

LESSON 24

HEALTHY MIND IN HEALTHY BODY

SUMMARY

Body and mind are two parts of a whole. If mind is happy, we do our work actively and energetically. If the body is healthy, the mind also remains radiant, alert and enthusiastic. The Yoga school of thought tells us how to facilitate the body - mind functioning so that one may enjoy happiness, peace and fulfilment in life. Yoga is a science that enlightens us regarding why we experience stress, tension and pain. It suggests a life style which is free from stress and pain. It makes our body and mind effective for leading a happy and healthy life.

What is Yoga?

Yoga literally means 'union' i.e., being one with the Supreme Energy. It is communion of individual being with the universal being. It is a passage from ignorance to self-knowledge. It also means the discipline of the body, mind, intellect, emotions and will, giving poise to the soul.

There are two aspects of Yoga: outer and inner. The outer aspect of yoga (vahirang) deals with - yama, niyama, asana and pranayama - which revitalize our body and mind. The inner aspect of yoga (Antarang) includes - controlling of senses (Pratyahara),

concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhyana) and Samadhi.

“Yogas chitta vrittinirodha” is Maharishi Patanjali’s definition of yoga. It means that yoga is the removing of the fluctuations of the mind or regulation of mental processes. It is also considered as the ability to perform actions with excellence. Yoga is an integrated individual life style.

Different types of Yoga

Yoga is for facilitating harmony, peace of mind, and self-regulation.

Types of Yoga

- **Hatha Yoga** - It aims at controlling the functioning of the body and helps channeling the flow of energy (Prana).
- **Raja Yoga** - It is meant for restraining the fluctuations in the consciousness (Citta).
- **Karma Yoga** - the path of selfless action (Anasakta karma) without expectation of rewards
- **Bhakti Yoga** - It refers to the path of devotion and surrender to God
- **Gyan Yoga** - It emphasizes on removal of ignorance and seeking of spiritual knowledge

Yoga to keep fit

The practice of yoga involves attending to the functioning at different levels of existence.

Diet - the kind and quantity of food that we eat determines our temperament. It is said that having right kind of food purifies the mind and soul.

Sattvic food - Warm and nourishing, easy to digest

Rajasic Food - Oily and spicy, hard to digest

Tamsic food - Dry and stale, harmful for our body systems

Yoga Asanas—These are body postures that make our body muscles supple and improve the blood circulation in the body. The Asanas are designed to bring the body into a condition where the healing forces of nature are able to do that work.

Precautions while Performing Asanas

- Asanas should be performed preferably early in the morning in a well – ventilated room.
- Bowels must be cleared before starting the Asanas. It is not desirable to have bath immediately after the Asanas.
- Asanas must be performed on a mat spread on hard ground. Clothing should be as light as possible.
- Breathing should be normal while performing the Asanas.
- Do not eat immediately after Asanas.
- It is advisable that the asanas should be done after learning the proper methods of doing the asanas by a Yoga-teacher.
- Shavasana should be the last Asana, so that you get enough rest.



Paschimottan Asana

tones the abdominal organs and kidneys and rejuvenates the whole spine and improves digestion



Sarvang Asana

provides energy, inner strength and vitality



Shavasana

complete relaxation of all the muscles, nerves and nervous system, the brain and all the organs of the body



Shalabh Asana

helps digestion and relieves gastric troubles and flatulence.



Ushtra Asana

• Improves posture and leg deformity



Dhanurasana

• loosens up the spinal cord and tones abdominal muscles



Halasana

regenerating effect on the glandular system, and clears up menstrual disorders



•Bhujang asana

soothes backaches, has a beneficial effect on kidney (adrenal glands) and stimulates digestion

Pranayam

Yoga says that Prana is not merely breath but it is a form of cosmic energy. It is the life-giving principle which is everywhere. By breathing exercises, it is possible to enhance the circulation of Prana in the body.

Abdominal breathing - In natural breathing, when we inhale the navel and lower abdomen bulge out a little, and when we exhale, the navel and the lower abdomen sink down a little.

Exercises in pranayama are as follows:



Meditation

The aim of meditation is to gain the vision of truth, to realize the oneness with all life and to enjoy peace and bliss.

Procedure - relax your body, sit comfortably in padmasana or sukhasana, keep your spine neck and head in a straight line. Let your chest spread out a little. First concentrate on your breath and breathe deeply. Exhale fully and inhale deeply a few times. Let the mind follow the breath and listen to its sound. This is a part of cosmic vibration. By concentrating

on this inner vibration, you will be in tune with the cosmic sound. Then all the ripples of thoughts and emotions will quieten. The lake of your mind will become still and you will experience peace and bliss. In this state of silence, you will forget all differences and become one with all life.

Evaluate yourself

1. Discuss any four exercises of 'Pranayama'.
2. What are the precautions to take while practicing yoga asanas?
3. Discuss the different types of Yoga?