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Sadhguru

Founder, Isha Foundation

Posted: January 2, 2011 11:53 AM



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# Rediscovering the Ancient Science of Yoga

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The word *yoga* literally means "union." When you experience everything as oneness in your consciousness, then you are in yoga. To attain that unity within you, there are many steps. Hatha yoga, for example, is one step. Hatha yoga means you start with the body; the body itself has its own attitudes, its own ego, its own nature. For example, you say, "Starting tomorrow, I will get up at five in the morning and go for a walk." You set the alarm. The alarm rings. You want to get up, but your body says, "Shut up and sleep!" It has its own way. So we start with the body. Hatha yoga is a way of disciplining the

body, purifying and preparing it for higher levels of energy.

All of us are alive; all of us are human beings. But all of us do not experience life at the same intensity because our energy levels are not the same. Our pranic energies are not the same. Different people experience life in different levels of intensity. Take, for example, a tree. A tree is just a tree. Most people will not even notice it, but one person will see the tree in great detail, an artist may see every shade of it, and somebody else sees not only the tree but also the divine in it. Everybody sees, but seeing is not the same because the level of intensity with which we experience life is not the same. So we start with the body because that is something that we all know.

The whole process of yoga is to take you from something that you know to the next step -- the unknown. If we talk about something that you do not know, either you have to believe it or disbelieve it. Suppose I start talking about God. You either have to believe my God or disbelieve my God, which will only take you

into flights of imagination, not into growth. So we talk about the body. This is something that you know - you know you have a body -- so we take the body to its peak. Then we talk about the breath and then the mind; that is also something that you know. You can only grow by taking the next step from where you are right now. Realizing where you are right now and taking the next step is growth.

The science of yoga is almost like a physical science. Suppose you mix two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen; you will get water. If a great scientist puts it together, it is water, and even if an idiot puts it together, it is still water. Similarly, in yoga, if you follow specific practices, only a certain result will happen. Whether a great yogi does it or an ignorant person does it, it does not matter. If one does the practices and spiritual disciplines properly, the results will arise.

These yogic systems have been identified for thousands of years, throughout the history of yoga. To start with, you work with the body, then you move to the breath, then the mind, then your inner nature. Many systems have been created that focus on just one step, like the body or the breath. But these are only different aspects of yoga. There is really no such thing as different branches of yoga. It is important that, in a very balanced way, all of these aspects are addressed as one unit. Otherwise, if you work with just the body, it is only preparatory in nature. So there is really no division as such. Yoga is a union of all steps -- cultivating the body, breath, mind and the inner nature.

\*\*\*

*Sadhguru developed Isha Yoga as an invigorating process to transform oneself. For over 25 years, Isha Yoga programs have touched and transformed the lives of millions of people around the world. To learn more, please visit [Sadhguru's Huffington Post bio page](#).*

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ThackerAgency 39 minutes ago (7:50 PM)

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I am beginning a teacher training class for this year to enhance my understanding of the science of Hatha. Some people discredit the Hatha science of Yoga because they are fearful of the draw to the spiritual side of Yoga. For this reason, I think introducing Hatha Yoga is best for someone not familiar with the practice to be comfortable enough to enjoy the physical health benefits of Yoga.

I am interested in the physical fit nature that Hatha has developed over thousands of years. While my spiritual life is satisfied by my relationship with Christ, my attachment to other people is enhanced by my Yoga practice. Everyone does need exercise to be fit. If I can encourage people to do Yoga on a regular basis for exercise, I will feel like I am enhancing their quality of life.

Yoga makes me feel amazing and alive, almost like a drug. I wish everyone could feel that too.

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[eric14](#) 44 minutes ago (7:45 PM)

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Yoga comprises a complex set of processes that together constitute a boy of practical wisdom.

To wish to call it "science" has a sad post-colonial compensatory feel about it. It is a stretch to call yoga a science in the modern English-speaking sense of the word. In languages in which science and technology are closer in meaning it may be possible but not desirable.

There are aspects to yoga which defy description as they are concerned with the subjective. Yoga is a practice not a science. And none the worse for it.

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[eric14](#) 39 minutes ago (7:50 PM)

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a boy

----

woops, read: "a body"

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[Dharma kate](#) 34 minutes ago (7:55 PM)

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Definition Science: (from the Latin scientia, meaning "knowledge") is, in its broadest sense, any systematic knowledge-base or prescriptive practice that is capable of resulting in a correct prediction, or reliably-predictable type of outcome. ...

works for me... as a science and as a practice.

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[eric14](#) 30 minutes ago (7:59 PM)

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Given your name the outcome comprised in your remarks is predictable.  
My goodness, I must be a scientist.

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[An Outside View](#) 46 minutes ago (7:43 PM)

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People everywhere definitely need to better understand what Yoga is and how can it help them.  
This article helps!

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[vinod1128](#) 3 hours ago (5:15 PM)

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A very lucid explanation of how one can begin yoga in their lives.

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Judy Wiggins 4 hours ago (4:51 PM)

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Sadhguru, through His Inner Engineering Program and other advanced programs, has deepened and strengthened my understanding of what yoga really is meant to be and what it really can do for the human body, mind and spirit when practiced the way it was originally meant to be practiced. We, in the west, have and do grossly misuse yoga. For a practice that has been around for thousands of years, there really must be something to it that we somehow deep down inside of ourselves recognize as authentic. I am very grateful to Sadhguru for his passion and commitment in teaching us what yoga really is, teaching us how to use it, practice it authentically, and setting us straight!

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Indigo1941 4 hours ago (4:14 PM)

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Let yoga be yoga, a practice that helps the mind work with the body while the body works with the mind. It is not a science, it is not a technology. It is a pleasantly ancient practice. Please let yoga be yoga, not a hodge-podge of improbable analogies.

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Frank Smith 4 hours ago (4:12 PM)

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Sadhguru makes Yoga sound like a sport. :O)

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vivaciousvivan 5 hours ago (3:40 PM)

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this is such a simple but thorough explanation of yoga.. i've been practicing yoga for over ten years. i started with a hatha yoga class and fell in love. i yearned for more. i found isha and i'm so complete. i encourage all to take the inner engineering online class. register at [www.innerengineering.com](http://www.innerengineering.com)  
you will be want to tell everybody you know to take the class.  
Vivian

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cynthiabaileymd 7 hours ago (1:36 PM)

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Practicing yoga has transformed my personal experience of living in my body: less aches and pains, better sleep, straighter posture, less tension, more strength where I really needed it. There's a lot of good scientific evidence now of the health benefits of yoga. Starting a yoga class or recommitting to a yoga practice is a great New Years gift to your total well being. And this coming from me, an MD. I wrote a blog post earlier in 2010 that summarized the current, best medical literature on yoga's health benefits from the western medicine perspective. If anecdotal personal stories aren't inspiring enough then maybe the scientific facts will be.

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John David Brodie 7 hours ago (1:01 PM)

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"Otherwise, if you work with just the body, it is only preparatory in nature. So there is really no division as such. Yoga is a union of all steps -- cultivating the body, breath, mind and the inner nature." - Many Yoga classes have become physical fitness programs instead of stillness and going beyond the 5 senses. Initiatory yoga like Kriya I have found to be very beneficial.

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Rebecca Reynolds 5 hours ago (3:56 PM)

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Yes, you can see this all over the place - yoga becoming fashionable, the newest fitness fad to get that beautiful body that most people seem to want or which helps to get rid of your back pain, but which, as a side line, can help you gain greater control over your mind and emotions and which somehow infuses a greater sense of the divine into your life. In my case, I started yoga as a teenager out of curiosity more than anything else. I found myself becoming disciplined about my yoga practice, though I'd had trouble committing to most things before that. Then things just started to happen. So whether one takes this up as a physical exercise or to improve one's health, if one finds the right teacher who can transmit this teaching properly, then things you could not have imagined will naturally begin happen. This has been my experience though the most profound, transformative and enduring experiences have come from Isha Yoga, through which I also learned a Kriya practice. The introductory class is now available online at [www.InnerEngineering.com](http://www.InnerEngineering.com)

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Ram49 8 hours ago (12:36 PM)

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A simple and lucid description of Yoga! Thanks Sadhguru and HP!!

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