

KUNDALINI RISING
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Is yoga the secret to enhancing MEMORY AND LEARNING?

David Beckham, the famous footballer, has often spoken about how yoga has helped him maintain fitness, improve flexibility, and recover from injuries more effectively throughout his career. Incorporating yoga into the training regimen allowed Beckham to enhance performance on the field and extend his professional playing career.

Yoga is not just about being strong and beautiful; it also has health implications. Emerging research suggests that yoga may serve as a preventive measure against dementia and cognitive degeneration. A focal point in these studies is the role of subtle micro-adjustments practitioners make to maintain balance, proper alignment, and fluidity. These small adjustments are crucial as they engage multiple neural pathways, promoting brain plasticity.

For instance, practitioners must subtly adjust their hips, spine, and shoulders to maintain balance during a seemingly simple routine like the tree pose. This continuous fine-tuning stimulates the brain's proprioceptive network responsible for spatial awareness and coordination.

The 29 April 2024 issue of Harvard Health Publishing states, "When you lift weights, your muscles get stronger and bigger. When you do yoga, your brain cells develop new connections, and changes occur in brain structure as well as function, resulting in improved cognitive skills such as learning and memory. Yoga strengthens parts of the brain that play a key role in memory, attention, awareness, thought, and language. Think of it as weightlifting for the brain."

One study conducted by the

Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation found that regular yoga practice significantly improved cognitive function in participants. The study emphasised that the intricate, mindful movements and breathwork required in yoga led to enhanced connectivity between brain regions. This connectivity is vital in maintaining cognitive function and delaying the onset of dementia.

The hippocampus, a brain region critical for memory and learning, benefits particularly from these micro-adjustments. Research published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease highlighted that yoga practitioners showed increased grey matter volume in the hippocampus compared to non-practitioners. This increase is likely due to the neuroplastic changes

prompted by the continuous, mindful adjustments required in yoga.

Yoga has also been shown to help individuals with Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) by improving concentration and reducing hyperactivity. The focus on breath control and mindfulness in yoga practice can enhance attention span and promote calmness, making it a beneficial practice for managing ADHD symptoms.

As research continues to unveil the profound impact of yoga on cognitive longevity, incorporating yoga into daily routines could become a widely recommended strategy for maintaining brain health and preventing cognitive decline.

By Shazia Omar
Photo: Courtesy





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