

Identifying the cognitive functions using reaction time – a futuristic approach

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Letter to Editor

Dear Editors,

We read the article of Ghuntla, T.P., & Dholakiya, J.R. (2023) entitled *A meta-analysis of influence of yoga activities on reaction time as a component of skill related fitness* with great interest and gathered knowledge. They included five relevant articles, with yoga activities showing a standardized mean difference (SMD) of 3.06 (95% CI: -0.66–6.78, $p < 0.01$) for VRT and 2.86 (95% CI: -0.37–6.09, $p < 0.01$) for ART. These results highlight the potential of yoga as an effective means to enhance reaction times, with implications for sports performance and skill-related tasks.¹ The limited number of studies included in the meta-analysis may be attributed to the lack of portable reaction time (RT) devices. However, a recent development device called the PC 1000 Hz portable RT device has been validated² for estimating both visual reaction time (VRT) and auditory reaction time (ART),² and the findings are consistent. Several studies have utilized this device in various yoga interventions, reporting significant changes and affirming its simplicity, user-friendliness, and reliability. These findings pave the way for future research on yoga-related studies, leveraging this innovative technology.³⁻⁵

Keywords

- yoga
- reaction time
- cognitive functions

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We know that cognitive functions are influenced by language proficiency, attention span, information processing rate, age, gender, BMI, education, socioeconomic status, hormone problems, and concurrent diseases.³ Reaction time (RT) is a crucial component of information processing, used to measure an individual's sensory-motor performance. The human body reacts differently to stimuli, like auditory stimuli are reacted to more quickly than visual ones,⁴ RT is the time taken to perceive, process, and respond to sensory stimuli.^{4,6} RT measures the central nervous system's function, determining cortical arousal, performance, and motor-sensory connection, assessing a person's ability to quickly react to even the smallest changes.⁶

It is used as an indirect measure of the central nervous system's (CNS) capacity for perceptual cognitive processing.⁴ RT and critical flicker fusion frequency (CFFF) are widely used tests for assessing cognitive processes in learning and performance, often used in therapeutic settings due to affordability, simplicity, validity, and reliability.³ Yoga is a popular mind-body practice⁷ that focuses on breathing, meditation, and postures, it enhances cognitive abilities, affecting memory, learning, planning, and perception. Its breathing methods aid in processing visual and aural information, and improved reaction time is crucial for athletes, skilled workers, and surgeons to perform at their best.¹ The OM meditation and ujjayi pranayama, has been proven to enhance hearing and visual abilities in healthy individuals by reducing visual and auditory response times⁸ also can boost resilience and self-awareness.⁹ Mind body practices cognitive benefits, including enhanced sensory processing, highlight its role in optimizing performance and well-being.

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