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The *Surya Namaskar* Pathway to Weight Loss: A Narrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Obesity is a rising concern for the country and the individual alike. *Surya namaskar* is part of the ancient Indian yogic practice, which can aid in the management of overweight/obesity.

There is no comprehensive review available on the effects of *Surya Namaskar* on weight loss in otherwise healthy overweight/obese individuals.

Aim: This narrative review aimed to highlight the quantity and duration of *Surya Namaskar* required to observe weight loss.

Materials and Methods: This narrative review included 12 studies meeting the inclusion criteria. A literature search was performed using the search terms *Surya Namaskar* and weight loss in: Cochrane Library, Google Scholar, PubMed, Research Gate, and Science Direct. Indian articles (2015-2025), in the English language, search limited to a maximum of 50 results in each database, were identified.

Results: Articles reporting weight loss from the practice of *Surya Namaskar*, males and females (18-60 years), reported to be overweight and/or obese with no co-morbidities, were included, which encompassed eight case studies, two cross-sectional studies, one review article, and one Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). The search yielded only one review article, yet the diverse study designs provided a comprehensive examination of the topic.

A reduction in Body Mass Index (BMI) of 1-1.96 kg/m^2, after 6-8 weeks of intervention and of 0.33-0.86 kg/m^2, after 45 days-12 weeks of intervention was reported by four and four studies, respectively. One study reported a reduced BMI of 4.2 kg/m^2, after 5 sets/repetitions (12 asanas) for 45 mins/day with gradual increments in the sets till 6 weeks. Another study reported a weight loss of 3.58 kg post-intervention (60 mins/day; 30 days). The reduction in BMI was not statistically significant in one study. Breathing exercises and meditation were included in three studies.

Conclusion: Studies reporting a higher reduction in weight/BMI had gradual increments (weekly) of 12 asanas beginning with 5-15 sets/repetition. This review concludes that studies lack diet monitoring, nutrient analysis during intervention, which can be explored further.

Keywords: Body mass index, Obesity, Weight loss

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