

Yoga for Lifestyle Changes

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“If you must be mad, be it not for the materialistic things of the world, be mad with the love of Yoga.”

B.K.S. Iyengar

The purpose of life is to lead a happy life. Yoga promotes lifestyle for happiness. Maintaining good health is the very foundation of a happy life. Physical inactivity, smoking, alcohol, stress and unhealthy food are the major reasons for all lifestyle problems. The problems may be related to health, finances, relationships or emotions. Bad lifestyle can raise levels of cortisol secreted in adrenal gland which in turn affect the secretion of dopamine, the mood elevating hormone in the brain. Over secretion of cortisol trigger physiological changes such as spikes in blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar. Yoga is a way of life and the main remedy for all sufferings. Today, lifestyle changes are the need of the hour.

According to the 2019 edition of the Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index, India is placed at 120th rank among 169 countries related to measures such as mortality by communicable and non-communicable diseases and life expectancy. India spends less per person in comparison to US. Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal ranked better than India.

Physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. Unhealthy diet was the second biggest factor in India driving most deaths and disability combined, after malnutrition. Food borne diseases cost India \$ 15 billion. According to World Health Organization, there is

no improvement in global levels of physical activity since 2001. People with a sedentary lifestyle are twice at risk than the physically active ones.

Lifestyle Changes Include

- Absence of disease
- Optimal physical fitness
- Proper nutrition
- Spirituality
- Smoking cessation
- Stress management
- Substance abuse control
- Health Education
- Environmental support

Yoga is the science of a being's evolution. It is the science of activating inner energies; blossoming of human potential to its fullness is yoga; the balance of intellectualism is yoga; Yoga is health insurance at Zero budget; Yoga is a passport to health assurance;

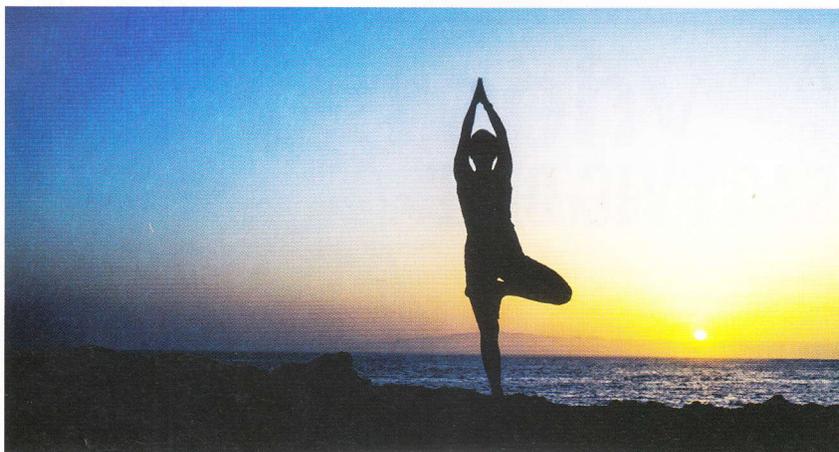
Yoga is secular nature and science; Yoga is technology or science of inner evolution for total well-being. Yoga is a well- balanced and perfect process for success and peace in life. Yoga is an integral part of the total healthcare approach. Yoga is a powerful antidote to the stresses of modern daily life. Yoga has three principles: purification, concentration and liberation. According to Yoga Sutras, “Yoga sutures the wounds of life.”

Assessing Fitness

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that adults between the ages of 18 to 64 years should do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week. Children and youth aged 6-17 years should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily. We have to keep in mind that 65 per cent of India's population is



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under the age of 35; 50 per cent of India's population is under the age of 25. Future India should be healthy and fit.

The present trend of assessing fitness is known as metabolic fitness like: Blood Glucose level should be around 85mg/dl; Blood Pressure should be around 115/76 mm; Body Mass Index should be between 18.5 and 24.9 units; Total cholesterol at 200 mg/dl or less; HDL at 60 mg/dl or above; LDL under 100 mg/dl; Triglycerides at 100 mg/dl or less; Pulse rate should be below 72 counts; Genetic fitness test (40 genes) helps to improve fitness, health and nutrition.

Special Features of Yogic Practices

- Prayer cleanses the blockages in the small intestine through brain signals and activates the vibrations in the brain particularly the hypothalamus; increases blood flow to the brain and promotes gamma waves;
- Kriyas perfect autonomous nervous system; balance three doshas (vata- nervous system; pita – digestive system; Kapha – respiratory system); eliminate toxins;
- Pawanmuktasana Series (simple physical exercises)
 - ✓ increase synovial fluid;
 - ✓ stretch ligaments and tendons;
 - ✓ promote immunity power and brain function;

- ✓ flush out excess free radicals;
- ✓ thickness and quality of cartilage improved;
- ✓ flush out excess calcium-oxalate solidness.
- Surya Namaskar and asanas balance the secretion of hormones (regulates specific human systems);
- Mudras perfect cerebro spinal fluid to flush out waste products
- Pranayama maximizes endurance and removes toxins; cures all diseases; balances earth, water, fire and air elements and activates electrical activity
- Bandhas activate central nervous system
- Meditation is for the purification of mind; it activates space elements; leads to thoughtless stage; blood flow increases; set right biological clock; genes perfected by activating hypothalamus
- Yoga helps to get the qualities of total well-being
- Blessings activate the dopamine system in the brain.

Benefits of Eight Limbs of Ashtang Yog

Yama and Niyama promote the psychological qualities (siddhis) such as Clair Voyance (future), Clair audience (sound), Premonition (unpleasant

incident) bad happening, Clair empathy (sensing emotion), Intuition (inner knowledge), Telepathy (reads others thoughts), Psychic healing (curing), Auric sight (other colors), Psycho kenetics (move objects), Mental influence (influencing others), Psychometry (getting information of others). Asanas give steel like body; promote immunity power.

Pranayama Awakens Kundalini Sakthi.

Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan and Samathi focus to get

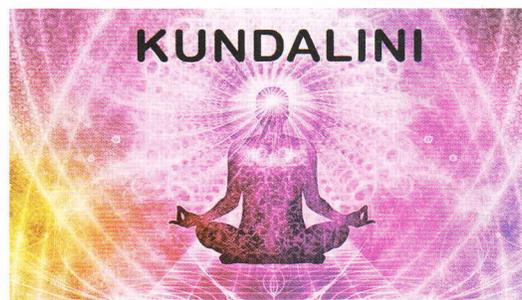
- the strength of an elephant
- the glow of the sun
- the beauty of the moon
- working of internal organs
- ability to become invisible and even weightless and more

The signs of Samadhi state (higher consciousness) include

- fewer breaths
- fewer thoughts
- a sense of inner peace and joy
- reduced extremes of emotions
- a feeling that they were not encased within the limits of a physical body
- enhancement of strength of will and perseverance
- appreciable behaviour

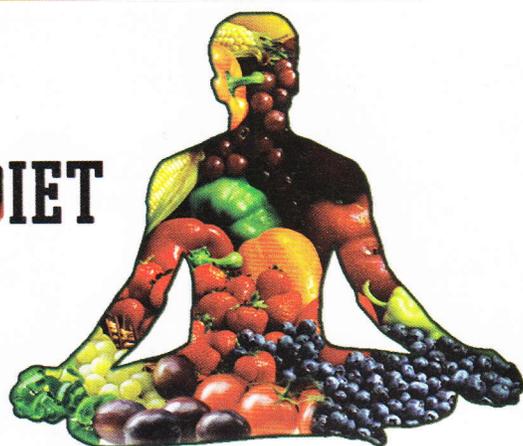
Yogic practices are considered as perfect exercises because they are more natural by using the stored energy from the body itself.

Scientific findings on Yoga are: Yogic practices enhance gray matter for cognition and white matter for



communication; Enhance white matter to avoid depression which is the number one reason for ill-health; Yogic practices promote Neurogenesis in which stem cells become matured cells; Yogic practices improve the responsiveness of immune cells called neutrophils to a bacterial challenge; Optogenetics-A technique that uses light to erase bad memory and to enhance good ones by controlling Neuron activity. Yoga acts as the natural process of optogenetics; Metabolic process of food and exercise is known as thermogenesis. Yoga promotes natural thermogenesis; Period gene, timeless gene and double time gene are to control circadian rhythm (biological clock). Circadian disruptions lead to obesity and autism. Yogic practices switch over on and off the gene. The process of changing the shape and functioning of genes is known as epigenetics; Yogic practices activate the natural process of preventing DNA damage as cells ageing and death is known as Chromatin silencing; Natural autophagy (cell recycling) occurs due to yoga; Yogic practices help to have more cortical thickness in the left prefrontal cortex of the brain to promote cognitive functions like memory and attention; Yogic practices help to form new angiogenic blood vessels in the body; maintains different parts of the body in a stable and balanced way to reverse aging (homeostatis); Promotes bio-energetics (transforms energy to the brain and the neurons).

SATTVIC DIET



Samadhi state in Ashtanga Yoga is nothing but activating blissfulness that is happiness. Yoga promotes happiness. Amritha is a deep red liquid secreted by the pineal gland which produces and stimulates the blissful state called Anandam. Anadamide, the bliss molecule and a neurotransmitter in the brain creates a state of accentuated happiness. This neurotransmitter is activated by yogic practices. It is not constantly active. A sadhana using special techniques of personal evolution could activate production of anadamide. Balanced secretion of hormones lead to proper electrical activities, in turn proper electrical activities keep our biological clock intact. Biological clock is perfected by genes also; Genes are purified by Yogic practices. Biological clock is the heart of one's life. Yogic

practices perfect biological clock to lead a happy life.

Notable Benefits of Sattvic Diet

Sattvic diet promotes life, virtue, strength, health, performance, happiness, purification of inner being and satisfaction- Bhagavad Gita.

Half cup of beans provide as much protein as an ounce of meat. Nuts (mainly almonds and walnuts), seeds, pumpkin seeds and avocados contain omega-3 fatty acids, which are in nerve sheaths, to protect nerves and cognitive functioning (memory) as in fish and chicken and to overcome neurological disorders. Milk, curd and dal provide as much protein as in chicken. Soya beans contain twice as much protein as beef. Jack fruit is as good as pork and meat. Groundnuts have two and half times more protein than eggs. Vitamin B12 which is mainly gained from non-veg items can also be gained from curd, butter milk, cereals and other dairy products to make red blood cells.

General Yogic Practices for Proper Lifestyle

Suryanamaskar, Trikonasana, Sirsasana, Halasana, Sarvangasana, Suptavajrasana, Dhanurasana, Ushtrasana, Navasana, Ardha matsyendrasana, Paschimottanasana, Kapalbhata in Padmasana, Bhastrika Pranayama in Vajrasana, Nadi Shodhana Pranayama in Siddhasana and Meditation. □

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