

UNIT-5

Yoga

Meaning and importance of yoga

The term yoga is derived from a Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means join or union. In fact, joining the individual self with the divine or universal spirit is called yoga. It is a science of development of man's Consciousness.

Patanjali - "Checking the impulse of mind is yoga".

Maharishi Veda Vyas - "Yoga is attaining the pose".

In Bhagwat Gita, Lord Krishna says, "Skill in action or efficiency alone is yoga.

Importance of yoga:

- Physical purity
- Cure and prevention from diseases
- Reduces mental tension
- Healthy body
- Provides relaxation
- Helps maintain the correct posture of body
- Yoga can be performed easily
- Spiritual development
- Increases flexibility
- Reduces obesity
- Improves health
- Enhances moral and ethical values

Elements of Yoga

The main aim of yoga is to control over the mind. This is Possible only follow to eight-fold Paths or eight steps also known as "Astanga Yoga". This system was developed by Maharashi Patanjali.

- Yama: First element of astanga yoga. Yama consists of five moral codes of conduct.
 - a) Ahimsa (non-violence): One must keep away from causing harm to any organism or human being.
 - b) Satya (truthfulness): We must be truthful in thought, word and deed. We must not tell a lie. We must abstain from falseness of any kind.

- c) Asteya: Asteya means non-stealing. The propensity to use others' objects, money or thoughts for our own benefits is stealing. We must abstain from it.
- d) Brahmacharya: not to take a diet that stimulates sexual desire, not to read pornographic or sex related literature, and no to indulge in sexual relations is called brahmacharya.
- e) Aparigraha: It means to lead a life with minimum requirements.
- Niyama: Is related to individual's body and senses. These are also ethical practices as yamas. There are five niyamas.
- a) Saucha: means purity. We must be clean physically as well as mentally. We must keep our body clean externally and internally. For the purity of internal organs there are six shudhi kriyas or shatkarmas.
- b) Santosh: It means contentment. We must develop a feeling of satisfaction in all situations of life.
- c) Tapa: To endure the difficulties, obstacles and complex situations easily in the way of attaining the objective and to go ahead continuously towards the goal is called tapa.
- d) Swadhyaya: To study the great Vedas, Granths, Upanishads, Yogdarshan and Gita with devotion is called swadhyaya.
- e) Ishwara Pranidhana: To dedicate all the deeds to God is called Ishwara Pranidhana.
- Asana: Asana means position or posture of the body. It is also meaning to sit in easy posture. Asanas are performed to keep the body flexible, agile and young. There are various types of asanas such as corrective asanas, relaxative asanas and meditative asanas.
 - Pranayama: Pranayama is the controlling of the process of breathing. It means the appropriate control over inhalation and exhalation. There are three constituents of pranayama, i.e., Puraka, Rechaka and Kumbhaka.
 - Pratyahara: Pratyahara is a process of self-control in which an individual is able to exercise control over his/her senses. Indeed, to control the mind and senses is called Pratyahara.
 - Dharana: Dharana is a concentration of mind. It is a first step towards Samadhi. It is a mental exercise which enables a yogi to go ahead towards Dhyana and Samadhi.
 - Dhyana: Dhyana is a process of complete constancy of mind. It is a stage prior to Samadhi. Dhyana is a complete concentration of mind over a period of time without any distraction.
 - Samadhi: The union of individual's soul with the supreme soul is called Samadhi. It is also called the checking or destruction of all the impulses of mind. During the

stage of Dhyana, when the disappearance of self-awareness takes place, the yogi or yogini attains the stage of Samadhi. He/she begins to feel the real truth. He/she forgets himself/herself completely. He/she begins to experience the divine pleasure.

Introduction to Asanas, Pranayam, meditation & yogic Kriyas

Asana: According to Patanjali Means "Sthiram Sukham Asanam" i.e. that possible which is comfortable and steady."

Classification of asanas:

- Meditative asanas: Padmasana, Sidhasana and Samasana are the main asanas of meditative asanas. By performing these asanas, the meditation power of an individual is enhanced. The practice of these asanas should be done before performing meditation. Meditation is done by remaining constant in these asanas.
- Relaxative asanas: Shavasana and Makarasana are the main asanas of relaxative asanas. The practice of these asanas removes fatigue and relaxes an individual physically and mentally. An individual gets complete relaxation after performing such asanas
- Cultural or corrective asanas: Matsyasana, Halasana, bhujangasana etc., are the prominent asanas of cultural or corrective asanas. These types of asanas regulate and systematize different activities of the body and finally provide energy to the body to perform pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, etc.

Pranayama: The word Pranayama is comprised of two words "Prana Plus Ayama" Prana means life force and Ayama means control. In this way pranayama means "The control or regulation of Prana". There are three parts of pranayama.

- ✓ Puraka means inhalation
- ✓ Rechaka means exhalation
- ✓ Kumbhaka means retaining of the breath. There are two types of Kumbhaka.

a) Internal Kumbhaka: To retain the breath after complete inhalation.

b) External Kumbhaka: To retain the breath after complete exhalation.

Types of pranayama:

- Suryabhedhi
- Ujjayi
- Sheetkari
- Sheetli
- Bhastrika
- Bhramari
- Plavini
- morchha

Meaning of Meditation: Dhyana or meditation is the prior stage of Samadhi.

It is a process of complete stability of mind.

According to patanjali, "The concentration of chitta (mind) on an impulse (vritti) without any divergence, is called dhyana". The concentration and the process of thinking on any subject or object are called 'Dhyana'.

Meaning of Shatkarmas or Sudhi kriyas: The human body is just like a machine. Similar to a machine which requires inner and outer cleanliness for smooth and systematic functioning, human machine also needs inner and outer cleanliness for proper functioning. The inner cleanliness of our body can be done properly by shudhi kriyas which are called shatkarmas it means six actions. These are the following shatkarmas/shudhi kriyas:

- ✓ Neti
- ✓ Dhouti
- ✓ Basti
- ✓ Nauli
- ✓ Tratak
- ✓ Kapalbhata

Yoga for Concentration and Related Asanas (Sukhasana, Tadasana, Padmasana, Shashankasana, Vrikshasana, Garudasana and Naukasana)

We all know about the amazing health benefits of Yoga, but the greatest thing amongst all is that Yoga works on changing our internal make-up.

According to a recent study conducted at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, practicing Yoga daily for 20 minutes can improve brain function and actually focus better on daily task at hand.

Yoga helps in improving concentration and focus by calming the mind and getting rid of distracting thoughts.

Here are 5 easiest effective Yoga asanas you need to try to boost concept rating and jump start your brain.

1. Tadasana (Mountain pose)
2. Vrikshasana (Tree pose)
3. Savasana (Corpse pose)
4. Padmasana (Lotus pose)
5. Bhramari Pranayama

SUKHASANA

Sukhasana or the easy sitting pose is one of the simplest poses for meditation suited for all beginners. Sukhasana comes from the Sanskrit work 'Sukham' which can mean 'comfort',

'easy', 'joyful', 'pleasure', etc. Sukhasana can be done by all age groups.

Benefits:

- ✓ It is a good meditation posture.
- ✓ It improves concentration and posture.
- ✓ Increases the glandular functioning.
- ✓ Improves leg strength and flexibility
- ✓ Cures arthritis and knock-knees
- ✓ Calms the mind
- ✓ Reduces stress and anxiety

Contraindications: The individuals who have knee injury should not perform this asana for long duration.

TADASANA (MOUNTAIN POSE)

This asana is like the base or the mother of all asanas; from within the other asanas emerge. Tadasana increases the levels of oxygen in the spinal cord and frontal part of the brain". It improves concentration and boosts energy. The word 'Tada' is come from the Sanskrit word, which meaning is 'palm tree' or another meaning is mountain and meaning of asana is posture or 'seal' so this asana is called Tadasana. Tadasana is the beginning and ending asana of Surya Namaskar according to Astanga Yoga. This is the best exercise to increase the height.

Benefits:

- ✓ Improves concentration of mind and body posture.
- ✓ It is helpful in developing physical and mental balance.
- ✓ It reduces obesity.
- ✓ It cures constipation and digestive problems.
- ✓ It alleviates sciatica.
- ✓ It is an excellent asana for those who want to enhance their height.

- ✓ It is beneficial in treating hypertension.

Contraindications:

- ✓ If you have low blood pressure you should not practice this asana.
- ✓ In case of headache or insomnia you should avoid practicing this asana.
- ✓ Individuals, who suffer from blood circulation problems such as faulty valves, should not perform this asana.

Shashankasana (Hare Pose)

The Sanskrit name for Hare pose is Shashankasana. The meaning of 'Shashank' is moon. Shashank itself is made up of two words 'shash' meaning 'hare, and 'ank' meaning 'lap'. The Shashankasana pose is said to benefit the practitioners by helping in calming the nerves and providing a feeling of tranquility.

Benefits:

- ✓ It releases pressure on the discs
- ✓ Regular practice relieves constipation
- ✓ The spine gets a forward stretch and becomes flexible and strong
- ✓ It also controls diabetes.
- ✓ It increases the memory power.

Contraindications: Those individuals who are suffering from high blood pressure or slipped disc should not perform this asana.

Padmasana (Lotus Pose)

The word Padmasana is a Sanskrit word which means "lotus flower" so it's also known as the "Lotus pose". It is so called because of the lotus-like formation which is made by our legs during this asana. Another name of Padmasana is "kamalasan". The word Kamal is a Hindi word which means a lotus flower. It is a yogic exercise in which one crosses the legs while maintaining a straight posture. It is an important position for meditation.

Benefits:

- ✓ It increases the focus of mind and concentration.

- ✓ It calms the brain
- ✓ It helps to relax the body
- ✓ It helps in reducing abdominal fat
- ✓ It helps in reducing blood pressure and muscular tension
- ✓ This asana is the base for all asanas and it straightens hip and knees.

Contraindications: Those individuals who suffer from sciatica or weak or injured knees should not practice this asana. This asana should not be practiced until you have good flexibility of your knees.

Naukasana

Naukasana comes from the two sankrit words 'nauka' which means 'boat' and 'asana' meaning 'posture' or 'Seal'. It is a posture in which our body takes the shape of a boat.

If you have always had a problem losing the extra paunch in your stomach area, then this asana is food for those who wish to reduce belly fat as well as to tone the abs. Naukasana is one of the few yoga poses that can be performed lying both on the stomach (prone position) and back (supine position.)

Benefits:

- ✓ It tones the muscles of the leg
- ✓ It is useful for the persons with hernia
- ✓ It strengthens the back and abdominal muscles
- ✓ It helps in digestive process
- ✓ It helps in reducing belly fat

Contraindications:

- ✓ Avoid practicing this asana if you have asthma or heart diseases.
- ✓ Women should avoid doing this asana during pregnancy.
- ✓ In case of low blood pressure, migraine, spinal disorder and severe headache, don't perform this asana.

Vrikshasana (Tree pose)

It is a balancing asana. It is one of the very few standing poses in medieval hatha yoga, and remains popular in modern yoga. The names come from the sanskrit words vrksa meaning 'tree' and asana meaning 'posture'. This posture replicates the graceful, steady stance of a tree. Unlike most yoga poses, the tree pose requires keeping one eye open in order to maintain body balance.

Benefits:

- ✓ It reduces the knee problems.
- ✓ It helps in improving concentration.
- ✓ It improves balances and stability in the legs.
- ✓ It enhances the flexibility of legs, back and chest muscles
- ✓ It is helpful to those who are facing the problem of depression and anxiety.

Contraindications: If you are suffering from migraine, insomnia, low or high blood pressure, acute knee problem and hip injury, you should avoid practicing this asana.

Garudasana (eagle pose)

Garudasana or eagle pose is a standing balancing asana in modern yoga. The name was used in medieval hatha yoga for a different pose. Garuda - the mythic 'king of the birds,' the vehicle of Vishnu. The word is usually sundered into English as "eagle," though according to one dictionary the name literally means "devourer," because Garuda was originally identified with the "all-consuming fire of the sun's rays".

Benefits:

- ✓ It strengthens the muscles, tones the nerves and loosens the joints of the legs and arms.
- ✓ It improves balance
- ✓ Strengthens ankles
- ✓ It alleviates sciatica and rheumatism

Contraindications: If you have had a recent ankle or elbow injury, you should avoid performing this pose.

Relaxation Technique for Improving Concentration (Yoganidra)

A yoga routine provides deep restoration to your body and the mind. And to make your practice more effective, it's ideal to end your yoga sequence with yoganidra (yogic sleep) in yoganidra, we consciously take our attention to different parts of the body and relax them. Simply described as effortless relaxation, yoganidra is an essential end to any yoga pose sequence. Yoga postures 'warm up' the body; yoganidra 'cools it down'. Yoga practices increase the energy levels in the body.

Yoganidra helps conserve and consolidate this energy and relax the entire system, preparing it for pranayama and meditation. It is therefore, important to keep aside sufficient time for yoganidra after yoga postures.

Stages of yoganidra:

- Preparation: Lie down on your back on the floor and adopt the pose of Shavasana. The body should be straight from head to toe. Legs should be slightly apart and arms should be a little away from the body. Palm should be upwards. Feel comfortable in this position. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
- Intension (sankalpa): Take a sankalpa according to your own wish. It should be short, clear and positive.
- Body rotation: At this stage awareness is rotated through the different body parts in a systematic way, which leads to complete relaxation in a systematic and organized manner.
- Breath awareness: At this stage, you simply become aware of the natural breath without doing any effort to change the flow of the breath.
- Opposites or feelings and sensations: At this stage, allow yourself to experience feelings and sensations. It is practiced with pairs of opposite feelings like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, love and hate, etc.
- Visualization: This stage induces mental relaxation. It develops self-awareness and relaxes the mind through removal of disturbing material, controls the mind and different images, objects or situations.
- Sankalpa: Once again sankalpa mentioned in the second point is repeated thrice with complete dedication.
- Return or finishing the practice: This stage is important because if you move fast out of yoganidra you can feel disconnected and uncomfortable. At this stage, awareness is externalized slowly so that you can be aware of the external location, sounds, objects and persons.

Advantages of yoganidra:

- Reduces tension
- Relaxes the mind
- Awakens creativity
- Counteracts stress
- Cure cancers
- Helps healing
- Promotes willpower

- Increases memory and learning capacity
- Manages psychosomatic diseases
- ✓ It reduces stress and tension. Modern psychology as well as yogic philosophy believes that there are three kinds of tensions-muscular, emotional and mental tension-which can be progressively reduced through regular practice of yoganidra.
- ✓ During the process of yoganidra the awareness of the body stimulates the brain. When the awareness is rotated on the different parts of the body repeatedly, there is a good flow of pranic energy in the brain, which ultimately relaxes the mind.
- ✓ Regular practice of yoganidra helps in making a bridge between the conscious and unconscious mind.
- ✓ The practice of yoganidra helps in building up the coping ability to counteract stress.
- ✓ As a technique of meditation, yoganidra can be adopted as a therapeutic model in the treatment of cancer.
- ✓ Yoganidra helps in building up willpower and optimism in an individual because it is sowed in the subconscious and unconscious mind repeatedly.

Conclusion: the technique of yoganidra has preventive, promotive and curative values. In our present modern lifestyle, where psychological and psychosomatic problems are on the rise, the technique of yoganidra may serve as a real boon for mankind.

ODM
EDUCATIONAL GROUP
Changing your Tomorrow