

# The Brain, the Nervous System, and Yoga

*Yoga health* are two words which are very closely related. The yoga health benefit is widely known. Yoga is there to aid both your physical and mental health. Therefore, most people who are interested in practising yoga do so for health reasons. They want to ease their back pain or want to know a method to relieve stress. This yoga and health section takes a closer look at how your body functions and how yoga can benefit your body.

## Benefits of a Healthy Nervous System

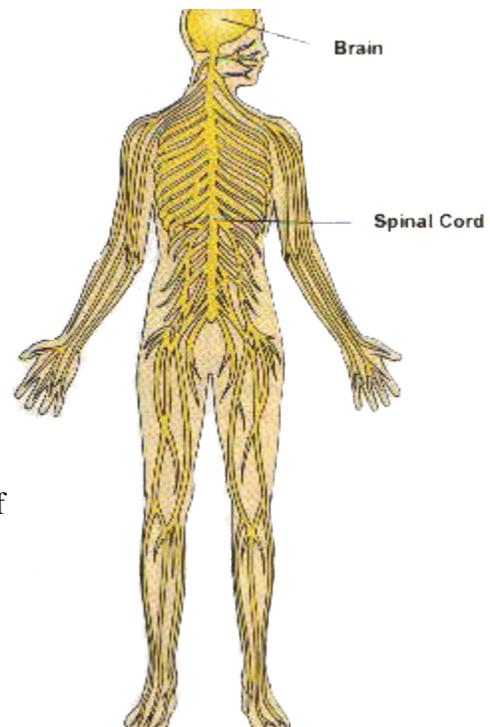
A healthy nervous system enables you to meet every event of life with calm and resilience. It keeps all the muscles, organs and tissues of the body working at full efficiency, gives sharper sensory perception and creates a sense of vitality and energy in your whole being. The nervous system is made up of large numbers of individual cells or neurons, each with a cell body and long projecting fibres that transmit rapid trains of nerve impulses or signals.

## Yoga and the Nervous System

Bundles of fibres together form the large nerves, which are stretched and purified by yoga Asanas. By clearing toxins from the tissues, the Asanas benefit neurotransmissions at the fine nerve endings, and at synapses between nerves. Yoga has been shown to stabilize the response of the nervous system to stress, removing the constant muscular tension produced by the repeated alerts from the central nervous system, and calming the involuntary symptoms of threat - racing heart, sweating, anxiety - roused by the sympathetic nervous system.

### Peripheral Nervous System

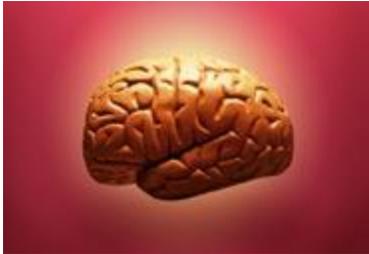
The spinal nerves leave the cord in pairs from either side of each segment, and branch finely to form the peripheral system. The motor (efferent) fibres carry instructions to every muscle, the sensory (afferent) fibres bring in information from every receptor.



## Central Nervous System

The central nervous system is the power house and communications center of the body. From their deep roots in the cord, the spinal nerves spread out to serve every part of the system. Within the cord, ceaseless intercommunication takes place, and impulses travel rapidly up and down the sensory and motor fibres, to and from the brain.

## The Effects of Yoga on the Nervous System



There are many factors in a person's life that combine to equate to good health. Exercise, proper eating habits, and positive mental health all benefit one's body *and* mind. Another form of health in a person's life is manifested through happiness. Health and happiness may be magnified by practicing the ancient art of yoga. No other practice has sustained the elements the ways in which yoga has, nor has any other natural practice been proven as effective in positively changing a person's entire being.

Yoga has the ability to alter many parts of the body, but some underestimate the power that yoga practices have on the body's systems, particularly those that are somewhat abstract to us because they are not visible like the arms or the legs. The nervous system, a key example of this, is a vital structure that affects parts of the body from the organs to the muscles. A well-rounded nervous system is what enables one to remain level headed in stressful situations. Neurons are the cells that make up the system, with fibrous hairs attached to the cell membrane which enables each cell to transmit impulses to nerves.

The Asanas in yoga are what cleanses these cells, which in turn allow the nervous system to react carefully to stress. The muscles are also able to relax during a time of tension and other negative symptoms produced by our adrenaline that pours into the system during "fight or flight" mode are repressed. All of these effects are due to activity within the sympathetic nervous system.