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YOGA THERAPY FOR OBESITY

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ABSTRACT

Yoga-chikitsa or Yoga Therapy has never been very easy to define, largely owing to the depth and breadth of the subject. And yet, simply stated, Yoga Therapy could be called a system of health care that helps treat human indispositions as naturally as possible, to alleviate pain and suffering through set of exercises, both physical and mental. Ideally, yoga therapy is preventive in nature, as is Yoga itself, while being curative in many instances, soothing in others, and restorative in most.

Yoga therapy is of modern denomination and represents man's first attempt to combine age-old concepts and techniques with contemporary medical and psychological know-how. So, where traditional Yoga was primarily concerned with spiritual transcendence, yoga therapy aims at holistic treatment of a variety of psychological or psychosomatic disorders ranging from sinusitis and asthma to emotional distress.

Yoga poses, cleansing techniques (Kriyas) and breathing exercises constitute the set of practices for controlling obesity and shedding weight. These should be done for at least an hour and should include 30 – 40 minutes strenuous physical workouts. These are done for stretching and are to be followed by deep relaxation of different parts of the body. All this is done in order that fat may be mobilized and expended for the further extra energy used during walking or any other vigorous functions. Meaning to say, you should practice any other physical activity such as walking or jogging or sports besides practicing Yoga poses and exercise if you wish to derive full benefit of the program. All said and done, Yoga therapy helps you overcome the stress and lethargy.

KEY WORDS- *Yoga-chikitsa, Yoga poses, breathing exercises, obesity.*

INTRODUCTION

Obesity is what we call too much unnecessary fat in one's body. It is turning into one of the major problems of the civilized world. There are three levels of obesity known to medical science are: enviable, laughable and pitiable. People, who are slightly overweight normally have round, smooth and beautiful faces. Then again, the concept of beauty changes from time to time. This is called enviable obesity. If such a person were to put on a little more fat he or. She would begin to look ugly. People start to laugh at them, so this is the laughable stage. Then again there are those who are so bulky, they cannot move their bodies and require help even to get in and out of the body; naturally, this is a pitiable stage.



Too much unnecessary fat build up makes a person obese. This could be due to several causes. Some of these instances could be the result of an organic cause, such as thyroid hormone deficiency, excessive adrenal cortisone or female sex hormones. Sometimes it can be the result of damage to a part of the lower brain that is in charge of hunger and satisfaction. However, not nearly all of cases fall under this class. The biggest reason for obesity is clearly known to be due to the result of modern lifestyle.

Yoga therapy for Obesity is very relevant in the present day

competitive world. Here every one is racing with time and it is becoming virtually impossible to find time to work out. Oftentimes, even when people do find time lethargy takes over. Yoga therapy teaches that it's all in the mind. This is where Yoga therapy steps in, to give us the will power so needed to adhere to regularity of workouts that is so crucial to a steady maintenance of the weight. Only Yoga seems to have understood that obesity is a problem that takes root in the mind. This is just like many other illnesses we come across. This results in extremely accelerated activity first in the mind in the form of desires or lethargy or suppressed intense bouts of worry during depression. This comes out in the form of disturbed prana which, subsequently, turns up as imbalance in the rhythm and rate of breathing. This could also show up as too much unwarranted dominance of one nostril breathing. When you attempt to set the problem right, you end up making note of these facts and work the whole body. This is to restore balance through deep rest and relaxation and activation of the energy expenditure channels.

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YOGA THERAPY

Yoga-chikitsa (Sanskrit) or Yoga Therapy has never been very easy to define, largely owing to the depth and breadth of the subject. And yet, simply stated, Yoga Therapy could be called a system of health care that helps treat human indispositions as naturally as possible, to alleviate pain and suffering through set of exercises, both physical and mental. Ideally, yoga therapy is preventive in nature, as is Yoga itself, while being curative in many instances, soothing in others, and restorative in most.

Yoga therapy is of modern denomination and represents man's first attempt to combine age-old concepts and techniques with contemporary medical and psychological know-how. So, where traditional Yoga was primarily concerned with spiritual transcendence, yoga therapy aims at holistic treatment of a variety of psychological or psychosomatic disorders ranging from sinusitis and asthma to emotional distress.

PRINCIPLE OF YOGIC THERAPY

Yoga holds that a person's health condition depends on himself. It lays emphasis on physical, mental and emotional balance and development of a sense of harmony with all of life. There's nothing mystical about it. Nor is it external. Rather it is an inner faculty. Yoga endeavors to re-establish inner balance through a variety of ways, ranging from the gross to the subtle. Which is why it is considered a holistic art? Rather than prescribe treatments, yoga therapy encourages awareness. Through age-old yogic techniques, we get to know ourselves better. From that knowledge, comes the ability to more easily accept and adapt to change, resulting in enhanced well-being in body, mind, heart and spirit. Hence its applicability to almost all chronic conditions.

Contrary to modern medical science that tries to identify the pathogenic factor (be it a toxic substance, a micro-organism, or metabolic disorder) then eliminate it, Yoga takes a totally different point of view. It holds that if a person is sick there must be a deeper reason behind it – that illness doesn't arise by chance. It is the result of an imbalance, a disruption in the body-mind complex that creates the condition. Here the symptoms, the pathogenic factors, are not the issue. Yoga believes that the root cause lies somewhere else. The six steps of Yoga for overall well being:

1. Right Posture – Asanas

A set of postures that tone up the muscles and internal organs, revitalize the system, create overall awareness of the body and its function and help tranquilize the mind. they also energizes and stimulates the body's major endocrine glands. And by toning up the internal organs, they also prevent and cure many an illness.

2. Right Breathing – Pranayama

A set of simple breathing techniques that slowdown and normalize breathing while simultaneously exercising subtle influences on the entire system.

3. Right Cleansing – Kriyas

A set of easy and effortless hygienic procedures that draw the attention to the affected areas and buttress the body's own cleansing mechanisms.

4. Right Diet – Balanced Yogic Diet

Most, if not all, illnesses are in some way linked to wrong food habits. A slight modification in dietary habits can rehabilitate the entire system.

5. Right Relaxation – Shavasana

A relaxing asana done several times as part of the Yoga program. A process designed to soothe both mind and body. Yoga holds that tension is dis-ease (i.e a state of unease) and relaxation is health. To this end the whole eightfold path of Yoga is to purify the body mind complex.

6. Right Mindset – Meditation

Meditation is a technique used to stabilize the mind, increase concentration and will power, balance cellular and chakra energy and develop one-pointedness.

All these, if performed together and consistently, help rid oneself of a variety of psychosomatic disorders. Which is why, every yoga therapy session should include all these practices. They help eliminate the aggravated toxins from the system, balance the tri-doshas and stimulate the essential biochemical substances in the affected organs.

Causes of obesity:

We can attribute many causes to obesity.

Stress plays a vital role in causing obesity. Psychological disturbances propel a person to seek comfort in food -such a person may consume excess food. Children suffering from such disturbances, tend to become obese.

1. Improper dietary habits can predispose an individual to obesity. When a person starts consuming foods rich in sugar, starch, fats, and highly processed foods, there is extra weight gain.
2. Technological advancements in modern life has resulted in less physical activity. At homes, people use electrical gadgets that save on hard physical labour, thereby resulting in sedentary lifestyle.
3. Nervous tension and disturbances in emotional and mental health can lead to obesity.
4. Improper functioning of the endocrine glands or digestive disorders cause obesity.
5. Intake of drugs like steroids can make an individual crave for more food and enhances his or her hunger level, resulting in weight gain.

How obesity affects a person:

When a person suffers from excess weight, the process of breathing is affected, which slows down agile physical movements. An obese person is also likely to suffer diseases like blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, etc.

Obese persons also suffer emotionally and show withdrawal symptoms i.e., they are usually shy to show themselves up. They also suffer abnormal hunger pangs and seem to be consumed with thoughts of food. Laziness and indolence becomes their second nature.

Yoga to the rescue of the obese

Yoga is an age-old system of healing that seeks to restore imbalances in the body, mind and soul. Yoga practices help in energizing the body, which has been in an inactive mode due to obesity. Importantly, yoga helps in cleansing the body of toxins and reduces fatigue. Asanas or yoga postures help to burn up excess fat, improve metabolism, tone up muscles and help the practitioner enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Pranayama

Breathing exercises or pranayama calms the mind, and promotes mental alertness. When pranayama is performed, craving for food stops and a person begins to enjoy a normal appetite. Additionally, the practitioner begins to develop a positive mental attitude, and is able to face life with renewed hope and confidence.

Meditation

Meditation is an important step in achieving inner balance and tranquility. The practitioner experiences inner silence, when he connects with the divinity within.

Rhythmical Breathing

Regular breathing brings about balance in the body, by calming the mind. It is said that he who has calm nerves, has a calm mind too. Pranayama helps in controlling the breath. Ideally, pranayama should be practiced without being in a hurry with adequate focus on the breath.

Steps:

Inhale through both nostrils to a count of 4.

1. The breath should be retained for a count of 8.
2. Exhale the breath through both the nostrils to a count of 4.
3. Retain the breath outside or remain without breath for a count of 8.

Pranayama is easy to practice, and helps an obese person to develop the will power to control excessive eating.

Meditation

When a person empties the mind of restless thoughts and turns the mind to the divine within, is the essence of meditation. Prayer, chanting or being absorbed in soulful spiritual music can accompany the period of meditation to induce relaxation.

CONCLUSION

The golden rule in achieving optimum results through yoga is regularity and punctuality, for only abysal, regular practice can produce desired results. Over a period of time, it helps reduce illnesses, increase vitality and vigor, restore balance, and enhance attitude to life. Which is also why yoga therapists prescribe specific regimens to suit individual needs? Research has conclusively proven the effectiveness of yoga therapy in healing psychosomatic and stress-related conditions. This is done by bridging the gap between body and mind, ranging across the entire spectrum from physical to emotional to mental. For optimum benefits, yoga therapy should be coupled with a balanced diet, Naturopathy, Ayurveda and Aromatherapy.

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