

## IS THE NOTION OF 'YOGA INJURY' TENABLE?

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### Abstract

*'Yoga Injury' the term in itself is misnomer. Since, āsana has often been taken to mean, rather unreasonably, a kind of physical exercise, we have started using the term 'yoga injury' just we use the term "sports injury". The Authors, through this article, have asserted that the violation of basic principles of yoga practices may alone result into some contra-indicative effects that are often termed as 'yoga injury'. In modern days, the reported incidences of so called yoga injury, allegedly resulting from Hathayogic practices, are ostensibly due to violation of basic principles of Yoga. These are some of the issues dealt-with in this article which strongly holds that yoga should not be misrepresented through unwarranted reports, often published in magazines, news papers or web pages, as they amount to defaming yoga, the timeless heritage of the entire humanity. It is high time that we stood firmly by the true nature of yogic tradition and desisted from the so called improvised yoga practices, often found far removed from the very basic tenets of yoga.*

**Key words:** *Yoga injury, asana, pranayama, Patanjali, Hathayoga, Swami Kuvalayananda, Modern yoga*

### Introduction:

Yoga can be viewed chiefly from the three aspects viz. Philosophical, Psycho-spiritual and Practical. The philosophical aspect relates to the explanation of 'metaphysical phenomenon and the concept of the eternal truth', the Psycho-spiritual aspect relates to the transcendence of the metaphysical phenomenon, as well as, 'realization' of 'the perennial truth' on the perceptual and attitudinal plane; while the Practical aspect encompasses the experiential mode of performing psycho-physiological practices. The Practical aspect, in turn, encompasses the following two ways:

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1. Cultivating an objective orientation by way of analytical thinking and appropriate action plans.
2. Practicing methodically the psychophysical practices, as enjoined in yogic texts.

In *Hathayogic* texts, besides the first aspect, the second one has, also, been given due importance, whereby, *śuddhikriyā*, *āsana*, *pranayama*, *kumbhaka*, *bandha* and *mudrā* are, conveniently, grouped. The second aspect is generally implicated with the purpose of making the body and mind conducive for realizing the highest experiential state leading one to *Kundalini arousal* and finally to Samadhi, often termed as a complete psycho-physiologically balanced state.

There is no denying fact that one needs a holistic approach for a proper development of one's personality. However, now a day, this fact is often overlooked. Yoga has become popular as a specific physical exercise regimen. This has led us more towards the physical aspect of yoga, ignoring its psychological and spiritual aspects, in the process. This has resulted into only a partial advantage being accrued from yoga. With such an approach, of course, we can maintain, predominantly, the bodily health or even manage certain pathological conditions. But availing these benefits alone does not lead us to the desired goal of yoga.

In order to understand as to what leads to Yoga Injury, it is necessary to know the basic principles of the practice of yoga, especially those relating *asana* and *pranayama*.

### **Principles of practicing *Asana*:**

Most popular and most important principles of practicing *asanas* are drawn from the following two important *sutras* of *Patanjali* –

Sthirasukhamāsanam – PYS: II : 46

prayatnaśaithilyānantasamāpattibhyām – PYS: II : 47

**Meaning** – *Asana* is that which is stable and comfortable – II: 46

The performance of *asana* should be with the total relaxation of effort and merging of *mind* with the infinite on the perceptual plane. -II / 47

### **Discussion on *Sutras* of *Patanjali*:**

There are four important instructional words from the view point of the correct practice of *Asana*. The definition of *Asana* by *Patanjali*, quoted here, though does not speak about any

particular body limbs or parts, is perhaps the most important technical guidance from the view point of performing *Asana*. *Patanjali* mentions two important principles of the performance of *Asana*:

1. Effortlessness (*prayatnasathilya*)
2. Attending the infinite (*anantasamapatti*) expanse with a total mindfulness

These are indispensably practical suggestions. While practicing *Asana*, one must not over exert and try to surpass one's own capacity. The final position of *Asana* should be maintained effortlessly. Effortlessness is applied not only for final posture but actually the entire process of practicing *Asana* should be effortless. If one starts encountering certain limitations during the practice proper, he/she should stop there forthrightly and continue to maintain the body position effortlessly, without transgressing one's optimal capacity and psycho-physical limitations. This will gradually increase the capacity of the body to maintain the final position effortlessly with a sense of inward well being.

The mental aspect of *Asana* has been given more importance here. *Sthira* or Stable posture (P.Y.S.), as well as, *sukha* and a feeling of well being (P.Y.S.) are two very important effects and indicators of *Asana*. The practice of *Asana* brings about a felt sense of stability of *mind* and body and also gives a feeling of well being. However, '*sthira*' and '*sukha*' are also implicated with the technique aspect of the practice of *Asana*. While practicing *Asana*, we must be careful that our body is steadily stable during the final posture and we are so comfortable that we feel an inward well being in it.

### **Concept of final position:**

We are, usually, under the impression that the final position of the body, as described in the texts, must be achieved at all costs. It is true that we must try to achieve the ideal position but along with that we, also, must not violate the fundamental principles of practicing *Asana* viz. '*sthirata*', '*sukha*' and '*prayatnasathilya*' as mentioned above. Every person, practicing *Asana*, has his own bodily limitations and so also the body is not prepared, initially, to attain the ideal final position smoothly. Therefore, whatever position body can adopt and maintain, in consonance with the concepts of *sthirata*, *sukha* and *prayatnasathilya*, should be considered as the final position of the *Asana*. We also have misconception that unless we acquire the ideal final position, *asana* will not give its due benefits. It should be noted by every practitioner of *asana* that it is not the final position that gives the benefit but it is the right technique of performing *Asana*, within

the parameters laid down by *Patanjali* that is vital even if the body is not able to attain the so called 'ideal' final position. If we violate the principles of performing / practicing *Asana*, we are likely to encounter problems for which we ourselves are responsible and not yoga.

### Principles of Practicing Pranayama:

**Pranayama** is the next but one of the foremost practices in the curriculum of both *Patanjala Yoga* and *Hathayoga*. It is to be practiced with an utmost care as even slight carelessness may result into hazardous results. A general instruction about the practice of *Pranayama* is available in *Patanjala Yoga Sutra*, as under -

tasmimsati śvāsaprasvāsayorgativicchedaḥ Prāṇāyāmaḥ / PYS : Sādhana Pāda :51  
bāhyābhyantarastambhavṛttirdeśakālasaṅkhyābhirparidṛṣṭo dīrghasūkṣmaḥ /

PYS: Sādhana Pāda: 52

These two aphorisms from *Sadhana Pada* of *Patanjali's Yoga Sutra* are mainly related with the technique aspect of *Pranayama*. They mean –

‘While being in that (*asana*) the break in the regular rhythmic movement of inhalation and / or exhalation (both) constitute *Pranayama*’ (PYS: II: 51).

*Pranayama*, broadly, can be of three varieties viz. Outward modality, inward modality and standstill modality, in respect of being measured and regulated by means of expanse, time and number of rounds, so that it becomes prolonged and simultaneously subtle.

Without going into detail and subtleties of the *sutra* and its meaning, we humbly place that most of the commentators have considered the *sutra* as first exposition of the technique of *Pranayama* and opine that later development of *Pranayama* or *Kumbhaka* derives its source from this *sutra*.

*Hathayoga* is another school of Yoga that has given maximum importance to the practice of *Kumbhakas*. A representative book on *Hathayoga* viz. *Hathapradipika* has preferred to use the word *Kumbhaka* rather than *Pranayama*. The book details out various types of *Kumbhakas* and, at the same time, cautions to be careful in the practice of any breathing exercises. These ‘cautionary verses’ actually have become a guideline for the practice of *Pranayama*. Any person, violating these cautionary instructions, is likely to get adverse effects of the practice.

*Hathapradipika* writes-

Yathāsimḥho gajo vyāghro bhavedvaśyaḥ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ/

Tathaiva sevito vayuranyatha hanti sādhakam // HP: II : 15

Pranayamena yuktena sarvarogaksayo bhavet/  
Ayuktabyasayogena sarva roga smudbhavah // HP: II : 16  
Hikkasvasasca kasasca sirah karnaksivedanah /  
Bhavanti vividha rogah pavanasyaprapakopatah // HP: II:17  
Yuktam yuktam tyajedvāyūm yuktam yuktam ca purayet/  
Yuktam yuktam ca badhniyādevam siddhimavāpnuyāt // HP: II: 18

The above verses mean :

Just as wild animals like lion, elephant or a tiger can be brought under control slowly and gradually, similarly the respiration should be brought one's conscious control gradually with practice. Otherwise, it can 'kill' the practitioner (himself) (HP: II: 15).

By the proper practice of *pranayāmas*, all diseases get attenuated (whereas) due to improper practice (of *prāṇāyāma*) all the diseases get generated (HP: II: 16).

Various diseases like hiccup, respiratory disorders, cough and also pain in head, ear and eyes get generated due to the malfunctioning of air.

- 1) *hikkā* - Hiccup- indicates diaphragmatic irritation.
- 2) *śvāsa* – dyspnoea- breathlessness
- 3) *kāsa* - cough.
- 4) *śirah vedanā* -Head-ache
- 5) *karṇa vedanā* - Ear-ache
- 6) *akṣi vedanā* - Pain in the eye ball (HP: II:17)

Exhale air properly, also inhale it in a methodical manner and it (air) should be retained also in a methodical manner. In this way accomplishment and perfection (in yoga) should be obtained. (HP II/18)

### **Discussion on the verses of *Hathapradipika*:**

Pranayama practice in *Hathayoga* is rather complex and at the same time most effective too. Many a time we become unduly enthusiastic in the practice of *Pranayama*, without being aware of the related consequences. We consider the retention of breath to be the most important aspect of the practice of *Pranayama*. However, we forget that while practicing *Pranayama* we are working with one of the most delicate systems of the body viz. respiratory system. And therefore, any kind of haste or incomplete knowledge of the technique may damage the system, as well as, may lead to various problems. That is why, in yoga literature, it has been repeatedly warned that the

practice of *Pranayama* should be gradually accomplished and intensified. *Svatmarama* suggests that just as a wild animal can be tamed by a gradual training only, similarly respiration should be brought under control gradually.

Besides being cautious during the gradual progress in the practice of *pranayama*, it is also important that we are well aware about the proper technique and its practice. Proper technique has been emphasized here in this verse. We should not identify *Pranayama* only with the retention of air that is *Kumbhaka* but it is equally important to be careful about the right technique of proper inhalation and proper exhalation. It can be experienced by every practitioner that if any one of the aspects of respiration is manipulated, other aspects of respiration cannot remain uninfluenced. Thus, our practice of *Pranayama* must be very calculated and within our capacity. Never exceed the capacity. It is also said that if we violate this rule it may lead to various adverse consequences. The text says that it may lead to diseases like hiccup, asthma, respiratory disorders and pain in eyes ear and head. However, *Pranayama* has also a potentiality that if practiced properly can make one free from various diseases as well.

### **Why injury?**

Unfortunately, while practicing yoga, people have accepted only the practical aspect of yoga and that too, unfortunately, not in accordance with the right technique, as shown by *Patanjali* or *Hathayoga* authors. In many Western countries yoga is considered as a specific exercise or has got amalgamated with other exercise methods. Also in India, many yoga schools, with their different identities, have been teaching yogic practices in the manner of physical exercises and claim, rather unethically, that references of such yogic practices are found in standard traditional yogic texts.

Violation of yogic principles, while practicing *asana*, may make the practitioner prone to the onset of some problems. Reports of such problems, arising out of a gross violation of the yogic principles, have appeared in some standard medical journals, in a manner that create a wrong impression that yoga itself leads to problems and therefore is 'not safe'! The headings often read something like, "the injury through so called yoga practices." (Interestingly, the title suggests rightly that these yoga practices are so called and not actual)

**Some reports about 'Yoga Injury' appearing on Google Search Engine, claimed to have published in reputed journals:**

With the growing popularity of yoga and specially *Asana* and *Pranayama*, some groups of people, probably with their vested interests, are continuously trying to defame yogic practices and get such articles published in some reputed journals and also publish them on the net. Here are some such reports, presented for the readers of this article, for ready reference.

### **1. Magazine (American)- Health- Article by Pamela Paul**

More than 14 million people are practicing yoga since 2000. Orthopedic surgeons, physical therapist across the country are dealing with the increasing fallout from yoga injury. Over the past three years, 13000 Americans were treated in an emergency room or a doctor's office for yoga related injuries (This is according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission).

### **2. Yoga Hub library- Article by Allistair Santiago**

Along with increasing interest and participation has been a corresponding and upsetting increase in reports of yoga related injuries in recent years like-ligament strain, sore joint(especially knee and wrist), swelling intervertebral disc, ganglionic injuries etc.

3. A case of rectus sheath hematoma due to noncontact strenuous exercise, yoga, in 45 year old woman, admitted as an emergency in hospital (**Ref. American journal of Emergency medicine (2009).**)

4. A case of hamstring tear, due to *utthita padangushthasana* which recovered after 6 months with medical treatment and physiotherapy. **By Carol Krucoff--[www.Yoga journal.com/life style/908](http://www.Yoga journal.com/life style/908).**

5. A case about head stand injury in *sirsasana*-50 years old osteoporotic patient who developed neck spine injury after *sirsasana* (**Ref- [www.yogajournal.com/1620](http://www.yogajournal.com/1620)**).

6. A case study by **Dr. Jonson DB, Dept of Surgery, Berkshire Medical Center, USA** - Case of 29 years old woman who suffered from spontaneous pneumothorax after the vigorous practice of *Kapalabhati*.

Before coming to any conclusion on the reports regarding such adverse effects of yogic practices, we must know some of the facts about different types of so called yogic practices which are actually innovations of modern Indian, as well as, Western fertile minds, who have 'molded' yogic practices in some vigorous exercises or superimposed their own understanding upon the techniques of their performance in such a way that it has become more an exercise and less of a practice of yoga. Here, it will not be out of place to inform our readers that Kaivalyadhama

Yoga Institute, established in the year 1924, is continuously engaged in treating and giving training in yogic exercises. It has not recorded even a single contraindicative complaint about 'Yoga Injury'. Thus, even after around 90 Years of Kaivalyadhama existence, the notion of Yoga Injury is quite an alien term in its premises.

This is high time that so called yoga experts and promoters, of so called 'innovative' yoga practices, introspected and pondered on the question, "Are we really promoting yoga in its true sense in such a manner"? We are sure the answer will be crystal clear to these 'experts' of yoga.

It is also a matter of worth thinking as to why *Swami Kuvalayananda*, the pioneer of scientific yoga has kept himself limited to very few *asanas* only and did not follow blindly the inventors of multitude of *asanas*, particularly at the time when the so called other techniques were flourishing very fast, during his time. We must strive to know why? We should make efforts to know the true spirit of Swamiji's legacy and reestablish scientific value of traditional *asanas* over so called 'innovative' *asanas* and the validity of their techniques. We should not forget that the validity of all *asanas* accepted and described by Swamiji had been scientifically tested and then promoted, whereas the 'innovative' *asanas*, flourishing in modern times, cannot claim to have been scientifically experimented. Moreover, modern yoga promoters conveniently violate the basic principles of practicing *asanas*, as propounded by ancient yoga authorities. It is quite surprising that yoga *asanas* are taught in a hall pre-heated to 40 degree Celsius. Unfortunately, such a practice is often patronized by a sizable number of people. This has taken us far away from the true concept of yoga. What people are learning in the name of *asana* is clearly something far removed from the tenets of authentic and classical yoga. Moreover the scientific validity of such practices are also questionable!

However, problems arising due to improper / incorrect practice of yoga are not a modern age issue alone. In ancient times, people had also been, allegedly, practicing yoga through wrong ways. That's why the traditional texts have explained the hazards and precautions to avoid such things (HP: II: 15-17) .

*Hathapradipika* has explained the specific therapy in 5<sup>th</sup> chapter for such problems:

*Pramādī yujyate yastu vātādistasya jāyate /*

*taddoṣasya cikitsārtham gati vāyornirūpyate // (HP-5/1)*

The person, committing mistakes in practicing yoga, develops diseases related to *vata* etc. Thus, considering both traditional and modern references and also increasing popularity and adaptation of yoga practices in masses, it is warranted to apply, diligently, important scientific



principles that may help us avoid the incidences of complications, in case of the recipients of yoga training and treatment. The following are some of such principles for the use of yoga professionals.

### **1. Scientific base:**

The people should know the proper scientific explanation about the method, efficacy and limitations pertaining to each and every yoga practice. Here, is the importance of anatomy and physiology. We can understand this through an example. During the performance of a particular *Asana*, one should be mindful as to what muscles undergo contraction, what get stretched and also to what extent, where the pressure of gravity acts most (specific joints, bones, organs, muscles etc), where is more strain, what about the breathing pattern during the final state and so on. All these must be well explained so that one can understand properly as to what is actually happening in the body during the very procedure. Every *asana*, variety of *pranayamas*, *kriyas*, *mudras* etc. should be explained within the parameters of anatomy and physiology.

Every yoga institute should respect and adopt the scientific view. Swami Kuvalyanandaji, founder of Kaivalyadhama, pioneered this outlook. He is the first person to have undertaken scientific research into yogic practices (from 1924 to 1966). Later on, many research institutes have worked and published many a research paper by taking the help of advanced laboratory techniques. There should be proper bibliography of the research work so that it will be easy to present the facts to the common people.

### **2. Understanding difference between Physical Exercises and Yoga practices:**

The term yogic exercise is itself a controversial term. Scientifically, both have different physiological effects. In physical exercises, the metabolic rate gets increased with increased energy expenditure. During yogic practices, however, we have to keep our metabolic rate almost at rest, resulting into the least energy expenditure. Obviously, after an hour of practice of physical exercises, one often gets fatigued and needs a sufficient amount of recuperative rest, whereas after an hour of correctly performed yoga practices, there is no sign of fatigue or exhaustion, whatsoever. Yoga itself is a rest with its principle of '*prayatnasaithilya*'. *Asanas* are physical exercises only in respect of their mechanism aspect. Being a form of yoga, the experiential aspect of *asanas* is considered as the prime identity of yoga. Therefore, after the practice of *asana* there is a comprehensive rejuvenation pre-emptying any need for the rest, unlike in exercise regimen.

We do not want to establish that yoga practices are more efficient in comparison with exercises. Both have their own significance and importance for health. There are many areas, in day today life, whereby one requires developing a particular physical power and strength as in sports or certain physical tasks. Here, physical exercises are indispensable. If understood in a proper perspective, both become mutually synergetic. Yoga, on the other hand makes us para-sympathetically oriented, inwardly sensitive, introspective and intuitive during its practices. Yoga, if performed like exercises would deprive one from the abovementioned yogic benefits. *Asanas* should be performed with a slow and gentle movement with gravity being allowed to operate gently and naturally, as well as, the maintenance time of *asanas* being operational as per one's individual psycho-physiological limitations and capacities. There should be a proper rest in between any two *asanas* performed sequentially.

Now, the task above should be seriously taken-up by the various yoga institutes, engaged in highlighting yogic practices in the form of physical exercises. The least they can do is to desist from proclaiming *yogasana*, pranayamas, mudras and bandhas as a part physical exercise regimen.

### **3. Understanding of Traditional texts:**

Almost all texts on yoga are in Sanskrit language. As we go through their various manuscripts, we find different words apparently conveying different meanings for a given construct or concept. Another thing is that, the practical methods are described in the form of verses i.e. within the limitations of use of words, giving the interpreters a lot of scope for their own interpretations and difference of opinions. Also, different schools of yoga often show different views on the same concept and on the basic premises.

### **4. Medical case reports:**

Anyone, reporting the case studies, encompassing benefit or hazards pertaining to particular yogic practices, should prepare and give a proper history, as well as, clinical and pathological conditions of the patient. For example- if one attributes the spontaneous pneumothorax due to *Kapalabhati*, he/she should get clarified whether such a patient has a tubercular lesions or whether his lungs were totally healthy. In many reported cases, unless all the relevant information is available about the patient it becomes impractical to give them credibility.

Most of the times, some people may get injured initially due to some other forms of exercises. But unfortunately, it is conveniently attributed to yoga and the same goes under the heading of 'yoga injury'. If a school of yoga is teaching yoga as an exercise regimen, how can one blame

the classical science of yoga which principally differs from all other exercise regimens? So in a case report, one should explain the specific practices which that person was performing alongside yoga practices.

### **5. Yoga teacher training:**

Firstly, all yoga institutes should know that we cannot produce an ideal yoga teacher within a few days of training, howsoever rigorous it could be! We have been seeing so many short term courses offered, wherein student attendees get certified as yoga teachers. Short term courses of seven days or 15 days are no less than a mockery of the great science of yoga.

Trainees for a yoga teacher course should have authentic information and knowledge about anatomy, physiology and psychology. They should learn yoga techniques properly and also take into account all possible errors and limitations which become evident during their practice. Also, they should have appropriate solutions to overcome those limitations. One of the important suggestions to them would be that they should teach the techniques according to psycho-physiological conditions of the learner. Often, yoga teachers offer some pre-designed general package of yoga to their prospective student learners. So also, learners often express their choice to undergo a particular package, disregarding what actually suits their objective needs. Therefore, it is in the interest of the learner to study his/her own needs while opting for a yoga course. The yoga teacher should also design various tailor made modules to suit the needs of his/her clientele. So also, if the teacher is taking a yoga class for a group, he should be in a position to give individual attention to all attendees.

### **The Stretching skill:**

Most of the cultural asanas are nothing but the skillful, gentle stretching of specific muscles, if the passive stretching phenomenon of *asana* performance is taken into account. One should know about the skill of stretching. For the beginners, there should be a gradual increase in stretch. Simple rule is that during any movement, while practicing an *asana*, if one feels unbearable uneasiness and pain, he/she should come back and release the *asana* forthrightly. Then day by day one may increase the degree of stretch. Yoga teachers should not force them to adopt the final posture in an inordinate manner. During the practice, all movements should be slow. Jerky movements may cause an acute spasm of muscles (stretch reflex) or may injure muscle fibers.

Some basic *asanas* are nothing but the preparation of further advanced asanas. For example, *Yogamudra* and *Janushirasana* prove to be a good preparation for *Pascimottanasana*, *Ugrasana* etc.

Stretching is closely related to the relaxation of muscles. In fact, only relaxed muscles can undergo a proper stretch. Sometimes, due to a prolonged use of weight training exercise, the muscle tone gets increased. Thus, even in resting condition, they remain in the state of contraction to some extent. Such a person may become bulky but is not so flexible because of an insufficient amount of relaxation or stretching of muscles. In such a person, a forceful stretching may cause an injury to muscle fibers. If you overstretch, it's a **grade one sprain**. If there are micro tears in a ligament or tendon, it's a **grade two sprain**. If there is a complete tear it is **grade three sprain**. Practically, many people, particularly new yoga enthusiasts, have grade one sprain during a regular practice. If they continue, further stages may occur to them. Limited weight training exercise may help us to progress in *asana*. But there should be a time gap of at least 20 minutes or so between both the practices.

#### **6. Age and ageing mechanism:**

Though we find scriptural references about the practice of yoga that any person young, old or very old, diseased or very weak can take up the practice of yoga and get success in it (HP: I: 64), such statements should be understood in a right perspective and with their judicious application. The beginning of yoga practice, too early or in cases of unsound health conditions in persons with a very advanced age, may prove to be counterproductive. Simple stretch can be given from the age of 6 years. But the advanced stretch should be given only after 12 years. After 40, one should properly evaluate his/her body conditions, especially about the status of joint related structures, blood vessels, muscles etc. The topsy turvy poses become dangerous in cerebral atherosclerosis. Grade one knee arthritis (OA) may get exacerbated due to yogic practices. Muscle stiffness for a long time may produce a permanent derangement in muscle fibers. Such a person should start with simple *asanas*.

Though some people may be following some advanced *asanas* during their youth, they should restrict overstretching and difficult *asanas*. It is better to check one's bone density after 45 years of age and accordingly a proper yoga practice plan should be decided. We have seen so many people becoming over-enthusiastic about yoga in their old age (rather than in their young years!). They often exert themselves, rather unreasonably, in performing difficult *asanas*.

#### **7. Pathological conditions:**

If you are teaching yoga to healthy people you can choose proper yoga practices rather easily. But when the person, having a specific problem comes in front of you, there are certain limitations

often encountered. In such a case, it is better to take a medical advice. This is a joint responsibility of a doctor and a yoga teacher. In these cases, modifications in original *asanas* and also to use props and other such things may become necessary. Therefore, a yoga teacher would do well in designing a personal yoga practice plan for his patient/trainee.

### **8. Personal safety measures:**

Every 'body' has its specific properties. Some people are born with a good flexibility. So, firstly, one should keep in *mind* that it is never advisable to compare oneself with other persons. In group practice often our ego gets hurt when someone is performing easily. We often tend to compete, in such a situation, disregarding our innate limitations. So a yoga teacher should see to it that any kind of such a competition with others is discouraged.

Challenge your maturity and wisdom in choosing the yoga practices most suitable to your needs and your innate limitations. Therefore, learn from a competent teacher, not from books or CDs or TV shows, for you need a close supervision in the initial learning phases of your yoga practice. It is also said –

‘Dekha dekhi kinha joga, ksije kaya badhe roga’

### **Conclusion:**

The above discussion and presentation highlights the following points in the form of conclusion.

1. We must know the basic principles, as laid down by our ancient yoga sages like *Patanjali* or *Svatmarama* and others, pertaining to the practice of *asanas*, *pranayamas* and other yoga practices.
2. *Asana*, *Pranayama*, or other yoga practices, if practiced according to scientific principles, will never result into any adverse effects, whatsoever.
3. Adverse effects of a wrong practice of yoga have been clearly indicated in the yogic texts.
4. ‘Innovative’ yoga practices, as well as, innovative techniques of performing the same are often not safe to be practiced.
5. *Asanas* must be learnt from a competent teacher only.
6. A teacher must be earnest and diligent in following basic yogic principles, as well as, anatomic and physiological principles pertaining to yoga practices.

7. Kaivalyadhama, a 90 years old yoga Institute has never met with a single case of the so called 'yoga injury' because its teachers have always followed the principles of the practice of yoga most diligently and strictly.
8. Individual himself is thus, responsible for any adverse effect due to the wrong practice of yoga and not the science of yoga.

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