



YOGA: HEALTHY LIVING FOR EFFECTIVE LIFE STYLE

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ABSTRACT

The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' meaning union of the body, breath and mind. Yoga is an ancient discipline designed to bring balance and health to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the individual. Yoga's primary emphasis is upon gaining general well being by the way of integration often incorporating three major components: held or sequences of physical postures, breathing, exercises and meditation. Yoga is absolutely a gift to humanity from our ancestors. In yoga therapy asana are not practiced for the sake of burning extra calories, but to develop body awareness, to understand the language of body, the way it works, and suits it best. This is the state of perfect happiness where there is no suffering, pain or agony. The supreme goal of yoga is spiritual attainment, which is eternal happiness peace of bliss. However, yoga is most beneficial for the holistic health of man. There are many methods for healthy living like - Physical Method (Running, Exercise & Aerobics etc), Mental Methods (Meditation-Sahaja yoga, Vipasana etc). These methods have multidimensional benefits. In this stressful and competitive life where every individual is suffering from tension and fatigues these methods act as tools for improving physical fitness for healthy and effective life style.

KEYWORDS: Aerobics, Sahaja yoga meditation, Vipassana meditation.

PHYSICAL METHOD: RUNNING, EXERCISE & AEROBICS.

Fitness for living in the house or at office or in work place in any service implies freedom from disease to meet the demands of daily living. Doing physical activity everyday contributes to optimum health and quality of life. Life style can be changed to improve health and fitness through daily exercise. Aerobic exercise stimulates heart, lungs and all working group of muscles and produces beneficial changes in body and mind. Aerobic exercise (also known as cardio) is physical exercise of low to high intensity that depends primarily on the aerobic energy-generating process.

MENTAL METHOD: MEDITATION, SAHAJA YOGA MEDITATION & VIPASSANA MEDITATION.

MEDITATION:

The word "Meditation" means to think, to think about something or to consider something. Meditation isn't just for monks seeking enlightenment. Meditation improves concentration, relaxation and endurance. Meditation is a practice where an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or for the mind to simply acknowledge its content without becoming identified with that content, or as an end in it. The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity, and forgiveness. Meditation can be an effective form of stress reduction and has the

potential to improve quality of life and decrease health care costs. Meditation involves achieving a state of 'thoughtless awareness' in which the excessive stress producing activity of the mind is neutralized without reducing alertness and effectiveness.

SAHAJA YOGA MEDITATION:

"Sahaja" in Sanskrit means spontaneous and also born with, "Yoga" means Union with God. The potential to the spiritual awakening and ascent is inborn in every human being. This potential is possible to be actualized through a unique living process of Sahaja Yoga. This unique discovery has been done by Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi in 1970. The process of Sahaja Yoga is spontaneous and natural. It is a technique to awaken the Kundalini Shakti which lies in the sleeping state at the base of the spine (sacrum bone) of each human being. The process of awakening this Kundalini (Self Realization) is a spontaneous and joy giving process, quite contrary to the widespread misinformation about it. There are seven chakras (energy centers) basically within us. These seven chakras are responsible for our physical, emotional and mental well being. These centers are meant for our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual requirements.

Benefits of Sahaja Yoga Meditation:

1. Improves health physically, mentally and emotionally.
2. Relief from stress by neutralizing the effect of aggression, frustration and anger around us.
3. Improves Communication Skills by improving relationship with others.
4. Inter cultural integration Sahaja Yoga Meditation brings about a true integration of all the major cultures of the world by overcoming all the divisive forces which are tearing the very fabric of societies all over the world.

VIPASSANA MEDITATION:

Vipassana, which means to see things as they really are, is one of India's most ancient techniques of meditation. It was rediscovered by Gautama Buddha more than 2500 years ago and was taught by him as a universal remedy for universal ills, i.e., an Art of Living.

Vipassana is a way of self- transformation through self – observation. It focuses on the deep interconnection between mind and body, which can be experienced directly by disciplined attention to the physical sensation that form the life of the body, and that continuously interconnect and condition the life of the mind. It is based on observation, self exploratory journey to the common root of mind and body that dissolves mental impurity, resulting in a balanced mind full of love and compassion.

The scientific laws that operate one's thoughts, feeling, judgements and sensations become clear. Through direct experience, the nature of how one grows or regresses, how one produces suffering or frees oneself from suffering is understood. Life becomes characterized by increased awareness, non- delusion, self- control and peace.

THE COURSES:

Since the time of Buddha, Vipassana has been handed over to the present day by an unbroken chain of teachers. The technique is taught at ten day residential courses during which participants follows a prescribed code of Discipline; learn the basics of the method, and practice sufficiently to experience its beneficial results.

The course requires hard, serious work. There are three steps to the training. The first step is, for the period of the course, to abstain from killing, stealing, sexual activities, speaking falsely, and intoxicants. This simple code of moral conduct serves to clam the mind, which otherwise would be too agitated to perform the task of self- observation. The next step is to develop some mastery over the mind by learning to fix one's attention on the natural reality of the ever changing flow of breath as it enters and leaves the nostrils. By the fourth day the mind is calmer and more focused, better able to undertake the practice of Vipassana itself: by observing sensations throughout the body, understanding their nature, and developing equanimity by

learning not to react to them. Finally, on the last full day participants learn the meditation of loving kindness or good will towards all, in which the purity developed during the course, is shared with all beings.

The entire practice is actually a mental training. Just as we use physical training or exercise to improve our physical fitness or physical health, Vipassana can be used to develop a good, pure and healthy mind.

Benefits of Vipassana Yoga Meditation:

Every religion worthy of the name calls on its followers to live a moral and ethical way of life, to attain mastery over the mind and to cultivate purity of heart. One tradition tells us, "Love thy neighbor", another says, Salaam Walekum- "still another says, Bhavatu sabbamangalam or Sarve bhavantu sukhinah – "May all beings be happy." Whether it is the Bible, The Khuran or the Gita, the scriptures call for peace and amity. From Mahavir to Jesus, all great founders of religions have been ideals of tolerance and peace. Yet our world is often driven by religious and sectarian strife or even war because we give importance only to the outer shell of religion and neglect its essence. The result is a lack of love and compassion in the mind.

Peace in the world cannot be achieved unless there is peace within individuals. Agitation and peace cannot co-exist. One way to achieve inner peace is Vipassana or insight meditation – a non – sectarian, scientific, results oriented technique of self observation and truth realization. Practice of this technique brings experiential understanding of how mind and body interact. Every time negativity arises in the mind, such as hatred, it triggers unpleasant sensation within the body. Every time the mind generates selfless love, compassion and good will the entire body is flooded with pleasant sensations. Practice of Vipassana also reveals that mental action precedes every physical and vocal action; determine whether that action will be wholesome or unwholesome. Mind matters most. That is why we must find practice methods to make the mind peaceful and pure. Such methods will amplify the effectiveness of the joint declaration emerging from this world peace Summit.

Ancient India gave two practices to the world. One is the physical exercise of Yoga postures (Asanas) and breath control (Pranayam) for keeping the body fit and healthy. The other is the mental exercise of Vipassana for keeping the mind fit and healthy. People of any faith can do practice both these methods.

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