

Chandra Namaskar! A Yogic Sequence and Its Effect on The Human Body & System-A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Background: Chandra Namaskar (Moon Salutation) is a traditional yogic practice associated with lunar energy and the predominance of Ida Nāḍī, which is believed to exert cooling, calming, and restorative effects on the body and mind. Although widely practiced for emotional balance, this systemic review aims to explore the systematic effect of Chandra Namaskar.

Objective: To synthesize & explore the systemic effects of Chandra Namaskar, a yogic sequence, on the human body and system through available evidence.

Methods: Following PRISMA guidelines, searching was done in databases including PubMed, Google Scholar, ResearchGate and Academia.edu. Studies investing Chandra Namaskar yogic practices and reporting physiological or psychological outcomes in human participants were included after screening of Title and Abstract followed by full text assessment.

Results: Out of 41 studies, 5 studies favour the inclusion criteria and shows to benefit the body after Chandra Namaskar practice in which 3 studies show significant improvements in musculoskeletal like hamstring flexibility, hip adductor flexibility, upper limb flexibility and dynamic balance, along with a reduction in anxiety levels. 2 studies show a significant decrease in aggression levels, indicating beneficial effects on psychological and behavioural parameters.

Conclusion: It was found that musculoskeletal flexibility, dynamic balance and psychological parameters such as aggression and flexibility got improved by doing Chandra Namaskar. Despite all the research, further studies are still needed to explore systemic effects of Chandra Namaskar.

KEYWORDS: Moon Salutation, Chandra Namaskar, Ida Nāḍī, Yoga therapy

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INTRODUCTION

Ancient Indian literature highlighted many such therapeutical practices which is recommended for maintaining health. Practicing Yoga is one of the tools for holistic growth and development.¹

Yuj is the Sanskrit meaning of yoga, which means to unite, reflecting its aim of connecting mental, physical and spiritual.²

Yoga is an art and science promoting healthy living.³

Patanjali yoga is known to be foundational pillar of classical yoga philosophy. For centuries, yoga has served as a tool which nurtures physical, mental and spiritual aspects of human beings.⁴

Sage Patanjali described the main principle of yoga is to control restless mind (400 BC, Yoga Sutras, Chapter I, Verse II).⁵

Patanjali defined yoga as chitta vritti nirodhah, meaning the regulation or cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. In this framework, chitta refers to the mental consciousness,

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while vritti denotes its various modifications or patterns. Thus, yoga is understood as the practice of restraining or quieting these mental activities, leading to stability, clarity, and self realization.⁶

One of the most notable yogic teachings in the Kathopanishad occurs in II.3.10-11, where the Uanishad states Kathopanishad Yadāpañcāvatiṣṭhantejñānānimanasāsaha / buddhiśca navicestate tam āhuhparamāṅgatim //The highest state is when mind and five senses are still and the intellect does not waver.⁷

Yoga functions at multiple levels of human existence, including the physical body, mental processes, emotional domain, and subtle energy. This multidimensional action

has led to the classification of Yoga into four principal paths: Karma Yoga, which emphasizes disciplined action through the body; Bhakti Yoga, which focuses on emotional devotion; Gyana (Jnana) Yoga, which centres on intellectual inquiry and the cultivation of knowledge; and Kriya Yoga, which is concerned with the regulation and refinement of vital energy. Most yogic practices incorporate elements from one or more of these pathways.⁸

Although yoga is thought to have originated about 5000 BC.⁹

It emphasize harmony between the mind, body, and spirit through postures, meditation, and breathwork. Over centuries, diverse schools of yoga developed, each with its own focus, yet all rooted in the shared goal of uniting mind and body.¹⁰

Therapeutic application of yogic practice is medical yoga, also referred as yoga chikitsa, which prevents against disease and also use as adjunct in management of medical conditions. It focuses on physical postures, regulated breathing, mindfulness, meditation and self-reflection to increase therapeutic results.¹¹

In early Tantric traditions, the Sun was considered to reside in the solar plexus and the moon was believed to be located at the crown of the head. The moon was thought to hold amrita, a divine nectar associated with vitality and immortality, symbolically linked to the cosmic moon and its life-sustaining influence. Although the inner sun was regarded as essential for initiating yogic transformation, excessive heat was believed to contribute to aging and degeneration. To counteract this process, yogic practices were employed for generation and conservation of amrita. These practices were believed to redirect vital energies upward from the lower chakras towards the Crown chakra; here they changes into amrita or soma.¹²

Chandra Namaskar, or Moon Salutation, is a popular Hatha Yoga sequence that is closely linked to the periodic movement of moon energy. Chandra Namaskara is a yogic approach that can be easily incorporated in one's daily life.¹³

In 1969, Bihar School of Yoga introduced Chandra Namaskara (Moon Salutations) as a novel practice. Existing literature indicates that this sequence primarily influences the Ida nāḍī, thereby stimulating the parasympathetic nervous system and promoting relaxation.¹⁴

The term Nāḍī literally denotes a "flow" or "current" and refers to the subtle pathways through which prāṇic energy circulates within the body. Yogic literature describes numerous nāḍīs, among which Idā, Piṅgalā, and Suṣumṇā are considered the most prominent. Idā Nāḍī is described as passive, inward-oriented, and feminine in nature and is therefore also referred to as Chandra Nāḍī, or the lunar channel. It is characterized as śīta (cooling) in quality and is symbolically represented by the color white. The guṇa of

Idā Nāḍī closely correspond to those attributed to Chandra (the moon), which is traditionally associated with calmness, stability, nourishment, and emotional balance.

Idā Nāḍī is believed to regulate the flow of prāṇic energy, providing nourishment and purification of both body and mind and supporting psychological equilibrium. Fourteen postures of Chandra Namaskar symbolically correspond to the fourteen phases of the moon. In the lunar calendar, the waning phase is referred to as Krishna Paksha, or the dark fortnight, while the waxing phase is known as Shukla Paksha, or the bright fortnight.^{15,16}

Postures of Chandra Namaskar combined with breathing pattern and mantras to channel moon-soothing and cooling energy.

About 500 years ago, a tantric text "The Shiva Samhita" describes the moon as a source of immortality.

It stimulates parasympathetic part of autonomic nervous system, supports emotional balance, increasing flexibility and reducing anxiety, anger and restlessness.¹⁷

Inhalation and Exhalation is also important parts of Chandra Namaskar, which are coordinated with each posture throughout sequence.¹⁸

Ideally, Chandra Namaskar should be practiced in the evening or at night time, or when the moon is visible at night, on an empty stomach.

Benefits of Chandra Namaskar is seen in individuals experiencing insomnia, as it encourages relaxation and prepares the body and mind for restful sleep. In women during their menstrual cycle, it can be supportive on days of low energy. The sequence of this yogic posture helps, quiet the mind and promotes mental calmness and emotional balance. Chandra Namaskar provides a gentle and restorative practice that helps replenish vital energy.¹⁹

Yogic posture like Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon Pose) is found to be helpful in postural stability and cognitive focus, thereby adding a dimension of balance and concentration. Chandra Namaskar represents a comprehensive yogic practice; its sequences provide overall therapeutic benefits like increases circulation, improve musculoskeletal flexibility and internal organ stimulation, toning and relaxation through coordinated stretching.²⁰

Chandra namaskar, its name itself implies asanas devoted to the moon and drawing soothing energy from it.²¹

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Following PRISMA guidelines, this systemic review explores the systemic effect of Chandra Namaskar on human body.

A literature search was conducted using database like PubMed, Researchgate, yogic journal, and Sanskrit journal to find relevant studies.

The search terms used Moon salutation, Chandra Namaskar and yoga.

Selection of literature were from standard textbooks, review articles, original research articles, and expert opinions.

Studies were included if they:

1. Chandra Namaskar or lunar-based yogic exercise.
2. Shows systemic effects of Chandra Namaskar.
3. Involved human participants.

Exclusion was done if they were from books, review articles, web-based articles or did not meet inclusion criteria after assessment.

Selection of study

Screening of identified records were done independently at two levels:

1. Screening of Title and abstract
2. Assessment of full-text for eligibility. PRISMA guidelines are used for selecting and excluding the study.

Extraction of data using a standardized form under following:

- Author and year
- Study design
- Sample characteristics
- Outcome measures

Extracted data from eligible studies are presented in tabular form.

RESULT

Direct research on Chandra Namaskar is limited; however, available data help to infer systemic effect.

Out of 41 selected studies through all the sources. 19 duplicates were removed. After screening of titles and abstracts of left 22, 12 were excluded. Review of full text of 10 remaining article were done, out of which 5 study meeting inclusion criteria were included, and they were Non randomized type study done on n=3 to n=45 adults population only.

Selection of study is illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram. (Figure 1)

In [Table-1], five included studies are summarized. They were non-randomized interventional studies, predominantly employing single-group pre-post quasi-experimental designs.

The included studies were conducted among adult participants with mixed populations, including both male and female subjects. The duration and frequency of Chandra

Namaskar practice varied across studies. Full-text articles excluded after eligibility assessment, along with reasons for exclusion, are presented in Table 2. Effects of Chandra Namaskar on Systemic Outcomes

Three studies evaluated musculoskeletal or flexibility-related outcomes. Significant improvements were observed in hamstring flexibility, hip adductor flexibility, and upper limb flexibility, balancing and decrease in anxiety following Chandra Namaskar practice.

Two included study reported a reduction in aggression levels following regular practice of Chandra Namaskar, indicating a positive effect on psychological and behavioural outcomes. Overall, the available evidence suggests potential psychological and reproductive health benefits of Chandra Namaskar; however, the number of studies and methodological quality were limited.

DISCUSSION

The present systematic review examined the systemic effects of Chandra Namaskar by synthesizing evidence from selected studies and interpreting the findings in light of established yogic and physiological concepts. Included studies shows benefits of Chandra Namaskar in dynamic balancing, physical flexibility and psychological parameters such as aggression and anxiety, suggesting its effect on mental health and musculoskeletal domains.

Hypothalamus along with limbic-autonomic nervous system regulate the nasal cycle and is further influenced by circulating catecholamines and other neurohormonal factors. This neurophysiological rhythm shows conceptual convergence with the yogic description. Pranac of flow through the Nadis, wherein dominance of airflow through the left nostril is described as Ida Nadi, dominance through the right nostril as Pingala Nadi, and symmetrical airflow as Sushumna Nadi predominance.²³

Dominance of the right nostril (Pingala) leads to more energy for physical work, and body generates more heat. Mental energy is dominant when the left nostril (Ida) is flowing. Normally during sleep, Ida nadi is dominated because if Pingala flows at night, sleep will be disturbed and restless. Digestion and absorption of food will slow and may leads to indigestion if Ida flows while taking food. At the physical level, Ida and Pingala correspond to the two aspects of the autonomic nervous system. Pingala coincides with the sympathetic nervous system, and Ida with the parasympathetic nervous system. Physiologically Sympathetic and Parasympathetic have opposite function, parasympathetic system relaxes the mind and body provide calmness. The flow of prana in Ida and Pingala is completely involuntary and unconscious until controlled by yogic practices.¹⁵

Breathing constitutes an integral component of Chandra Namaskar, with each posture synchronized to either

Table 1: Extraction of data from Included Primary Studies

Author, year	Study design	Sample size	Outcome
M. Tripathy. 2017	Single-group pre-post experimental study	15	Significant decrease in aggression score
M. Tripathy. 2018	Single-group pre-post quasi-experimental study (non-randomized)	45	Significantly decrease in aggression level of participants.
Himani Patel, Dharti Shah. 2022	Single-group pre-post test	20	Significantly decrease in aggression level of participants. Significant improve in flexibility of Hamstrings and adductor muscles
Mayuri Khataavkar. 2022	Case series	3	Significant increase in flexibility of upper limb and also reduction in generalized anxiety score
Mayuri Khataavkar and Vrushali Panhale B. 2025	Single-group pre-post quasi-experimental study	15	Significant improvement in flexibility and dynamic balance

Table 2: Sources Excluded from Data Extraction

Author, Year	Title	Type of Article	Reason for exclusion
Chowdhury K., 1994	Utility of Chandra namaskar in daily life	Review article	No intervention outcomes
Bhavanani, Madanmohan. 2012	Immediate effect of Chandra Nadi pranayama (left unilateral forced nostril breathing) on cardiovascular parameters in hypertensive patients.	Interventional study	Chandra Namaskar is not intervened
Padte S., 2018	<i>Chandra Namaskar – The Unknown Soother</i>	Conceptual article	No intervention
Ansari, 2019	Surya Namaskar and chandra Namaskar as a preventive measure for pre-menopausal syndrome.	Review article	No intervention
Choudhury, Saikia, Chetia.	Chandra Namaskar and its benefits: A survey	Survey Article	No intervention

inhalation or exhalation; this coordination is found to be helpful in increasing circulation, thereby improving blood supply to the organs, brain, and other physiological systems. And also, expansion of the chest cavity and lungs during the practice aid in cardiopulmonary function and improves digestive processes by increasing visceral perfusion and autonomic regulation.¹⁸

Chandra Namaskar, benefits physical and mental health. Significant improvements in lower limb flexibility and dynamic balance among young adults.

Decrease physical activity may cause reduction in cross-sectional area of fibres, muscle stiffness, decrease capillarization and diminished oxidative capacity.

Postures in Chandra Namaskar contribute to muscle elongation, particularly activating the gluteus maximus and medius, quadriceps, and lumbar extensors. Improving the flexibility of muscles such as the gastrocnemius and soleus therefore helps in maintaining postural stability.

Asanas of this yoga activates the Root Chakra (Mooladhar), which governs the lower back, legs, and feet, which aid in balancing and flexibility.¹

Anxiety is seen across trimester in pregnancy due to increase in cortisol level and altered leptin response within the hypothalamic-pituitary axis. Moon Salutation will activate Ida nadi or stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and promote relaxation. Practicing Moon Salutation on full moon days is traditionally recommended to balance excessive energy, reduce stress, and channel creativity. Outdoor practice under moonlight is considered especially beneficial. Therefore, Moon Salutation, as a gentler variation of traditional yoga sequences, may be particularly suitable for pregnant women when practiced with appropriate modifications and under professional supervision.¹⁴

Reported health outcomes include enhanced digestion, spinal toning, lung expansion, and Heart Chakra activation. The practice supports blood circulation, regulates abdominal function, stimulation of spinal nerves, stretching of leg and back muscles, and provide flexibility prior to childbirth. Additional benefits include relief of sciatic nerve tension, improved confidence, toning of pelvic muscles, regulation of adrenal gland activity, and alleviation of constipation, anger, and sciatica. Overall, Moon Salutation fosters bilateral balance, poise, and holistic well-being of both mind and body.¹³

Several postures in Chandra Namaskar overlap with Surya Namaskar. Musculoskeletal adaptations depend on posture mechanics, not solar/lunar symbolism. However, pace, breath, intent, and autonomic emphasis differ. Pranamasana, which is common to both Surya and Chandra Namaskar, is associated with mental relaxation, reduction in anxiety, and improved concentration. The upright posture combined with controlled breathing may facilitate psychological calmness and attentional focus. Hasta Uttanasana contributes to strengthening of the respiratory and intercostal muscles, supports lung expansion, and may aid digestion through thoracoabdominal stretching. Forward bending postures such as Hastapadasana promote flexibility of the spine, hips, and hamstrings while stimulating abdominal musculature, potentially supporting metabolic and digestive functions.

Ashwa Sanchalanasana has been reported to strengthen the spinal musculature, enhance lung capacity, and support abdominal organ function, while Parvatasana provides spinal elongation, improves peripheral neuromuscular coordination, and enhances upper and lower limb strength. Ashtanga Namaskar and Bhujangasana strengthen the upper body and respiratory musculature, while supporting spinal flexibility and thoracic expansion therefore postures of Chandra Namaskar found to be helpful in improving musculoskeletal function and autonomic regulation.²³

Ardha Chandrasana increases the mobility and strengthens the entire skeletal system. It stretches the neck, shoulders, back, and chest, so provide relieve against stiffness. Additionally, it enhances body awareness and improves balance.²⁴

CONCLUSION

Chandra Namaskar is holistic yogic practice found to be beneficial across, physical, physiological and psychological domains. Studies included in this systemic review shows improvements in dynamic balance, flexibility, mental health, such as anxiety and aggression. These effects are brought by coordinated breathing pattern, which increases circulation, supports cardiopulmonary function, and promotes autonomic regulation. They also aid in improving digestion.

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