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Apr - Jun 2011 ISSUE



***SMART
Effective Self
Management
Programme***

Cooking With Love

**Teaching Yoga
with Precision
and Alignment**



Message from Master Mani

Moving from Hatha Yoga to Raja Yoga

Namaskar.

Sitting, its difficult to stand; standing, its easy to sit.... Sometimes, if not all the time, we need to really kick ourselves up to do practises that involves exercise, and it is much more difficult with practises involving the mind. Reading is easy but doing the practises or the concepts advised in the books is tough. This is where asanas come in. It makes us tough, it bakes the body and strengthens the mind to pursue the next step of emotional and mental training which requires higher stamina. When we can truly remain steady and in pleasure due to the high level of life force in the body from the toughening practise of hatha yoga, then we can sincerely say we are ready for Raja yoga. Even today while practising, my mind said, "Ok, do the rest tomorrow", as it was raining and it would be a good excuse to stay indoor and

read a book. I just followed my body and went out for a walk, came back to continue my practise and now as I indulge in literature I feel steadiness, pleasure, energy and yoga in my being. I advise this everyday in my classes and teachings and many are beginning to experience the wisdom advocated by yogis for aeons i.e. abhyasa (practise). Many more succumb to tamas (lethargy), become defensive and give up. They say they do not feel any difference when they stop. It may be true as penetration has not reached deeper levels yet and that is the reason they give up just before it gets deeper. Whereas for me if I do not practise for a day, I am sensitive enough to feel the changes in my body and mind. However, I do have to admit that after all these years there seems to be a bonus in the sense that the good effects seems to last much longer. Maybe after some time of long abhyasa it could last till expiry? This is a lifelong experiment to continued experience(s) but one needs to continue abhyasa (practise) in order to judge it in the reality platform. The yoga practitioners were called vira (heroic) sadhakas (practitioners), I know now more than ever that it takes heroic efforts to continue yoga sadhana, it takes nothing to not do anything; yet just like purifying ore or baking an earthen pot, the outcome is strength, lustre, brilliance, energy, purity, longevity, ananda (happiness) and wisdom.



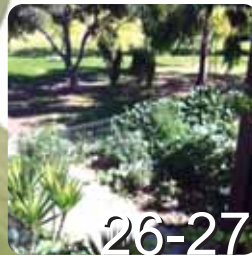
Master Manisekaran

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Calling all yoga enthusiasts, we are currently seeking your contributions either written or photographs (with catchy captions) on anything and everything about yoga. Selected works will be published in our next issue. In every issue, there will be a lucky winner who will receive a whole month of free Hatha Yoga Classes worth RM90! So get those pens and cameras out and start snapping and writing. All works should be emailed to

yogamail@malaysianyogasociety.org

attention to THE EDITOR

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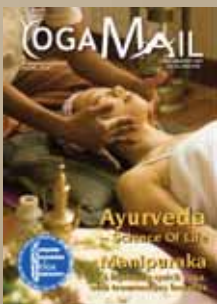
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Yoga-ing The Blues Away

by Enbarani

Meet Randy, an overzealous 15-year-old boy, who loves go-karting, zorbing and climbing hills. A few days ago, Randy was diagnosed by a school psychologist as 'stressed out and having a high level of anxiety', which was suspected to be related to the academic challenges rising from examinations and assignments workload.

"Aunty Dory, I try to stay active as much as possible, taking part in all the adventurous activities inside and outside school, but I still find myself worrying about whether I can pass the exams."

Aunty Dory is the only sister of Randy's father and a passionate traveller herself. Sometimes she brings Randy along on her local or foreign tours, having just celebrated New Year strolling along Hong Kong's inviting food lanes.

"It is common for you to feel tensed, especially when approaching tests or exams. Pressure and uncertainty will kick in making you to feel unsettled and affect your immune system as well as your brain chemicals."

"So you are saying stress can also make me sick!" the grimace on Randy's face is as prominent as a clown's smile.

"If you don't manage stress well, yes, it can do you harm." Aunty Dory says matter-of-factly, which really does not help to perk Randy's mood.

"But Auntie, I don't want to feel frustrated, ill and moody before and during the exam season," Randy throws his back against the faded lime beanbag couch. "I want to sail through the exam period with a clear mind."

"Have you tried yoga, Randy?"

"That slow-motion exercise from India? No!" Randy frowns. "Yoga is too slow for teenagers, especially active ones like me."

"Have you heard of the saying 'slow and steady wins the race'? That's what yoga is all about." Auntie Dory moves and sits opposite Randy, cupping a mug of hot chocolate between her palms.

"Recently, from my trip to Kerala, I learned a lot about yoga and their benefits to adolescents. Let me share a little with you."

Prescribed medication like Prozac, is usually given to psychological patients to calm the brain chemicals which have gone haywire. Usually, medication brings side effects like dry skin and irregular sleeping pattern.

Quite the contrary, yoga does not cause any side effects. Yoga manages stress by relaxing the group muscles as the practitioner performs the various asanas, stretching and strengthening the muscles and organs whilst regulating and rebalancing body hormones. After the vigorous but slow asanas, pranayama is practiced to control the breath and energy of the internal body. Yoga nidra, or meditation helps to calm the mind and soothe the entire joints and muscles, as well as feeding energy to the soul. Overall, the person will feel rejuvenated and refreshed at the end of every session.

The tingling and harmonious effect on the person's life is an out-of-this-world experience and can also be essentially recuperative for traumatized individuals. Feeling reconnected to oneself again, the practitioner would be able to handle any upcoming surge of stress or other deteriorating challenges.

"Really, Auntie? Yoga is able to do so much?"

"The way I see it, yoga is a holistic practice, benefiting the body, soul and mind, nourishing every part of the human body development. You can't see the effect instantly but if done consistently for a few weeks, you can definitely see the positive effects knocking on your soul's door."

Randy is still wearing a layer of doubt on his face but curiosity gets the hook of him instead. "Sounds like a friendly antidote to all my exam anxieties! But where do I start, Auntie Dory?"

Stress usually causes pressure on the physical body, especially the spine and the central nervous system that protects the nerves that lead to the brain. Hence, start with hatha yoga or the basic asanas like surya namaskar, cobra and tiger postures, as well as any balancing posture, in order to emphasize the careful alignment of spine, strengthening of the muscles, making the body more balanced and flexible, working towards developing a sound mind.

"So, let's start maintaining the spine first, Auntie Dory!"

"Yes, Randy. As you progress further, meditation will build a stronger mind, increase relaxation and help to lower blood pressure and muscle tensions, which are all the results of stress in your life."

"Before I postpone this noble act of yoga, can you bring me to a yoga centre to register myself, auntie? I don't want to wait until a migraine attacks me one day, it might be too late to call for help."

"Sure, Randy. After I've finished this cup of hot chocolate, I'll drive you to the Malaysian Yoga Society in Brickfields."

"Thanks Auntie Dory!" **YM**

Asana Of The Month

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Methods

- Lie down on your stomach. Rest your forehead on the floor.
- Now, put your legs together and position your arms below the corresponding sides of your shoulder, close to your body. The hands should be placed beside your chest.
- Now, start inhaling slowly. Keep inhaling and then raise your upper body (trunk), including your chest and head, to the maximum extent possible. Raise your trunk slowly, without creating any jerk. Do this just as a cobra raises its hood.
- By doing the above step, you will gradually feel the bending of the vertebrae one by one and feel the pressure traveling downwards from the cervical, dorsal and lumbar regions and lastly to the sacral regions.
- While doing this, your head and chest should be positioned upwards.
- To release the posture, by exhaling slowly and bringing down your trunk smoothly down to the floor.
- Repeat the exercise for five times.

Health Benefits Of Bhujangasana

- Relieves muscular tensions and back ache
- Stimulates the endocrine system
- Strengthens and increases the flexibility of spine
- Tones up superficial muscles of the back
- Relieves stress and fatigue
- Strengthens the abdominal muscles
- Effective in relieving constipation
- Strengthened kidneys and adrenal glands
- Tones up the abdominal viscera
- Gives good appetite
- Effective for women in toning up their ovaries and uterus, blood circulation is improved to this area
- A natural remedy for amenorrhoea, dysmenorrhoea, leucorrhoea and various other utero-ovarian troubles



Precautions

- Bhujangasana is strictly not recommended for pregnant women.
- People suffering from hernia, intestinal tuberculosis or hyperthyroidism should not perform this asana.
- People suffering from peptic ulcers should avoid doing Bhujangasana.

A 7-day programme, held from the 20th to the 26th of November 2010 at the Pure Life Society in Puchong and SJK (T) Jalan Fletcher in KL.

The free-course, offered by the Malaysian Yoga Society, was designed specifically to provide a systematic and comprehensive basic yoga training to poor, underprivileged students and abused women, with the intention to provide them with certificates, which would enable them to run their own classes.

The participants, who came from all over Malaysia, learnt strenuous but effective yoga lessons that covered all aspects of teaching yoga from basic asanas to intermediate level asanas, philosophy of yoga, pranayama (breathing techniques), shatkarma (cleansing techniques), pratyahara (relaxation techniques) and management of a yoga class.

A father said he was happy to know that his three children, who took part in the programme, were involved in a meaningful and useful exercise. Yoga engages them in body and mind and helps them develop valuable skills like relaxation and enhances their focus and attention span.

The students learnt self discipline and importance of cultivating good habits for a prosperous life.

With daily practice, they would be able to develop their thinking skills, be sensitive to their thinking patterns, whether destructive or progressive, and motivate them towards higher achievements in studies as well as life generally. The women learnt to appreciate their abilities, heal from past bad experiences or traumas, self-control and skills to boost their confidence. Overall they were made clear of the importance of yoga for self development, self realisation and the development of their consciousness, which will definitely enhance their lives as well as their families' and friends'.

"The project should be expanded to reach more students and underprivileged women, especially in the rural areas. It will teach students self discipline and help them improve their physical and mental capabilities," said Madam Kamalaveni from Johor. Her son, Kasiven, added that he enjoyed his lessons and looked forward to bringing some of his friends to join the next such programme.



A Visit to Rumah Orang Tua, Seri Setia, Sungai Way on 27 February 2011

by Julie Hoh



We started off the day by learning a very special "Therapeutic Touch" at the NSR centre before we set off for our destination. This was the special massage that we would administer to the elderly when we got to Rumah Orang Tua, Sri Setia, Sungai Way.

Touching expresses care, and ensuring that we touch those that we care for in the right way helps to improve the quality of the healthcare that we provide. It didn't take us long to perfect the "Therapeutic Touch" and without further delay, we were on our way.

Upon reaching Rumah Orang Tua, we unloaded all of our donations for them. And then we began our journey with "Therapeutic Touch". I began by going around to speak to the elderly and explain our purpose for being there. Everyone was so engrossed in their mission. It was heartening to realize that we are still able to find love and care at the bottom of everyone's heart. What old people need fundamentally is love, care and a pair of ears or someone to talk to. While carrying out the massage, most of the caregivers involved themselves in deep conversation with them. That allowed their lonely hearts to open up.

A few of us proceeded to the 1st floor where the bed-ridden elderly were. This particular old lady that I attended to was so fragile she couldn't even hear or talk. But from her gestures, I felt she really appreciated the comfort and companionship that we brought her. I felt so sorry that I had to leave her because I had others to attend to. The second lady was very different; she was so joyful and chatted most of



the time. She filled us in on the happiest moments in her life. I sincerely hope she was really happy in her heart too.

A project like this should be carried out more often so that more people can benefit from it; be it the receiver or the caregivers. A caring touch helps the elderly compensate for bereavement, dependency and an altered body image. It has been found to be therapeutic as a form of nonverbal communication and as a means of decreasing sensory deprivation, increasing reality orientation and alleviating pain. A nurturing touch is also effective in helping the elderly feel less isolated and vulnerable during periods of intense personal stress.

When coming into physical contact with another human being with the intent of instilling love and hope, it brings feelings of reward to both the elderly receiver and the therapists/ caregivers. The elderly feels cared for, the relationship grows and the lives of both are changed.

It was about 1.30pm and time for us to say goodbye to everyone. I left the Rumah Orang Tua with hope that there would be more of these projects in the future. It would be good to continue to bring hope and light into the house of those who need it.



Recognising the need for an effective self management programme

Do Malaysian companies and corporations recognize the need to have a very effective self management programme in place to create a more conducive working environment for one and all? Do they realize the importance of having happy, peaceful, relaxed and confident employees for better productivity?

An employee's attitude and state of well-being as well as personal development determines his success and also the success of his company.

Self management skills like being reliable, integrity, knowing what the company expects from an individual, getting along with others, and being enthusiastic and helpful involves a healthy understanding and commitment from the worker.

Besides self management, there's a great need to address the issue of stress among employees. Stress is a silent killer. People suffer from stress almost every moment due to uncertainties; frictions small and big, whether at home or at work; financial responsibilities; political and social confinements, living/working environment, health problems and many more.

Stress can be induced by very simple issues sometimes or major illnesses, or the trials and traumas of life. Even positive changes like marriage, having children or promotions are said to cause anxieties that may lead to stress.

People are moving further and further away from peaceful, healthy living conditions and stress level is escalating, especially in the working areas.

Why **s.m.a.r.t.** ?

Each worker is an asset to a company, whether from the higher-level executive position and upper management level or lower-class workers. A happier, healthier employee will be more of an asset, more productive and probably a more loyal one as well.

Now, YF (Yoga Franchise) through its SMART (Self Management and Reenergization Technologies) programme has the very solution.

SMART is a corporate and personal training programme, offering a comprehensive portfolio of a conscious and systematic process for the complete physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and self development of a human being to local and international organisations.

Besides solid self management techniques, SMART helps each worker understand the root cause of his problem and teaches him simple, authentic, guaranteed, doable yoga exercises to manage, mitigate as well as overcome his problems in the long run.

Companies worldwide, especially in the West, recognise the authenticity of yoga in this regard, and are adopting yoga fitness programmes to introduce healthy, relaxing, stress-free lifestyle to its employees and also for self management and development purposes.

Hence, SMART techniques are safe, authentic, simple and guaranteed to bring about greater harmony not only within a person but also his surroundings. It not only works in the mind and body to make a person stable and aglow with health, it also influences the very way one exists as a person and also as an employee.

SMART provides organisations with expertise, practical delivery, value for money and excellent customer service.

It's time for companies to understand the troubles of the times and bring about a healthier working culture that will undoubtedly increase productivity as well as the quality of the products it offers.



s.m.a.r.t. Methods and Techniques

- **Breathing Techniques:** Yoga breathing techniques are clinically proven in reducing stress level, promoting mental clarity and increased oxygenation. The increased oxygen levels and body-mind meshing will help induce a sense of peacefulness and calm.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** A distinguish technique between sleep and rest.
- **Poses and Posture Alignment Techniques:** Healthy exercises with aligned postures and poses incorporating strength and flexibility.
- **Positive Mental Attitude:** Techniques to encourage positive thinking and removing negative mind conditioning.
- **Diet and Nutrition:** Information will be given on healthy diets that fit a person's needs and adds vitality. For example, certain foods help reduce anxiety and some are natural energizers.

*** Programme can be customised based on companies' requirements while maintaining major components.*

s.m.a.r.t.'s objectives:

SMART's main objective is to train participants on effective self management and relaxation through various holistic methods. Benefits of increased self management levels:

- Better productivity/work performance and greater efficiency.
- Improved health, physical fitness and stronger immune system. Reduces muscle tension and pain due to the sedentary working positions.
- Better memory, increased focus and concentration.
- Brings clarity of thought, promoting better and quicker decision-making and enhancing creativity. Results in a calmer disposition, greatly improving interpersonal relationships in the workplace and promoting teamwork.
- Encourages positive thinking patterns, improves motivation and morale hence promoting job satisfaction.

- Higher energy level.
For employers, this results in reduced medical cost and less productive time loss.
- Target Audience:
Initially: Mid- and senior level executives. Though everyone would benefit, impact will be felt most by those in higher-level executives, sales staff and those in high stress situations.

Programme Structure:

Main Course:

- Comprehensive SMART Programme
- Duration: 8 days (Ideally for 8 consecutive days- 1 ½ hours each session). This programme's objective is to support the increase of staff productivity level in your company through teaching SMART techniques that are office friendly, so that dynamism is sustained throughout the work day. There will be minimal interference to your staff routine as SMART can be done in work attire at the allocated work space when implementing the techniques as a daily practice during office hours.
- 2 days SMART Programme
Duration: 2 days which can be conducted over a weekend i.e Saturday and Sunday.

- SMART Workshop
Duration: 1 day which can be conducted over a weekend i.e. Saturday or Sunday.

SMART Executive Seminar

- SMART Executive Package A:
Duration: A 3 day lifestyle change to relax your mind, refresh your body and recover your inner balance.
- SMART Executive Package B:
Duration: A 3 day fully guided detoxification from nasal and upper breathing passage to the entire digestive and elimination system.
- SMART Follow-ups
Half a day once every quarter. These would consist of revision of techniques in the main course and later on more advance and refined techniques. This would also encourage participants to keep practising the techniques. Here, personal testimonials on the effectiveness of the techniques when practiced regularly would be very convincing. This session could also be a forum for participants to exchange their personal experience.

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THE MAKING OF A KRIYA YOGINI

by Shivaani Premahansa

With God and Guru's Grace, I would like to share some of my experiences with fellow kriyabans and spiritual aspirants who seek Self-Realization.

This journey started from the day I was born i.e. March 17, 1955. It has been a long, slow but steady journey that took me through the various stages of spiritual development.

During my childhood, my parents did what all parents do ... home and temple worship. This is the basis of any spiritual development, paying regular homage to a particular deity (ties) at home or at a chosen temple. From that tender age, I was taught to connect with God through an external form. But of course, I did not understand the difference between the external or internal form or even the existence of the formless. As the years rolled by, I was exposed to and developed the habit of reading ... from fairytales to spiritualism, from comics to cosmic consciousness.

My beloved mother was my first Guru. A Guru is one who helps to remove our ignorance and grant us knowledge. She took me into the world of words. She taught me bhajans, kirtans and enrolled me in thevaram classes (songs of God). She continued to inspire me with her love for God and Guru. She set the right examples for me to follow.

In my quest for self-realization, I searched for the proof of God's existence in other religions. This developed during my schooling years when I began to read Holy Books from Enlightened Masters, Prophets, Saints and Sages. Regretfully, I was handicapped by the inability to read and write in my mother tongue i.e. Tamil. Thus, my inner thirst for knowledge pushed me to search and read Holy Books in English. Along with these books, I began to read books on philosophy, biographies, science fictions, psychology, self-motivation, spiritualism etc.

I was then handed over to various Gurus who taught me the necessary subjects like

Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Literature, Arts, Commerce, Language, Music and Dance. At the age of 15, I met my first Yoga master when I enrolled for my Hatha Yoga classes, which

had a deep impact on me. I began to be aware of my body and my breath. The lessons taught remain with me even till this moment. From the age of 17, I discovered the cosmic energy that exists within me in the form of Shakti. Through the subsequent years, She began to take me to deeper levels of consciousness.

In 1975, I went to India and met my first spiritual Master ... Bhagavan Sri Satya Sai Baba. He had an everlasting impact on me, and my spiritual growth continued to bloom stage by stage. His spiritual discourses and teachings began to become a part of my life and sadhana (spiritual practices) where my love and connection with Lord Shiva began to grow stronger.

The next major impact came in 2005, when I undertook my first Yatra (spiritual journey or pilgrimage) to Mount Kailash-Lake Manasarovar, Tibet. It is said that the first sight of the Himalayas will be permanently imprinted in one's soul. Indeed, I was awed and it was love at first sight! The 19-days pilgrimage can never be erased from my memories. It was a journey of deep love and connection with the Divine who exists deep within us. Being in the presence of the mighty Himalayas, puts us in the right perspective. I realised that I am nothing.

From that year, I continued to return to Nepal every year and paid homage to Lord Pasupatinath in Kathmandu. My journeys in Nepal took me to various holy sites like Gosainkund (the source of the Trisuli River);



Annapurna Circuit Trek (Muktinath temple); Gorkha (Gorkha Kali Ma temple); Dasain Kali Ma temple and various other Holy temples and religious Hindu and Buddhist sites. Year after year, I continued to trek amongst the Himalayas searching for the Infinite One.

While my life's journey took me closer to God ... my personal life began to take a different shape. Step by step, one by one, I found myself being separated from family and personal relationships. I had a deep sense of being prepared for something more complex.

The curtain was lifted in 2007 when I met my first Kriya Guru ... Master Manisekaran, a most loving and divine soul. This was the beginning of my life as a Kriya Yogini. He opened the doors in an incredible world of chakras and cosmic forces. He put me on a never-ending journey in search of Enlightened Masters and Self-Realization. He began to take me into an inward journey, made me realize that my breath is more than oxygen and carbon dioxide and my body is actually a spirit in Form. With the activation of my Manipura chakra, my inner world began to receive flows of cosmic energy, which radiated as healing energy to all who sought my help.

The speed began to accelerate ... as my inner fire began to grow. The more he taught, the more I desired. I began to look inside and realised that the entire universe is actually within me. I realised that I am a Spirit having a human experience. I realised that the external world is merely an illusion ... but a necessary illusion, affectionately called Maya. Master Mani put me in front of the Holy Fire and lighted the sparks within me. I became a sponge and absorbed everything that radiated from him ... his words, his techniques, his actions, his thoughts and even his looks. There were moments of doubts and clarifications ... moments of joy and tears. Finally, I reached a point where he said, "Shivaani, go ... fly ... and don't come back to this Maya world!" and with that my beloved Master released me into the inner universe.

Like an eagle which has been taught to fly, I was pushed out of the nest to test my wings

and knowledge.

I took the first dive and climbed up to a secluded forest ashram on Shivapuri mountain, Nepal, where I stayed for 48 days with a divine soul named Todke Babaji. He gave me the total freedom to practice my kriya sadhana. He gave me shelter, food and hours of enlightening conversations beside his dhuni (holy fire pit). Sitting in one place, I met people from various parts of the world. It was my first experience of forest life. My kriya practices in this seclusion, brought more spiritual experiences.

Upon my return to civilization and home, my world began to open further. Another divine soul, came into my life. Her blessed name is Sai Lakshmi Ma. In the most unexpected way, she came to stay in my parent's home and during that two weeks, she blessed me with saktipath. Her divine energy flowed through me in strong waves and my kundalini shakti awakened to connect with her energy. There were days of awesome energy flows. My kriyas strengthened and deepened.

Upon her return to India, my role began to change. I found my cosmic energy expanding through the worldwide web ... the Facebook! As the friends list began to increase on its own accord, I found myself meeting swamis, swaminis, matajis, babajis, divine enlightened souls, angels, masters, gurus and loving shishyas. The world exploded in the net! I connected with the world-wide spiritual consciousness! I began to transcend my boundaries! I went with the flow of the Holy Ganga! It has brought me in contact with the most amazing personalities who are prepared to selflessly share their love and knowledge with me. It has brought me in contact with seekers of Truth, Knowledge and Love. This whole experience makes me realise that I am merely an instrument of God and in order to find my true self, I must allow Him i.e. my Inner Guru, to guide me.

And so, I am now preparing myself for the next Yatra to pay homage at the 12 Jyotir Lingams, India ... a spiritual journey that will further connect me and my shishya with the Divine Energy and bring me closer to Moksha! Om and prem.

Play With Yoga

Yoga offers a lot of appeal for a health-conscious community regardless of age, creed and gender in need of a fix for a holistic healthy lifestyle. Yoga improves people's lives, returning equilibrium to our hectic schedules, bringing bliss to many individuals and households alike.

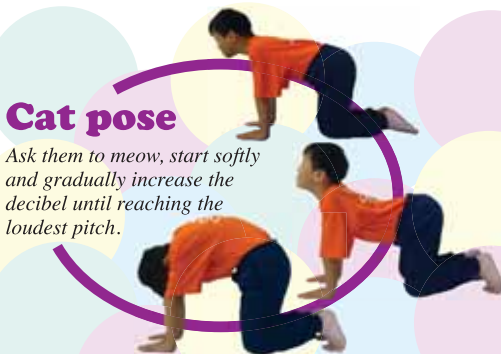
The 21st century's children are exposed to a competitive world full of academic and non-academic expectations, pressure and abuse, which can lead them to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and eating disorders. What benefits can yoga bring to children as young as three years old? The breathing exercises, postures and meditation are able to correct distorted self-perception, reduce stress and fatigue. Children will bounce back with more confidence as their hormonal system gets regulated and able to control emotions and mood swings. Yoga also serves as a safe and gentle way to introduce physical activity to generally inactive or sport-shy youngsters.

Everyday I practice a 10-minute session in the classroom before lessons begin, either in the morning when the children first come to school or later after snack time, just before lunch, before the second session of lessons begin. Kids love animals, and yoga has many postures emulated from the animals. So naturally integrating both elements will make the whole yoga session an entertaining, educational and healthy one. I use pictures of animals as a cue to prompt them to be prepared for the next pose. At other times, I give the older children the opportunity to lead the exercise routine. Let them have fun with the yoga poses!

****Reminder:** Check with your child's doctor/parents before starting on a new exercise routine. Don't forget to hold the posture for 5 counts, anything more than this might cause the children to be very restless and they might opt for the PlayStation at home or playdough at nursery!

Cat pose

Ask them to meow, start softly and gradually increase the decibel until reaching the loudest pitch.



Cobra pose

Encourage them to hiss like a snake.



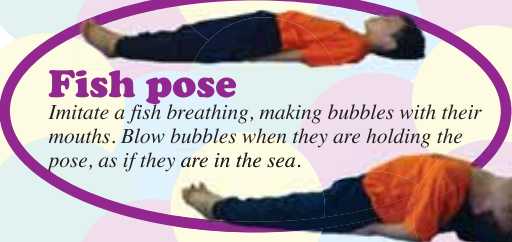
Lion pose

Children usually enjoy roaring loudly to this pose.



Fish pose

Imitate a fish breathing, making bubbles with their mouths. Blow bubbles when they are holding the pose, as if they are in the sea.



Butterfly pose

Invite them to flap their legs as if the legs are a pair of butterfly's wings.



Teaching Yoga with Precision & Alignment

There comes a time in yoga asana practice and training that the practitioner has a niggling feeling that there could be something more coming from the stretching and reaching into various postures. You may want to explore but you don't quite know where to begin. You flip the pages of yoga magazines, books and scan videos trying to decode the jaw dropping poses and decipher the lines of instructions that accompany each picture. But it's still all a jumble. Sage Patanjali is whispering the Eight Limbs of Yoga in your ear and yet you are wondering how they all come together in this deep well of information.

The answers are not to be found from the outside of that wondrous posture. No, they are not in the contortion as an uninformed bystander would call it. (Well, one can hardly call an asana a contortion can they? Although, the thought of performing it may tend to inspire that thought of really getting into a bind and having to find away to unravel the knots after!) But rather, search a little deeper inside and the answers could be found: how to achieve that germ of elegance and repose in an asana regardless of one's flexibility or stiffness; how to reach and expand from the insides to awaken every cell's intelligence; discovering the meaning of the Eight Limbs while journeying internally to a posture, enjoying the moment's freedom wherever you reach and then returning back with more energy to go again.

In a certain yoga pose, the class instructions are given to students in accordance to the principles of Ahimsa. For example, to reach for the ankle if you can't reach the big toe with your hand. But you know you can do it. You are just so very sure of it. After all, you have been training for some time now. And how are you going to progress further if you don't try? You are ready. So why are you feeling the resistance as you reach out for the stretch? What's holding you back from immersing yourself in the stillness? Most times our body is expected to take the instructions from our brain/mind whether we realise it or not.

Brain to the body, "OK, now do this, hand: Reach out and catch the toe. No... not that one. The left one! Further, reach more! No, not the ankle... I want you to catch the left BIG TOE! Yes! Got it!". The hand duly obeyed, but the rest of the arm, shoulder and back just got pulled along with it. No choice... they are after all attached to the hand.

Messages from the body to the brain while in the position, "Now shoulder is feeling a little tight and arm is starting to tremble a bit, while obedient hand still holds on tightly to the big toe. Oooo, the back is now trying to pull the hand's grasp away from the big toe. How uncooperative! Even the knees are starting to bend in protest."



For many people, the easiest way to have a good day is to look in the mirror in the morning and like what they see. Bouncy, shiny hair that falls into place and a glowing complexion is a reflection that will help fortify a smile and set the mind in a positive place for the rest of the day.

Sadly, many of us end up seeing lifeless, dull hair and a weary face. Often we blame it on a lack of sleep, a recent bout of flu, stress or age. Little do we realise that one of the main causes of this lacklustre appearance could be the products we use for our face and hair.

Drugstore Products

The average product sold at the pharmacy or supermarket contains chemicals that can have long-lasting negative effects on a user. The problem is that the beauty industry is self-regulated, information is scarce and the list of ingredients on a product label is often too complicated to understand.

In shampoos, for example, two common ingredients are sodium lauryl and ammonium lauryl, foaming agents that are known to weaken the hair and dry it out over time. Worse still, some studies have even shown that these ingredients can lead to cataracts, improper eye development in children, skin irritation and even depression and cancer. Most companies then offer a complementary conditioning product to replace moisture lost. This product too might have myriad chemicals that could irritate the scalp and prevent it from breathing.

These are just the listed ingredients. Research has shown that an average beauty product has at least 14 undeclared chemicals, many of which can result in hormone disruption, allergic reactions such as asthma, wheezing, headaches and dermatitis. These chemicals are not only absorbed through the skin, but they are also inhaled when sprayed and are able to accumulate in the body, as well as be passed on from the womb.



Many of these secret chemicals are lumped together under the convenient label "parfum" or "fragrance", and may include for example diethyl phthalate (DEP) which, when used by pregnant women, is known to lead to abnormal reproductive organ development in boys and can also lead to sperm damage in men.

Organic Products

Perhaps it is unsurprising that the average (cheap) supermarket brand is fraught with danger. Does this then justify the expense on pricey branded organic products? Unfortunately, in many countries, the use of the terms "organic" and "natural" are unregulated and products with such claims may in fact have synthetic ingredients. Most labels do not offer percentage figures or concentrations of the "botanical extracts" that they use so the final ratio of natural to synthetic materials within the product may actually render it less organic than its pretty label claims.

Homemade Herbal Recipes

To be entirely sure of the safety of the products that you use in your hair and on your face, the best solution is to turn to herbal recipes that can be concocted at home or bought from a supplier that you can trust.

Truly organic or purely herbal products have a wide range of benefits. The use of essential oils instead of synthetic fragrances eliminates skin irritation and reduces the risk of cancer. Mineral-based make up products instead of chemical-based ones are non-comedogenic, gentle on the skin and doesn't clog the pores. Shampoos made of only natural products reduce hair loss, increase nourishment, keep the scalp healthy, provides extra strength and shine and even repairs damaged hair.

Ayurveda herbal beauty solutions are often based on everyday herbs that have multiple benefits. Finding out more about these options would be the best first step towards revitalising your physical appearance and self-image.

For more information on natural hair cleanser, face wash and essential oils, contact NSR CENTRE at 03-77241072 or email us at nrsrslimmingcentre@gmail.com



Natural herbs for rejuvenation

Synthetic ingredients to look out for in your beauty products

Chemical	Possible hazard	Also used as
sodium lauryl sulfates	cataracts improper eye development skin irritation depression cancer	foaming agent
ammonium lauryl sulfate	weaken hair leading to hair loss drying environmental pollution	
propylene glycol	petrochemical by-product	antifreeze
olefin sulfonate		deodorized kerosene
monoethanolamine (MEA) diethanolamine (DEA) tweethanolamine (TEA)	disrupt hormone balance causes cancer	

Natural beauty & body care



YOGIC SCRIPTURE

“Neti cleanses the cranium and bestows clairvoyance. It also destroys all disease which manifest above throat”

Hatha Yoga Pradipika
Chapter 2, verse 30

Sutra and jala neti exert a profound physiological effect on the body, mind and personality. On the physical level, irrigation of the nasal mucosa removes accumulated mucus from the nostrils, associated passages and sinuses, allowing air to flow without obstruction.

The membrane lining the nostrils secretes a protective film of sticky mucus. Tiny hair like cilia promotes the movement of this mucus, along with the pollutants, dust etc, which adhere to its surface. The nasal membrane is highly innervated by nerve fibers and is perhaps the most sensitive area of the whole body.

These nerve fibers include not only the fibers of the olfactory nerve (the first cranial nerve) responsible for the sense of smell, but also numerous other autonomic fibers which relay information to the brain about the inflowing breath. Not only smells, but also environmental temperature, humidity and allergens in the air are all sensed by the nose as the inflowing breath is drawn across this mucus membrane.

Neti exerts a relaxing and irrigating effect upon the eyes by stimulating the tear ducts and glands. It also clears the entrance to the Eustachian tubes in the nasopharynx. The sinuses, important bony cavities within the facial and frontal bones, are also lined with mucous membranes and help to make the skull light and the voice resonant. Neti promotes drainage of the sinuses, preventing stasis of mucus and keeping them clean and functional.

Regular practice of neti maintains healthy secretory and drainage mechanism of the entire ear, nose and throat area. This helps to ward off colds and coughs, allergic rhinitis, hay fever, catarrh and tonsillitis. It also gives resistance to

various diseases of the ears, eyes and throat, such as myopia, tension headache due to eyestrain, certain cases of deafness such as ‘glue ears’ and middle ear infections, inflammations of the adenoids, as well as inhibiting the formation of nasal polyps. Where there is weakness or deficiency in these areas, even in children, or steaming from childhood, neti stimulates and restores natural functioning. Mouth breathing in children, leading to poor memory, concentration and development is overcome by neti.

Neti relieves muscular tension of the face and nervous tics, and helps maintain facial youth and freshness. It releases emotional tension and is beneficial in anxiety, depression, epilepsy and hysteria.

Of course, the practice of neti promotes a balance between the left and right nostrils and consequently the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This induces a state of harmony and balance throughout the entire central nervous system and the systems governing respiratory, circulatory, digestive and excretory function.

The frontal lobes of the cerebrum, responsible for the higher mental faculties, begin to function optimally. Integration of the higher mental faculties leads to genius, intuition, creativity and so on.



Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Refreshing Herbal Tea

INGREDIENTS:

- 500ml water
- 2 pandan leaves
- 1 lemon grass
- Mint leaves
- 1 teaspoon chinese wild berries (gei chi)
- Sugar to taste

Method:

1. Bring water to boil
2. Place all ingredients in the boiling water and boil for 5 minutes. turn off fire and steep for 1 hour
3. Drink when it's still warm



Synergising Ayurveda and Yoga

Yoga and Ayurveda are two paths closely intertwined to enhance one's health. Ayurveda, means "knowledge of life," is the ancient art and science of healing. Yoga is the ancient art and science of higher intelligence through a healthy body and mind.

Like yoga, Ayurveda teaches how to keep the physical body healthy, and how this health relates to living a balanced and energetic life. Both yoga and Ayurveda spring from the ancient Sanskrit texts called the Vedas. According to Vedic scholar David Frawley, "Yoga is the practical side of the Vedic teachings, whilst Ayurveda is the healing side." In practice, both paths do overlap.

Like Yoga, Ayurveda has been around for 5,000 years and is a medical science of life, prevention, cure and longevity.

Globally, yoga is now regaining its value as people are getting more aware of the need for a more balanced life lived with vitality. Ayurveda is experiencing a global revival too. Yoga is not limited to specific practices and postures e.g. the Ashtangas serve as a tool for yoga.

Today, many are seeking to unleash their full human potential and are turning to the many tools of Yoga or Ayurveda. The tools offered in Ayurveda include: Abhyanga, Panchakarma, Pizhichil, Kizhi and Sirodhara. One tool in Ayurveda is Abhyanga-(Ayurveda oil Application).

In essence, Ayurveda and Yoga compliments each other. Flexibility and removal of toxins from the body enhances the way one practices Yoga. Many Ayurveda treatment

procedures can help to improve flexibility of the body. For example "Abhyanga" prevents tiredness, degeneration and aggravation of 'Vatha' in the body. The practitioner of ancient martial arts in Kerala called 'Kalaripayattu' show amazing flexibility of the body. This they achieved through practicing Abhyanga daily. Moreover "Abhyanga" improves peripheral blood circulation, improves eye and skin health and gives longevity as well.

Ancient wisdom says that Ayurveda purifies our body, Yoga purifies our mind and Grammar purifies our language. Recently, a Master Teacher of Yoga shared, "Though I have been a Yoga teacher for several years, I find Ayurveda complements and enhances my yoga practice and well-being further."

Through combining Ayurveda and Yoga practitioners can elevate their practice as both complement each other.

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Dr. C. Radhakrishnan, BAMS, Senior Ayurveda Physician and Director at Punarnava Ayurveda in Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. Please email your enquiries to dr.radhakrishnan@punarnava.org



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Cooking *with* LOVE

By Nalini Singam

Cooking is another way to find your way to your soul. I literally come alive as I stand in my kitchen, overlooking the parkland outside my house, cooking and creating scrumptious meals for my family. Everyday I am thankful for my small and compact kitchen, with the best view I can hope for - green grassy slopes dotted with tall trees with voices of children playing in the park. The kitchen is the heart of the family. My reward - the joy of watching my family relish the humble creations from my kitchen.

Cooking is a form of therapy - the abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables, the aromas that burst alive as you add each ingredient to the pot. Every morning as I am finishing my morning sadhana (yoga practice) I am already plotting and planning what to cook for the day and the rest of the week. Do you ever feel in the zone when you are cooking? If you can say yes, you are truly blessed. Try not to label the idea of standing in the kitchen 'slaving' over a pot as 'work'... instead turn your time in the kitchen into an experience that nourishes and restores your energy, rather than drain you. Cooking can be therapeutic if you do it the right way - that is with minimal interruption. Forget multi-tasking and allow yourself to concentrate solely on one thing - the joy of creating a meal! I find it helps to create a nice ambience to allow your creative juices to flow, it could be the comforting sound of silence or a foot tapping beat, depending on your mood. Remember a happy cook is a good cook!

Cooking nourishes your body as well as your soul. By cooking your own food, you become the master of your body and health - as you have control over the type, source and quality of food that you feed your body. Nothing adds more taste and flavour to the food, than



embracing joy, happiness and love as you prepare your food. Cooking is like love, it should be entered into with surrender or not at all. Feeling resentful and angry are the worst ingredients to bring to the cooking process - the effects are evident in the oversalted or burnt food.

Cooking with my kids every Sunday evening - inspired by the Master Chef TV series. My daughters and I try new and exciting dishes, not forgetting old family favourites and comfort food. As we chop and peel vegetables, we talk and peel away our own layers, opening ourselves to each other, sharing our deepest dreams, secrets and fears. I hope this is something that they will treasure and pass down to their own children. Memories of their mother - would be cooking in the family kitchen sharing their feelings and thoughts, accompanied by yummy aromas from the food. The memory I treasure is baking with my own mother, the smell of butter cake baking in the oven while I licked the batter off the bowl and spoon (way back when we didn't worry about raw eggs and salmonella)!



Kitchen Garden-Chef's Inspiration

Cooking from the Kitchen garden – nothing can compare to the connection with Mother Earth as you walk around your own vegetable patch, deciding what to cook for dinner and the satisfaction of picking the freshest food for the dinner table. When I go shopping in my backyard, which has been lovingly tendered and cultivated by my husband, I feel like I am living on fresh air and love. Not only do we enjoy the most nutritious and tasty vegetables, free of pesticides and chemicals, but also experience the joy of nurturing the plants and watching them grow and flourish. The best form of therapy and relaxation I have is weeding the patch - it is mindless and it feels like I am removing all the weeds from my mind at the same time. I feel so carefree and gratified after each weeding session.

Cooking Mentor - Jamie Oliver's simplest ingredients and easy cooking steps to produce the most mouth-watering dishes. He strips cooking down to the basics (hence the Naked Chef) yet brings out the flavours by adding herbs and lemon for an explosion of flavour.

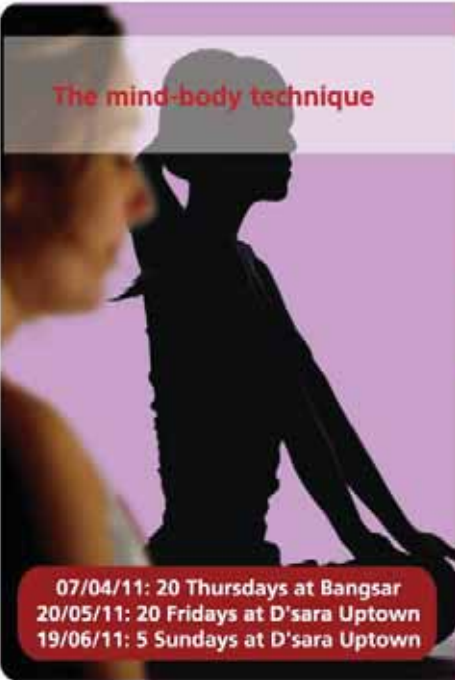
Cooking my way to my dream job – my sister spotted an advertisement for a Personal Chef to prepare healthy vegetarian meals for a large family in my local papers and encouraged me to give it a try. After all what experience did I have in cooking professionally, having spent the last 19 years in the corporate world. Equipped with my passion, I went for the interview and tried out for the job cooking off against another possible candidate. My vegetarian fried rice and pasta sauce (with hidden pumpkin, carrots and eggplants for my kids when they were younger) tipped the scales. I was living my dreams, cooking vegetarian meals for that large family of nine in their state of the art, professional kitchen with the best cooking appliances and sharpest Japanese knives. Every week, I planned the menu and listed out all the ingredients (for shopping) making sure it was nutritious yet appealing. Each time I cooked there, I felt like I was starring in my own cooking show, planning and producing healthy food to satisfy a range of palates from adults to a 2-year-old. Despite being on my feet for 5 hours preparing 5 to 7 dishes each time, I completely immersed myself in the creation of the food without any interruption and distraction from the real world—it was so therapeutic that I felt I should be paying them to cook there instead! Sadly I had to give up my dream job to focus on my other passion that needed my time - teaching yoga. My cooking stint taught me to be more organised, the art of multi-tasking as well as improve my chopping skills.

Now cooking for my family of four has become effortless and more joyful. I am happily making homemade bread and jam, there is nothing comforting than waking up to the smell of freshly baked bread. It is truly a labour of love! **YM**

*"When men reach their sixties
and retire, they go to pieces.*

Women go right on cooking."

Gail Sheehy



The mind-body technique

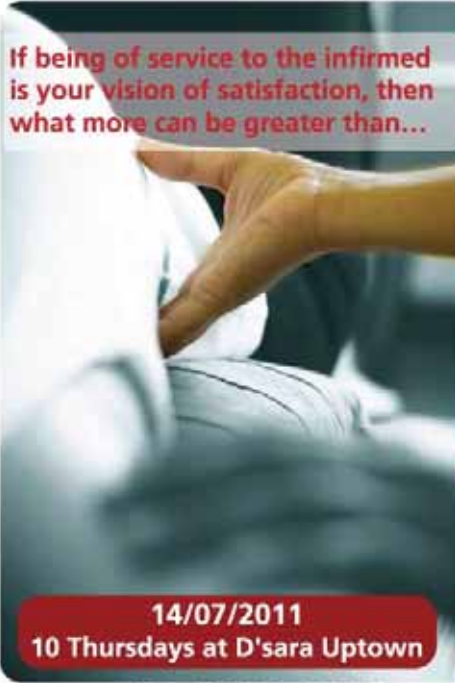
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- Increased supersensory perception due to greater clarity of mind
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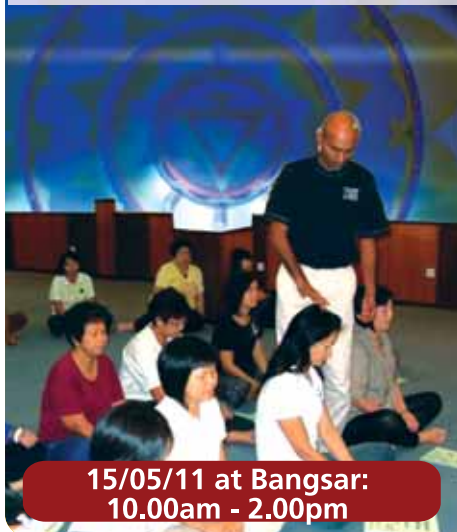
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details. This competition is open to all yoga practitioners, professional or recreational,

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3/4/2011	Yoga Sadhana Course
7/4/2011	Self Mastery
9/4/2011	Yoga Sadhana Course
14/4/2011	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
16/4/2011	Manipuraka Practice Session
17/4/2011	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
17/4/2011	Shatkarma Workshop
18/4/2011	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
25/4/2011	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
26/4/2011	Hatha Yoga Class

MAY

1/5/2011	Full Intestinal Cleansing
2/5/2011	Yoga Sadhana Course
7/5/2011	Teaching Yoga with Precision & Alignment Certification Course
8/5/2011	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
15/5/2011	Manipuraka Workshop
15/5/2011	Urdhva Retas Workshop
15/5/2011	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
16/5/2011	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
20/5/2011	Self Mastery
21/5/2011	Yoga Sadhana Course
22/5/2011	Manipuraka Workshop
22/5/2011	Urdhva Retas Workshop
23/5/2011	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
25/5/2011	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

JUNE

6/6/2011	Yoga Sadhana Course
6/6/2011	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
6/6/2011	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
12/6/2011	Vedic Time Management Workshop
19/6/2011	Self Mastery

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