Effect of Hatha Yoga on Stress and Recovery of Female Collegiate Athletes

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*Int J Exerc Sci* 2(1): S32, 2009. **PURPOSE:** To determine the acute effect of Hatha yoga participation on stress and recovery of collegiate female athletes (cross country, soccer and volleyball). **METHOD:** Twenty five healthy female athletes were randomly divided into two groups, experimental (Yoga, Y; n=14, age=19.3±1.3 years) and control (No Yoga, C; n=11, age=19.7±3.6 years). Hatha yoga was performed on four consecutive days, at 30-40 minutes per session, and consisted of breathing exercise, meditation, asanas/postures, sun salute, and relaxation. Participants continued usual training with their respective teams. The Recovery-Stress Questionnaire for Athletes (RESTQ-Sport) was completed 2 days before and one day after four consecutive days of yoga (Y) or no yoga (C). **RESULTS:** There was a significant decrease (p = .008) in global stress scores (2.58±.94 to 2.01±.68) for Y, but not C (2.60±.55 to 2.41±.85, p = .132). Global recovery scores for Y (2.86±.59 to 2.82±.00, p = .405) and C (2.95±.70 to 2.95±.61, p = .527) were unchanged pre to post. **CONCLUSION:** Hatha yoga practice appears to decrease stress in collegiate female athletes. Thus, appropriate incorporation in the training program may reduce negative effects of overtraining.