

[sg\_popup id="191" event="onload"][/sg\_popup]Practicing yoga might seem like it is merely a trendy thing to do, but it is much more than that. It provides not only physical health benefits—such as increased flexibility, breathing techniques, decreased pain, and of course a great workout—but mental benefits as well. There is even science behind yoga practices as well.

Yoga is a practice for both mind and body, originating from ancient Indian philosophy. The beginning of yoga started with the Indus-Sarasvati civilization in Northern India over 5,000 years ago. Over the years, yoga has been redefined by various ideas, beliefs, and techniques. Pre-modern (or classical) yoga is defined by Patanjali's Yoga-Sûtras, which contains steps and stages towards obtaining Samadhi or enlightenment.

Today, yoga has been, yet again, redefined, to create a system of practices designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. The practice moved West in the late 1800s, and began to become established as schools and studios opened.

There are numerous styles of yoga still today, however Hatha yoga is the most commonly practiced in the United States and Europe. It emphasizes postures, breathing exercises, and meditation.

To get more into the science behind yoga, according to the [2007 National Health Interview Survey](#) (NHIS) that included a comprehensive survey on the use of complementary health approaches by Americans, yoga is the sixth most commonly used complementary health practice among adults.

Research suggests that certain sets of yoga poses may reduce lower back pain and improve function. Other studies have shown that practicing yoga can improve quality of life, reduce stress, lower heart rate and blood pressure, help relieve anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

One NCCIH (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health) study of 90 people with chronic lower back pain, found that participants who practiced Iyengar yoga—a form of Hatha yoga that emphasizes detail, precision, and alignment—saw significant improvement in their disabilities, pains, and depression over a 6-month period.

Another study in 2011 compared yoga, with conventional stretching exercises, to a self-care

book in 228 adults with chronic lower back pain. The results revealed that both yoga and stretching were exceptionally more effective in improving function and reducing symptoms than the self-care book.

Researchers, however, do stress that yoga should not replace conventional medical care or to postpone seeing a health care provider about pain. Yoga is meant to be a way to help and aid, not solve.

However, with all this, practicing yoga is definitely not a fad or trend, but an old practice to help a person achieve both a mental and physical workout.

Yoga is also easy to practice just about anywhere—even your lab! Watch the video below, and try the practice in your lab the next time you're waiting for your results!

Make sure to post any videos or picture of your lab yoga to either Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram and tag Phenomenex.

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