

Yoga with Healthy Life

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Abstract: *Yoga is not a religion or a cult, and you won't have to learn to walk on hot coals, swallow crushed glass, lie on sharp nails, become hypnotized or practice black magic, because, contrary to these popular, beliefs its practice entails none of these.*

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1. Introduction

Yoga is a philosophy of living, and part of it, called Hatha Yoga, merely involves doing some especially easy exercises that take about 10 to 15 minutes yet promote an incredible state of well being.

Tension Harmful

Psychologists today agree that mild "positive" tension is normal, generally useful, as it can stimulate you toward productive activity. But excessively morbid tension can destroy your life. It arises from chronic anxiety or fear - whether real or imagined.

If your mind is over-tense, it uncontrollably, continuously grinds out apprehensive thoughts. You may often be seized by anger, doubt, jealousy, shame, inferiority or despair, and constantly feel driven, chased, hammered, sleeping may be difficult, nightmares frequent. The muscles of your face, arms, hands, feet, neck, back and abdomen may unconsciously and steadily tighten, often sweat. Chaotic nerve impulses may continually bombard and disrupt the healthy co-ordination and functioning of your heart, blood vessels, lungs, stomach, glands or nerve centers. These symptoms may clearly indicate that a physical disease or mental collapses are not far away.

Scientific research has shown that these manifestations may be caused by inherited or acquired hyper-sensitive nerves or slightly defective glands; unresolved childhood or adolescent conflicts; over-emphasized "success" standards or the demands of fast-paced living; excessive preoccupation with the excitement elements of television, newspapers, movies; stimulating, but ultimately debilitating eating and drinking habits; poor posture, shallow breathing and inadequate exercise.

Whatever the cause, one consequence is certain as your energy leaks, vigor ebbs, and as toxins form and accumulate in your body's cells, the paralyzing condition of *fatigue* soon prevails. Your cheerful magnetic looks, pleasant friendly relations, efficient work and confident attitude all vanish! An empty, insecure, heavy, deficient feeling may now overwhelm you. And it is *right here* that the Yoga exercises come to the rescue.

What is Yoga?

Their purpose is not to build massive muscles or athletic endurance, so they are not done vigorously, perspiring or fatiguing. Rather, they are intended to develop *inner* stamina, vitality, health and relaxation; there fore, you move slowly - *very slowly* - into a Yoga exercise (called a posture or pose), maintain it for several seconds and, simultaneously, concentrate on an indicated glandular or nervous region while you breathe deeply and rhythmically. Each posture is performed differently, has its own benefits, but it is their combined effect that powerfully fortifies you in many ways against daily pressures.

In a posture, the farther you can "pull" or "stretch" and the deeper you can concentrate on a specified body area, the more your blood circulation is stimulated and increased through even the deepest and remotest cells, tissues, muscles, joints, organs, glands and nerves. These then become well nourished, oxygenated, cleansed and strengthened - for perfect functioning.

Deep breathing allows your body to get more needed life-propelling oxygen and dispose of more poisonous carbon dioxide. "Thus," says Yogi Gupta, "while your lungs are made more elastic and hardy, your cellular metabolism is stimulated - aiding such internal processes as regeneration, repair and elimination." And when your breathing becomes rhythmic, your mind and body are calmed, composed, and perfect co-operation and co-ordination between inner functions follow.

The slow-motion and then sustained position of a Yoga posture encourage you to develop keen body awareness, mind control, concentration, nervous strength, will-power and poise. As you attain perfection in these postures, you experience during and after a session a detached, "philosophical" state, *not* characterized by indifference or apathy - as with some drugs - but with intense *interest* in life. You can see yourself, others and your problems more objectively, clearly; the desire to improve yourself becomes creatively strong; destructive tendencies may be consciously replaced with new beneficial habits, and more reasonable solutions or adjustments may be made to difficult situations.

Posture Tips

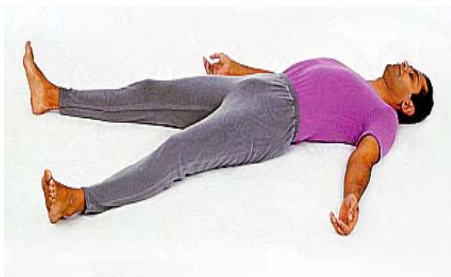
Surprisingly, you'll find these "mystic" postures immensely practical little energy is wasted yet much obtained; expensive gymnastic equipment need not be purchased; your home or office may become your "gym"; and only about 10 to 15 minutes are required to complete a routine. Thus, their efficiency, economy and expediency make them highly appealing.

The best time to posture is in the morning - before breakfast, or, if that's not possible, then in the evening about two hours after dinner; a few may even be done during the day. Should you be sustaining an illness or injury, check with your doctor before starting. If you can obtain a Hatha Yoga teacher to assist you in grounding or basics, do so, for the greatest benefits depend on perfect performance. In a few weeks you should be doing the exercise with ease and elegance. To estimate your progress, compare your first attempts with future tries and note *how far* you can stretch, *how long* you can easily hold it, and *how changed* you feel.

First, *some preliminaries* Open your windows as wide as comfort allows; loosen collar, belt, tight clothing; remove watch, jewellery, glasses. And remember this- because it's most important and won't be repeated - Always move very slowly into a posture, and, once in it, never strain; breathe only through the nose - deeply, softly, rhythmically - inhaling for 4 seconds, holding breath 2 seconds and exhaling 4, unless otherwise indicated. If counting - *full seconds* places undue pressure on your chest or lungs, then count faster in half or quarter seconds. Close eyes and concentrate deeply.

1. The Relaxing or Corpse Pose

Lie down on a mat or rug, on your back, palms up, feet out, and, with each exhalation, feel the sensation of sinking down, "dissolving." The Relaxing Pose is done for several seconds at the beginning and the end of a Yoga session, and always after each posture. It may also be used by itself for about 5 minutes during the day, as it serves excellently as an instant "tension breaker."



2. The Mind-Calming

Breathing

Should your mind be terribly upset and your thoughts be running wildly, then, while preferably in the Relaxing Pose, or even sitting or standing, inhale for 8 seconds, retain breath 4 seconds and exhale 8, concentrating throughout on the breath. This should not be done for more than 3 minutes at a time, but may be performed at different periods of the day.



3. The Hare Pose

Half-Headstand

Kneel on floor, sit on heels, clasp them with hands. While inhaling, arch spine slightly backward, then, exhaling, bend spine forward until top of head rests on mat, forehead near knees. Raise hips up high. Hold 10 to 30 seconds. *Concentrate* between eyebrows ... To return, while inhaling, sit back on heels, raise and arch body backward. *Repeat* 3 rounds (times). Then do the Relaxing Pose for about 40 seconds . . .



Benefits

Activates Brain, pituitary gland, Healthy skin, Healthy heart, increase memory and concentration.

4. The Cobra Pose

Lie on your abdomen, forehead on rug, legs together and straight; place palms on floor under shoulders, fingers forward, elbows up. In succession, while inhaling, raise head, upper, middle, and lower portions of spine, pulling up mainly with back muscles, not arms, which are used primarily for support. Legs and pelvis remain on floor. Breathing normally, *Hold* 5 to 10 seconds. *Concentrate* on solar plexus ... To return, while exhaling depress in succession the lower, middle and upper spinal segments, then the forehead. Relax 10 seconds on abdomen. Repeat 3 to 5 rounds. Then do the Relaxing Pose for about 40 seconds . . .



Benefits

Increases flexibility of the spine and strengthens it. Build confidence and courage.

5. The Reverse Pose

Lie on back, palms down, feet straight and together; while inhaling raise both legs until they form about a 45 degree angle above the face. Now brace hips with hands. Exhale. Hold 20 to 50 seconds. *Concentrate* on face ... To come down, place palms on floor, inhale deeply, and, while exhaling, gently lower your straight legs. Do Relaxing Pose for 20 seconds after each round. *Repeat* 3 rounds.

Benefits

For thyroid problems, Healthy skin, good functioning of abdominal muscles, organs and lungs.

To Conclude

Do 3 minutes of the Relaxing Pose, dividing the time into 1½ minutes of Mind-Calming Breathing, and 1½ minutes of just watching your thoughts until they disappear, and your mind becomes like a calm lake. Then slowly rise to your feet. Inhaling, stretch arms up, then exhaling; lower them to your sides. *Repeat* 3 rounds.

Yoga conquers tension and fatigue with an inner feeling of abundance and equanimity, which insulates you against the pressures and shocks of daily living, and strengthens you for the achievement of your personal goals.

Psychological Cause of Cold

On the other hand, it's possible that your family is psychologically disposed towards getting colds. Dr. Katherine H. Hain says that worry or unhappiness make people far more cold – prone than they are under more cheerful circumstances.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, the 19th century philosopher, observed that a person's emotional well-being is as important as how well he takes care of himself. "Contentment even preserves one from catching cold," he wrote.

Infections and clinical illnesses as well as health practice measures are also associated with the relationships between stressful experiences and acute infections. For example, infections often are a result in the decreased ability for the body's immune system to fend off further attacks on the immune system. Individuals that are not experiencing stress or clinical illnesses may have a reduced inflammatory response. When there is exposure to a potentially acute infection acute inflammation occurs which is a positive defense.

Virologist and physicians are inclined to agree. They state fairly positively that the climate of the mind is more important than most people realize. The late Dunbar of New York, who wrote extensively on psychosomatic ailments, observed that emotionally disturbed children develop colds much more often than other children do. Studies at military camps have shown that new recruits, who are tenser, get more colds than more experienced soldiers. One paper presented at a medical meeting suggested that colds could be caused by lack of love.

You may have noticed that your children catch more colds during such trying times as exam week or when a new baby comes home from the hospital. Women get more colds during their menstrual periods. One of the reasons

women get far more colds than men, incidentally, lies in more ups and downs. (Their closer contact with their children and the scantier clothes they wear are the other reasons.)

Emotional Ups and Downs

Emotional strain helps bring on colds because it weakens the resistance of the respiratory tract, which is where cold viruses gain their foot hold. One psychiatrist believes that of all human organs the nose is probably the most sensitive to emotional ups and downs.

Then, there are also "colds" that are not really colds. There is no virus at work. Instead, the person who believes he has a cold may be experiencing the symptoms because of a secret need for sympathy. He may blame his sickness on a bug, but it could really be the fault of an overbearing boss, or worry over money, or even a lack of love.

If you suspect that tension is contributing towards your family's colds, you can try to eliminate as much of it as possible. Does your husband seem to catch cold at a time when business pressures seem most acute? Perhaps by talking over his problems with you, he can relive some of the tensions. Are you more cold-prone when family squabbles are at a high pitch?

As far as the children are concerned, they too, have disturbances to you. Does Johnny start to sniffle just before he has to give a speech in class? You may be able to help him relieve his nervousness (and avoid a cold) if you see to it that he is a fully prepared as he can be, does May "worry herself sick" about a forthcoming test? If you help her build confidence in herself, she may be able to face that test in far better health. Psychological stressors, such as significant life changes or an inability to manage or cope with stress, can result in a feeling of perceived "helplessness or hopelessness".

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