

An Evaluation of Static and Dynamic Yoga Training Programs

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ABSTRACT

While traditional yoga programs focus on static stretching and core stability, Essentrics yoga relies more heavily on full-body stretch and strengthening regimens coupled with dynamic movements such as ceiling reaches, side-to-side bends, lunges, and side leg lifts. Through the incorporation of more dynamic movements, Essentrics yoga is thought to elicit greater improvements in overall body composition, flexibility, and balance. **PURPOSE:** To examine the benefits of a 6-weeks long Essentrics (dynamic) program compared to standard (static) Yoga on body composition, flexibility, and balance. **METHODS:** Thirty-one participants (24 females and 7 males, age = 20.4 ± 0.2 yrs, and BMI = 22.58 ± 0.55 kg/m²) were assigned to two groups - a standard Yoga (YOG, $n = 20$) and an Essentrics (ESS, $n = 11$) group. For 6 weeks, both groups attended a 45-50-minute class, 3 times per week. Body composition (dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry), flexibility (sit-and-reach), balance (lower extremity Y-balance), as well anthropometric measurements were assessed at the beginning and end of the 6-week program. Measurements of the balance test included 3 reaches and their combined values [anterior (ANT), posteromedial (PM), posterolateral (PL), and composite reach distance (CRD)]. All reaches were averaged for the right and left sides and then normalized to leg length. Data were analyzed using an ANOVA with repeated measures ($p < 0.05$), and a post-hoc test was performed if any significant main or interaction effects were found. **RESULTS:** Interestingly, the total body fat percentage was significantly reduced only in the YOG group (24.44 ± 6.73 to $23.51 \pm 6.32\%$, $p = .002$). There were no significant group differences between YOG and ESS in balance and flexibility. However, balance was improved after the 6-week workout programs; PM (87.13 ± 11.64 cm to 92.25 ± 9.91 cm, $p = .001$), PL (82.88 ± 11.28 to 88.62 ± 9.62 cm, $p = .002$), CRD (225.96 ± 27.17 to 238.26 ± 22.98 cm, $p = .001$), normalized PM (98.31 ± 11.68 to $104.27 \pm 11.14\%$, $p = .001$), normalized PL (93.60 ± 11.98 to $100.15 \pm 10.70\%$, $p = .001$), and normalized CRD (255.12 ± 27.89 to $269.21 \pm 25.07\%$, $p = .001$). Additionally, flexibility was improved from 51.42 ± 8.24 to 53.38 ± 7.04 cm ($p = .010$) after the 6-week workout programs, while total body fat percentage was significantly reduced only in the YOG group (24.44 ± 6.73 to $23.51 \pm 6.32\%$, $p = .002$). **CONCLUSION:** Whether an individual prefers a static or dynamic yoga program, both show improvements in flexibility and balance; however, neither program had a significant benefit over the other.