Decolonizing Yoga in Academia: Narratives of Young Adults using Yoga to Manage Stress

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Abstract: This inquiry explores the experiences of thirteen Canadian yoga-exemplars, ages 25-40, who use traditional Yoga knowledge and practices to handle life's stresses and strains. The young adults describe Yoga as a holistic and spiritual practice as a way of life, a philosophy, and not merely a physical exercise. Their stories about how they cope with the challenges of life such as school, relationships or existential angst, demonstrate how Yoga has helped them effectively cope with stress. Their discussion of Yoga is important because of concerns that unmanaged stress leads to negative impacts, such as anxiety, depression and drug and alcohol abuse. Researchers have concluded that, due to the heterogeneity of Yoga, it is difficult to compare Yoga programs to know their quality or content. Also, these programs are usually limited to practice of asanas, or physical postures, along with some mindfulness. Yet, as the Patanjali Yoga Sutras explain, Yoga teaches the complete psychology of the mind and provides a holistic, spirituality-based, embodied and experiential approach to wellness and increased-self-awareness. Using the Art of Living programs as a case study, this inquiry provides an example of a program that teaches all eight limbs of Yoga which is a Yoga-based theoretical framework researchers can use to study programs that are based on Yoga.

Purva paksh, or critical review, of western scholarship on Yoga has led Indigenous scholar-practitioners to conclude that Yoga has been, and continues to be, studied through colonial lenses. This study proposes and demonstrates how Yoga may be better understood and analysed using Yogas own theories and Sanskrit terminology. This study uses decolonizing methodologies to theorize Yoga as indigenous knowledge, similar to other indigenous knowledges of the world which are based on the oral tradition. Indigenous scholars have asserted that the authority to speak for or teach the knowledge belongs to its own knowledge keepers and scholars, and not to outsiders. The study further decolonizes western studies on Yoga to show that the significant contributions made by Yoga to western psychology, mind sciences, and philosophy remain mostly unacknowledged. A review of the many threats faced by Yoga from western Indology provides the backdrop to the yoga-exemplars' narratives.

Subject: South Asian studies
While yoga in general has a calming influence, certain yoga poses have a super awesome ability to help us let go of tension and stress. Check these out. Yoga works to relieve tension and reduce stress in both the body and the mind, and it can make you more resilient when those recurring stress triggers pop up. While yoga in general seems to have a calming influence, there are certain yoga poses that have a super awesome ability to help us let go of tension and stress. Check these out. 1. Eagle Pose (Garudasana). This pose requires you to concentrate and focus the mind to a single point, which is an excellent stress management tool. It can also help to free up tightness in the shoulders and hips, which are common spots for emotional tension. Yoga combines breathing exercises, meditation and poses proven to benefit mental and physical health. This article lists 13 evidence-based benefits of yoga. Practicing yoga is said to come with many benefits for both mental and physical health, though not all of these benefits have been backed by science. This article takes a look at 13 evidence-based benefits of yoga. 1. Can Decrease Stress. Yoga is known for its ability to ease stress and promote relaxation. In fact, multiple studies have shown that it can decrease the secretion of cortisol, the primary stress hormone. One study demonstrated the powerful effect of yoga on stress by following 24 women who perceived themselves as emotionally distressed. By reducing perceived stress and anxiety, yoga appears to modulate stress response systems. This, in turn, decreases physiological arousal — for example, reducing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and easing respiration. There is also evidence that yoga practices help increase heart rate variability, an indicator of the body’s ability to respond to stress more flexibly. Stress response. But for many patients dealing with depression, anxiety, or stress, yoga may be a very appealing way to better manage symptoms. Indeed, the scientific study of yoga demonstrates that mental and physical health are not just closely allied, but are essentially equivalent. The evidence is growing that yoga practice is a relatively low-risk, high-yield approach to improving overall health.