



2021 Theme: Yoga for well-being

The COVID-19 pandemic still persists throughout the world causing much turmoil, disruption and sadness because of immense personal loss of lives and livelihoods. So the Day will be marked in the midst of much uncertainty and a future that is still not clear for vast segments of the population. livelihoods of people globally.

Besides affecting people's physical lives and state of health, the COVID-19 pandemic has also exacerbated psychological suffering and mental health problems, including depression and anxiety, as pandemic-related restrictions continue in various forms in many countries. This has highlighted the urgent need to address the mental health dimension of the pandemic, in addition to the physical health aspects.

Thus, Yoga is most critical in promoting both the physical and mental well-being of humanity than ever before. We therefore see a growing trend of people around the world embracing and practicing Yoga to stay healthy and rejuvenated, as well as to fight stress, depression caused by social isolation. Yoga has also proven to be very effective in the psycho-social care and rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients in quarantine and isolation, and especially to allay fears and anxiety.

Recognizing this important role of Yoga, this year's commemoration of the International Day of Yoga focuses on "Yoga for well-being" – and how the practice of Yoga can promote the holistic health of every individual.

The World Health Organization mentions yoga as a means to improve health in its [Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world](#).

UNICEF says children can practice many [yoga poses](#) without any risk and get the same benefits that adults do. These help develop increased fitness in the form of flexibility, mindfulness and relaxation.

2021 virtual event

The Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations invites you to an online celebration of the 7th annual International Yoga Day on **21 June 2021, from 8:30 to 10:00 am EST**, to be broadcast live on [UN WebTV](#).

The event will open with messages from the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, which will be followed by demonstrations of Yoga exercises (*asanas*) to improve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and an Interactive panel discussion on “Yoga for well-being.”

What is Yoga and why do we celebrate it?

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word ‘yoga’ derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.

Today it is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity.

Recognizing its universal appeal, on 11 December 2014, the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by [resolution 69/131](#).

The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga. Yoga is an invaluable gift from our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body, thought and action ... a holistic approach that is valuable to our health and our well-being. Yoga is not just about exercise; it is a way to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature.”

It is important that individuals and populations making healthier choices and follow lifestyle patterns that foster good health. In this regard, the World Health Organization has also urged its member states to help their citizens reduce physical inactivity, which is among the top ten leading causes of death worldwide, and a key risk factor for non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes.

But yoga is more than a physical activity. In the words of one of its most famous practitioners, the late B. K. S. Iyengar, “Yoga cultivates the ways of maintaining a balanced attitude in day-to-day life and endows skill in the performance of one’s actions.”

How much physical activity is recommended for your age group?

WHO has recommendations on the amount of physical activity people of all ages should do to benefit their health and wellbeing.

Infants under 1 year of age

- All infants should be physically active several times a day.
- For those not yet mobile, this includes at least 30 minutes in prone position (tummy time), as floor-based play, spread throughout the day while awake.

Children under 5 years of age

- All young children should spend at least 180 minutes a day in a variety of types of physical activities at any intensity
- 3-4 year old children should spend at least 60 minutes of this time in moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity

Children and adolescents aged 5-17 years

- All children and adolescents should do at least 60 minutes a day of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity
- This should include activities that strengthen muscle and bone, at least 3 days per week
- Doing more than 60 minutes of physical activity daily will provide additional health benefits

Adults aged over 18 years, to seniors and the very elderly

- All adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity throughout the week.
- For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or equivalent.
- For developing and maintaining musculoskeletal health, muscle-strengthening activities involving major muscle groups should be done on 2 or more days a week
- In addition, older adults with poor mobility should do physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week.