

Role of Yoga in Promotion of Health

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Introduction

Ayurveda believes in concept of prevention is better than cure.

As stated by Acharya Charak-
Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam.
Aaturasya vikara prashamanamch.

Ch.su.30/26

Considering the motto of Ayurveda, the subject swasthavritta mainly deals with prevention and promotion of every individual of their physical, mental and social health.

Yoga is an old discipline from India. It is both spiritual and physical. Yoga uses breathing techniques, exercise and meditation. It claims to improve health and happiness.

Ayurveda have been developed as the methods of bodily purification. The aim of Yoga is to cleanse the internal organs and thereby create harmony between the major panic flow, Ida and Pingala and attending physical and mental purification and balance.

According to both Ayurveda and Hatha Yoga, an imbalance of the Doshas will result in illness. In Yoga, we try to protect ourselves from injury and attempt to avoid harming ourselves by overindulging in unhealthy foods.

The true essence of Yoga revolves around elevating the life force or 'Kundalini' at the base of the Spine. It aims to

achieve this through a series of physical and mental exercises. At the physical level, the methods comprise various Yoga posture or 'Asanas' that aim to keep the body healthy. The mental techniques include breathing exercises or 'Pranayama' and meditation or 'Dhyana' to discipline the mind.

The ultimate goal of Yoga is, however, to help the individual to transcend the self and attain enlightenment. As the Bhagavad Gita says,

Samtvam yoga uchyate.

Bhagvad Gita 2/48

Yogaha karmasu kaushalam.

Bhagvad Gita 2/50

A person is said to have achieved Yoga, the union with the self, when the perfectly disciplined mind gets freedom from all desires and becomes absorbed in the self alone.

The modern lifestyle lures us with comfort and convenience, in the form of gadgets & gizmos that have become vital to our daily lives. But, it comes with a big price tag and we pay for it with lifestyle diseases like obesity, hypertension & cardiac problems among the others.

In this modern world, our environment is fighting for survival and we human suffer from more & more physical and psychological stress, we cannot always control them but can learn how to face them and to this end Yoga is as good an invention it has ever been.

Review of Yoga

Importance of Yoga

Yoga is not a religion; it is a way of living that aims towards 'a healthy mind in a healthy body.'

Yogic exercises recharge the body with cosmic energy and facilitates:

- ♦ Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony
- ♦ Promotes self-healing
- ♦ Removes negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
- ♦ Enhances personal power
- ♦ Increases self-awareness
- ♦ Help in attention, focus and concentration, especially important for children
- ♦ Reduces stress and tension in the physical body by activating the parasympathetic nervous system

Yogic Practices for Health and Wellness

The art of practicing Yoga helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. It improves respiration, energy and vitality.

The widely practiced Yoga Sadhanas are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi, Bandhas and Mudras, Shatkarmas, Yuktahara, Mantra-japa, Yukta-karma etc.

Yamas are restraints and Niyamas are observances. These are considered to be prerequisites for further Yogic practices. Asanas capable of bringing about stability of body and mind.

Sthir sukhamasanam.

Pa.yo.da. 2/46

Pranayama consist of developing awareness of one's

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breathing followed by willful regulation of respiration as the functional or vital basis of one's existence.

Pranayamo vayornirodhaha.
Dalhan Su.u. 50/16

Pratyahara indicates dissociation of one's consciousness from the sense organs which connect with the external objects.

Dharana indicates broad based field of attention which is usually understood as concentration.

Deshaschittabandhasya dharana
Pa.yo.da. 3/1

Dhyana is contemplation (focused attention inside the body and mind) and Samadhi (integration).

Bandhas and Mudras are practices associated with Pranayama. They are viewed as the higher Yogic practices that mainly adopt certain physical gestures along with control over respiration. This further facilitates control over mind and paves way for higher Yogic attainment.

Shatkarmas are detoxification procedures that are clinical in nature and help to remove the toxins accumulated in the body.

Yuktahara advocates appropriate food and food habits for healthy livings.

Benefits of Yoga

Weight loss, a strong body and flexible body, glowing beautiful skin, peaceful mind, good health- whatever you may be looking for, Yoga has it on offer.

1. All round fitness
Health is not a mere absence of disease. It is a dynamic expression of life - in term of how joyful, loving and enthusiastic you are. This is where Yoga helps; posture, Pranayam and meditation are holistic fitness package.

- ◆ Improves health
- ◆ Gives mental strength

- ◆ Improves physical strength
- ◆ Protection from injury
- ◆ Detoxifies body

2. Yoga for weight loss
Sun salutations and Kapalbhatai Pranayama helps lose weight with Yoga.

3. Yoga for stress relief
A few minutes of Yoga during the day can be a great way to get rid of stress that accumulates daily in both the body and mind. Yoga postures, Pranayama and meditation are effective techniques to release stress.

4. Yoga for inner peace
It is one of the best ways to calm a disturbed mind.

5. Yoga to improve immunity
An irregularity in the body affects the mind and similarly unpleasantness or restlessness in the mind can manifest as an ailment in the body. Yoga poses message organs and strengthens muscles, breathing techniques and meditation releases stress and improve immunity.

6. Yoga to live with greater awareness
Yoga and Pranayama help to create that awareness and bring the mind back to present moment where it can stay happy and focused.

7. Yoga for better relationships
Yoga can even help improve your relationships. A mind that is relaxed, happy and contented is better able to deal with sensitive relationship matters. Yoga and meditation keeps the mind happy and peaceful.

8. Yoga to increase energy

9. Yoga for better flexibility and posture
Regular Yoga practice stretches and tones the body muscles and also makes them strong. It also helps improve your body

posture when you stand, sit, sleep or walk. This would in turn help to relieve you of body pain due to correct posture.

10. Yoga to improve intuition
Yoga and meditation have the power to improve your intuitive ability so that you spontaneously realize what needs to be done, when and how.

Discussion

Modern lifestyle has lost the harmony in mind-body relationship which has caused several stress based disease and cancer. An attempt to prevent and treat these diseases triggered a search for better lifestyle and better strategies that converged on the rediscovery of ancient disciplines such as Yoga. Yoga has technical systems to help calm the mind, maintain resilience, harness physical and mental energies and to develop an integrated personality.

Conclusion

Health is not mere absence of disease. It is a dynamic expression of life- in terms of how joyful, loving and enthusiastic you are. Causes of sickness or ill health are generally noted as impurities on the level of mind body and speech. Body mind and spirit are like tripod -even if one aspect isn't functioning properly, our life will not be balanced and that will lead to ill health. Yoga creates a harmony by aligning all the three components into one. Yoga is an integral part of our lifestyle. It removes the impurities from the level of mind and unites everything with the spirit. In this way Yoga plays important role in promotion of health.

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