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Intervention of Yoga for treating Cancer

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Yoga has a relaxing effect on the body, making it far more suitable for those undergoing powerful medication and radiation therapy.



Lung cancer is the most common type of cancer world-wide with over 2,093,000 cases reported in 2018. This accounts for 12.3% of all diagnosed cases of cancer during the same period internationally. Statistically speaking, it is considerably more likely to afflict men than women. However, with changes in women's lifestyle, coupled with the deteriorating air quality in many metropolitan areas, it's only a matter of time before the gender gap reduces. Hence lung cancer is a growing concern for both genders.

There are four main types of lung cancers, of which the two most common are Adenocarcinoma and Squamous Cell Carcinoma which account for 40% and 30% of all cases respectively. While lung cancer is treatable to a much greater degree than in even the recent past, detecting the ailment in its early stages is vital to achieving a positive outcome. Symptoms of the disease include, but are not limited to, persistent coughing for more than two weeks, aches in the arms, shoulder, neck and back, shortness of breath, weight loss, blood in the sputum, and general lethargy. The fight against cancer has led allopathic researchers to look to a rather unexpected form of alternative healthcare, one that is thousands of years old and originated right here in India; called yoga.

This begs the question, what possible value could an ancient therapy like yoga add to lung cancer treatment that the current system lacks? The answer, rather surprising; is a lot, at least according to a test conducted by the U.S. National Institutes of Health on 26 patients (treated with chemotherapy and radiation therapy) and caregivers. The study observed that those subjects who regularly practiced yoga i.e. 15 sessions of yoga lasting one hour each, especially exercises which stretched the chest area and emphasised on taking deep breaths, performed better in a walking and endurance test than those subjects in the control group i.e. those who did not practice yoga. Many of the participants were so satisfied with their results that they continued to practice yoga upon the completion of the experiment and 96% rated the programme as 'very useful'.

Another study conducted in 2017 by University of Texas analysed the effect of Yoga therapy on 32 patients with lung cancer. The study included administering physical, breathing and stretching exercises along with meditation. The findings revealed that yoga therapy not only improved the physical functioning of the patients but also improved their mental health.

Yoga has a relaxing effect on the body, making it far more suitable for those undergoing powerful medication and radiation therapy. In the fight against cancer every tool in our arsenal is a blessing, and that is precisely what yoga is. It has absolutely no negative side effects and contributes immensely to the patient's quality of life; furthermore, it can be highly customised to accommodate each patient's unique personal requirements. When coupled with light exercise such as brisk walking, yoga is without a doubt an excellent, effective, and quite possibly the ultimate form of therapeutic healing. As a non-medicinal therapy, Yoga offers various benefits to lung cancer patients; it improves the mental, physical and spiritual well-being of the patients going through a tough battle against lung cancer.

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