

Improving Lung Function in Asthma with Yoga and Exercise Training

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DESCRIPTION

Asthma is a chronic respiratory condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It is characterized by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, leading to symptoms such as shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and chest tightness. While medication plays an important role in managing asthma, lifestyle changes, particularly exercise training and yoga, have gained attention for their ability to improve lung function and enhance quality of life for adults with asthma. Exercise and yoga, when properly integrated into an asthma management plan, offer significant benefits for lung health, respiratory strength, and overall physical and mental well-being. In individuals with asthma, the airways are often more sensitive and prone to inflammation, causing breathing difficulties. The lungs' ability to exchange oxygen efficiently is compromised during an asthma attack, leading to discomfort and limited activity. Improving lung function can help reduce the frequency and severity of asthma symptoms, enhancing the individual's capacity to participate in daily activities without experiencing shortness of breath.

Role of exercise training in asthma

Exercise is essential for maintaining cardiovascular health, muscle strength, and overall physical fitness. For individuals with asthma, exercise can also improve lung function by increasing the efficiency of oxygen exchange and promoting better control of breathing. When performed safely and under proper guidance, exercise training can lead to long-term improvements in respiratory capacity and symptom control.

Increased lung capacity: Regular exercise, particularly aerobic exercises such as walking, cycling, and swimming, helps improve lung capacity. By challenging the respiratory system, these activities encourage the lungs to work more efficiently, improving oxygen intake and usage over time.

Strengthening respiratory muscles: Engaging in resistance training and aerobic exercise strengthens not only the muscles involved in movement but also the muscles that support breathing, such as the diaphragm and intercostal muscles. This

allows individuals with asthma to take deeper breaths, reducing the effort required to breathe during physical activities.

Reduced airway sensitivity: Exercise can help desensitize the airways over time, reducing the likelihood of asthma triggers leading to a full-blown attack. Gradual, low-impact exercises are particularly beneficial in helping the airways adapt to increased physical demands.

Improved cardiovascular health: Asthma often limits participation in physical activities, which can lead to reduced cardiovascular fitness. Regular exercise helps to improve heart and lung efficiency, reducing the strain on the body during exertion and lowering overall asthma symptoms.

Lung function in asthma through yoga

Yoga, an ancient practice combining physical postures, breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation, has been shown to offer numerous benefits for individuals with asthma. Its emphasis on controlled breathing and mindfulness makes it particularly effective for improving lung function and promoting relaxation, which can ease asthma symptoms.

Controlled breathing (pranayama): One of the core aspects of yoga is pranayama, or controlled breathing exercises. These exercises train individuals to regulate their breath, slow their breathing rate, and focus on deep, diaphragmatic breathing. For people with asthma, this can enhance lung capacity, improve airflow, and reduce hyperventilation during asthma attacks.

Improved airflow and oxygenation: Yoga helps increase lung capacity by teaching individuals how to fully expand and contract their lungs. This promotes better oxygen exchange and reduces feelings of breathlessness. Yoga postures, such as backbends and chest-opening poses, specifically target the respiratory system, helping to expand the rib cage and improve airflow.

Stress reduction: Stress and anxiety are common triggers for asthma attacks. Yoga promotes relaxation through its combination of breathing exercises, meditation, and gentle movement, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels. The

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calming effects of yoga can reduce the likelihood of asthma attacks triggered by emotional stress.

Improved posture: Many yoga poses focus on posture and alignment, which can aid in improving lung function. Good posture allows the lungs to expand more fully, leading to better oxygen intake. In individuals with asthma, improving posture through yoga can help relieve pressure on the chest and lungs, making breathing easier.

Increased mind-body awareness: Yoga encourages mindfulness and body awareness, allowing individuals with asthma to become more in tune with their breathing patterns and recognize early signs of breathing difficulties. This heightened awareness can lead to more effective management of asthma symptoms before they escalate.

CONCLUSION

Exercise training and yoga are powerful tools that can help improve lung function and enhance the quality of life for adults with asthma. By incorporating these practices into an asthma management plan, individuals can strengthen their respiratory system, reduce symptoms, and gain greater control over their condition. While medication remains essential, the physical and mental benefits of exercise and yoga offer a holistic approach to asthma care that can empower individuals to live healthier, more active lives.