

USEFUL YOGIC ASANAS IN PREGNANCY-A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is the ancient science of India. During period 300 B.C. Patanjali muni established this science in the form of *Darshana Shastra*. From then till today this science get developing day by day with various research work. Yoga science consist of eight different aspects, together called as *Ashtanga Yoga*. *Asana* is one of them. The posture which gives comfortable position to the body is called *Asana*. In general, *asana* having many benefits to human body and it gives relief from various diseases. Pregnancy or antenatal period is delicate period in life of woman, during which vigorous activities or exercises are completely contraindicated according to Ayurveda as well as modern science. But ongoing research in yoga suggest that mild form of yoga which includes few simple and easy yogic *asanas* and *pranayamas* may perform in antenatal period. These *asanas* having positive impact on physical and mental health of pregnant woman and helps to prevent pregnancy disorders. One should keep in mind that this yoga should perform under guidance of experts. In this article we are going to review such few important *asanas* which can be perform in pregnancy.

KEYWORDS: *Ashtanga Yoga, Asana, Antenatal period.*

INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an ancient science began 5000 years ago in India. The roots of yoga expand deep into the Hindu culture. The word *YOGA* is derived from the root word *Yuj* which means unite. The uniting of body, mind and spirit.^[1] Today, with current work and family demands on both

women and men, yoga has become a tool to manage stress and transforms the body to be lean and strong. Today our goals are a bit more practical, like building core strength for proper posture and learning to de-stress through the fast pace of our lives using deep breathing. Pregnancy brings a new meaning to the concept of beauty. It is a period of immense joy coupled with excitement. The practice of yoga can help you prepare your mind and body for labour and birth as this helps you focus, to concentrate and keep you healthy. It can also help in ensuring easier labour and smooth delivery by relieving tension around the cervix and birth canal and by opening the pelvis.^[2]

When to start yoga^[3]

- For the first trimester, standing Yoga Poses are advised as this will help strengthen the legs, enhance circulation, generate energy, and may reduce leg cramps.
- During the second and third trimester, one may reduce time spent for practicing the *asanas* to prevent fatigue and overwork. Instead focus more on breathing and meditation.
- It is also not advised to practice from the tenth through the fourteenth week of pregnancy since these are crucial times.

The following are the Yoga Poses that can help you in dealing with the symptoms of pregnancy, ensuring smoother and easier delivery, and faster recovery after childbirth.

- *Vrukshasana*
- *Trikonasana*
- *Marjarasana*
- *Vajrasana*
- Bhadrasana (Butterfly Pose)
- *Shavasana*

***Vrukshasana*: Tree pose^[4]**

Steps

- Stand upright, raise your arms overhead and interlock your fingers.
- Now stretch slowly and gently to the right and then the left, imitating the swaying movement of a palm tree.

Advantages

- It stretches the legs, back and arms which invigorates the body. It helps to improve concentration.

- Stretches the entire spine and helps to clear the congestion of spinal nerves.
- It also helps in developing physical and mental balance.
- It stretches and strengthens the rectus-abdominus muscle which an accessory muscle for bearing down.

Trikonsana^[4]

Steps

- Stand with your feet 2–3 feet apart facing forward.
- Turn the head, left side foot to the left side and bring your left side hand down to the left side foot.
- Place the palm to the left side hand on the left side foot and keep your right hand upward. Breathing in and bring your arms lateral to the floor.
- Exhale, extend, and flex on your right side to bring the right hand closer to the right foot.
- Hold breathing in, slowly come up, and then relax.

Advantages

- Maintains a balance between physical and mental health, exclusively for expectant mom since their center of gravity shifts.
- Extends and widens the hips which aid in delivery.
- Minimizes low back pain and maternal stress.
- This pose regulates the digestive system and massages internal organs like the liver.

Marjarasana^[5]

Steps

- Come onto your palms and knees, with your palms shoulder width apart below your shoulders and your knees hip-width apart below your hips.
- Breathe in and raise the head and gently bend the spine close to the floor.
- While breathe out, bring your chin toward your chest and gently arch the spine upward. Do not strain yourself.

Advantages

- It helps to ease the stiffness in the neck and shoulders.
- It releases spinal stress.it may alleviate backache & discomfort of back & neck.
- It helps to reduce discomfort caused by the growing uterus & reduce dyspnoea.

- After initiation of labour, this asana should be performed in between contractions thereby it helps in dilatation of cervix to facilitate normal vaginal delivery.

Vajrasana^[5]

Steps

- Sit with your legs stretched straight in front of you.
- Now fold both the legs and sit in a kneeling position. Keep the hips on the heels; the toes should point out behind you and your big toes should touch each other at back.

Advantages

- This asana enhances digestive system which increases the energy uptake.
- Alters blood flow and nervous system impulses in the pelvic region.
- Relieves stomach ailments like hyperacidity and it is the only asana that can be practiced after taking meals.

Bhadrasana: (Butterfly pose)^[5]

Steps

- Pose with your legs as shown in the image. Turn your knees and put the soles of the feet altogether, holding the heels as close to the body as possible.
- Loosen your inner thighs. Grip your feet with two hands.
- Smoothly recoil the knees up and down, utilizing the elbows as levers to press the lower extremities down. Do not use any force.
- Repeat up to 20 to 30 times. Straighten your legs and calm down.

Advantages

- Promote flexibility in the hip and groin region.
- Extends the thighs and knees, minimizing pain. Reduces fatigue.
- Aids in facilitating smooth delivery
- It improves blood circulation to perineal region due to stretching.
- It strengthens perineal muscles i.e Levator ani,
- which bear most strain during labour.
- This posture stretches muscles of hip joint; training may decrease the Sacro iliac pain.

Shavasana^[6]

Steps

- Lie down straight as seen in the image.
- Shut your eyes and calm down. Inhale slowly and relaxed breaths.

Advantages

- Minimizes stress related to maternal. it is useful throughout pregnancy in relieving anxiety, fatigue etc. and brings about a feeling of wellbeing.
- Aids in regulating BP.
- By remaining motionless for some time and keeping mind still while one is fully conscious, one can learn to relax, this conscious relaxation invigorates & refreshes both body and mind.

Benefits of Yoga

- Develops stamina and strength.
- Relieves tension of lower back, hips, chest, upper back, neck and shoulders.
- Calms the nervous system.
- Preparation for Labour.
- Connection with baby.
- Increases circulation.
- Breathe work practice.

Research suggests that prenatal yoga is safe and can have many benefits for pregnant women and their babies like.

- Improve sleep.
- Reduce stress and anxiety.
- Increase the strength, flexibility and endurance of muscles needed for childbirth.
- Decrease lower back pain, nausea, carpal tunnel syndrome, headaches and shortness of breath.
- Decrease the risk of preterm labour, pregnancy-induced hypertension and intrauterine growth restriction.

CONCLUSION

- Yoga & Ayurveda are known to serve the lives of human beings since thousands of years.
- These ancient sciences are true and highly effective, upon which the newer generation is working out to prove its significance.

- Yogasanas which are mentioned earlier are helpful in pregnancy for prevention of various diseases, also helps in management of many pregnancy disorders.
- So, Work Healthy Eat Healthy Think Healthy & Stay Healthy.
- Because.

“If wealth is lost nothing is lost but if health is lost everything is lost.”

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