

Management of Coronary Artery Disease Through Yoga

Subramaniam Seshan¹, Ninad Nagrale², Swapnil Patond³, Ranjit Ambad⁴

¹Associate Professor, Datta Meghe Institute of Management Studies, Nagpur (MS), ²Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Datta Meghe Medical College, Nagpur (MS), ³Associate Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine, Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College, DMIMS, Wardha (MS), ⁴Associate Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Datta Meghe Medical College, Nagpur (MS)

Abstract

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of morbidity & mortality accounting for approximately 30% global burden of death per year. Disorders & in turn diseases due to gradual shifting towards sedentary lifestyle diseases like type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypertension, stroke, obesity etc are the major menacing factors for the progression of coronary artery disease. With speedy development of commerce and increased inclination towards lifestyle influenced by western countries in the past many years, prevalence of such diseases has reached frightening proportions among Indian population. Apart from physical consequences of cardiovascular diseases which are prominently looked for and taken care of, mental aspects of such patients is always overlooked. Such patients mentally become vulnerable & always remain worried & keep on feeling in their subconscious mind that soon they may die due to their heart condition. This in turn results into stress and anxiety which has become common amongst all the Indians. Medicines are commonest curative remedy in India but through this article, I am proposing some remedies through Yoga. This article doesn't guarantee 100% result but it is preventive remedy for Coronary Artery Disease.

Keywords: Coronary artery disease, Yoga, lifestyle disorders.

Introduction

When the major blood vessels (aorta, right coronary, left coronary, left anterior descending & circumflex) that supply heart get pathologically damaged, coronary artery disease develops. The most common cause for such pathological assault on coronaries is development of atheromatous plaques over their inner walls. Gradually it will lead to narrowing which in turn lead to partial or total block of the vessels. These blocks will limit or obstruct the blood supply to heart which will ultimately lead to ischemia to the heart. There are varieties of clusters of symptoms that will give indication of coronary heart disease. They are pain or discomfort (arms, left shoulder,

back, neck, jaw or upper abdomen), breathlessness, palpitations, sweating, extreme weakness or anxiety. Various risk factors for coronary heart disease are:

- **Age:** As it advances, coronaries get narrowed and hardened.
- **Sex:** Comparatively women are protected but their risk increases after menopause.
- **Family history:** Person is more susceptible if any close relative got any history of coronary heart disease.
- **Smoking:** Smokers are at higher risk for developing coronary heart disease.
- **High blood pressure:** Uncontrolled blood pressure always result in hardening and narrowing of coronaries arteries.
- **High blood cholesterol levels:** There are higher chances of development of plaques which result in furtherance of atherosclerosis.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Ninad Nagrale

Associate Professor Dept. Forensic Medicine, Datta Meghe Medical College, Shalinitai Meghe Hospital and Research Centre, Nagpur-441110

- **Diabetes:** Type 2 diabetics are more prone.
- **Obesity:** Excess weight typically worsens other risk factors.
- **Physical inactivity & High stress:** They will worsen the situation.
- **Unhealthy diet:** High amounts of saturated fat, trans fat, salt and sugar can increase your risk of coronary artery disease.

Prevention: The same lifestyle habits that can help treat coronary artery disease can also help prevent it from developing in the first place. Leading a healthy lifestyle can help keep your arteries strong and clear of plaque. To improve your heart health, you can: Quit smoking, Stay physically active, Eat a low-fat, low-salt diet that's rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, Maintain a healthy weight, Reduce and manage stress. Yoga is giving a new lease of life to many, so to tackle chronic diseases it is providing remedies which will be lifelong. Yoga will provide support to patients having coronary artery disease through its various relevant postures (asana's) which can be done very easily. Yoga does not send a message that if you do it regularly you will be relieved from a particular disease. If it is performed every day it will add vital energy for smooth life even if you are suffering from any chronic disease. In this article we will be providing 6 postures (asana's) which can be performed at any time in the day but early morning will always be preferred (empty stomach) to get good result. Secondly this postures must be implemented after due consultation with your physician. If your physician disapproves don't do these postures as it will be harmful for your body¹⁻³.

Asanas:



1. Utkatasana: It is also called as Chair Pose. Chair Pose clearly works the muscles of the arms and legs, but it also stimulates the diaphragm and heart. The steps are being given and it should be done maximum 10 times or as per your strength.

Step 1 - Stand in Tadasana. Inhale and raise your arms perpendicular to the floor. Either keep the arms parallel, palms facing inward, or join the palms.

Step 2- Exhale and bend your knees, trying to take the thighs as nearly parallel to the floor as possible. The knees will project out over the feet and the torso will lean slightly forward over the thighs until the front torso forms approximately a right angle with the tops of the thighs. Keep the inner thighs parallel to each other and press the heads of the thigh bones down toward the heels.

Step 3- Firm your shoulder blades against the back. Take your tailbone down toward the floor and in toward your pubis to keep the lower back long.

Step 4- Stay for 30 seconds to a minute. To come out of this pose straighten your knees with an inhalation, lifting strongly through the arms. Exhale and release your arms to your sides into Tadasana.

2. Bhujangasana: Bhujangasana or Cobra Pose is a reclining back-bending asana in hatha yoga and modern yoga as exercise.



Step 1- Lie flat on your stomach on the floor. Stretch your legs back, tops of the feet on the floor. Spread your hands on the floor under your shoulders. Hug the elbows back into your body.

Step 2- Press the tops of the feet and thighs and the pubis firmly into the floor.

Step 3- On an inhalation, begin to straighten the arms to lift the chest off the floor, going only to the height at which you can maintain a connection through your pubis to your legs. Press the tailbone toward the

pubis and lift the pubis toward the navel. Narrow the hip points. Firm but don't harden the buttocks.

Step 4- Firm the shoulder blades against the back, puffing the side ribs forward. Lift through the top of the sternum but avoid pushing the front ribs forward, which only hardens the lower back. Distribute the backbend evenly throughout the entire spine.

Step 5- Hold the pose anywhere from 15 to 30 seconds, breathing easily. Release back to the floor with an exhalation.

3. Makarasana:



Step 1: Lie down on the floor on your stomach. Fold your hands and keep the tip of the elbows on the ground with your fingers facing upwards. Keep your elbows shoulder distance apart.

Step 2: Now, raise your shoulders and head. Keep your neck straight and look ahead. Bend your head a little forward and place your chin in your palms.

Step 3: Stretch out your legs with the toes facing outwards. Feel your body touching the ground. Breathe normally and slowly and relax your muscles.

Step 4: Stay in the asana for a few minutes until you feel completely relaxed. To release from the position, gently remove your palms from the chin, bring your shoulders and head down and roll over.

4. Padmasana:



Step 1: Sit on the floor with your legs straight in front. Bend your right knee and bring the lower leg up

into a cradle: The outer edge of the foot is notched into the crook of the left elbow, the knee is wedged into the crook of the right elbow and the hands are clasped (if possible) outside the shin. Lift the front torso toward the inner right leg so the spine lengthens (and the lower back does not round). Rock your leg back and forth a few times, exploring the full range of movement of the hip joint.

Step 2: Bend the left knee and turn the leg out. Rock your right leg far out to the right, then lock the knee tight by pressing the back of the thigh to the calf. Next swing the leg across in front of your torso, swiveling from the hip and not the knee and nestle the outside edge of the foot into the inner left groin. Be sure to bring the right knee as close to the left as possible and press the right heel into the left lower belly. Ideally the sole of the foot is perpendicular to the floor, not parallel.

Step 3: Now lean back slightly, pick the right leg up off the floor and lift the left leg in front of the right. To do this hold the underside of the left shin in your hands. Carefully slide the left leg over the right, snuggling the edge of the left foot deep into the right groin. Again swivel into position from the hip joint, pressing the heel against the lower belly and arrange the sole perpendicular to the floor. Draw the knees as close together as possible. Use the edges of the feet to press the groins toward the floor and lift through the top of the sternum. If you wish, you can place the hands palms up in *jnana mudra*, with the thumbs and first fingers touching.

Step 4: Padmasana is the sitting asana par excellence, but it's not for everybody. Experienced students can use it as a seat for their daily pranayama or meditation, but beginners may need to use other suitable positions. In the beginning, only hold the pose for a few seconds and quickly release. Remember that Padmasana is a "two-sided pose," so be sure to work with both leg crosses each time you practice. Gradually add a few seconds each week to your pose until you can sit comfortably for a minute or so. Ideally you should work with a teacher to monitor your progress.

5. Shavasana:



Step 1: Lie on your back with your legs straight and arms at your sides. Rest your hands about six inches

away from your body with your palms up. Let your feet drop open. Close your eyes. You may want to cover your body with a blanket.

Step 2: Let your breath occur naturally. Allow your body to feel heavy on the ground.

Step 3: Working from the soles of your feet up to the crown of your head, consciously release every body part, organ and cell.

Step 4: Relax your face. Let your eyes drop deep into their sockets. Invite peace and silence into your mind, body and soul. Stay in Shavasana for five minutes for every 30 minutes of your practice.

Step 5: To exit the pose, first begin to deepen your breath. Bringing gentle movement and awareness back to your body, wiggling your fingers and toes. Roll to your right side and rest there for a moment. With an inhalation, gently press yourself into a comfortable seated position. Let your head be the last thing to come into place. Carry the peace and stillness of Shavasana with you throughout the rest of your day.

6. Pawanmuktasana:



Step 1: Lie flat on your back on a smooth surface, ensuring that your feet are together and your arms are placed beside your body.

Step 2: Take a deep breath. As you exhale, bring your knees towards your chest and press your thighs on your abdomen. Clasp your hands around your legs as if you are hugging your knees.

Step 3: Hold the asana while you breathe normally. Every time you exhale, make sure you tighten the grip of the hands on the upper shins and increase the pressure on your chest. Every time you inhale, ensure that you loosen the grip.

Step 4: Exhale and release the pose after you rock and roll from side to side about three to five times. Relax.

Benefits of Yoga in coronary heart disease:

1. It tones your digestive organs and heart.
2. Stretches chests and lungs, open the heart and lungs.
3. It relaxes your body completely and keeps you rejuvenated.
4. It calms the brain, increase awareness and attentiveness.
5. It helps to lower blood pressure, calms the brain and helps relieve stress and mild depression, lastly relaxes the body.
6. Strengthens the abdominal muscle, massages the intestine and internal organs of digestive system and improves digestion.

Conclusion

Current research on coronary artery disease and its implication concludes that Yoga plays a vital role in maintaining your health. It also gives an impetus to your body to keep moving. Any disease basically sends a negative signal and to counter it, Yoga plays a major role⁴⁻⁶. The study gave an opportunity to understand the reasons for coronary artery disease and subsequently how Yoga can provide benefits to a common man. Everybody should take out time from their regimen to focus on Yoga as it will give an added energy to your vital organs and keep you healthy and fit^{7,8}. Secondly the postures recommended by the researcher is very simple and can be done by any age group person. The various Yoga poses will help you in leading a happy and stress-free life. Keep doing it and stay healthy and keep your heart strong⁹.

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