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Impact of hatha yoga on flexibility of high school boys

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of Hatha Yoga training programme on Flexibility. Randomly selected 60 high school boys were divided into two equal groups as A and B. After taking the pre-test, Hatha Yoga training programme was given to experimental groups A where as the group B was a control group. The experimental group 'A' had undergone the training programme in Hatha Yoga, thrice a week for 16 weeks. Two middle tests after 5 weeks and 10 weeks and a post test were conducted. The t-test was employed to analyse the significance of difference from the pre-test to post test on selected variable. The result reveals that there was significant improvement in Flexibility for the experimental group as a result of the training programme in Hatha Yoga conducted for a period of four months.

Keywords: Hatha Yoga, Flexibility

Introduction

Physical fitness cannot be purchased. It has to be earned through a daily routine of physical exercise. It is evident that fit citizens are a nation's best asset and weak ones are its liability. It is the responsibility of every country to promote physical fitness of its citizens because physical fitness is the basic requirement for most of the tasks to be undertaken by an individual in his daily life.

Yoga has come a long way in the past few years. Take a look at any studio's schedule and you'll see so many different types of yoga. Yoga practice is thousands of years old. Hatha yoga derives its name from the Sanskrit words for sun and moon, and it's designed to balance opposing forces. The balance in hatha yoga might come from strength and flexibility, physical and mental energy, or breath and the body. Hatha is a blanket term for many different 'styles' and schools that use the body as a means for self-inquiry. It's often used as a catch-all term for the physical side of yoga, is more traditional in nature, or is billed as yoga for beginners. "Hatha translates to 'forceful,' but this relates more to the aspect of concentration and regularity of practice rather than applying unnecessary force to the body. Hatha is a general category that includes most yoga styles. It is an old system that includes the practice of asanas (yoga postures) and pranayama (breathing exercises) which help bring peace to the mind and body, preparing the body for deeper spiritual practices such as meditation. The Hatha Yoga system includes asana along with the six shatkarmas (physical and mental detox techniques), mudras and bandhas (psycho-physiological energy release techniques) and Pranayama (pranic awakening practices). Fine tuning of the human personality at increasingly subtle levels leads to higher states of awareness and meditation. The term Hatha Yoga has been commonly used to describe the practice of asana (postures). The syllable 'ha' denotes the pranic (vital) force governing the physical body and 'tha' denotes the chitta (mental) force thus making Hatha Yoga a catalyst to an awakening of the two energies that govern our lives. More correctly the techniques described in Hatha Yoga harmonise and purify the body systems and focus the mind in preparation for more advanced chakra and kundalini practices. (Bühnemann, G. 2007).

Flexibility is the ability of an individual to move the body through as wide a range of motion as possible without undue strain to the articulation and muscle attachments (Dick, Frank, 1980) [3]. The flexibility is largely determined by the tightness of muscles, tendons and ligaments that are attached to the joint. The more a muscle can stretch, the better the flexibility of the joint. Good flexibility is important for joint health and for the prevention of injuries. Flexibility is a highly adaptable physical fitness component. It increases with

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regular activity and decreases with inactivity. Flexibility is also specific. Good flexibility in one joint doesn't necessarily mean good flexibility in another.

To measure the flexibility of the lower back and posterior thighs. The subject was asked to remove his shoes and sit on the floor with feet against a standardized Sit and Reach Test apparatus. The apparatus was placed against a wall to prevent it from sliding. The subject was asked to extend the legs fully with the feet about shoulder width apart. The tester holds the subject's knees to ensure they were extended. The subject was asked to extend his arms forward with hands placed on top of each other, bending forward along the measuring scale four times and hold both hands at the maximal position for 1-2 seconds on the fourth trial. The score is the maximum distance reached in nearest half centimeter.

Objective of the study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of Hatha Yoga training programme on Flexibility of high school boys. The study may help the people to know the effect of Hatha Yoga, on selected variable of health related physical fitness and probably make an impact on the public to follow Hatha Yoga to maintain good health and fitness. Further, this study may educate parents and academicians of

school education to include Hatha Yoga in their co-curricular programmes.

Hypotheses

There will be significant improvement in Flexibility as a result of training programme in Hatha yoga.

Design of the study

Randomly selected 60 high school boys were divided into two equal groups as A and B. After taking the pre-test for Flexibility (Sit and Reach Test), Hatha Yoga Training was given to experimental groups A where as the group B was the control group. The experimental group had undergone the training programme in Hatha Yoga, thrice a week (ie, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) for 16 weeks. Two middle tests after 5 weeks and 10 weeks and a post test were conducted.

Analysis of data and discussion of findings

The t-test was employed to analyse the significance of difference from the pre-test to post test on selected variables. The level of significance chosen was 0.05. The following table of statistical descriptions reveal the effect of training programme in Hatha Yoga.

Table 1: Significance of differences between the pre-test and post-test means of the hatha yoga group and control group on flexibility

Groups	Means				MD	SD	SE	't' value
	Initial	First middle test	Second middle test	Final				
Hatha Yoga Group (N=30)	20.6833	21.333	22.15	22.7833	2.10	0.4025	0.0735	28.571*
Control Group (N=30)	22.1667	22.17	22.05	22.05	0.1167	0.3130	0.0571	2.041

* Significant at 0.05 level, 't' value required at 0.05 level = 2.045 (df 29)

The above table indicates that the Hatha Yoga group exhibited significant improvement in flexibility with initial mean score (20.6833) and the final mean score (22.7833). Further, it shows that the obtained 't' value (28.571) is much higher than the tabulated 't' value (2.045) at 29 degrees of freedom. Hence the obtained 't' value was found to be highly significant at 0.05 level. On the contrary, the initial

mean value (22.1667) and the final mean value (22.05) of Control group showed negligible difference. Further the obtained 't' value (2.041), is less than the required 't' value (2.045) which was insignificant at 0.05 level. The initial, 2 middle tests and final means of Hatha Yoga and Control groups on flexibility are diagrammatically shown below.

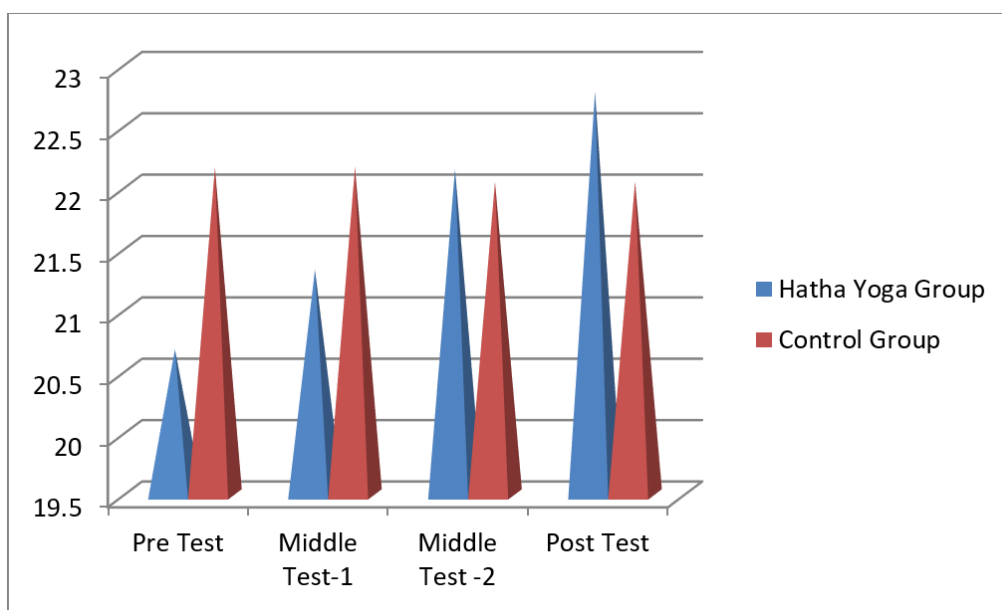


Fig 1: Graphical representation of mean difference of Hatha Yoga and control groups on flexibility

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of statistical results, it was observed that there was significant improvement in Flexibility for the experimental group as a result of the training programme in Hatha Yoga conducted for a period of four months. There was no significant improvement shown by the control group.

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