



## US Army turns to yoga for making soldiers combat ready

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**Washington** : US Army, the world's most hi-tech force is to introduce yoga to boost "combat readiness" of its troops to prepare them for tough operations globally.

Yoga is being made part of forces new fitness regimen already brought into force from March 1 in a drastic overhaul of the combat readiness being carried out for the first time in 30 years, Christian Science Monitor quoting Pentagon sources reported.

This is not the first time that the US Army has turned to yoga since the outbreak of the Gulf war and battle in Afghanistan, the army has been using the ancient Indian meditation art to treat cases of "Post-traumatic Stress Disorders" (PTSD) reported from these battles.

Experts said soldiers who took to yoga had reported remarkable results in suppressing PTSD and mental tensions reported in large number of cases at military bases like Fort Jackson, the official US military website has reported.

Alison Thirkield, a clinical psychologist with Joint Mental Health Services said, "Yoga uses meditation, deep relaxation, gentle stretching and breathing to reduce physical, emotional and mental tension. It has been found to be useful in helping people to deal with anxiety caused by traumatic events."

"Yoga is a different way of getting in and trying to address these symptoms. Yoga can teach soldiers very concrete relaxation strategies. It's grounded in many of the same principles that therapy is grounded in," Thirkield said.

Now, with wide experience of using the yoga to cure its soldiers of war disorders, the US Army is going further to make it a part of physical regimens for incoming soldiers.

"The new army physical curriculum which will incorporate yoga was being phased in over the next six months at several bases," General Mark Hertling, Deputy Commanding General for military training at the Army's Training and Doctrine Command has said.

"It's yoga-like, it's like Pilates... and Frankly, it is all those things," Hertling said.

He said tough training leads to stress, fractures and other injuries. Hence, the new doctrine is a departure from how the army tests its soldiers.