
SURYA-NAMASKAR: A POTENTIAL TOOL FOR REDUCING ANXIETY AND IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH IN NON-WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Background: Surya Namaskar is considered a part of ultramodern - day yogic practices though it was neither considered an asana nor a part of traditional yoga. Rehearsing Surya Namaskar before beginning routine conditioning vitalizes the practitioner and gives a fully reenergized day. It's a complete package consisting of 12 poses that energize the nerves and blood vessels of the body from top to bottom. **Objectives:** The present study was designed to verify the concept and importance of Surya Namaskar and its impact on mental health and anxiety. **Methods:** A pre-post control group design was adopted for this study, involving 60 non-working women divided equally into experimental (n=30) and control groups (n=30). An independent t-test was used to analyse the data obtained. **Result:** The result revealed that a significant reduction was found in non-working women concerning anxiety and improved mental health. **Conclusion:** This study reveals that Surya Namaskar provides extensive psychological and physiological benefits, including improved flexibility, mental clarity, strength, lung capacity, and hormone balance, ultimately reducing stress, anxiety, and insomnia while enhancing mental capacity **Suggestions:** Surya Namaskar is an all-round exercise; however, pregnant women, people with hernias or high blood pressure, and people with back conditions should seek proper advice before practicing Surya Namaskar.

KEYWORDS: Non-working women, Anxiety, Mental health, Surya Namaskar.

SURYANAMASKAR

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(Maha-subhashita-samgraha, quote No. 4723)

One who does sun salutations daily gains longevity, wisdom, strength, virility, and lustre.

Surya Namaskar, or Sun Salutation, is a traditional yogic practice from India that combines physical postures, controlled breathing, and meditative awareness to promote harmony between the body, mind, and spirit. The term literally means “salutation to the Sun,” symbolizing respect for Surya, regarded in Indian culture as the source of life and energy. The practice originated in India and consists of a systematic sequence of movements that can function both as a physical exercise and as a deeper spiritual practice involving asana, pranayama, mantra, and meditation. Although its exact historical origin is uncertain, it is often associated with the seventeenth-century saint Samarth Ramdas and was later popularized in the twentieth century by Bhawanrao Shrinivasrao Pant Pratinidhi through his work *The Ten- Point Way to Health: Surya Namaskars* (1928). Regular practice of Surya Namaskar has been found to reduce stress and anxiety, improve mental clarity, enhance cardio-respiratory efficiency, strengthen muscles, increase flexibility, regulate hormonal balance, and support overall physical and psychological well-being (Stec et al., 2024; Pal et al., 2024; Kumari et al., 2022; Parajuli, 2023).

NON-WORKING WOMEN

The concept of non-working women is homemakers or stay-at-home mothers, women who do not engage in paid employment or formal workforce activities outside the home. Their primary responsibilities often involve: 1. Managing household chores and domestic duties. 2. Caring for children, elderly, or other family members. 3. Engaging in volunteer or community work (unpaid). The mental health of housewives is impacted by many factors, including the role they play in society, the responsibilities they have, and the lack of time they have for themselves.

Non-working women face several mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, loneliness, emotional disturbance, irritability, sleep disturbances, and eating problems. They also experience role conflict, family conflicts, and interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. Some studies have found no significant difference in mental health or depression between working and non-working women (Balugade, 2023).

However, studies on the mental health of working and non-working women have different results. A study in Nepal found that working women had better mental health. (Thapa, 2023). Working women had a higher percentage of scores in the high category of general

well-being than non-working women (Annu, S. 2020).

The mental health of non-working women varies depending on several factors, including age, the quality of their work and home environments, and the number of responsibilities they have (Sinha, 2017; Panigrahi et al., 2014). Housewives are often seen as the glue that holds a facility together and are expected to take on many responsibilities. This leads to feelings of being overburdened and a lack of time for self-care, expensive mental health challenges such as low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and burnout, they may also experience co-dependency which leads to behaviours such as denying their own needs and seeking approval from others.

They experience feelings of loneliness and isolation, which have negatively impacted their mental well-being. In Indian society, cultural norms dictate strict gender roles, which limit personal growth and aspiration, and seeking professional help is stigmatized or inaccessible due to financial constraints.

The present study aimed to confirm whether this yogic technique was making a positive contribution to mental health and anxiety of non-working women, if it was enhancing mental health and reducing anxiety, the study sought to determine the pattern of enhancement and reduction

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Panjrath, Y., Pathak, V. N., and Kumar, K. (2025) examined the effect of *Surya Namaskar* as a gender-sensitive intervention to reduce social physique anxiety among women suffering from Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). The study focused on the psychological impact of regular Surya Namaskar practice on women. The findings indicated that consistent practice of Surya Namaskar significantly reduced social physique anxiety and improved psychological well-being among women with PCOS.

Suwannakul, B., Sangkarit, N., Thammachai, A., and Tapanya, W. (2025) conducted a randomized controlled trial to investigate the effects of *Surya Namaskar yoga* on perceived stress, anthropometric parameters, and physical fitness among overweight and obese female university students. The results revealed that participants who practiced Surya Namaskar showed significant improvements in physical fitness and a reduction in perceived stress compared to the control group.

Thakur, K. (2025) studied the impact of *Surya Namaskara* on selected physical and psychological variables among college girls aged 19–22 years. The experimental group practiced Surya Namaskar for three months, while the control group received no

intervention. The results showed significant improvements in flexibility, body composition, and reductions in stress and anxiety among the participants who practiced Surya Namaskar.

Sathiyabama, N., Rajesh, S., and Princy, S. (2023) investigated the effect of Surya Namaskar practice combined with rhythmic training on physical fitness and psychological variables among school girls. The experimental group underwent twelve weeks of Surya Namaskar training. The findings indicated significant improvements in flexibility, muscular strength, cardiovascular endurance, and reductions in stress and anxiety levels among the participants.

Panjrath, Y. and Pathak, V. N. (2022) conducted a systematic review to examine the effectiveness of Surya Namaskar and meditation in managing anxiety and body dissatisfaction among women with PCOS. The review concluded that regular practice of Surya Namaskar contributes to improved psychological well-being and helps in reducing anxiety among women.

Bhandari, D.S. et al. (2022) investigated the effects of base run and *Surya Namaskar* on psychological well-being among university boys. The study used random sampling along with a pre-test and post-test experimental control group design. A paired sample *t*-test was applied for statistical analysis. The results indicated significant improvements in psychological well-being after one month of intervention. Moreover, the comparison between the two activities revealed that *Surya Namaskar* was more effective than base run in enhancing psychological well-being.

Kaural, M. and Atri, K. (2021) studied the effects of *Surya Namaskar* on anxiety and mental stress, with a particular focus on relaxation disposition among medical students. A randomized control group design was employed in a collegiate setting. The study used instruments such as the Smith Stress Symptoms Inventory (SSSI), Smith Relaxation Disposition Inventory (SRDI), and the stress subscale of SRDI. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANCOVA. The findings revealed that participants in the experimental group demonstrated higher levels of physical relaxation and reduced anxiety and sleeplessness. Furthermore, they scored lower on stress-related dispositions such as somatic stress, worry, and negative emotional responses.

METHODOLOGY OBJECTIVES

- To assess the level of mental health of non-working women.
- To assess the level of anxiety of non-working women.
- To assess the effect of Surya Namaskar on the mental health and anxiety of non-

working women.

HYPOTHESIS

- There will be no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of non-working women regarding mental health.
- There will be no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of non-working women regarding anxiety.

SAMPLING AND SIZE

In this study, purposive sampling was used and according to the purpose of the present study consisted of 60 non-working women in the age range of 25 to 45.

RESEARCH VARIABLES

Independent Variable:

- Surya Namaskar, Twelve Poses of Yogic Techniques

Dependent Variables:

- Mental Health
- Anxiety

Operational definitions

Non-working women: Non-working women, are homemakers or stay-at-home mothers, are women who do not engage in paid employment or formal workforce activities outside the home.

MEASURES

1. Mental Health Inventory (M.H.I.)

The Mental Health Scale, developed by Jagdish and A.K. Shrivastava in 1983, is a 56-item self-report measure that assesses six dimensions of mental health. The scale consists of 32 false-keyed (negative) and 24 true-keyed (positive) statements, which are rated on a 4-point scale (Always, Often, Rarely, Never). Scoring is reversed for negative statements, with higher scores indicating better mental health. The scale has demonstrated good reliability (0.73) and validity (0.54), making it a useful tool for assessing mental health in various populations.

2. Comprehensive Anxiety Test

The Anxiety Test, developed by L.N.K. Sinha and A.K.P. Sinha in 1971, is a 90-item self-

report tool that uses a simple "Yes/No" response format. The scale boasts strong psychometric properties, including high reliability (test-retest correlation: 0.85, Spearman Brown coefficient: 0.92) and moderate validity (correlation coefficient: 0.62).

RESEARCH DESIGN

A pre-post control group design was adopted for this study, involving 60 non-working women aged 25-45 divided equally into experimental (n=30) and control groups (n=30).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

To compare anxiety and mental health scores between the experimental and control groups, Mean, SD and an independent t-test were conducted.

ADMINISTRATION

The study involved 60 non-working women divided into two groups: experimental (30) and control (30). The experimental group practiced Surya Namaskar for 30 minutes, 7 days a week, for 5 weeks. The protocol included a 5-minute warm-up, 20 minutes of Surya Namaskar (12 rounds), and a 5-minute cool-down. The practice took place at a local community centre. The control group continued their daily routine without any intervention. Data was collected through questionnaires before and after the study, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics to compare the effects on mental health and anxiety between the groups.

RESULTS

Table – 1: Pre-Post Mental Health and, Anxiety scores of Non-working women.

Variable	Group	Pre-test (Mean ± SD)	Post-test (Mean ± SD)	t-value
Mental Health	Experimental	55.00 ± 5.00	60.00 ± 5.00	5.00
	Control	55.98 ± 4.62	56.12 ± 4.34	0.42
Anxiety	Experimental	39.00 ± 7.00	35.00 ± 5.00	4.18
	Control	31.53 ± 4.63	30.98 ± 4.33	0.31

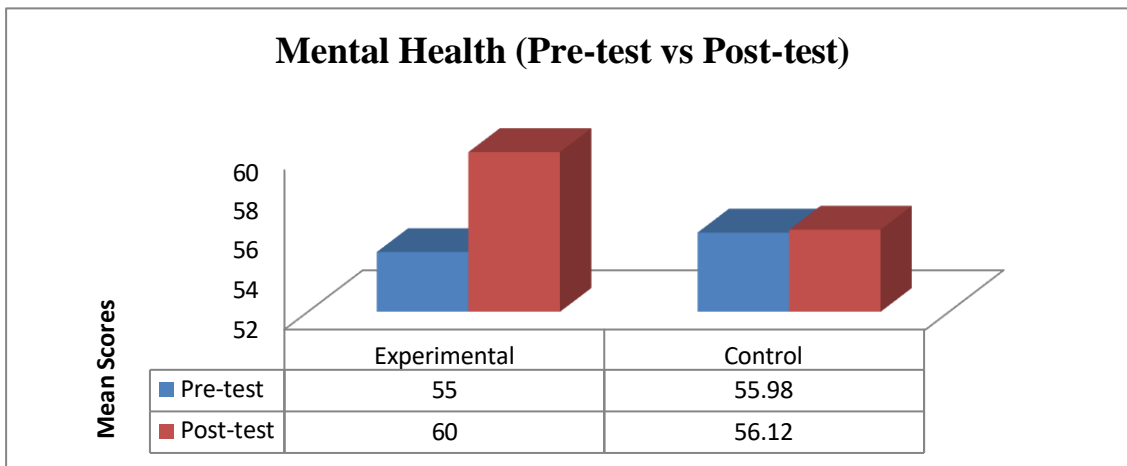


Fig. 1: Graph showing Pre-Post Mental Health Scores: Experimental vs. Control Groups.

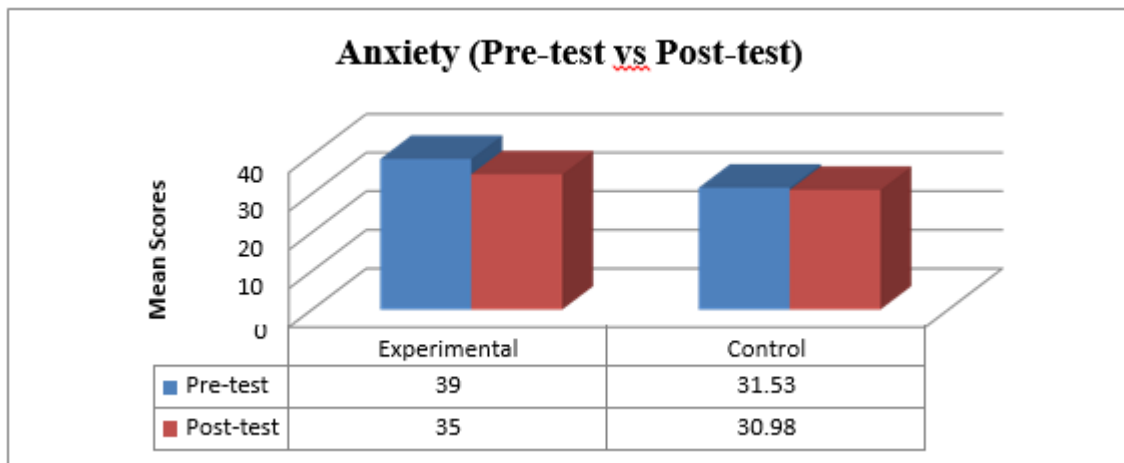


Fig. 2: Graph showing Pre-Post Anxiety Scores: Experimental vs. Control Groups.

Table–1 presents the comparative analysis of the pre-test and post-test mean scores of mental health and anxiety among non-working women in the experimental and control groups in order to examine the effectiveness of the yogic intervention and to test the proposed null hypotheses. With regard to mental health, the experimental group demonstrated a clear improvement from the pre-test mean score of 55.00 (SD = 5.00) to the post-test mean score of 60.00 (SD = 5.00). The obtained t-value of 5.00 is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a meaningful enhancement in the mental health status of the participants after the intervention. This substantial increase suggests that the yogic practices contributed positively to the psychological well-being of non-working women. In contrast, the control group showed only a marginal change from the pre-test mean score of 55.98 (SD = 4.62) to the post-test mean score of 56.12 (SD = 4.34). The calculated t-value of 0.42 was not statistically significant, indicating that no notable improvement occurred in the absence of the intervention. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that *there will be no significant difference*

between pre-test and post-test scores of non-working women regarding mental health is rejected for the experimental group but accepted for the control group.

A similar trend is observed in the case of anxiety. The experimental group showed a reduction in anxiety levels, as the pre-test mean score of 39.00 (SD = 7.00) decreased to 35.00 (SD = 5.00) in the post-test. The calculated t-value of 4.18 is statistically significant, demonstrating that the yogic intervention effectively reduced anxiety among the participants. Conversely, the control group exhibited only a negligible difference between the pre-test mean score of 31.53 (SD = 4.63) and the post-test mean score of 30.98 (SD = 4.33), with a t-value of 0.31, which is not significant. Hence, the null hypothesis stating that *there will be no significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of non-working women regarding anxiety* is rejected for the experimental group but accepted for the control group. Bar diagrams show the experimental group's mental health scores improved and anxiety levels dropped after the Surya Namaskar intervention. The control group showed minimal changes, indicating the intervention had an impact.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study reveal that regular practice of Surya Namaskar significantly improved mental health and reduced anxiety among non-working women. The experimental group showed higher mental health scores and lower anxiety levels compared with the control group, indicating that Surya Namaskar is an effective yogic intervention for enhancing psychological well-being and emotional stability. These positive changes may be attributed to the integrated nature of Surya Namaskar, which combines physical postures, controlled breathing, and mindful awareness, thereby promoting relaxation and better emotional regulation.

The results are consistent with previous research. Hölzel et al. (2011) reported that mindfulness and meditation practices improve emotional regulation and reduce anxiety. Similarly, Büssing et al. (2012) found that yoga contributes significantly to psychological well-being and stress reduction. Recent studies also support these findings. Parajuli, Shindhe, and Pradhan (2023) observed that regular practice of Surya Namaskar improved mental health, self-control, and mindfulness among adolescents. Likewise, Stec et al. (2023) reported that yoga-based practices help reduce stress and enhance emotional regulation. Further evidence from Suwannakul et al. (2025) showed that regular Surya Namaskar practice significantly reduced perceived stress and improved overall psychological and physical health

among female university students.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study concludes that Surya Namaskar has a positive impact on the mental health and anxiety of non-working women. The practice of Surya Namaskar significantly improved mental health scores and reduced anxiety scores among non-working women. These findings suggest that Surya Namaskar can be a useful tool for promoting mental well-being and reducing anxiety among non-working women. The study's findings have important implications for the mental health and well-being of non-working women, who may be more susceptible to stress, anxiety, and depression due to their social and economic circumstances. The practice of Surya Namaskar can provide a low-cost, accessible, and empowering means of promoting mental health and well-being in this population.

However, the study's findings should be interpreted in the context of its limitations. The sample size was relatively small, and the study's duration was limited to a few weeks. The present study's findings suggest several future research directions and practical implications. The study has limitations, including a small sample size and short duration. Future research could explore Surya Namaskar's impact on diverse populations, long-term effects, and comparison with other yoga styles. Community-based programs incorporating Surya Namaskar could promote mental health in non-working women. Suggestions for improvement include increasing sample size, adding a control group activity, and conducting follow-up assessments.

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