

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY FOR HEALTH PROMOTION

Dharmartha Kama Moksanam
Arogyam Mulam Uttamam

C.S.I., 115



As per our most ancient text on Health, The Charaka Samhita, The fundamental requirement of the body is good health in order to attain the four objectives of human existence, namely,

1. Acquisition of religious merits (dharma)
2. Acquisition of wealth for living in comfort and generosity (artha)
3. Gratification of permissible pleasures and fulfillment of desires (kama)
4. Attain liberation from these shackles of cycle of birth and death (moksha)

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The World Health Organization also defines Health as **"Health is just not absence of disease, but it is "a state of complete physical, mental, and social and Spiritual well-being"**

I do firmly believe that Health is manifestation of our own thoughts, perceptions, choices and lifestyle. Health is our right. Health is our domain. It is a culture of internal and external cleanliness exercise, dietary control, mind regulation and rest.

The Concept of Mind over Matter also affirms that behind every physical problem, there is a...

- Mental cause
- Some damaging thought patterns
- Negative feelings
- Self-defeating beliefs
- Even spiritual crisis.

It appears that psychological and social factors influence the physiological systems of the body that are directly responsible for good health and the ability to fight disease. Therefore if

religious/spiritual involvement can be shown to enhance psychological health and social interactions, it is reasonable to hypothesize that religious/Spiritual factors may improve physical health as well, doing so by reducing psychological stress, increasing social support, and encouraging positive health behaviors.

Science has outlined the problem and shown us some of the mechanical means by which we can try to solve it, but science cannot change us. Only we can change ourselves.

Spirituality brings about change from the inside. No matter how many toys we have, they cannot make us good or happy. Only the spiritual morality, which attunes us and harmonizes us with the greater universe, can do that. Spirituality, therefore, is the key to reversing the injury that we have been doing to ourselves, the earth, and other life forms for thousands of years.

A Health Promotion approach recognizes that a broad range of factors

(determinants) beyond their individual genetic makeup, including the conditions in which they live and work, personal habits, environmental factors, and social and cultural norms affects people's health. There can no other approach to Health Promotion like the Value Based Approach of Sage Patanjali's Ashtangyoga practices which has its foundation on Science and Spirituality both.

For over 2,000 years, yoga, meaning the unity of the body and the vital life force, has been practiced. The program unites the body with the mind and consists of a series of slow, gentle stretches accompanied by deep, steady breathing. It strengthens the body while calming and awakening the spirit.

"The deep, steady breathing of yoga is believed to balance the nervous system and improve circulation," says Nicole Nisly, MD, UI Hospitals and Clinics Complementary and Alternative Medicine Clinic. "Combine that with visualization and relaxation, and yoga leads to a calm and focused state of mind."

SCIENCE & SPIRITUALITY IN HEALTH PROMOTION

Science: The search of the Health problem outside

Spirituality: The search of self-generated Health problem inside

Yoga is actually an ancient practice that connects the mind, body, and spirit through body poses, controlled breathing, and meditation. The practice of yoga has many health benefits associated with it as per many researches and evidence-based practices.

HEALTH BENEFITS WITHIN

From lowering blood pressure to increasing pain tolerance, the following health benefits can all be discovered within the body.

-Blood pressure: A consistent yoga practice decreases blood pressure through better circulation and oxygenation of the body.

-Pulse rate: A slower pulse rate indicates that our heart is strong enough to pump more blood with fewer beats. Regularly practicing yoga provides a lower pulse rate.

-Circulation: Yoga improves blood circulation. By transporting nutrients and oxygen throughout our body, yoga practice provides healthier organs, skin, and brain.

-Respiratory: Like the circulatory system, a lower respiratory rate indicates that the lungs are working more efficiently. Yoga decreases the respiratory rate through a combination of controlled breathing exercises and better fitness.

-Organs: Yoga practice massages internal organs, thus improving the ability of the body to prevent disease. Additionally, an experienced yoga practitioner becomes better attuned to her body to know at first sign if something isn't functioning properly, thereby allowing for quicker response to head off disease.

-Gastrointestinal: Gastrointestinal functions have been shown to improve in both men and women who practice yoga.

-Immunity. Yoga practice has frequently been correlated with a stronger immune system.

-Pain: Pain tolerance is much higher among those who practice yoga regularly. In addition to pain tolerance, some instances of chronic pain, such as back pain, are lessened or eliminated through yoga.

-Metabolism: Having a balanced metabolism results in maintaining a healthy weight and controlling hunger. Consistent yoga practice helps find the balance and creates a more efficient metabolism.

HEALTH BENEFITS WITHOUT

Just as many health benefits occur within the body, there are many benefits that can actually be experienced from without the body. From better sleep to more energy and strength, this list provides several benefits found on the outside of the body.

-Aging: Yoga stimulates the detoxification process within the body. Detoxification has been shown to delay aging, among many other health benefits.

-Posture: Through consistent practice, our posture will improve so that one looks more confident and healthy.

-Energy: Regular yoga practice provides consistent energy. In fact, most yogis state that when one performs yoga correctly, he will feel energized after the yoga session rather than tired.

-Weight: The benefits of a better metabolism along with the exercise of yoga work to keep the weight in check. Additionally, the stretching of muscles longwise helps to reduce the amount of cellulite that can build around muscles.

-Sleep: Because of the many benefits to both body and mind that a yoga routine can provide, many find that their sleep is much better.

-Balance: An integral part of the yoga practice is balance and control over the body. With a consistent practice, one will find that the overall balance will improve.

-Body Awareness: Practicing yoga will give an increased awareness of one own's body.

-Core strength: With a strong body core, one receives better posture and overall body strength. A strong core helps heal and reduce injuries.

-Sexuality: Yoga can improve your sexuality through better control, more relaxation, and more self-confidence.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS

Due to the strong mind-body connection of yoga, there are many emotional benefits to be gained from a consistent yoga practice.

-Mood: Overall well-being improves with yoga practice.

-Stress Reduction: The concentration required during yoga practice tends to focus attention on the matter at hand, thereby reducing the emphasis one may have been putting on the stress in life.

-Anxiety: One benefit to the controlled breathing used in yoga is a reduction in anxiety. Self-acceptance. Focusing inward and realizing through yoga practice that perfection is not the goal, self-acceptance begins to take over.

-Self-control: The controlled movements of yoga teach how to translate that self-control to all aspects of your life.

-Positive outlook on life: Continued practice of yoga results in a balance of many hormones and nervous system, which brings about a more stable, positive approach to life.

-Hostility: Most yogis report a huge reduction in the amount of hostility they feel as well as a sense of control when anger flares. This calm effect is likely from the relaxation and meditation that is incorporated in the yoga practice that leads to an overall calming of the nervous system. Less hostility means lower blood pressure and stress and a healthier approach to life.

-Memory: Improved blood circulation to the brain as well as the reduction in stress and improved focus results in a better memory.

-Attention: The attention required in yoga to maintain the structured breathing in conjunction with yoga poses sharpens the ability to keep a sharp focus on tasks.

-Social skills: In yoga, one learns the interconnectedness of all of life. Daily yoga practice soon evolves from a personal journey to one connecting to the community at large where social skills improve.

PHYSIOLOGICAL & THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS

Several aspects of body chemistry such as glucose levels and red blood cells are affected by yoga.

-Cholesterol: Yoga practice lowers cholesterol through increased blood circulation and burning fat.

-Lymphatic system: Our lymphatic system boosts our immunity and reduces toxins in our body. The only way to get the lymphatic system flowing well is by movement. The specific movements involved in yoga are particularly well-suited for promoting a strong lymphatic movement.

-Glucose: There is evidence to suggest that yoga may lower blood glucose levels.

-Sodium: Yoga reduces the sodium levels in the body. In today's world of processed and fast foods that are full of sodium, lessening these levels is a great idea.

-Endocrine functions: Practicing yoga helps to regulate and control hormone secretion. An improved endocrine system keeps hormones in balance and promotes better overall physical and emotional health.

-Triglycerides: Triglycerides are the chemical form of fat in the blood, and elevated levels can indicate a risk for heart disease and high blood pressure. A recent study shows that yoga can lead to "significantly lower" levels of triglycerides.

-Red blood cells: Yoga has been shown to increase the level of red blood cells in the body. Red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen through the blood, and too few can result in anemia and low energy.

-Vitamin C: Vitamin C helps boost immunity, helps produce collagen, and is a powerful antioxidant; and a yoga regimen can increase the vitamin C in the body.

PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS

As a form of exercise, yoga offers benefits that are sometimes not easily found among other exercise regimens

- Low risk of injury: Due to the low impact of yoga and the controlled aspect of the motions, there is a very low risk of injury during yoga practice compared to other forms of exercise.

-Parasympathetic Nervous System: In many forms of exercise, the sympathetic nervous system kicks in, providing with that fight-or-flight sensation. Yoga does the opposite and stimulates the Parasympathetic Nervous System. The parasympathetic system lowers blood pressure and slows the pace of breathing, which allows relaxation and healing.

-Subcortex: Subcortical regions of brain are associated with well-being, and yoga is thought to dominate the subcortex rather than the cortex (where most exercise dominates).

- Reduced oxygen consumption: Yoga consumes less oxygen than traditional exercise routines, thereby allowing the body to work more efficiently.

- Joint range of motion: was improved by participants who practiced yoga.

- Eye-hand coordination: Without practice, eye-hand coordination diminishes. Yoga maintains and improves eye-hand coordination.

- Dexterity: The strong mind-body connection and flexibility gained from yoga leads to grace and skill.

- Endurance: Working the entire body, yoga improves endurance and is frequently used by endurance athletes as a supplement to their sport-specific training.

- Depth perception: Becoming aware of the body and how it moves, as one does in yoga practice, leads to increased depth perception.

DISEASE PREVENTION

Regular practice of Yoga can help prevent the following diseases.

- Heart disease: Yoga reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, keeps off weight, and improves cardiovascular health, all of which lead to reducing your risk of heart disease.

- Osteoporosis: It is well documented that weight-bearing exercise strengthens bones and helps prevent osteoporosis. Additionally, yoga's ability to lower levels of cortisol may help keep calcium in the bones.

- Type II diabetes: In addition to the glucose reducing capabilities of yoga, it is also an excellent source of physical exercise and stress reduction that, along with the potential for yoga to increase insulin production in the pancreas, can serve as an excellent preventative for type II diabetes.

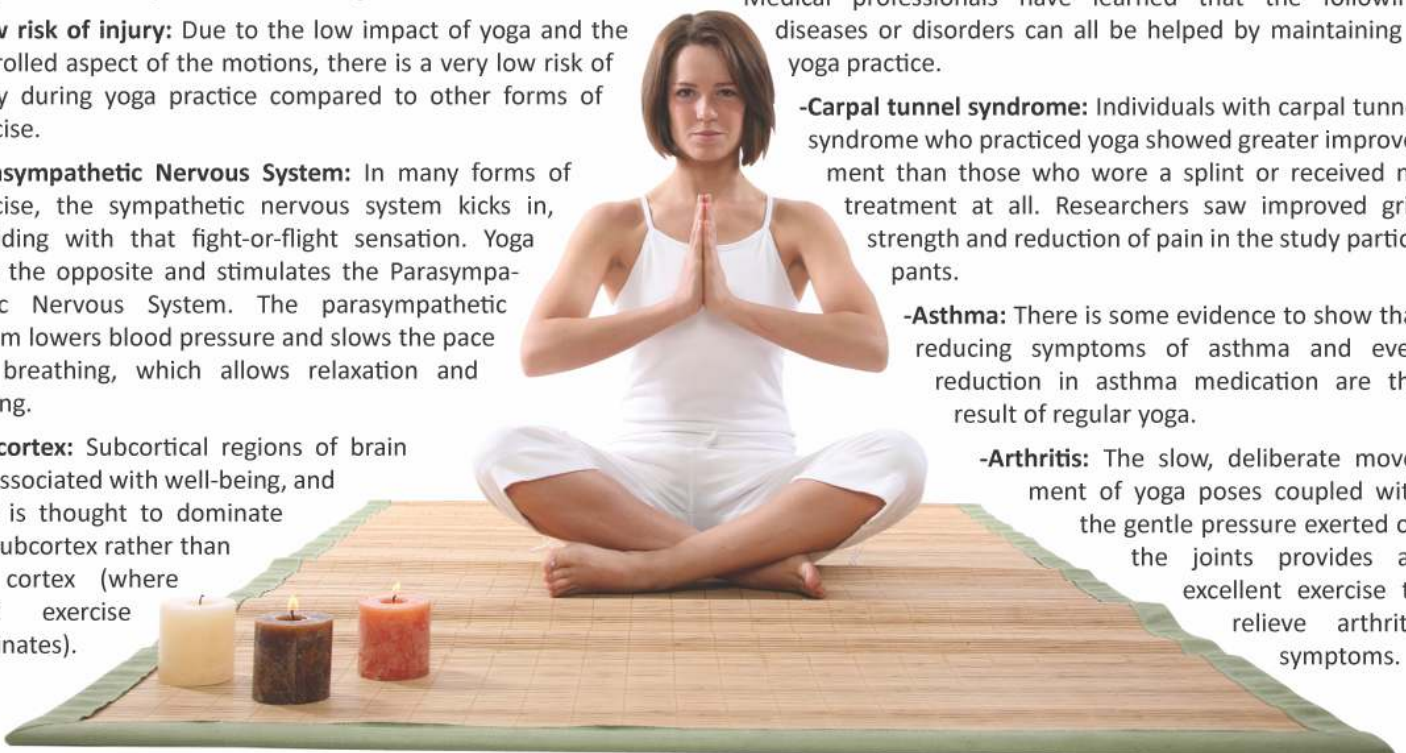
SYMPTOM REDUCTION OR ALLEVIATION

Medical professionals have learned that the following diseases or disorders can all be helped by maintaining a yoga practice.

-Carpal tunnel syndrome: Individuals with carpal tunnel syndrome who practiced yoga showed greater improvement than those who wore a splint or received no treatment at all. Researchers saw improved grip strength and reduction of pain in the study participants.

-Asthma: There is some evidence to show that reducing symptoms of asthma and even reduction in asthma medication are the result of regular yoga.

-Arthritis: The slow, deliberate movement of yoga poses coupled with the gentle pressure exerted on the joints provides an excellent exercise to relieve arthritis symptoms.



-Cancer. Those fighting or recovering from cancer frequently take advantage of the benefits that yoga provides. Cancer patients who practice yoga gain strength, raise red blood cells, experience less nausea during chemotherapy, and have a better overall well-being.

-Muscular dystrophy: Using yoga in the early stages of muscular dystrophy can help return some physical functions. The practice of Pranayam helped one teen regain many of his abilities lost to muscular dystrophy.

-Migraines: Regular yoga practice has been shown to reduce the number of migraines in chronic migraine sufferers.

-Scoliosis. Yoga can straighten the curvature of the spine associated with scoliosis.

-Chronic bronchitis: Exercise that does not elevate respiration, yet increase oxygen levels in the body is ideal for treating chronic bronchitis.

-Sciatica: The intense pain associated with sciatica can be alleviated with specific yoga poses.

-Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Studies of people with OCD have shown that practicing yoga has led to a reduction in symptoms—resulting in less medication or medication no longer needed.

-Constipation. Due to the practice of yoga and overall better posture, the digestive and elimination systems work more efficiently.

-Allergies: Certain types of breathing can also help clear the nasal passages.

-Menopause: Yoga practice can help control some of the side effects of menopause.

The integration of yoga within contemporary healthcare can give people more tools for improving health. When we practice yoga we join body, mind and spirit which enhances our tremendous capacity for healing. We can learn to take a more active role in our own health and well-being. The philosophy of 'Yoga in Healthcare' is to support and develop ways of bringing the ancient teachings of yoga into contemporary healthcare settings for those receiving care and for the caregivers.

Science & Spirituality indeed is the need of the day based on Reality Principle for Healthy Life.

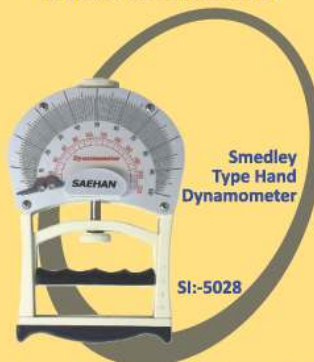
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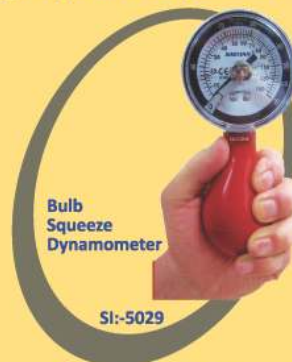


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