

ENGAGING THE MIND AND BODY: YOGA

Yoga is a series of very precise body-weight postures and movements, which are designed to improve fitness. Its philosophy is rooted in a physical culture of health and well-being.

Benefits of Yoga:

There are a multitude of physical and mental benefits that one can gain by practicing yoga. Some of these are highlighted below:

1. **Lowers stress and improves mood:** some yoga methods use meditation techniques to quiet the mind and to streamline the focus of the body on breathing. This relieves stress and allows for relaxation.
2. **Increases flexibility:** yoga poses work by safely stretching your muscles and other soft tissues such as ligaments and tendons. This increases the range of motion in the joints and allows you to move more freely.
3. **Improves muscle tone and strength:** many yoga poses have a substantial effect on your upper and lower body strength as well as your core. There are different yoga poses that focus on almost every part of the body. Any pose, as long as it is practiced in the right way, will strengthen that part of the body in a safe way that doesn't put too much stress on any one specific muscle group.
4. **Helps you lose weight:** for many people, a major contributor to gaining weight is stress. Yoga brings a deep sense of relaxation to your body which allows you to de-stress and thus to lose weight naturally. It also works by strengthening your muscles, which helps lose weight.
5. **Lowers blood pressure:** practicing yoga regularly helps increase lung capacity as a result of deep breathing practices. This will help slow down the heart rate and in turn will lower blood pressure. It has also been linked with lower cholesterol and improves immune system functions.

The beauty of yoga is that it can be practiced anywhere, with any number of people and doesn't require any equipment. Yoga will give you a chance to relax, treat yourself right, fix your neglected body and prepare you for the next challenge.