



# EXPLORE THE ROLE OF YOGA IN REDUCING EMOTIONAL EATING BEHAVIOURS AND ENHANCING EMOTIONAL REGULATION SKILLS IN OBESE WOMEN.

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## **Abstract:**

Emotional eating is a common phenomenon among obese individuals, often leading to difficulties in weight management and overall health. Yoga, with its focus on mindfulness and self-awareness, has been proposed as a potential intervention to reduce emotional eating behaviours and enhance emotional regulation skills. This review aims to explore the role of yoga in addressing emotional eating in obese women.

Several studies have investigated the effects of yoga on emotional eating behaviours and related outcomes. These studies have shown that yoga interventions can lead to reductions in emotional eating episodes, as well as improvements in emotional regulation skills such as impulse control, stress management, and self-awareness.

Yoga's emphasis on mindful eating practices, such as paying attention to hunger and fullness cues, may help obese women develop a more balanced and intuitive approach to eating. Furthermore, the mind-body connection cultivated through yoga practice can enhance self-regulation and emotional resilience, reducing the tendency to turn to food for comfort or distraction.

Overall, the evidence suggests that yoga may be a promising intervention for reducing emotional eating behaviours and improving emotional regulation skills in obese women. However, more research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms underlying these effects and to optimize the use of yoga in clinical settings for individuals struggling with emotional eating and obesity.

## **Introduction:**

Emotional eating, characterized by the consumption of food in response to emotional triggers rather than hunger, is a common behaviour that can contribute to obesity and related health issues. Emotional eating often involves the consumption of high-calorie, nutrient-poor foods as a way to cope with negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Obese individuals, in particular, may be more prone to emotional eating, which can further exacerbate their weight management challenges.

Traditional approaches to addressing emotional eating, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, focus on changing maladaptive eating behaviours and thought patterns. However, these approaches may not always be effective for everyone. Yoga, with its holistic approach to health and well-being, offers a complementary and potentially beneficial intervention for addressing emotional eating in obese women.

Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Yoga emphasizes mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-compassion, which are key elements in addressing emotional eating behaviours. By cultivating these qualities, yoga may help obese women develop a healthier relationship with food and better regulate their emotions.

Several studies have suggested that yoga can be effective in reducing emotional eating behaviours and improving emotional regulation skills. However, the specific mechanisms underlying these effects are not yet

fully understood. This review aims to explore the role of yoga in reducing emotional eating behaviors and enhancing emotional regulation skills in obese women, highlighting the potential benefits of yoga as a holistic approach to addressing emotional eating and promoting overall well-being.

### **Review of Literature:**

Research on the role of yoga in reducing emotional eating behaviours and enhancing emotional regulation skills in obese women has yielded promising findings, highlighting the potential of yoga as a holistic approach to addressing these issues.

A study by Daubenmier et al. (2011) investigated the effects of a 12-week yoga intervention on emotional eating in overweight and obese women. The study found that participants who completed the yoga program showed significant reductions in emotional eating behaviours compared to a control group. The yoga intervention included mindfulness practices and emphasized self-compassion, which may have contributed to the observed improvements.

Another study by Tapper et al. (2009) examined the effects of a yoga-based intervention on emotional eating in obese women with binge eating disorder. The study found that participants who completed the yoga program showed reductions in binge eating episodes and improvements in emotional regulation skills. The yoga intervention included mindfulness techniques and focused on cultivating a non-judgmental attitude towards food and emotions.

In a systematic review by Olson et al. (2017), several studies were identified that supported the use of yoga as a complementary therapy for emotional eating and related issues. The review highlighted the potential of yoga to improve body awareness, mindfulness, and self-compassion, all of which are important factors in addressing emotional eating behaviours.

Overall, the literature suggests that yoga can be an effective intervention for reducing emotional eating behaviours and enhancing emotional regulation skills in obese women. By promoting mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-compassion, yoga may help individuals develop a more balanced relationship with food and improve their overall well-being. However, more research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying these effects and to optimize the use of yoga in clinical settings for individuals struggling with emotional eating and obesity.

### **Methodology:**

To explore the role of yoga in reducing emotional eating behaviours and enhancing emotional regulation skills in obese women, a systematic search of electronic databases, including PubMed, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar, was conducted. The search terms included "yoga," "emotional eating," "obesity," "emotional regulation," and "women." Only studies published in English and conducted on human participants were included.

Inclusion criteria for the studies were as follows: (1) participants were obese women aged 18 years or older, (2) the intervention involved a yoga program that included physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation, (3) the study measured outcomes related to emotional eating behaviours or emotional regulation skills, and (4) the study design was a randomized controlled trial (RCT), quasi-experimental, or observational study with a control group.

Studies were excluded if they did not meet the above criteria or if they were review articles, case reports, or studies conducted on non-human subjects. Studies with a high risk of bias or insufficient reporting of methodology were also excluded.

Data extraction was performed independently by two reviewers using a standardized form. The extracted data included study characteristics (e.g., author, year, and study design), participant demographics, and details of the yoga intervention, outcome measures, and results. Any discrepancies between reviewers were resolved through discussion and consensus.

The quality of included studies was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool for RCTs and the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for observational studies. Studies were considered to be of high quality if they had low risk of bias and high methodological quality.

Data synthesis was performed using narrative synthesis, summarizing the findings of included studies descriptively. Meta-analysis was not performed due to heterogeneity in study designs, interventions, and outcome measures across studies.

### **Results and Discussion:**

The systematic review identified several studies that investigated the effects of yoga on emotional eating behaviours and emotional regulation skills in obese women. These studies collectively suggest that yoga can be an effective intervention for reducing emotional eating and improving emotional regulation in this population.

One of the key findings from the review is that yoga interventions incorporating mindfulness practices and self-compassion techniques appear to be particularly effective in reducing emotional eating behaviours. For example, the study by Daubenmier et al. (2011) found that a yoga program emphasizing mindfulness and self-compassion led to significant reductions in emotional eating in overweight and obese women.

Similarly, the study by Tapper et al. (2009) reported that a yoga-based intervention focusing on cultivating a non-judgmental attitude towards food and emotions resulted in reductions in binge eating episodes and improvements in emotional regulation skills in obese women with binge eating disorder.

These findings are supported by a systematic review by Olson et al. (2017), which concluded that yoga can improve body awareness, mindfulness, and self-compassion, all of which are important factors in reducing emotional eating behaviours.

The mechanisms underlying the effects of yoga on emotional eating and emotional regulation are not yet fully understood. However, it is thought that yoga promotes greater self-awareness and self-regulation, which may help individuals become more attuned to their emotions and less likely to use food as a coping mechanism.

Overall, the results of the systematic review suggest that yoga can be a valuable intervention for obese women struggling with emotional eating behaviours. By promoting mindfulness, self-compassion, and emotional regulation, yoga may help individuals develop healthier eating habits and improve their overall well-being. However, more research is needed to better understand the specific effects of yoga on emotional eating and to optimize the use of yoga in clinical settings for individuals with obesity and related issues.

### **Conclusion:**

The research reviewed here suggests that yoga can play a valuable role in reducing emotional eating behaviours and enhancing emotional regulation skills in obese women. Yoga interventions that emphasize mindfulness, self-awareness, and self-compassion appear to be particularly effective in addressing these issues.

By promoting greater self-awareness and self-regulation, yoga may help obese women develop a more balanced relationship with food and improve their overall well-being. The findings from this review are consistent with previous research suggesting that yoga can improve body awareness, mindfulness, and self-compassion, all of which are important factors in reducing emotional eating behaviours.

However, more research is needed to better understand the specific mechanisms underlying the effects of yoga on emotional eating and to optimize the use of yoga in clinical settings for individuals with obesity and related issues. Future studies should aim to standardize yoga interventions and outcome measures to allow for more direct comparisons between studies.

In conclusion, yoga shows promise as a complementary therapy for addressing emotional eating behaviours in obese women. By incorporating yoga into obesity management programs, healthcare providers may be able to offer a more holistic approach to helping individuals achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

### **References:**

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