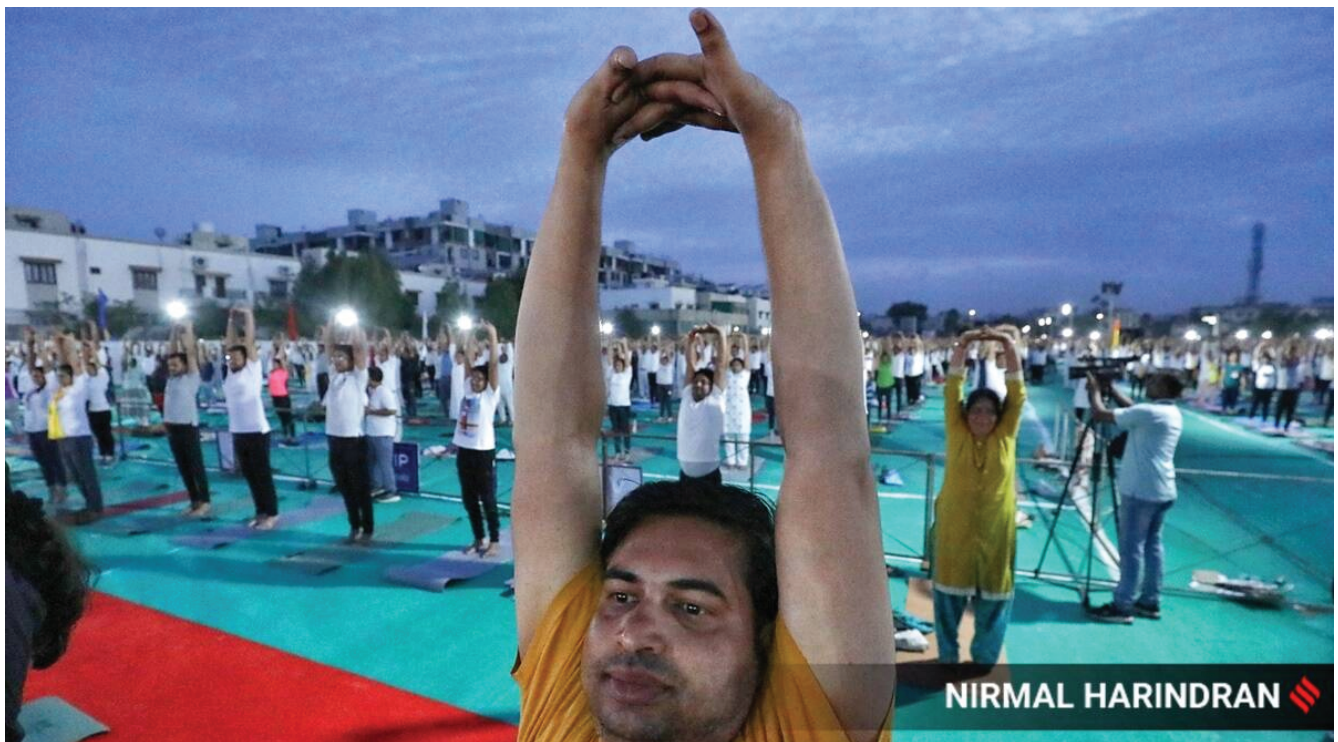


International Day of Yoga: Why yoga should be a part of your fitness regime

According to an expert, when people club a personalised fitness approach with yoga, they are able to achieve their goals much faster and more effectively



There are many things that people can do for their fitness, especially if they are looking to stay in shape. **Yoga** is one of them. Not only does it help a person stay healthy, it can also enable weight loss, overall mood-boost and flexibility.

According to Amol Naikawadi, preventive healthcare specialist and joint managing director, Indus Health Plus, exercise does not affect everyone the same way.

Some people may say, “‘I spend more time in the gym than my friend, but I can’t lose even half as much weight.’ The answers are in the DNA. Variations in the ACTN3 gene have been linked to different exercise-related parameters. If a person has normal ACTN3, they will have more type II muscle fibres associated with high muscle power, and hence, they will excel in power-based athletic activities like sprinting. People carrying variant forms of ACTN3 may perform better with endurance-based activities like marathons,” he explains.

Naikawadi adds that research shows following a “genetically-matched workout plan” can result in “three times more gains than following a random workout plan”. “Your genetic makeup determines what type of exercise you respond to, how prone you are to injury, and how long it will take for you to recover.”

He states that when people club a personalised fitness approach with yoga, they are able to achieve their goals much faster and more effectively. “Many people combine yoga with other workouts like weightlifting, weight training, and sports. They benefit from mind-body interventions.”

According to Naikawadi, including yoga in the regime can have the following benefits:

- 1. Increases flexibility:** When was the last time you wished you could touch your toes while bending forward? Yoga can not only improve your flexibility, but also let you perform complex asanas.
- 2. Muscle strength:** Yoga could strengthen weak muscles. It helps in preventing muscle strain by toning the muscles.
- 3. Increased metabolism:** Yoga keeps your body healthy. Your body’s metabolism is improved, and you feel better; it motivates you to eat well, too.
- 4. Lowers blood sugar levels:** Yoga not only **lowers blood sugar**, but also lowers bad cholesterol and boosts good cholesterol. It motivates weight loss and improves the body’s sensitivity to insulin.
- 5. Blood flow:** The relaxation exercises in yoga regulates blood flow to all parts of the body. Exercises like handstands help blood flow from the lower part of the body to the heart, where it can be pumped back to the lungs to be oxygenated.
- 6. Keeps diseases at bay:** Exercises that strengthen the immune system also help to keep diseases at bay. It not only destroys various viruses, but also boosts immunity to combat diseases.
- 7. Boosts self-esteem:** You would be able to explore different aspects of your personality when practising yoga. It would make you feel better about yourself.
- 8. Enhances lung function:** Many breathing exercises can improve lung function. Such exercises could help cure respiratory problems in the long run.
- 9. Improves sleep:** Regular yoga practice can help reduce stress and creates a routine for a regular sleeping pattern. A relaxed body sleeps deeper and more peacefully.