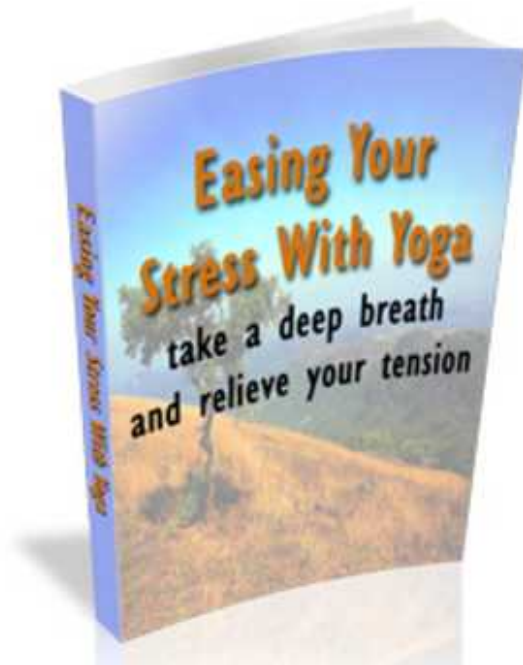


Easing Your Stress With Yoga

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Chapter 1: What Is Yoga?

Time and again we hear the word yoga. Often people think it is some sort of exercise with funny poses, right? The left leg stretches upwards and the hand goes behind the body to hold the leg, no? But yoga is not just about stretching, maintaining a posture, breathing or even merely a form of exercise. It is much more than just that. It is a spiritual practice but not a religious one that helps you to maintain a fine balance between work and a healthy mind!

Not to worry, you are not the only one who doubts this! Many people have questioned how something like this could help them to maintain a balance between work and a healthy mind or even establish a healthy, lively and balanced approach to life. And to understand this better and to know how yoga actually works, you need to get a better understanding of what yoga is all about.

Yoga originates from the language Sanskrit and it means “union” or “merger”. And the essential purpose of it is to achieve a stable balance between the mind and the body and

to also to achieve self-enlightenment. And to accomplish this, yoga applies movement, breathing, pose, relief and meditation as various means of maintaining a healthy, lively and balanced approach to life.

Yoga is believed to be a physical exercise that is the oldest still being practiced. Thus, yoga signifies stability in every area of life. In earlier times, the logic behind yoga practice was to achieve constancy and relaxation so one could get ready for the severity of meditation - that is, to stay sat still and remain alert for a long period of time. From today's perspective too, yoga has a crucial role in achieving a fine equilibrium between work and a healthy mind.

Even though yoga is a systemic philosophical approach, yoga is not a religion, being more about attaining a spiritual balance than any code of beliefs.

And yoga is not solely about staring at candles and breathing incense or for flexible young people just to lie around relaxing either. Anyone, irrespective of body type, age, experience or physical abilities can practice yoga.

Chapter 2: History Of Yoga

The adage, "What's in the past should stay in the past" does not really work here. You might have a vague perception of what yoga is, but to appreciate it better, you have to know where it all started and what it has become today. A peek into the history of yoga will make it easier for you to understand and recognize the values of its rich tradition and maybe this will help you integrate yoga into your daily life.

At present, lots of people take up yoga for some sort of body exercise and lots of them do not even know the past of yoga. Yoga is defined to be more than a technique of body exercise for health. Yoga is an ancient route to spiritual growth and started in India. This is where Induism is practiced. You should not mistake Induism for Hinduism. The traditions and purpose of yoga date back to the Upanishads. Upanishads were written in 1000-5000 BC.

The Upanishads are the most fundamental and most significant Hindu scriptures. Each and every orthodox schools of Hinduism establishes their principles on the facts found in

the Upanishads. Though there is a relationship between yoga and the Upanishads, yoga is not specifically related to Hinduism and the connection to Hinduism (which is not a religion) exists merely because the history of yoga is originated in the civilization of the Indus Valley.

Yoga methods were and are applied by the Hindus to encourage spiritual growth. They promote the coming together of the transitory self with the unbounded unending self. This phrase defines God by the Hindus. By and large, yogis believe that God is a formal and divine substance. This principle is known as the Pantheism, which considers that every single thing is God.

Since the yogis consider everything to be God, therefore it is also believed that man is God.

Yoga's outlook towards a man's problem is essentially with regards to lack of knowledge. Man just does not recognize that man is God. Therefore, the key is explanation, or to undergo a coming together or merger with God. For you to achieve that objective, you have to have lots of strength of

mind.

Can the approach that is utilized in the yoga methods be distinctive from the beliefs? The explanation to this question would typically be “no” since yoga is regarded as a system of a psychosomatic type of workout, so these two cannot be separated.

It is believed that for you to perform yoga to the fullest, and get the maximum benefits, you must feel and go through the effect of “kundalini” within meditation. This indicates that for you to comprehend the sacred teachings and for it to be sensed by your soul within you, the various chakras or locations within one’s body where a loop of biophysical or metaphysical force exists should come concurrently in the course. Kundalini arouses the center of the chakra to unlock and discharge the force that is apprehended within. If this is not done correctly, some devotees consider that you can damage their brain! By knowing the past of yoga, you will quickly learn that yoga is, essentially, about caring for your soul and spirit, as Yoga trains you to concentrate on yourself and your own failings.

Chapter 3: Why Do Yoga?

We do various different forms of exercises to meet different needs. We do weight training to acquire strength. We go for jogging or perform aerobics to get a cardiovascular workout. We perform tai-chi to improve our sense of stability and harmonization. We do stretching to achieve suppleness. For peace of mind and relaxation, we meditate.

At some point, you may therefore have wondered if there is one single type of training that would meet all your different needs. One that will give you a full and complete workout that does everything from helping you to achieve strength to gaining endurance, improving balance, gaining flexibility and one that finally also helps you to relax. There definitely exists one such complete and perfect form of exercise that helps achieve everything! What else, but yoga?!

Yoga is without a doubt more than mere stretch outs and relaxing. It is the definitive mind and body test and a superb means of achieving body and mind alertness.

A typical session of yoga will make you feel a sense of pure energy and relaxation. You get to work on your physique and align your bones correctly, as well as learning to breathe deeply, thus providing adequate oxygen for your lungs, blood and brain.

You will also experience relaxation in its purest and most profound form, because by making your body aware and working on the muscles, you will be able to relax more easily than other forms of exercises might allow.

Thus, the main reason why you feel really good and totally relaxed after a proper yoga session compared to either a cardiovascular workout or weight training (or for that matter any other form of exercise) is because you are getting to develop self-awareness and also appreciate your own body.

Chapter 4: Who Should Do Yoga?

In short the answer to this question would be anyone and everyone!

Irrespective of whether you have never done any physical exercise or whether you are a world class athlete, you can still gain huge benefits from yoga.

So, do not fret even if you have never lifted your finger to carry a pen, yoga will do you good and will gradually become as comfortable as it would be to someone who jogs an hour a day or works out daily.

Plus, the mental acuity and alertness that comes with yoga will lead you to enjoy a remarkable growth, not only physically, but mentally and emotionally as well.

As the age old saying goes, “practice makes perfect”, but for you to become skillful and competent in yoga demands effort, determination and practice. However, as another saying has

it, you reap what you sow.

Therefore, you must put in enough effort to achieve the full satisfaction that you are looking for. If you are looking for a quick fix, you cannot hope to achieve full satisfaction and fulfillment in yoga.

Alternatively, if you want to maintain or regain your health, energy and strength or simply want to feel younger, stronger and more energized, then yoga is exactly what you are looking for.

Also, if you are looking for a perfectly balanced and complete form of exercise that can be practiced by anyone and everyone, in any condition or state and you are ready to accept fresh new challenges as you progress, then again, yoga is your perfect choice!

Chapter 5: The Aims Of Yoga

Some have said that the fundamental intention of yoga is to attain emancipation or the ultimate freedom that is known as the "Kaivalya".

Basically, this equates to an understanding of your innermost being or soul.

Subsequently, you would be free from the chains of cause and effect, which is the Karma that binds you to continual reincarnation.

It is said that in Kaivalya, you exist in peace and harmony after achieving complete wisdom and understanding of the difference between the spiritual (which is eternal, static and free of sorrows) and the material, which is not.

It is therefore suggested that this must be attractive as life is generally seen as something that is filled with sorrow and pain. Even happiness and bliss leaves pain and loss when they

are gone, since nothing is considered permanent in the material world.

As a result of this non-material focus, yoga is believed to be a spiritual pursuit.

Nevertheless, along the path of yoga you can also achieve health, contentment, harmony and wisdom which will stimulate your spiritual growth and support your efforts to apply everything that you learn along the way.

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