

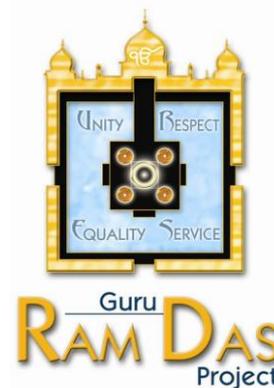
Transforming Lives with Kundalini Yoga

WHAT IS KUNDALINI YOGA?

- Kundalini Yoga (**KY**) is an activity that involves breath control (pranayama), physical postures (asana) & movement and a variety of meditation techniques including voice work (mantra) and hand postures (mudra). KY is most often taught in a class setting, but can be taught one to one.
- Anyone can do KY. Whilst some postures require a degree of mobility, a qualified teacher can suggest alternatives. A class typically lasts 45-90 minutes. (Note: GRDP also works with teachers who specialise in chair based KY for those of limited mobility.)
- Beyond the cardio-vascular benefits of physical exercise, KY directly stimulates and effects the glandular system and nervous system, as such it has various physical and mental health benefits.

Research has shown KY to influence various psychological and stress related disorders including, **insomnia, anxiety, depression, everyday stress** and **stress related medical illnesses, post-traumatic stress disorder, OCD, dementia** and **memory function**.

- KY has been successfully used as part of programmes to help Addiction Recovery (drug & alcohol), OCD, Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders & with the elderly. KY is currently the focus of various scientific research projects around the world (see references).



KY FOR MENTAL HEALTH & STRESS MANAGEMENT

The Stress Management Society defines stress as: **“a situation where demands on a person exceed that person’s resources or ability to cope”**. Under stress, adrenaline and cortisol flood your body priming you for to be ready for "fight or flight". Whilst in small amounts stress can be beneficial, too much or long-term exposure to stress can lead to medical problems including:

Allergies	Asthma	Colitis
Constipation	Depression	Diabetes mellitus
Hay fever	Heart attack	High blood pressure
Indigestion	Menstrual difficulties	Migraine
Overactive thyroid	Peptic ulcers	Rheumatoid arthritis
Skin Disorders	Tuberculosis	

There are now hundreds of research papers dedicated to the medical benefits of yoga and meditation and there is also specific research into the effects of KY. Research over the last decade by scientists including, Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, Ph.D, Gurucharan Singh Khalsa Ph.D, Dr. Dharam Singh Khalsa and Sara Lazar, Ph.D. offers compelling evidence that KY can change our brains, and our lives, by **reducing stress** and **stimulating the parts of the brain responsible for memory function**.

Much research has focussed on Sudarshan Kriya or Kirtan Kriya a simple KY meditation practice involving the chanting of a mantra (Sa, Ta, Na, Ma) out loud, as a whisper and silently whilst simultaneously moving the hands through a series of postures (mudras) and a fixing the point of focus of the eyes up to the forehead. These studies have been based on simple daily practice of just 12 minutes per day, something achievable by all. Findings include:

- Sudarshan Kriya can alleviate anxiety, depression, everyday stress, post-traumatic stress, and stress-related medical illnesses. Mechanisms contributing to a state of calm alertness include increased parasympathetic drive, calming of stress response systems, neuroendocrine release of hormones, and thalamic generators.
- Kirtan Kriya can significantly lower levels of depressive symptoms and lead to greater improvement in mental health and cognitive functioning compared with simple relaxation.
- Kirtan Kriya also stimulates telomerase activity (43% improvement) compared with 3.7% in simple relaxation. suggesting improvement in stress-induced cellular aging.

WHO IS THE GURU RAM DAS PROJECT?

The Guru Ram Das Project (GRDP) is a charity set -up with the primary aim of improving the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of the community. Our main service is the provision of Kundalini Yoga outreach classes to those in need including: projects for alcohol & drug rehab, mental health, the homeless, elderly people and more. We are also involved in interfaith work and community building activities.

For more information about our services and how we can help, please see our website: <http://www.grdp.co.uk> or contact our Project Manager via email: info@grdp.co.uk

REFERENCES & RESOURCES

Your Brain on Yoga (Harvard Medical School Guides) - Sat Bir Singh Khalsa PhD , Jodie Gould.

Meditation as Medicine - Dharma Singh Khalsa MD, Cameron Stauth.

Kundalini Yoga - Meditation for Complex Psychiatric Disorders: Techniques Specific for Treating the Psychoses, Personality, and Pervasive Development Disorders - Dr. David S Shannahoff-khalsa

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Sudarshan Kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: part I- neurophysiologic model. Brown RP, Gerbarg PL. Altern Complement Med. 2005 Apr; 11(2):383-4.

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A pilot study of yogic meditation for family dementia caregivers with depressive symptoms: effects on mental health, cognition, and telomerase activity. Lavretsky H, Epel ES, Siddarth P, Nazarian N, Cyr NS, Khalsa DS, Lin J, Blackburn E, Irwin MR. Int J Geriatr Psychiatry. 2013 Jan;28(1):57-65.

Kundalini Yoga research highlights - <http://www.alzheimersprevention.org>
(Improvement in Mood and Reduced Stress in People with Memory Loss, The anti-aging effect of Meditation, Different meditations have different effects on the brain, Yoga Meditation Associated with Better Mental Health, Yoga Meditation Associated with Better Memory Function)