

Sudarshan Kriya Yoga (SKY)

Yogic breathing technique



Peter Juriga - 17.10.2023

Breathing as a pathway to consciousness

- Water, Nutrients and Oxygen are essential components of life
- Inhale = life 🌞
- Exhale = death 🦴
- Becoming aware of our breath has been shown to engage our parasympathetic nervous system or “rest and digest” system

What is SKY?



- SKY can be divided into 4 main components:
 - 1, Ujjayi - slow breathing (2-4 breaths per minute)
 - 2, Bhastrika - forceful and rhythmic breathing (20-30+ breaths per minute)
 - 3, Om - chanted 3 times with very prolonged expiration
 - 4, Sudarshan Kriya - an advanced form of rhythmic, cyclical breathing with slow and fast cycles

SKY and PTSD

- 21 U.S. male veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan wars (11 active, 10 control group)
- The active group, which received the Sudarshan Kriya yoga intervention, showed significant reductions in PTSD symptoms (PCL-M scores) at Time 2 (immediately post-intervention), Time 3 (1 month post-intervention), and Time 4 (1 year post-intervention) compared to Time 1 (baseline).
- Specifically, the active group showed reductions in Reexperiencing and Hyperarousal symptoms over the study period.
- While there were medium to large effect sizes in favour of the active group, the control group did not exhibit significant changes in PTSD, anxiety, or depression symptoms over time.

SKY and depression

- In a 4-week study, 45 individuals with severe melancholic depression were randomly assigned to three treatment groups: bilateral electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), imipramine (IMN), or SKY. The SKY group practiced SKY once per day for 30 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of rest, six days per week. The study evaluate the effectiveness of these treatments in reducing depression symptoms.
- In the 4-week study, the SKY group experienced a significant reduction in HRSD scores, similar to the groups receiving ECT and IMN. The SKY group achieved a 67% rate of remission (HRSD < 8.0), which is noteworthy given the severity of their depression.
- Regular practice of SKY

SKY and stress

- SKY and WOW - two stress-management workshops (WOW - cognitive-based approach to stress management)
- 50 participants for each workshop
- Key Findings SKY:
 - Perceived Stress Reduction: Post-Workshop and 3-Month Follow-up
 - Sleep Disturbance (PSQI): Significant Improvement (below clinical cutoff at follow-up)
 - Social Connectedness (SC): Significant Increase at Post-Workshop and Follow-up
 - Heart Rate Stress Reactivity: Improved at 3-Month Follow-up
 - Resting Heart Rate: No significant change
- Key Findings Wisdom On Wellness:
 - Perceived Stress Reduction: Minimal change at Post-Workshop
 - Sleep Disturbance (PSQI): Return to pre-workshop values at Follow-up
 - Social Connectedness (SC): Significant Increase at Post-Workshop (not persistent)
 - Heart Rate Stress Reactivity: Improved at Post-Workshop
 - Resting Heart Rate: Significant increase at Post-Workshop

Exercise

- Box breathing technique for 3 minutes
 - 5s inhale, 5s hold, 5s exhale, 5s hold
- 3 inhales per minute for 3 minutes
 - 10s inhale and 10s exhale

