

By Minoo Jokhi



Renowned American author Jack Canfield correctly said:

"Your habits will determine your future." One good habit, which is a complete essential in today's hectic and stressful world is yoga and meditation.

The world over Yoga International Day is celebrated every year on June 21. What is exactly Yoga? It is not merely a system of physical exercise but a complete total way of life. It helps a person remain healthy and retain mental balance in difficult and adverse situations. Yoga creates the essential framework of living a life full of harmony, which is enjoyable and worth living.

Stress reduction, body awareness, self-confidence, memory improvement... yes, yoga is a very essential and useful tool to increase memory and concentration. Yoga prevents forgetfulness by making an individual calm and cool and also improves the person's focus and concentration. It can also improve your powers of recall by increasing circulation to your brain. And the greatest advantage for school and college students is that they gain complete self-mastery as well as realize their true self-identity. Yoga is the tool through which an individual can gain self-realization.

As a child grows up and goes to a higher standard, yoga helps to manage the child's discipline, which helps the child to study better and more productively. Yoga is a wonderful holistic science, promoting specific techniques for integrated development of one's being—be it physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

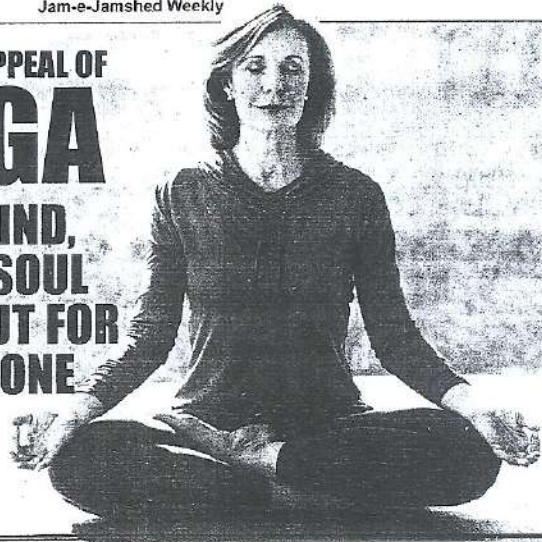
Aside from the physical benefits, one of the best benefits of yoga is how it helps a person manage stress, which is known to have devastating effects on the body and mind. Yoga is very effective in developing coping skills and attaining a more positive outlook on life.

Regular practice of yoga ensures sound health, sharp intellect, youthful looks and abundant energy. Yoga breathing exercises (Pranayam) are very powerful since they work as a tonic to reduce stress.

Insomnia, emotional imbalance, headache etc.

ETERNAL APPEAL OF YOGA

THE MIND, BODY, SOUL WORKOUT FOR EVERYONE



Importance Of Yoga

Yoga is indeed a must for all of us for a variety of reasons as listed under:

Yoga teaches us the philosophy: "Be where you are, not where you think you should be." Yoga literally is "joining" or "union" from the Sanskrit root 'yuj'. Union with the Supreme Being or any practice that makes for such union is fantastic. And meditation is that medium, which unites the individual spirit with God, the supreme spirit. The name of the philosophy is expounded by the sage Patanjali, teaching the process of union of the individual with the

universal soul.

One wonderful exercise is to take a deep breath and then let it out, and then you keep on breathing deeply and slowly a few more times. While doing this focus your attention on nothing but the groups of your muscle starting with your forehead and then relax those muscles... go on to your shoulder muscles, then your stomach, legs,

feet, toes. This systemic relaxation will bring on a kind of meditative state in a matter of few minutes.

Another wonderful asana is 'Brahmamudra' where you sit in a yogic posture and close your eyes and move your head in all four directions.

The 'Child's Pose' is a very well-known yoga exercise, because it releases a lot of tension in the lower back. Start by kneeling on a yoga mat and lean back so you are sitting on your heels. Make sure your knees are little apart and then very slowly bend forward as you exhale, so that your torso is in between your thighs. Tuck in your chin slightly so that you're not straining your neck. And you can either let your arms stretch out in front of you or let them go down at your sides, so that your hands are near your feet. Stay in this position for as long as you feel comfortable and make sure that you are focusing on your breath.

Try doing this and all yoga asanas regularly for life long benefit. Truly, yoga is a great blessing.

It is observed that individuals normally

confine yoga only to asanas, pranayama and meditation. But in reality, the yogic way of living overall is most important from the healing point of view. Yoga helps you to express yourself.

Yoga is the means whereby we may break through the limitations of everyday consciousness and reach a state of serenity within and harmony without.

Yoga has a message for all; it has a message for the human body, human soul, for all of humanity and, importantly, for the human mind. It immensely contributes to peace of mind and tranquility.

As late American author Norman Vincent Peale had rightly commented: "The life of inner peace, being harmonious and without stress, is the easiest type of existence."

Being in a state of peace with oneself, devoted to one's higher self is Meditation.

Always remember to have a steady mind; otherwise meditation is not possible. The main purpose of yoga is to create a sense of oneness in the psyche of human beings. It enables removal of many distractions you may encounter and aids in the physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects of human personality.

Yoga treats human body as a microcosm of the universe. Various yoga asanas and pranayama and meditation help individuals of all ages to bring about a complete inner balance. Yoga is vital for all—healthy person and also not-so-healthy person. Also, students doing yoga sincerely do see an increase in their marks.

Yoga is widely considered as an "immortal cultural outcome" of the Indus Saraswati Valley Civilisation dating back to 2700 BC. It works on the level of one's body, mind, emotion and energy.

Four classifications of yoga include: Karma Yoga where body is utilized; Jnana Yoga where mind is utilized; Bhakti Yoga where emotion is utilized; and Kriya Yoga where energy is utilized.

On an average 80-90 % of all individuals who practice yoga sincerely see their stress levels reduced immensely. Yoga helps a person's body to slow down, especially when the asanas are complimented with deep focused breathing. Indeed, with so many benefits, one must religiously do yoga sincerely and with 100 percent commitment always.

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