# BENEFITS OF YOGA: INWARD AND OUTWARD FITNESS

Yoga has been around for more than 2000 years and doesn’t show any signs of going away. The more people know about it, the more they are convinced that it is exactly what they were looking for. Especially in today’s hectic and busy world, Yoga provides people with the perfect retreat to recharge their bodies, minds, and souls and take a respite from the chaotic life. Yoga is performed so that we can challenge our bodies but not feel overwhelmed by it. We focus on our breathing and calming ourselves. Yoga has many benefits, whether we talk about physical aspects, mental, or spiritual, but here we will outline some of the physical benefits of Yoga and how they affect us.

## BECOMING AWARE OF OUR BODIES

One of the most beneficial aspects of yoga is that we become aware of what is going outside as well as inside ourselves. We start paying attention to what’s going around. By performing Yoga, we focus all our attention on our body. We identify its capabilities and how to enhance them further. We do this by strengthening our bodies through various poses and developing our breathing practices. That is how we become aware of our bodies.

You will notice that Yoga studios rarely have mirrors. That is because Yoga helps us focus on what’s going on inside our bodies instead of how our bodies look from the outside, or how someone else’s body looks. Surveys have found that people who do Yoga pay more attention to their bodies than people who don’t. The people who perform Yoga on a regular basis were found to be more accepting towards their bodies and less critical.

## BECOMING A MINDFUL EATER

Mindfulness is when you focus on what’s going on right now instead of what could have been or what was. Mindful eating is the method of becoming aware of your eating habits and the physical and emotional sensations that are attached towards it without judging yourself. Mindful eating helps us be aware of the following elements:

* Eating even when full
* Being aware of how food looks, tastes and smells
* Eating in response to environmental cues, such as the sight or smell of food
* Eating when sad or stressed
* Eating when distracted by other things

## WEIGHT LOSS AND MAINTENANCE

When people practice yoga and become mindful eaters, they become more sensitive towards sensations like hunger and the fullness. People who regularly perform Yoga have been found to gain less weight than people who do not perform Yoga. The people who started yoga when they were overweight, started losing weight due to the practices. Many researchers and yogis have attributed this ability to lose weight and then maintain it with mindfulness.

## BETTER PHYSICAL FITNESS

Yoga doesn’t only affect your eating habits and your awareness. It also has a major impact on your body’s flexibility, fitness and the capacity to handle challenges. A research was done on people who had a sedentary lifestyle and had not performed yoga before. After practicing yoga for a number of weeks they reported greater muscle strength, improved endurance, higher flexibility and better cardiovascular health.

Believe it or not, these are just a few of the physical benefits of performing yoga. There are virtually unlimited benefits if we include emotional and spiritual advantages. So what are you waiting for? Start Yoga today!