**Abstract**

**Purpose:** Yoga is a holistic approach to complementary medicine that involves areas such as emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of wellness through a mind-body exercise. Research has shown that yoga improves muscular mobility and strength, pain relief, and reduces stress. Reducing stress can decrease inflammatory cytokines leading to higher success rates in cancer therapy (Archer et al., 2012). However, it is disputed whether yoga improves breathing, weight management, circulation, cardiovascular conditioning, and spirituality. The purpose of this study is to examine the physical and psychological effects of a 4-week hatha yoga program on active young adults. The measured psychological aspects included stress levels, and the physical aspects included functional movement incorporating stability and mobility.

**Methods:** 16 active young adults with limited yoga experience, 1 male and 15 females (age=19.68±1.01), participated in the study. All subjects signed an informed consent prior to testing. Participants completed pre/post assessments of a functional movement screening and Smith Relaxation States Inventory 3 (SRSI3). Participants then completed 4 weeks of the Hatha & Flow Yoga for Beginner DVD (Anchor Entertainment Inc.) for three, 30 minute sessions a week.

**Results:** A paired sample t-test found significance for improvement in the overall functional movement screening scores (p<0.001). In addition, significance was found for a decrease in overall stress levels (p<0.001).

**Conclusion:** Results demonstrate that yoga would be a beneficial addition to exercise programs. Practicing yoga for 4 weeks allows for improvement in mobility and stability, thus quality of life. Participants also displayed increased levels of relaxation and decreased levels of stress after completion of this program. Therefore, yoga is an effective form of complementary medicine due to its ability to be implemented into therapies, such as chronic pain, cancer, and musculoskeletal therapies.

**References**


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