



# Yoga and Performance Management

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**Abstract:** In the recent years, various organizations are recognizing and promoting employee well-being in order to improve the overall performance management of their employees by integrating the wellness courses. The performance management of an organization can be attributed to a number of factors which can lead to the success or failure of the organization. The present Paper aims to discuss whether the adoption of Yoga in an organization or at the work places can have a positive and productive impact on the collective performance and the management of the work places and the employees. Yoga is generally perceived to be a way of keeping oneself healthy and happy. However, if one truly understands the concept of yoga as a complete way of life, one can clearly see its benefits for changing the paradigms of its practitioners. Scientific studies have repeatedly proved that Yoga improves productivity and performance. Yoga, has been derived from the Sanskrit word “Yuz,” which means to yoke or unite. Yoga aims at integrating the body, mind and soul of an individual. Yoga is an art of healthy living emphasizing the existence of a perfect harmony between the mind and body, individual and the nature. Yoga has evolved into a global phenomenon, known for its therapeutic and preventive benefits.. In recent decades, scientific research has increasingly validated the importance of yoga in enhancing various aspects of health and well-being of the human beings. But the reason that the concept of workplace Yoga has gained popularity is the Yoga’s ability to blend body and mind exercises that delivers the results that individuals and organizations seek in terms of their productivity and performance. These practices not only provide numerous benefits to employees, but they can also help improve productivity and retention. With increased stressful working environments and hectic schedule, many people struggle with the negative impact of their busy work lives. To manage their personal and work-lives in balance, many people are turning to yoga which gives them peace of mind so that they can achieve a perfect work-life balance. Adoption of Yogic practices for employees can lead to the feeling of calmness and well-being in them, by increasing the flow of blood to the brain and releasing positive mood hormones. Workplace wellness programs increasingly include yoga and meditation because they improve mood which in turn has a positive impact on body and mind. Regular meditation increases the amount of Grey matter in the auditory, sensory and frontal Cortex of the brain, which is associated with working memory and executive decision making. Being physically fit is directly linked to being healthy, but studies have shown that yoga can have greater health benefits than similar aerobic exercises and walking. Physical exercise increases energy levels which helps people focus, but workplace yoga benefits the individual as it can also “*greatly affect neural patterns in the brain, which can improve your ability to concentrate and focus.*”

**Key-words:** Yoga, Health, Workplace Environment, Performance, Productivity

**Introduction To Yoga :** Yoga is one of the six foundations of Indian philosophy and has been used for millennia to study, explain, and experience the complexities of the mind and human existence. Yoga encompasses the philosophy of Karma Yoga



(path of detached action), Jnana Yoga (knowledge of self), Bhakti Yoga (Trust in the supreme order) and Raja Yoga (Asana, Pranayam, Meditation etc.). Practicing this knowledge may bring about a complete transformation of one's personality, not only on the physical, but also on one's mental, emotional, and spiritual levels, which strengthens one's ability and desire to put in one's best. Patanjali, an ancient yoga sage, defines Yoga as a technique used to still the mental fluctuations of the mind to reach the central reality of the true self. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras outline a skillful way of conducting life that fosters moderation and harmony. Ashtanga Yoga, the eight step path of yoga, encompasses cognitive learning, moral conduct, physiological practices, and psychological therapy. The first two steps of Yama and Niyama seek and shape external behavior and thought patterns and thus minimize disturbances in the mind and the body. On the behavioral side, abstinence is sought from violence, falsehood, dishonesty, sexual excess, and acquisitive tendencies. On the cognitive moral side, the ideals prescribed are — purity, contentment, austerity, self study, and forbearance. The stages of Asana and Pranayama are meant for disciplining the body and regulating subtle energy flows. In the fifth stage of Prayahara, the secondary input is regulated so the mind is not distracted. The stages of dharana, dhyana, and Samadhi are for uplifting one's spiritual self and for heightening consciousness. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone assert that the 'Fundamental aspects of workplace spirituality, such as meaningful work provides a feeling of purpose, a sense of connection and positive social relations with their coworkers, and the ability to live an integrated life in which the work role does not conflict with the essential nature of the person as a human being, may interact to create different perceptions of ethicality within the organization' Yoga psychology conceives the self (*atman*) in terms of different levels of being. The inner-most core or *atman* is covered by hierarchy of five sheaths or layers. This continuation of layers corresponds to a sort of stepwise ladder, leading inward to the *atman*; the journey inward forms the basis of growth and development: Biological evolution from a protozoan to man, psychological evolution from child to adult, consciousness enhancement from mere cognitive to universal consciousness, wherein there is no ego and there is realization that the concerns and needs of all people are the same, and that what is good for one is good for all. In this growth process, feeling and emotions are accepted as having a place, they are not considered wrong or repressed, but are transformed and redirected.

**Impact of Yoga on Organizational Performance:** Yoga Philosophy helps a person to have a broader view of life, with greater awareness of his actions. This automatically results in enhanced commitment to his job and organization. The Yogic way of life is all about the correct attitude to life, which can result in a better organizational climate. In the Indian context, the assimilation of this knowledge may be better and easier, as the Indians have grown with all these concepts right from childhood. The top leaders of the company have to be convinced about the utility of this idea. They should themselves have the necessary trust in this philosophy and in the results it can bring. The results show a significant difference among those who are introduced to the practice of the yoga way of life. However, in order to get the benefit of yoga in its entirety, one has to adopt yoga as a technique of life management. This would include not only the Raj Yoga practices of *asana*, *pranayama*, and meditation, but also imbibe the concept of detached action (*Karma* Yoga), trust in God's justice system (Bhakti Yoga), and seeking the knowledge of self (Jnan Yoga). Such an integrated approach can yield superior results for individual happiness and also for organizational performance. Regular working hours have a bad impact on the performance as the



workers who get no time to relax leading to stress and anxiety in them. In order to reduce the tension caused by long working hours, yoga and meditation prove to be very effective. According to research, regular adoption of yogic practices can improve mood and relaxation while decreasing cortisol, the stress hormone. Workers who are less stressed are more productive, engaged, and capable of producing their best work. Today's fast-paced and distracted working environment require intense focus and concentration. Yoga and meditation techniques have repeatedly been proven to improve memory retention, enhance brain activity and functions like attention span and reduce stress levels. Deep breathing exercises are especially important for those who sit for hours in front of a computer screen without taking breaks, as poor posture can also contribute to fatigue. Yoga is a great way to improve strength and flexibility. Behind existence of mankind. They find time to think things through objectively, encourage and motivate others selflessly; consistently display loyalty, honesty, integrity and trust. An article on 'Get your Work Life balance back with Yoga' by Kim Archer says that through mind-body approaches of yoga which is not only cost-effective but very easy to practice, has made 70% of Americans who have trouble sleeping or even have medically defined insomnia have become regular sleepers. The number of those suffering from pain and making regular doctor visits because of it has gone down by 36%. Thus spiritual workers are also happier than their non-spiritual counterpart. The top management of the Organizations should believe that one can deliver more when one is stress free and positive about life. Secondly the Organization has to find out the Resource persons to train its workforce so that the training of yoga way of life becomes a continuous process with periodical regularity. The key to success lies in giving employees total knowledge of yoga in both the theoretical and practical manner.

**Conclusion:** As Gurudev Sri Sri RaviShankar, the founder of 'Art of Living' in India asserts '*Like a flower bud, human life has the potential to blossom fully. Blossoming of human potential to the fullness is Yoga.* It has also been found by research that practicing yoga, meditation and pranayama makes mind still thus enabling workers and managers to purify their mind and make it spiritual, expand their self to include others around them, and help them grow and transform without expecting anything in return. With increased stressful working environment and hectic schedule, many people struggle with the negative impact of their busy work lives. To manage their personal and work-life in balance, many people are turning to Yoga which gives them peace of mind so that they can achieve a perfect work-life balance. Yoga can help reduce back pain, lower the risk of musculoskeletal problems like carpal tunnel syndrome and repetitive strain injuries (RSIs), which are frequent among office workers. In order to make Yoga way of life a corporate policy, firstly the top management of the organizations need to be convinced about the utility of the idea. They should be made aware of the yoga philosophy and its various benefits which can lead to the integration of Yoga into organizational behaviour thereby impacting and enhancing employee well-being and performance. Yoga with its holistic benefits for physical, mental and emotional health provides a great solution for employee engagement, job satisfaction and improving the performance metrics. Hence it can be observed by the above discussed points that incorporation of yoga into the workplaces can address the issues which contribute greatly towards job satisfaction while promoting individual health and well-being.

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