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Yoga and Disease

Yoga and Health have become a universal combination that reflects the idea of complete well being.

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‘Where there is a health, there is happiness’ and yoga can play a significant role to acquire this happiness. According to yoga health is an integrated state of body, mind and spirit. There is a harmony in all the psycho-physiological functions. It is well coordinated and balanced condition of body and mind wherein the homeostasis is adequately maintained. Therefore a feeling of happiness and contentment are essential factors for sound health. Diseases, on the other hand arise when dissatisfaction, frustration and dejection are dominant. Although the primary objective of yoga is spiritual advancement, it has been observed that many psychosomatic disorders are controlled best with the help of yoga practices and the persons who practice yoga regularly (Sadhana), can very well maintain their health, throughout their life. This indicates that the resistance power against the diseases i.e. immunity is improved due to the regular practice of yoga. The long life span of the yoga practitioners also indicates that the yoga practice can slow down the aging process.

Today, several people are resorting to this preventive and promoting aspect of yoga. There however is a growing tendency to apply yogic methods as the last resort for each and every disease, irrespective of its severity, duration and the age of the patient. This is however a wrong concept of yoga therapy.

In order to stay away from diseases yoga lays emphasis on the following steps:

- Purification of ‘nadis’ by removing the obstructing toxins from the body.
- Reconditioning of the neuro-muscular and glandular system so that adequate immunity is regained.

- Cultivation of proper psychological attitude so as to increase the ability of the individual to cope with the stressful situation if any.

Every living being is well equipped with the healing power. Yoga recuperates this natural strength of the body and mind to eliminate disturbing factors. Thus, yoga supports and enhances this healing power by maintaining the equilibrium or homeostasis, through the development of optimum muscle tone. This, in turn, provides proper mental relaxation.

Yoga, thus, has the power to heal various diseases. People suffering from diseases, like, Arthritis, Osteoporosis, spinal problems can resort to yoga as it activates the muscular system. Yoga also helps to shape long, lean muscles. Another common pain is back pain. It causes tightness and spinal compression. Yoga, through increased flexibility and strength, can help prevent the causes of some types of back pain. Apart from the muscular system, yoga contributes to the respiratory system as well.



Breathing shallowly into the lungs and not giving much attention to the pattern of personal breathing is a common characteristic of most individuals. Yogic practices, like Pranayama, focus on the breathing process and thus, teach one how to use the lungs in a better way. Certain types of breathing exercises can also help to clear the nasal passages and even calm the central nervous system.



Yoga improves the circulatory, muscular, cardiovascular, endocrine, respiratory and other systems in human body. But traditionally yoga is not related to aerobic fitness the way running or cycling are. Most forms of yoga emphasise deepening and lengthening the breath. This stimulates the relaxation response and the opposite of the fight-or-flight adrenaline boost of the stress response. Perhaps one of the most wanted and treasured health benefits of yoga is its effect on heart diseases. Yoga has long been known to lower blood pressure and slow the heart rate. A slower heart rate can benefit people with hypertension, heart disease, and stroke. On a biochemical level, studies point to a possible anti-oxidant effect of yoga. And yoga has been associated with decreased cholesterol and triglyceride levels as well as a boost in immune system function.

Practice of Yoga, although, intensely physical, yet it has immense psychological effect. Concentrating so intently on what the body is doing has the effect of bringing calmness to the

mind. Yoga also introduces its students to meditation techniques, such as, watching how the person breathes and disengages from the thoughts, which help calm the mind. These procedures often heal heart problems. It is known that physical activity is always good for relieving stress, and this is particularly true in case of yoga. Because of the concentration required, a person's daily troubles, both large and small, seem to melt away during the time one practices yoga. This provides a much-needed break from the stressors, as well as helping put things into perspective.

Among yoga's anti-stress benefits lies an array of biochemical responses. Some research points to a boost in the hormone oxytocin. This is the so-called "trust" and "bonding" hormone that is associated with feeling of staying relaxed and connected to others. Yoga benefits a human body and mind in countless ways. Concentration and the ability to focus mentally are common benefits the yoga students talk about. The complicated mental diseases like depression, fear, anxiety and so on can be cured by Yoga within no time. Yoga is even being studied as an adjunct therapy to relieve symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Yogic therapy is used also used to treat specific medical conditions, from clinical depression to heart disease. Yoga is also beneficial for other diseases like asthma, gastritis, cancer, arthritis, insomnia, multiple sclerosis and others. Some studies have suggested that yoga may have a positive effect on learning and memory. Other researchers have been studying whether yoga can slow the aging process, increase a person's sense of self-acceptance, or improve energy levels as well. Some potential benefits of yoga are difficult to title scientifically. Yoga considerably increases spiritual awareness as well.

The results of yoga therapy, however, will vary from individual to individual. These results depend on two factors: the technique of yoga practices and the constitution and nature of the patient. For the desired effects from the yoga therapy one should ensure that the technique adopted is correct from the traditional as well as the scientific point of view. Useful physiological changes only take place when the proper techniques are followed. For this one would require a yoga guru. Besides this, the disordered physical, mental and spiritual state of the patient, known as, Prakriti, should be considered before beginning the healing process. Most of the time, the preliminary reconditioning of the individual patient is necessary before starting the main yogic treatment.

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