



Mission-LiFE (LIFESTYLE FOR ENVIRONMENT) INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

June 21, 2025

Theme: "Yoga for One Earth, One Health"



Sulabh-IIHH EIAACP Resource Partner
under the aegis of the
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India

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Yoga, a profound spiritual discipline rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, has a history that spans over 5,000 years. The word "yoga" is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj, meaning "to join" or "to unite," symbolizing the union of body and consciousness. The earliest references to yoga appear in the Rig Veda, the oldest of the four Vedas, which contains hymns, mantras, and rituals used by Vedic priests. Although these texts do not provide detailed instructions on yogic practices, they lay the spiritual foundation for the discipline. In the later Vedic texts, particularly the Upanishads, concepts such as meditation (dhyana), renunciation, and self-realization are introduced—key elements that later define yogic philosophy.

As yoga evolved, the focus shifted from ritualistic practices to inner spiritual development. This transformation marked the beginning of the classical period,

where yoga was systematized and defined. The most influential text from this era is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, composed around 200 BCE. Patanjali outlined the philosophy and practices of yoga in 195 aphorisms, detailing the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga—yama (ethical restraints), niyama (discipline), asana (posture), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (absorption or enlightenment). Patanjali is thus considered the father of classical yoga, as his work provided a clear and practical guide to spiritual growth through disciplined practice and mental control.

In the post-classical and medieval period, yoga became more diverse and dynamic. New schools of yoga emerged, most notably Hatha Yoga, which emphasized the physical body and its role in spiritual awakening. Texts like the Hatha Yoga



Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita elaborated on physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), purification methods (shatkarmas), and energy control through chakras and nadis. This period saw yoga as both a spiritual and physical discipline, aimed at achieving higher consciousness through mastery over the body and breath. It was also during this time that tantric traditions influenced yogic practices, integrating rituals and meditative techniques that emphasized the union of masculine and feminine energies.

The modern era of yoga began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when Indian yoga masters began introducing yoga to the Western world. Swami Vivekananda played a crucial role in this movement through his speeches at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893, where he spoke about the spiritual essence of Indian philosophy, including yoga. Later, figures like T. Krishnamacharya, B.K.S. Iyengar, Pattabhi Jois, and Swami Sivananda expanded the global reach of yoga by developing structured systems of physical practice that emphasized health, alignment, and inner awareness. Yoga's popularity grew steadily in the West, becoming associated not only with spirituality but also with physical fitness, stress relief, and mental well-being. In recognition of its universal value, the United Nations declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga in 2014, following a proposal by Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Today, yoga is practiced by millions around the world across all age groups and backgrounds.

It remains a timeless path of inner transformation that promotes balance, harmony, and unity between the self, the community, and the environment.

Fitness Benefits of Yoga:

- **Activates Deep Stabilizer Muscles:** Unlike many conventional workouts, yoga targets deep postural muscles that support the spine and joints. These subtle muscle activations improve posture, prevent back pain, and enhance body awareness.
- **Improves Functional Fitness:** Yoga mimics natural, full-range movements like twisting, squatting, lunging, and bending—enhancing mobility and coordination used in everyday tasks and sports.
- **Balances the Nervous System:** Yoga tones the parasympathetic nervous system ("rest and digest"), helping the body recover faster after intense exercise. This supports long-term fitness gains by reducing burnout and fatigue.
- **Strengthens the Mind-Muscle Connection:** Through breath awareness and mindful movement, yoga improves the neuromuscular link—helping you activate muscles more efficiently and with greater control in both yoga and other workouts.
- **Enhances Body Symmetry and Alignment:** Many people develop strength imbalances between the left and right sides of the body. Yoga helps correct muscular asymmetries, leading to better alignment, improved performance, and injury prevention.





Sulabh-IIHH EIACP Resource Partner, in collaboration with Sulabh International Social Service Organisation, celebrated International Yoga Day on 21st June 2025 at Sulabh Gram, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi. The event was held under the global theme “Yoga for One Earth, One Health,” in alignment with Mission-LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The celebration witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 200 individuals, including working professionals, students, teachers, housewives, and local community members, all coming together to embrace yoga as a path to personal well-being and environmental harmony.

Renowned yoga practitioner Dr. Ravindra Kumar led the session, providing insightful guidance on the origin, purpose, and holistic benefits of yoga.

Participants engaged in a structured session beginning with warm-up exercises, followed by the practice of various yoga asanas. Dr. Kumar explained each posture’s health impact and spiritual significance, emphasizing the deeper connection between physical wellness and mental clarity. His teachings encouraged participants to view yoga as a way of life rather than just a form of physical exercise.

Dr. Namita Mathur, Coordinator of Sulabh-IIHH EIACP RP, also joined the session, inspiring attendees through her words and presence. She motivated everyone to incorporate yoga into their daily routines as a positive lifestyle change aligned with sustainable and eco-conscious living. The event reinforced the message that yoga is a timeless discipline that connects individuals with themselves, their communities, and nature, promoting a balanced, healthy, and sustainable life for all.



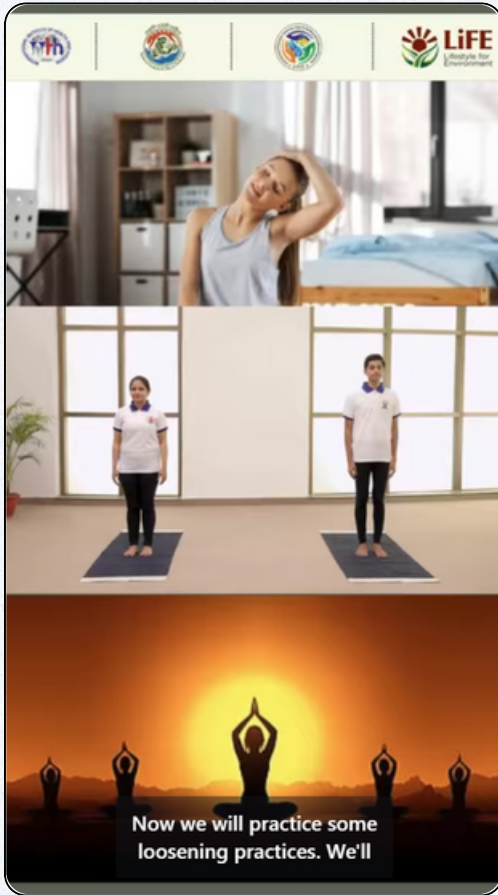
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The celebration drew enthusiastic participation from over 200 individuals, including working professionals, students, teachers, housewives, and local community members, who gathered to embrace yoga as a path to personal well-being and environmental harmony.

Yoga practitioner Dr. Ravindra Kumar led the session, offering valuable insights into the origin, significance, and holistic benefits of yoga. Participants engaged in guided warm-up exercises and practiced various yoga asanas, with Dr. Kumar explaining their health impacts and deeper spiritual meaning.

Dr. Namita Mathur, Coordinator of Sulabh-IIHH EIACP RP, also participated in the group session. Her presence and encouraging words inspired attendees to incorporate yoga into their daily lives as a meaningful step toward sustainable living.

The event reinforced the message that yoga is not merely an exercise, but a lifestyle—connecting individuals with themselves, their communities, and the planet.

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