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Apr - Jun 2015 ISSUE

The Effects of Yoga on Cardiovascular Disease

**Yoga for the
Elderly**

**Yoga
- Harmonising
Dis-Ease**



Message from Master Mani

YOGA *vs* Cardiovascular Exercise



Is yoga a cardiovascular exercise? Can something slow, charming, graceful, deep and relaxing be of a cardiovascular exercise nature? Yoga asanas are never done for weight loss, beauty, preserving youthfulness, mental powers, etc — but all these do come as a by-product of right training.

Let's consider this promising research data:

"For years, meditation fans have said that the practice keeps them healthy. A study, published in the 'Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes' journal in November 2012, actually tested this. For the study, 201 people with coronary heart disease were asked to either (a) take a health education class to promote better diet and exercise or (b) take meditation classes. Researchers followed up with the participants for the next five years and found that those who took the meditation classes had a 48 per cent reduction in their overall risk of heart attack, stroke and death."

How about that?! Even without a single movement — no walking, no jogging, no stretching — heart attack and stroke reduced by 48 per cent! Amazing isn't it?

This is exactly what yoga has been saying for thousands of years — *stiram sukham asanam* — steady and comfortable should the posture be. So in meditation the asana is one and it is held for a longer period of time while maximising the state of being relaxed and steady.

Personally, I have seen yoga practitioners whose only form of daily exercise is doing yoga asanas in their rooms early in the morning. No sweat, plenty of shavasana (relaxation) in between the asanas, not clamouring for perfection but just enjoying the slowness, steadiness, gentleness and calmness in the movements... yet they have amazing stamina, good strength, wonderful and simple flexibility; and they feel light, live long, happy and healthy — most often without serious medical conditions.

And if they go, they do it in yoga style — simply, gently and happily.

For me, this is what all forms of exercise should contribute — a lifestyle of quality. **YM**



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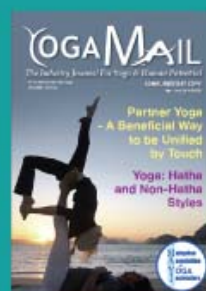
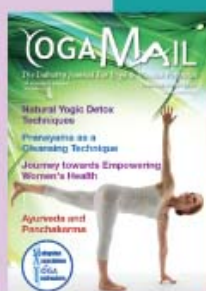
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The Effects of Yoga on Cardiovascular Disease *by Chandra Nanthakumar*

It has been reported that one in every four Malaysians suffer from some form of cardiovascular disease (The Star, 2014). It has also been reported that approximately 12 million of the Malaysian population are afflicted with hypertension. What is more appalling is the latest records revealing that 35% of deaths in individuals below 60 years of age is due to cardiovascular disease. Even more alarming is the fact that those hospitalised in Malaysia for a heart attack are on the average 59 years old, seven years younger than the global Grace Registry (The Star, 2014).

The common causes of heart disease are smoking, high blood pressure (BP), obesity, diabetes, high levels of blood cholesterol as well as stress. While many are contented with popping in as many capsules to counteract the effects of these ailments, others may choose to change their lifestyle. On the contrary, it can be added stress for those who cannot afford the medication as they are very costly, what more if one has to go under the knife.

Those who are not afflicted can lower their risk of developing a heart disease by also changing their lifestyle. It may be as simple as just ensuring that one gets at least seven hours of sleep every day and exercises regularly (Hoevenaer-Blom, Spijkeman, Kromhout, & Verschuren, 2013). Research has also shown that sleep-deprived individuals are at a greater risk of developing high BP, diabetes and weight problems, and evidently, these are some of the culprits to heart disease. The Public Health Agency of Canada has reported that physical activity has the ability to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Practicing yoga (i.e. doing asanas and pranayama) regularly is one easy way to ensure adequate physical activity in your life. While some individuals may choose to exercise vigorously like doing aerobics or running on a



treadmill to de-stress, yoga is growing in its popularity as it is very safe and easy enough to practice, though it requires discipline. Sometimes forcing the body into challenging movements and perspiring profusely during an aerobic workout, for example, may bring about more harm than good. Profuse sweating can cause tremendous loss of electrolytes from the body, thus affecting the homeostasis of the biological system. Aerobic movements and running on a treadmill can also be a little strenuous to the joints, especially the knees.

Since yoga movements are done with breath awareness, they help dampen the body's reaction to stress. According to Streeter, Gerbarg, Saper, Ciraulo and Brown (2012), yoga can treat cardiac diseases by improving stress-related imbalances in the nervous system. When one is highly stressed, an imbalance is created in the autonomic nervous system. The parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) activity is decreased while the sympathetic nervous system activity increases. By practicing yoga on a regular basis, the underactivity of the PNS can be corrected, thus reducing the effects of stress-related disorders (Streeter et. al, 2012).

Yoga also helps to reduce stress-related inflammation. The findings of a study conducted by Kiecolt-Glaser et al. (2010) revealed that regular female practitioners of yoga, who were exposed to a stressor, had less of a blood compound, which is linked to inflammation, compared with novice female practitioners of yoga.



Another amazing thing about yoga is that it also helps to reduce high BP, one of the main causes of cardiac problems. Prolonged high BP is known to weaken the heart and damage blood vessel walls. If untreated, this may lead to narrowing of the arteries and eventually one may suffer a heart attack. According to Okonta (2012), yoga practices may be an effective treatment for high BP as it has the ability to reduce the body's response to stress. Researchers in the United States have also indicated that yoga practices, specifically yoga therapy, not only reduces high BP but it is also effective in reducing blood glucose level, cholesterol level and body weight, which are major problems affecting the American society (Yadav et. al, 2012). Yoga has been proven effective because it modulates the physiological system of the body, specifically the heart rate. Since stress is a significant contributing factor to high BP, which in turn causes cardiac issues, the incorporation of yoga as part of the holistic nursing care for these patients treats the individual as a whole and not only the disease the patient is suffering from.

In summary, besides providing physical activity, yoga brings about tremendous benefits to one's health and it can be safely used as complimentary medicine in the treatment of cardiovascular disease. Instead of ingesting expensive medication to counteract these disease, one could simply practice yoga to keep the disease at bay. **YM**

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Yoga for the Elderly

by Nemala

As a person's age passes the 50s, it is common to notice the lack of efficiency in body and deterioration of immune system that leads to various diseases. Hence to avoid the rapid declination of the body, exercising becomes an imperative part of healthy ageing.

However, unlike most physical activities that are available out there, Yoga is among a few that has been known to benefit all age groups, from young to old. It is especially true for the older people as Yoga gives the benefit of movement without straining the body. It is a low-impact exercise that is gentler on your body compared with other activities such as brisk walking or aerobics. So, this is a practice as easy and as comfortable as it gets. Even the strength training in Yoga is less likely to cause injury as yoga practitioners utilise their natural body weight instead of additional weight devices. Therefore despite being a low impact exercise, several researches have shown positive output of yoga in promoting health, especially good bone health. It is found through scientific research that older adults (with osteoporosis) who regularly practise yoga are found to increase their bone mineral density (Fishman, Loren M., MD, BPhil(Oxon), *Yoga for Osteoporosis, A Pilot Study. Geriatrics Rehabilitation. 2009; Yoga for Osteoporosis. Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine. 2010; Krucoff, Carol. Standing Strong, Yoga Journal, 2013*). This is great news for all senior citizens, especially women who are more likely to have bone mineral loss due to menopause. Speaking of which, yoga can also relieve menopausal discomfort.

Several yoga postures are known to help ease the hormonal fluctuations of menopause and bring relieve to the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause such as hot flashes, anxiety and painful menstruation. Try out poses like the bridge, seated forward bend and plough.

Besides that, typically as one gets older he or she will face muscle loss, reduced flexibility and limited range of motion (ROM). This often leads to several

major health issues in the elderly, among which is the issue of falls. Research shows that 1 in 3 older people fall at least once a year. This scenario could very much be improved through the practice of yoga. The gentle stretches of yoga have long been associated with improving ROM and enhancing flexibility of body, including the spine. It also assists to increase steadiness and balance. Most yoga poses are infused with elements that keep one's balance in check. Therefore regular practices allow the improvement of flexibility, ROM and balance to take place, which is in line with reducing the risk of falls and related injuries.

By now, I'm sure there is a fair understanding (if you thought differently before) that yoga isn't about bending oneself into a pretzel. Learning even a handful of simple yoga poses can improve the overall quality of anybody's life. However, I must emphasize that it is very important to always learn from a certified yoga instructor. A good instructor will not only allow you to explore further without compromising the right body alignment, but will also encourage you to learn at your own pace and allow you to understand your own body limits. This is crucial to permit a positive growth within as a practitioner and to avoid injury. Yoga, or more specifically hatha yoga, is never about performing the poses at so-called state of perfection, instead it is the art of giving your best while enjoying the moment (with yourself). This is truly crucial, especially for the elderly as it instils their confidence, comfort with themselves and the ability to function well.

Nevertheless as we are all well aware of, growing old does not mean dealing with physical issues alone but also involves emotional and mental issues. One of it is loneliness. Many older adults have been found to be prone to loneliness. Loneliness has been linked with multitude health problems, including heart risks and even premature death. A proceeding from the US National Academy of Sciences study says that practicing an additional form of yoga,

known as the mindfulness meditation, not only decreases the feelings of loneliness in the elderly but also have positive effects against mental illnesses. This is a great gift for many elderly out there as the practice allows them to re-instill the ability to be content with themselves without depending on external factors; often time is the cause for loneliness. Another study published by Brain, Behavior & Immunity Journal also showed that undergoing an eight-week mindfulness meditation training programme, as well as doing meditation exercises at home, was linked with improving loneliness. Besides that, the effect of practice also showed reduction in the expression of genes known to be linked with inflammation. This is an important finding as inflammation has been found to contribute to a wide range of health threats, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases and neurodegenerative diseases. Therefore, practice of any form of meditation has great benefit on the practitioners' emotional and physical health.

Apart from alleviating loneliness, practices of meditation have also been shown in past research to have positive effects on the brain. Sustained meditation practice leads to 'neuroplasticity', which is the brain's ability to change structurally and functionally on the basis of environmental input. A research led by Richard Davidson from the University of Wisconsin has shown that experienced meditators exhibit high levels of gamma wave activity and display an ability to not get stuck on a particular stimulus. In fact, they are automatically able to control their thoughts and reactivity. The enhanced brain wave activity was found to continue for a time lapse even after the meditation session ends.

The practice of yoga has long been associated with many great benefits, among which is the relieving of pain. A preliminary study of a small sample size conducted by Wake Forest Baptist University found that meditation could reduce pain at a great level. It was noted that meditation resulted in reducing intensity of pain by 40 per cent and pain unpleasantness by 57 per cent. This is because the practice reduces activity in the somatosensory cortex and increases activity in

other areas of the brain. Many pain-relieving drugs, including drugs such as Morphine, typically shows a pain reduction of only 25 per cent.



Last but not least of the multiple benefits is on the anti-aging benefit found by long-term meditators. A new frontier of anti-aging science research done by the University of California Davis' Shamattha, a project that measures telomerase activity has shown that meditators have significantly higher telomerase activity than those non-meditators. Telomeres is the protective cap at the end of our chromosomes. It has been found that longer telomeres means that you're also likely to live longer. Telomerase is the enzyme that helps build telomeres, and greater telomerase activity may possibly translate into stronger and longer telomeres

So all in all, it is crystal clear that Yoga can and in fact is good for adults of any age, especially seniors. It rejuvenates and allows you to heal. Even as you grow older, continue to always feel young by keeping to these ancient practices that clearly have a reason for surviving centuries before us.

However, the more intriguing question is, why wait till you are old when you could start the practice now and reap the golden benefits sooner!? **YM**



Yoga - Harmonising Dis-Ease

by K. Saravana Sealán

Imagine being chased by a fierce dog. We would naturally try to defend ourselves with a stick or run for our lives, right?

By then, due to anxiety and the adrenalin rush, our blood pressure would have shot up and we would be looking for a safe place to sit and calm ourselves down. Then, we'd look for the "rightful authority" to take preventive measures in permanently curbing such attacks.

High blood pressure, one of the most prominent causes of death, is what this introduction was geared towards, and on how, as a yoga practitioner, I ought to search for a permanent and favourable solution.



Very recently, I tested my blood pressure using my twin brother's pressure equipment. The reading was 132/107.

It was an ordinary day, my mind was calm when I was testing it, and I was aware that for a normal person, the blood pressure ought to be 120/80. So, naturally, I got worried. But I decided that before I pressed the panic button, I'd Google to check what the reading meant and to learn more about high blood pressure. I learnt that the systolic — 132 — indicates pre-high blood pressure, while the diastolic — 107 — indicates high blood pressure.

It was code red undoubtedly for medical practitioners, and a moment of truth for me, as it could be fatal if the pressure escalates further.

My dad, who was on high blood pressure medication all his life, developed diabetes over the years, underwent dialysis and eventually passed away after refusing to amputate his gangrene-infested leg. Up until the time of his passing, he was sadly still under medication.

When I checked the blood pressure chart over the Internet, the vivid memories of my amazing dad were playing in my head and I had to make a prudent decision, a better one from my dad.

We are trained in yoga. It comes with the art of reflection and introspection, which leads to realisation. So, I did a diagnosis on what had led to the increase in pressure and to understand the cause instead of worrying about the symptoms.

I realised that the past months had been very hectic with my family members being taken seriously ill with dengue fever and clogged arteries, coupled with the usual work pressures, etc. that could have caused the mental agitation. More profoundly, I realised that a neck injury, a whiplash I sustained some years ago from a car accident, and a very recent knee and shoulder injury due to futsal with my young nephews, were also contributing to my physical restrictions.

Due to the knee injury, I had been very easy with my Hatha Yoga postures. That could have taken a toll on my health.

Reading through some online medical journals, I realised that diet, mental health and exercise play a vital role in keeping the blood pressure and ill health in general, at bay.

While I pondered further, a thought sparked in me, asking "Isn't the body intelligent and able to heal itself? Subsequently, another thought followed, "If the body is intelligent, then, have we understood the high blood pressure situation deep enough to know that it is actually the body's own intelligent mechanism of protecting or healing itself?"

Then the thought plunged deeper — "If soon after a fight or flight stressful situation, how would we expect the blood pressure to be normal? Naturally, with the heart pounding and the breath being deep, like in the case of the fierce dog chasing, the blood pressure would obviously be high, wouldn't it?"

Now, deciphering the intelligence of the body, I realised that there was a cause that was instigating the pressure to be high, and until I peer deeper into restoring that dis-ease — the high blood pressure would look like a disease, naturally.

When I asked why the high blood pressure, the reality unfolded. The high blood pressure is the intelligent mechanism of our system to gush the blood into the system as rapidly as the healing is required.

Imagine, the neck having a nerve pinch due to cervical issues? Obviously, due to the nerve pinching, the diameter of the nerve would have been constricted and hence the heart has to pump harder to send the blood through the constricted nerve to the brain.

Imagine we take a medicine to bring the blood pressure to the medically suggested count. Now, the blood pressure would have been too low for it to push itself through the constricted nerve in order to reach the brain. And as a result, more cells within the affected area would have been cut off of enough supply of oxygen and nutrients the blood carries. That moment, it became evident to me that it could be one reason why my dad, though being under medication, continued to have other organs malfunction, until finally he passed on. Hmm... something to ponder ya!

Anyway death is inevitable and there is no one to blame. But we have to move on with the aspirations our parents had for us in living our lives happily and healthily.

The food we consume these days is dubitable, on whether it is food or genetically modified compositions with excessive use of pesticide. While some are mere chemicals made to taste like food, we could be addicted to the tastes and be busy putting toxins into our bodies instead.

Now, which 'rightful authority' am I supposed to report this case to for a permanent and productive solution?

I consulted a dear friend who is a doctor and he asked to increase the intake of green leafy vegetables as they contain magnesium, as I requested for no drug prescriptions.

Meanwhile, I have returned to my regular Hatha Yoga practices more consistently as my knee is improving.

I performed asanas like Bow Pose, Plough Pose, Cow Pose, Viparita Karani, etc, to strengthen the internal organs and breathing practices (pranayama) like Nadi Shodhana, Kapalabhati and Bhastrika, coupled with Yoga Nidra, which did wonders. All this, while continuing my shatkarmas (the cleansing practices), to remove the unnecessary toxin that my body had accumulated, and as much as I can, sticking to a healthy diet.

Finally, I'm coming to terms that blood pressure fluctuates based on the physical and mental well-being. And that, the body is an amazing mechanism that heals itself, given a chance.

We have Yoga that harmonises the dis-ease in arresting the diseases, effectively. We have to be wise and courageous in choosing the 'appropriate authority' for our well-being and liberation.

"Our health lies in how honest we are with our practices and in how fast we bounce back, should there be adversities." **YM**

EVENTS Valuable Sharing

by Vijaya

"Which skill is important to derive maximum benefit from our studies, to score well in the exams and be successful in everything we do?" asked Master Mani to some 200 standard six students at the SJK (T) Batu Caves, during a 2-hour yoga session in January.

There were many interesting answers. But the answer we were looking for was 'the ability to focus/concentrate'.

In between the asanas and breathing techniques, the kids thoroughly enjoyed the lessons and wisdom from Master. As Master instructed, Saandhi demonstrated the asanas while Shuba and I walked like prefects in between the long rows of students.

Master was in full gear giving the students the maximum lessons in the minimum time given to us, so it was an intense and fruitful yet joyous 2 hours, because Master in full gear means there's a lot of laughter involved.

Well into the lively yoga session, he suddenly asked me something and gestured to make sure the students were seated in proper alignment, and pointed to a girl right at the back who seemed uneasy at her place. That was lesson for me to be present and aware.

More than the students, Saandhi, Priya, Shuba and I got the best out of the beautiful interactions and yoga trainings at the 3-day yoga session in the school.

Continuing into the lessons, on the second and third day, he asked us to handle the entire sessions by ourselves.

It was not easy to teach yoga to a few hundred kids, but it was momentous. Kids are kids but you'd be amazed at their depth and sincerity in learning. Then, even as you teach, you learn. The lesson is more for you than them.

In normal circumstances, children's laughter can't be controlled. They'd play, they'd fidget about, they won't follow instructions, would defy, talk non-stop, answer back, tell you plainly that they'd rather play video games than do yoga, and they act like they know more... they think they do, or rather they don't really think but function from the 'purity of a child' from within.

Our job was to understand that and approach them wisely. Children are not made to be quiet, composed, sit straight, be calm, be careful and be considerate of the teacher in front or comprehend the true meaning and depth of yoga.

Imagine the scenario when they've been made to do just that... sit in Sukasana (easy pose) one after another in rows that stretch right to the back of a very large open hall! It takes a Master's wisdom to have their entire attention.

We managed... Priya, Saandhi, Shuba and I. The lessons we learn from Master, we take everywhere with us.



In between the foundation and intermediate twists, stretches, forward bending and balancing there were happy rings of laughter as Saandhi and Priya were in full gear as well. I watched with amazement.

More than 350 kids took part in the programme and without any doubt they gained insight into the benefits/goodness of sitting up straight, being calm and composed when faced with challenges, being alert when listening to their teachers or revising their lessons, being focused in performing their everyday work, being open and intelligent, because that's what they each are, and why they need to be considerate and compassionate towards their friends, neighbours, parents, teachers, etc.

How to tell that they had benefited? After each session they were given time for feedback and there were lots of positive ones. Their testimonials were encouraging and they hung around us asking questions like "Where can I learn yoga?", "What asana can I do everyday?", "Would this asana help me improve my focus?"

In fact, the Batu Caves school headmistress and teachers have requested for a Yoga Camp in their premise and we are working on that right now! **YM**

YOGA THERAPIST CERTIFICATION COURSE

The demand for Yoga Therapists is on the rise as many are seeking complementary therapies in addition to conventional medical care.

Yoga Therapy is the adaptation of yoga practices for people with health problems. Although general yoga classes can improve general health and resolve mild complaints, they may not be as suitable for those with serious medical conditions. In such cases yoga therapy can help people by tailoring yoga to their individual needs, taking into account their health problems, constitution and circumstances.

In the Yoga Therapist Certification Course, the aspiring therapist will learn therapeutic yoga applications with comprehensive illustrations, how to identify root cause of problem, and step by step yoga treatments as well as management for common ailments such as:

- Depression, migraine and other stress related ailments
 - Problem in the neck, shoulder, spinal, lower back problem and knee
 - Reproductive system health
 - Cancer and other autoimmune system diseases
 - Asthma and other respiratory problem
- ...and many more!

If you are hoping to expand your yoga teaching to include therapeutic work, becoming a yoga therapist is the way to advance!



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A

rticles by Practitioners

Daily Practice Makes A Master

by Vijaya

Starting from the basic.

Daily practice means, when you bend forward, you can touch the toes you were not able to touch a month ago. It means you can stand on your head in a few months' time and pretty soon you can pull the legs up to padmasana (lotus pose) and cross the hands through the back and comfortably catch hold of your big toes, if you want to.

In yoga, the only Important Mantra is DAILY PRACTICE.

Asanas aside, it means a whole lot of other things too. It means:

1. Getting deeper insight into a skill or work to the point of gaining mastery
2. Learning self-discipline
3. Achieving success in any field
4. Discovering your skills
5. Discovering your self
6. Finding your niche
7. Managing your time and life effectively
8. Being healthy, happy and confident
9. Creating possibilities and opportunities
10. Not giving space for negativity to take over
11. Getting into focus and progressing in our effort
12. Conquering weakness and adding strength to the practices
13. Expanding creativity
14. Feeling good about ourselves

And many more.

What sort of people are we?

Do we take charge of life, be positive and continuously grow or do we usually whine and fail to shine?

Do we have a daily programme to spruce up life and put us on a moving and progressive mode?

We know that all the successful business magnates, corporate kings, rich and famous people in various fields have, but how about Sadhana (disciplined practice) and the daily practice of a Sadhaka (practitioner of yoga)?

First and foremost it takes concrete lifetime commitment and intense drive to realise the wonders within and ultimately attain liberation: that is the path of every Sadhaka.

Am I one? Are you one? Do we have a solid practice routine? Why don't we have and what is stopping us?

Practice makes a Master and Master means business. To him there's no hanky-panky or compromise where Sadhana is concerned. During trips and retreats I see him up at five in the morning ready with Neti Pot in hand and he still does all the practices that he started off with many many years ago... daily, even during "public holidays" as he puts it.

I tell him gladly, "Master I have done Tratak, Neti, Kunjal, Hatha, Prana Vidya, Manipuraka and Kriya today", and he'll give a longer list of things he'd done since 3am in the morning or 4am. I think of myself as one and I do have a practice routine to stick to.

Frankly speaking, mine has been a wonderfully deep and evolving journey that had started from scratch and has progressed tremendously into this beautiful state of being. I make sure that I do at least a few of the long list of practices daily, if not all.

This was my wonderful experience the other day. It happened two days ago. For one whole week I had very acute and troublesome pain in the left ankle and I was not able to put the foot down without experiencing sharp and agonising pain. It could have been arthritis or maybe accumulation of uric acid. Not sure which. So I was literally limping to work.

Two days ago, with the same pain I sat down and got immersed in Hatha, Yoga Nidra and Pranayama. The pain was still there. Then I continued to Prana Vidya and Kriya. After finishing, this was my true experience, I got up and voila, the pain was gone. It simply disappeared.

It is due to the increase of Prana (life force) in the body and the mind understanding the nature of pains. But yoga is not just about twisting and bending successfully, or healing ourselves and others. What we experience on the outside is just the tip of the iceberg.

There's a huge treasure waiting to be discovered within every person. We gain deeper insight into it all, and in the process discover our true selves only when we immerse ourselves into the discipline of daily practice.... and receive the grace of the guru.

That is more important.... to place the fruits of our labour at the guru's feet and get his blessings. The path of a Sadhaka is razor sharp. So with daily practice, it would help if one adds in: humility, kindness and purity.

As Master said, the practice of yoga and everything yoga is not even limited to daily.... it's every single moment and are we game for it? **YM**

A

Articles by Practitioners

Unexpected Discovery of My True Passion in Yoga as a Practitioner and Instructor

by LH Foo

Previously, my favourite pastimes were squash and running. Later, in 2008, I signed up for a two-year membership with a fitness centre to switch to weight lifting, body combat and MTV classes, which I enjoyed very much.

My yoga journey began with a well-known fitness centre. I had my first taste of yoga in 2013 as part of a therapy for my shoulder soreness. I am eternally grateful to yoga, which has now become my true passion, for healing the soreness in my shoulder. After that I started my yoga lessons at Bosu Yoga and got to explore and practise Hatha Yoga at a few branches of that fitness centre. I followed two great teachers, i.e. Nicholas and Iryne, whom I learnt a lot from. They gave me lots of confidence in doing the asanas (postures). After practising for a couple of months, yoga improved my posture, increased my flexibility, strengthened and toned many of my muscles,

improved my mental alertness and so much more. Since then my impression on yoga changed completely.

Hatha Yoga consists of a set of physical exercises known as asanas and sequences of asanas designed to align our body, mind and emotions. The asanas are also designed to open the many subtle channels in the body, so that energy can flow freely. And I learnt that Hatha Yoga is also translated as “Ha” meaning sun and “Tha” meaning moon, which refers to the balance of masculine aspects (active, hot, sun) and the feminine aspects (receptive, cool, moon) within all of us. Hatha Yoga is a path towards creating balance and uniting the opposites. In our physical bodies, we develop balance of strength and flexibility. Later I learnt that Hatha Yoga is a powerful tool for self-transformation. It requires us to bring our attention to our breath, which helps us to still the fluctuations of the mind and be more present in the unfolding of each moment.



Generally, yoga is more popular among females. I notice about 10 to 20 per cent of males in any yoga class that I attend. To me, there is no particular reason why yoga is more popular among women. Many myths about yoga stand in the men's way — that it isn't a decent workout, too touchy feely, you've got to be flexible to do them and men's bodies just aren't built for pretzel-like poses, etc. So, when I tell people that I am practising yoga, most of them don't believe it until of course they see photos of me in the various poses.

I have a lovely family with kids. Since the discovery of my passion in yoga in 2013, I started to teach Hatha Yoga to my family before bedtime, twice a week. They enjoyed it very much and the different asana combinations during each session made the lessons interesting. In between my busy schedule, it worked out to be a good family bonding time. Instead of watching TV, doing yoga together meant spending quality time together, sweating together, having fun together and relaxing together (in Shavasana).

In mid-2014, one evening, as usual after two consecutive classes with Iryne (who was a graduate of MAYI Yoga Academy's International Yoga Instructor Course, or IYIC), we had a casual chat and she asked me to consider IYIC and Super Yoga Kids Instructor Courses (SYKIC). I went back, thought about it and also googled it up to get more information. Later, I called MAYI and met up with Sumi, who introduced me to the courses in a more detailed manner. I signed up for both IYIC and SYKIC.

IYIC in MAYI, with their exhaustive syllabus, was a great place to learn the fundamentals and principles of yoga, e.g. Asanas, Anatomy and Physiology, Pranayama (breathing techniques), Shatkarmas (cleansing techniques), Yoga Nidra, etc. We also learnt how to teach correctly and safely as well as

come up with variations of regressive and progressive postures. It is for those who are inspired to become yoga Instructors as well as those who have great passion for practising yoga for personal development.

SYKIC taught me to combine yoga with various techniques to stimulate the kids' and teenagers' minds and also nurture their physical and mental development. The course teaches us to communicate effectively with kids, be like them, act like them, think like them and most of all be with them with sincerity, care and presence.

Since then I met with a few great instructors in MAYI who taught me a lot, namely Joti, Mei Wan, Priya, Surya and Chandra. Having trained under them gave me great motivation to do the asanas, assignments and researches. I never missed any of the yoga practices and assignments for the IYIC and SYKIC despite of my busy schedule.

Having completed IYIC level 1, level 2 and SYKIC, I continue teaching my family members, relatives and friends. I have started a small community practice as well. I'm glad and grateful that I made this decision which has taken me another step into my yoga journey as a practitioner and instructor.

As a yoga practitioner, I shared some yoga therapy poses with some of my friends and colleagues. A few of them have actually started to practise yoga after that. One of these friends is a 100km marathoner whose upper body lacked strength. After learning some poses from me he had signed up for yoga lessons with a fitness centre and said that it had improved his upper body strength. Since then, another friend had also started a daily yoga practice routine, which had healed his shoulder soreness and backache.

We care, we share, we learn. Namaskar! **YM**

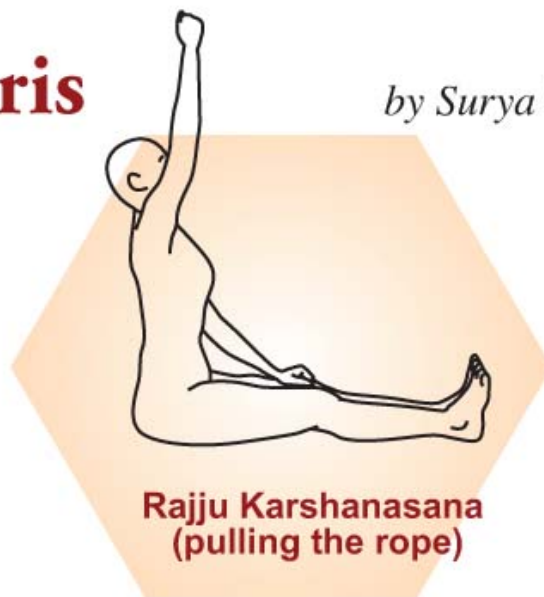


Yoga Therapy: For Angina Pectoris

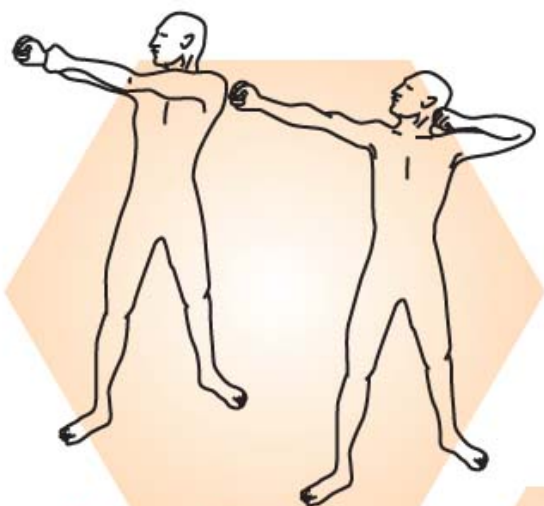
by Surya Tay

According to yoga, angina is a condition due to accumulated Kapha dosha which blocks the flow of prana vata into the coronary artery. Heart muscles do not receive sufficient blood and oxygen causing pain that can be severe and frightening. Typically the pain starts from the breastbone in the centre of the chest, goes towards the left shoulder and passes along the inner side of the upper arm to the tip of the little finger.

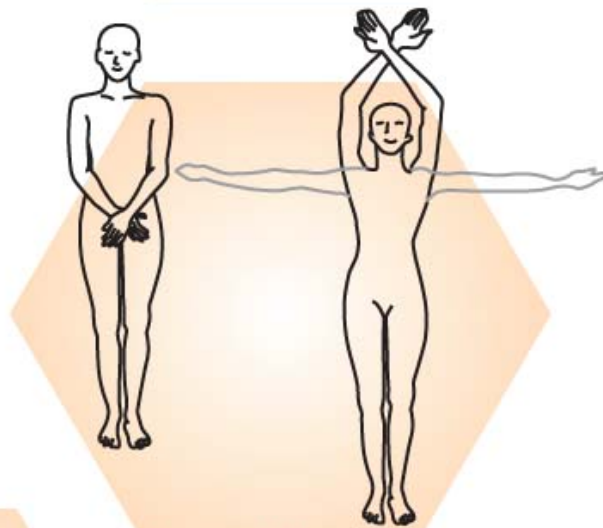
If there is no acute angina pain, coronary circulation can be improved through the following gentle yoga stretches:



Rajju Karshanasana
(pulling the rope)



Akarna Dhanurasana
(bow & arrow pose)



Hasta Utthanasana
(hands raising pose)



Pawanmuktasana
part 1
(all joints exercises)



Shavasana



Makarasana
(crocodile pose)

Pranayama

Ujjayi, Nadi Shodhana,
Bhramari

Other

Yoga Mudra, Yoga Nidra

You are recommended to consult an experienced yoga therapist before attempting any of the Shatkarma practices. For a free yoga therapy first consultation please call: **03-22605322** (Brickfields/Bangsar); **03-77266682** (Damansara Utama)



Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

1.2 Yoga citta vritti nirodhah

by Jamie Spatafore

Yoga is the cessation of mental modifications.

Let us go back to the very beginning. Most commentaries take this sutra as a summary of what is to follow. It is not. It is the absolute truth. There is nothing more to be said. Believe it or not there are some beings who hear or read this sutra, sit down and contemplate this sutra, then stand up and awaken never to be bothered anymore by the pairs of opposites.

We are not them. We need something more. We need this idea to be "fleshed" out. That is also our downfall. How can you parse the truth? How can you give it qualities or meanings that are easily understood by the masses? You can't. Sri Patanjali knows this. He gave us the absolute truth in the beginning. The rest of the sutras are only shadows of the truth. Don't misunderstand, they are wonderful aides but they are just aides. Aides are not the truth and they are to serve their purpose and be put away.

The problem is many of us get attached to the aides. We enjoy the feeling we get or we enjoy feeling like we are doing something. We are going somewhere. Really we are only going in circles. This is why the majority of us will only stay with a practice for a short time. Once the newness wears off, we want something new. We want a new teacher. We want a new system. We waste years of our lives looking for someone to give us something new.

If you look at the core of every religion or philosophy you will find the truth. Unfortunately, man is not satisfied so he wants rules and regulations. He wants mystery. The various prophets know that is not the way but what more can they do? They give them what man wants in an effort to assist. That is the beginning of the end. Man takes those instructions and invents even more. Meanwhile, he slips further and further from the truth.

There is nothing that can be added to the truth. There is nothing that can be subtracted from the truth. However, we go on talking and talking and building up these great castles in the sky that have no basis in truth and no reality of their own. It is like as if 10 blind men are describing the elephant from their point of

reference. Meanwhile, none of them know anything about the elephant.

The eight limbs of yoga are taught to be one of these systems. If you do ABC, surely you will become DEF. We look at each one as a stepping stone to Samadhi. All the while, we get frustrated that we cannot practice absolute non-violence or absolute abstinence. What if we are wrong? What if these are not steps but characteristics? Meaning, what if they are actually signs of a person that has achieved Yoga? Someone who is in complete Union will naturally be non-violent. Maybe we have it all backwards. Maybe the thing to strive for is Yoga and not the characteristics of one in that state. After all, the characteristics are just by-products of the truth. They hold no truth of their own.

We love to go on these fantastic journeys to far-away lands to catch some peaceful vibrations. Yes while we are there we are peaceful but isn't that just temporary? Move there for a few years and see what happens. Eventually we end up with the same mind and the same problems as before.

The point here is there is no person, no place, no thing that can give us Yoga. We have to get it ourselves. Sure there are aides and sure there are some benevolent beings to assist but as soon as they talk or guide, we've missed it. They know that. We don't. We want them to carry us across the ocean of samsara to some great heaven waiting next door. That is just our neighbour and it is no more peaceful than the spot we are standing in right now.

There will be plenty of confusion. There will be plenty of doubt. That is all part of this amazing game known as life. It has to be played out as our creator intended. We cannot escape it. I will leave you with one of my favourite quotes. Take your time and reflect on this everyday for a week and see what you think.

"Everything is predetermined. But one is always free to not identify oneself with the body and not be affected by the pleasure and pain associated with its activities."

- Ramana Maharshi **YM**

A

t Your Fingertips:

Arjuna : The Herb that Protects Your Heart

by Lee Yan

Your heart is one amazing organ. It's the first organ to form during development of your body. Throughout our lives, the heart continues carrying out the vital job of pumping nutrient rich blood throughout the body to sustain life. Your heart is at the center of your circulatory system. This system consists of a network of blood vessels, such as arteries, veins, and capillaries. These blood vessels carry blood to and from all areas of your body.

This fist-sized powerhouse beats (expands and contracts) in average about 100,000 times per day, pumping five or six quarts of blood each minute, or about 2,000 gallons per day. Your heart is vital to your health and nearly everything that goes on in your body. Without the heart's pumping action, blood can't move throughout your body and there will be no life. It's time to pay more attention to what your heart does for you and in return what you can do for your heart.

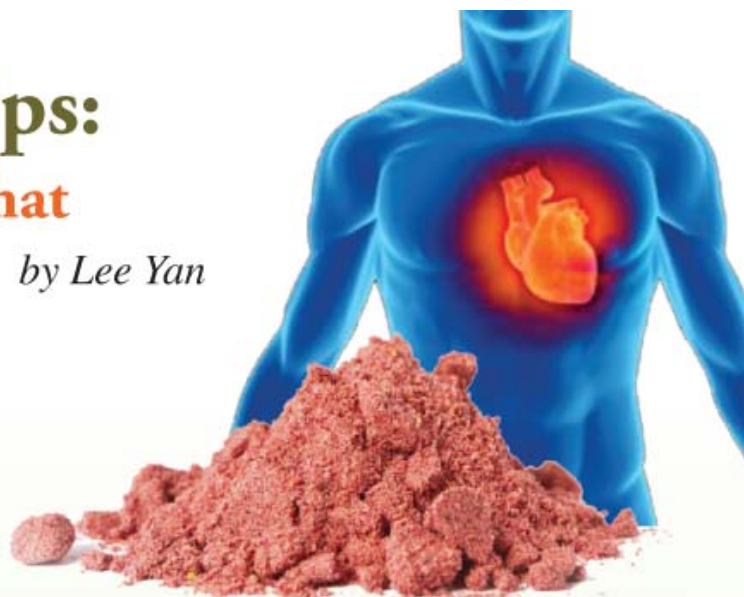
Among heart related health conditions such as Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is one of the leading causes of death these days. It is often termed as the "silent killer" as it produces no symptoms. If such conditions are improved, however, it can cause havoc on blood vessels and internal organs, setting the stage for the later development of a heart attack, stroke, or kidney failure.

In today's world, we are constantly stressed, pushed to meet deadlines or rushing to get the kids to school while meeting work demands and the heart needs to be healthy and strong to take on these challenges. For people with mild to moderate blood pressure, lifestyle changes; combined with helpful natural nutritional herbs, can dramatically lower blood pressure and may eliminate the need for prescription drugs as well.

There are so many natural Ayurveda herbs and modern food choices for prevention, treatment and improvement of heart related issue.

Arjuna

Terminalia Arjuna (usually simply referred to as Arjuna) is a tree bark that is used medicinally in Ayurveda for the purposes of cardiovascular health pertaining to the heart itself. In Sanskrit, the word arjuna means bright, silver or "shining," expressing the shining quality of the bark of the very tall deciduous arjuna tree that grows up to 90 feet. Once a year the bark naturally molts or peels, making this beneficial bark accessible for harvest.



Arjuna is also the name of the hero of Sanskrit epic of ancient India, the Mahabharata. Arjuna was the protector of his family in this battle. The herb Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*) was named for its traditional role of protecting the vitality and heart health of those who take it. It has a large variety of bioactives showing promise at improving function of the heart without any observable toxicity of side effects.

Recently, researchers have found that Arjuna supports the muscle tone of the heart, therefore supporting healthy blood flow through the heart. Arjuna also promotes a stronger contraction of the heart muscle, allowing the heart to function efficiently. Like many of the western herbs for the heart, like Hawthorn berry, Arjuna is loaded with a group of heart-healthy polyphenols and flavonoids such as arjunone and arjunolone that classify it as a cardio-tonic.

Traditional Use as a Lymph Tonic for the Heart

From the Ayurveda perspective, Arjuna is a lymph mover for the heart. Under the protective shiny layer of the bark lie reddish, more active constituents. Other herbal lymph movers are Manjistha and Red Root, but raspberries strawberries, blueberries, beets and cranberries support antioxidant activity and move lymph as well.

It is understood in Ayurveda that when the lymph around the heart gets congested, the ability of the heart to pump in a healthy fashion weakens. Arjuna was used for millennia to support the heart's lymph drainage, a strong heart muscle, encourage healthy muscular contractions of the heart, and healthy arterial blood flow.



Healthy Arteries

There are numerous studies conducted on Arjuna bark appears to be effective in improving cardiac function in persons who have recently undergone heart trauma or injury. One study showed that, when Arjuna bark was taken, it supported healthy cholesterol levels. In another study in which smokers were given the extract of Arjuna, it supported healthy arterial function, meaning that their arteries were able to expand and contract in a normal fashion – a difficult task for smoker's arteries. Another study suggests that Arjuna may support relief from occasional chest discomfort. When Arjuna was used alone and in combination with the standard western medication (isosorbide mononitrate), occasional chest discomfort was reduced by 50% when patients consume Arjuna daily.

Arjuna for Vitality

In some cases, the heart struggles to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. As the heart works harder and harder to do so, it becomes bigger and the heart muscles stretch. Eventually this reaches a point where the heart cannot keep up or contract efficiently.

In the same study, subjects with issues of this nature who were unable to carry out any physical activity without discomfort took Arjuna every eight hours. One hundred percent of the subjects evaluated progressed to a point where they were able to perform normal activities without discomfort. After 4 months, 75% of them were able to perform normal activities with only slight limitations. No subjects in the placebo group saw such improvement.

Your Heart, the Ruler of Your Body

In many traditions, the heart is considered the ruler of the body. Ironically, it is often a body system that is overlooked until it is in crisis. Treat your heart like the ruler that it is by practicing a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Arjuna's Benefits:

- Arjuna bark powder is rich in saponins, natural anti-oxidants (flavonoids) gallic acid, ellagic acid, oligomeric proanthocyanidins, phytosterols, and minerals including calcium, magnesium, zinc and copper.
- Regular use of T.arjuna improves the pumping activity of heart, which makes it very useful for heart weakness and congestive heart failure.
- Arjuna improves cardiac muscle strength.
- It decreases LDL cholesterol levels. Arjuna's ability to suppress the blood's absorption of lipids indicates that it has cholesterol-regulating properties. Its principle constituents are sitosterol, ellagic acid and arjunic acid.

- Arjuna bark is rich in Co-enzyme Q-10 which prevents incident of heart attacks.
- Arjuna also has a tonic and diuretic effects that benefit cirrhosis of the liver.
- It induces a drug-dependent decrease in blood pressure and heart rate.
- The bark of Arjuna is useful as an anti-ischemic and cardioprotective agent in hypertension and in ischemic heart disease, especially in disturbed cardiac rhythm, angina or myocardial infarction.
- Arjuna helps maintain a healthy heart and reduces the effects of stress and nervousness.
- Arjuna can relieve symptomatic complaints of essential hypertension such as giddiness, insomnia, lassitude, headache and the inability to concentrate.
- In a study on the efficacy of the bark powder in treating congestive cardiac failure (CCF), over 40% of the cases showed marked improvement. CCF due to congenital anomaly of heart and valve disease was also brought under control. 4 out of 9 cases of CCF due to chronic bronchitis were also relieved by the treatment.

How to Consume Arjuna Herb

Its bark powder, made into water concoction and consumed in a dose of 50 ml, once or twice a day, before food. A tablespoon of bark powder is added to 2 cups of water, boiled and reduced to half a cup, filtered and consumed when hot. It can be consumed in the form of milk remedy, as explained above.

This herb is not suitable for person with Low Blood Pressure. Because it can lower blood pressure and blood sugar levels, people on medication for BP and diabetes need to take precaution to avoid over-dosing. It is safe to use in children and during lactation.

Lifestyle Tips to Protect Your Heart

Lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol will reduce your risk of heart disease. Here are some tips to protect your heart:

- Eat a healthy diet that is low in salt; low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol; and rich in fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Take a brisk 10-minute walk, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.
- Reduce strenuous and stressful activity
- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit as soon as possible.

For more information on how you and your family can benefit from using NSR's medicinal quality Arjuna herb. For other types of herbs and natural treatments availability please feel free to contact us at **03-7724 1072** or visit our website at www.nsrcentre.com. NSR Centre Damansara Utama

Eco's Echoes:

Your Supernatural Power (Part 3)

by Ravin.S

CONCLUSION

The moment we inhaled for the first time, we are pervaded with the power to translate the possibilities of our minds into the real world. To fully awaken our power, it requires a subtle change in the way we think of ourselves in life, a shift in belief. All these three experiments are telling us about our relationship to the world. The common denominator among all three is that they involve human DNA. When we consider the three experiments, something no less than paradigm shattering happens. In the first experiment, we know that human DNA has a direct effect on the vibration of light. In the second experiment, we learned that even we are separated by distances of hundreds of miles, we are still connected to DNA molecules, and the effect is the same. In the third experiment, the 'HeartMath' researchers showed us that human emotion has a direct effect on DNA, which in turn directly impacts the stuff our world is made of. This is the beginning of our 'inner technology' that does more than simply tell us we can have an effect on our bodies and our world - it shows us that this effect exists and how it works!

We can write an equation based on the discussions:

Equation 1: Emotion changes the DNA

Equation 2: DNA changes the Matter (Our physical world) with no limit to distances
Substitute equation 2 into equation 1,

Equation 3: Human emotion changes our physical world with no limit to distances!

APPLIED KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE

The universe is a projection of events that are happening in response of our actions. It gives nothing less than direct access to every possibility that we could ever pray for. Equation 3 is proved, when people within a group share a common experience of consciousness. The effect was detected beyond the group itself. Inner experiences are being carried in a way that's not restricted by the so-called laws of physics. Example of this phenomenon is evident in the effect that 'Transcendental Meditation' (TM), can have upon large populations.

Cities in US with population over 10,000 experienced significant changes in their communities when they participated in the TM project. Those involved used specific meditation techniques to create the inner experiences of peace that were reflected in the world around them. This is called 'Maharishi Effect' on honour of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who stated that when 1% of a population practiced the methods of meditation, there would be decrease in violence for that population. Similar studies led to landmark project, 'International Peace Project'. During the Israeli-Lebanese war of the early 1980's, practitioners were trained in precise techniques of TM to create peace in their bodies rather than simply talking and thinking about that war. During the exact time that they were at peace, terrorist incidents, crime against people and traffic accidents declined in number. When the participants stopped their practice, the statistic reversed. These studies confirmed the earlier findings; when a small percentage of the population achieved peace within themselves, that peace was reflected in the world around them.

On this planet, we are still witnessing endless wars, frequent misunderstandings, fervent hatreds, the rivers of blood spilled by all those emperors so that they could become the momentary masters. Yet, we have the biggest power as the majority when together we stand as one. Our prayers is the in-built supremely advanced healing technology beyond imagination which could make the change within self and towards outer world to bring peace for everyone, for those families who lost their beloved in tragedies, recently happened series of flight disasters, earthquakes and so on. Scientists were able to identify the minimum number of people needed to experience inner peace for the healing to mirror in the surrounding world:

Square root of 1% of the population

For an example, in a city of 1 million people, the total is about 100. In a world of 7 billion people, it's only about 8,400. This represents only the minimum number required for the effect to begin. The more people are involved, the faster the effect is created on planet earth. We can apply this principle in our lives for any group of people, regardless of whether it's a small community, a temple congregation, a large city or for the entire planet! **YM**



Think about what these experiments, results and conclusions mean in our life. What problem can't be solved, what illness can't be healed, and what condition can't be improved if we are able to tap the force and change the quantum blueprint where all of these things come from?

Inner Insights: Wonderful Practices for Self-Development

by Sivasangaran (Shanker)

I used to think of yoga as merely an exercise that involves physical movements and was practised only by a few people. But my perception changed entirely after I had the privilege to take up yoga lessons in 2005 when I was in secondary school. Thanks to my twin brother who had joined first and had lured me in by explaining the mountainous benefits of this ancient science.

As I was an athlete, I frequently joined football tournaments, track and field events and other sports activities. My muscles were very stiff, so in the first month of learning yoga I experienced muscle pain and could not perform some of the asanas (postures). After a few months, the pain started to ease and I became more flexible, and my stamina shot up dramatically. Thus, I was able to increase my performance in sports and able to maintain my physical health as well.

My yoga lessons started at Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman with Master Manisekaran. His lessons didn't just stop at Hatha Yoga, but spread far and wide into Yoga Nidra, Pranayama, Trataka and also Meditation.

After a few months, he introduced us to the amazing practice of Kriya Yoga as well. I was very excited and interested. He took one month to teach one technique and altogether 20 months to finish all the 20 Kriya techniques. During the practices my awareness and my mental stamina became very strong, so I believed that the improvements were due to Kriya Yoga.

An interesting incident took place at a LRT station. After my class, at about 10pm, I was waiting for taxi at the station. Suddenly, 2 people on a motorbike came towards me. One of them jumped down from the bike and barged towards me with a knife in his hand. All of this happened in a split second and I could clearly see what was happening. My immediate impulse was to run away from him as fast as I could. I noticed that another person on the street started to run as well when he saw me running away. The crooks gave up on us. I was amazed at my quick decision-making skills and attribute it to the amazing Kriya practices. Now I feel super confident in making decisions.

After a few years, I had the opportunity to learn the Urdhva Retas technique. This is a very powerful practice to boost energy level.

Usually I feel very sleepy after lunch, but I noticed that it did not happen after I started practising Urdhva Retas. It also improved my self-alarm. I'm able to wake up at the expected time in the morning without having the urge to go back to the warmth and comfort of my bed again.

The breathing techniques, or pranayama, improved my breathing and stamina. Now my breathing is always stable before, during and after my cardio practices. Sometimes I experience heavy breathing but I still feel comfortable.

After I enrolled for the Yoga Therapist Certification Course, I had a very good understanding of Hatha Yoga, what is the significance of the asanas, and how the asanas have helped to cure physical diseases. This has helped me become a very good instructor. It also helped me to cure my physical problems.

After a few years of practising all these wonderful techniques, people started noticing the changes in me. My brother said that he could see enormous improvement in my personality, behaviour, aptitude, attitude, and also in self-confidence. This shows how spectacular yoga is and how beautifully it is contributing to the growth of an individual.

Since I have taken the International Yoga Instructor Course, I am now a certified yoga instructor and have been teaching yoga in Indonesia.

A yoga practitioner need not compete with others and show off that he is way better than others, instead he should understand his own self, his capacity and limitations, and put in effort to improve himself and his life. In the process, he could help others grow as well.

YM



Inner Insights: Yoga, a Life Changer

by Kogie Loganathan

The term yoga became familiar to me when I was 8 years old. It started one fine Saturday afternoon when my aunt dragged me to a temple beside my house and asked me to join Thevaram and Bhajan classes instead of watching TV at home. I wasn't very happy being pushed into something I didn't know anything about, especially not during my favourite TV shows on the weekends! But gradually, I started enjoying the classes and soon after that they started giving free yoga classes as well.

At first I thought yoga was just a bendy exercise with unfamiliar names, but later I found it very cool that my teacher could do a headstand. I still remember starting the classes off with light warm up stretches, which were followed by 12 sets of Sun Salutations and various other asanas. As a child, I did it for fun and never understood the real essence of yoga. It continued until I was 15 years old. I had to stop after my life took a busy turn with various school activities.

As I grew up, life took me to many directions and groomed me into a bold and sensible yet short-tempered, emotional and gullible woman. Deep down I knew that I had swayed a little according to worldly needs and society regulations. I knew I wasn't living based on my desires and my true inner self was bottled up.

I started my yoga practices again only in 2013 under the amazing guidance of Master Manisekaran, which changed my life and I'm still changing to become a better person. I started with Hatha Yoga and later took up the Self Mastery Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course, which I'd like to specially mention, brought remarkable changes within me and helped me to touch base with my true inner self.

I'm sharing here some of the changes that I have experienced.

1 I'm a Vegetarian now.



I never had any intention to become a vegetarian because I was a food tourist to be exact. I used to eat anything and everything on the plate, including forbidden food in Hinduism. But naturally yoga led me to become a vegan because Ahimsa (non- harming) is part of the Yama values and it had helped me to control my senses. I'm happy with my decision and have no regrets. And of course, there is no judgment (another thing that yoga has taught me) towards people who prefer to consume meat.

2 Let it go! Let it go!



There was a time when I went through a lot of emotional suffering and I found it hard to let go. At one point I was even suicidal. Yoga taught me that letting go is part of life: Without acceptance of this simple fact, we would all suffer a lot. So, let it go!

3 Sayonara to alcohol



I used to resort to alcohol whenever I was stressed out. It was a temporary fix and it never solved any of my problems nor made me feel any better. This is a bitter truth coming from an ex-alcohol consumer. But hey Relax! Now, I know that Pranayama (breathing techniques) works better than a shot of alcohol any day!

4 I found like-minded 'always happy' friends



Through yoga I have found a new network of friends. They are long-term practitioners with excellent *Stiram* (steadiness) and *Sukham* (happiness) qualities, and they create a beautiful circle of happiness whenever I'm around them. The aura is just amazing and calming. They are truly inspiring, motivational and remarkably kind. Despite their busy working schedule, their dedication towards Karma Yoga is truly inspiring.

5 Ain't no whiner



I used to complain about everything and anything, a lot ... A LOT! But in the end, complaints didn't make things better, but in fact they went from bad to worst. Yoga taught me gratitude; to be grateful for what I have and what I'm bestowed with.

6 Just watch



As I mentioned earlier, I was an overly emotional person beset with anger, sadness, irritation... you name it. I learnt the term 'watching' and 'witnessing' through yoga. I learnt to not to respond to any of the emotions or even thoughts. It increases the awareness about the surrounding and brings one to a state of being centered.

7 Acceptance



Due to past lifestyle and experience, I used to feel that I'm not good enough and that I'm a hopeless person. But now, that part of my voice has been silenced as yoga has taught me to accept myself and love myself dearly. That's indeed a huge change within me.

8 Live in the present moment



I used to grieve over the past and worry about the future very intensely. However, with yoga I learnt that my whole emphasis should be in this moment, because this moment contains all. "Now" is the only reality — everything else is either memory or imagination. "Now" is the only time there is. So nothing to grieve over or worry about; laugh out loud and be happy always!

Yoga isn't just about making pretzel shapes with your body, bendy asanas or upside down handstands, it's about recognising and nourishing the light that resides within. It is not a quick fix like alcohol or other entertainment; it seeps into your bones, your heart and your soul over time. With consistent practice, it comes in handy when you face difficult times in your life.

So keep calm and yoga on! **YM**

Ayur Yoga: Natural and Lasting Weight Loss



Does your weight seem to be going up? Do you feel heavier, tired and sluggish? Maybe you've even tried dieting or exercising, but nothing seems to be an effective or permanent solution.

With over 60 per cent of Malaysians being overweight and 45 per cent classified as obese, these seemingly innocent additional pounds are having a drastic impact on the quality and length of life. Health issues such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, stroke and cancer are all related to obesity and at their highest ever — taking a toll on us as individuals and the society as a whole.

1+1 ≠ 2 ?

Commonly practiced weight loss methods state that in order to lose weight, the calories consumed must be less than the calories spent by the body. I for one can attest that this does not always ring true. How many of you have experienced this bizarre phenomenon too, you reduce your food intake, maybe add on some exercise and yet the number on the scale remains unchanged?

Ayurveda and Weight Gain

Poor diet and a sedentary lifestyle are the main culprits for weight gain in Malaysians. However, there are other factors to look at as well. Ayurveda reveals that unless the root of the imbalances causing the weight gain is resolved through a holistic health plan, the loss of weight through diet and exercise will be regained.

Each person has a unique constitution made up of excesses and deficiencies, and hence one size fits all

plan does not provide an effective solution. With this in mind, MAYI AyurYoga takes into account each individual's unique needs and tailors the weight-loss plan accordingly.

The 'Perfect' Body

Ayurveda has a deep understanding that by genetic nature people have different physiques, with some being heavier while others are thinner. Similarly, this idea is echoed by modern medicine with the classifications of the ectomorph, endomorph and mesomorph body types. The three main body constitutions in Ayurveda are described as Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

It is important to determine your body type and understand its characteristics when balanced. This will help you to know yourself better and be equipped with the know-how to maintain an ideal state of health. A key aspect of this is to understand what is healthy for you as an individual, as the body image that you think to be desirable may not be ideal for you.

Diet and Nutrition

"If diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. If diet is correct, medicine is of no need."

- Ayurvedic proverb.

These ancient words of wisdom highlight the importance Ayurveda gives to a diet. It is important to know which food to favour and which to avoid. Foods that are heavy, difficult to digest and clogging in nature aid in the formation and accumulation of toxins in the body. On the flip side, foods that are easily digested and cleansing help to purify and maintain the physiology. So much of what we call "food" these days is highly toxic, and the body rarely receives the



nourishment that it needs. In fact, one of the greatest boons of Ayurveda is the knowledge of how to follow a healthy and highly digestible diet that provides optimum nourishment whilst being extremely satisfying, allowing the body to perform its best. The best part of this diet is that unlike starvation or highly restrictive diets, it is highly satisfying and can be easily maintained.

'Agni', the Digestive Fire

Agni or the digestive fire is a key principal in Ayurveda. It is responsible for absorbing nutrients while burning off waste products. The word "Agni" is in fact the root of the English word "Ignite".

When our Agni is strong, food is digested efficiently and nutrients are assimilated easily. However, when Agni is weak, the system is unable to fully digest what we eat. Whilst waiting to be digested, our food putrefies in the gut and turns into toxins and impurities. It is these toxins and impurities that are eventually absorbed, working their way into our tissues and disrupt the harmony within. They are one of the main culprits of all diseases.

Certain foods and herbs can be taken to aid digestion, and recommendations on when and how to eat to maximise digestive efficiency are all important aspects of the Ayurvedic weight-loss plan.

One of the best ways to stimulate digestive power is through Yoga. MAYI AyurYoga's weight loss plans combine the knowledge from both the sister sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga to form a comprehensive plan as intended by the Vedic knowledge. Certain asanas such as the Surya Namaskar or sun salutation, and specific pranayama, or breathing techniques, work to increase the digestive power and improve the assimilation of nutrients, whilst toning the muscles and improving skin elasticity to achieve your ideal figure.

Toxins a.k.a. 'Ama'

According to Ayurveda, nearly every major disease is primarily caused by the build-up of Ama, or toxins. Some of the basic symptoms of the presence of Ama in the body include laziness and lethargy, depression

and irritability, poor digestion, constipation, formation of gas, or wind, perspiration with strong odour and dull skin and eyes.

There are several techniques used to remove Ama, such as Urdwarthanam, a type of massage with dry herbs. Urdwarthanam is particularly useful in melting stubborn fat and removing cellulite. A rigorous application of specific herbs is massaged into the body against the hair growth. This technique creates additional friction and heat, facilitating the penetration and absorption of the herbal formula deep into the tissues. It increases the circulation throughout the body, rejuvenates the cells and also doubles up as an exfoliating treatment, leaving the skin soft and smooth. Some of the other techniques used include oil massage (Abhyanga), heat therapy (Swedana) and various internal cleansing practices.



The Results

After completing a holistic Ayurvedic weight-loss programme, the pounds will magically melt off the body and would continue to do so with the correct application of the treatment.

One of the best perks of an Ayurvedic programme over other weight-loss techniques is the bounty of positive side effects that accompany the treatment, thanks to the removal of toxic build-up and the infusion of vitality from the treatments.

Smooth and glowing skin; a significant reduction in body odour and bad breath; increased circulation and oxygenation in the tissues; an increase in anti-aging effects; and better sleep and sky-rocketing energy levels are just a handful of the side effects that you too can experience today.

Reclaim your health today and call MAYI AyurYoga for a commitment-free consultation. **YM**

Want to know more about Ayurveda or weight loss and what we can do for you? Call us at **03-6127 5693** for a free consultation and mention Yoga Mail to redeem a complimentary gift.
*Terms and conditions apply

Building the child's health begins when the mother is carrying the child in her womb, during the pregnancy stage. Expectant mothers seek and receive abundant advices from various sources — doctors, books, Internet and peers (other mothers). Regardless of the number of pregnancies the expectant mothers have, the main concern across the globe remains the same — the baby's health. In order to have a healthy pregnancy, expectant mothers are always advised to eat right, stay fit and stay calm and joyful. Strenuous activities are most often instantly crossed out of their to-do list. As such, many expectant mothers are cautious about exercising during pregnancy due to concern about the effects exercising has on the baby she is carrying.

During pregnancy, the expectant mother is the provider for the baby. To be more precise, she is the only source for the foetus to depend on. When the health of the expectant mother is in tiptop condition, she provides a good condition and 'environment' for the foetus to grow in her as well. And in order for the expectant mother to be able to provide, she would first need to practice a healthy lifestyle. Apart from a proper diet, more and more expectant mothers have chosen pre-natal yoga as their choice of 'exercise' for its gentle and calming benefits.

In a nutshell, gentle and carefully crafted yoga stretches and other yoga practices such as pranayama (breathing techniques) and relaxation techniques are important practices which expectant mothers can adopt. Under a certified pre-natal yoga instructor's guidance, specific yoga stretches can help the expectant mother to develop strength to carry the weight of her growing baby, relieve tension of specific muscle groups such as the lower and upper back, hips, etc, which have to take on a lot of stress and tension to support the blossoming womb size, improve circulation and also help in the delivery process.

Apart from the apparent importance of proper breathing to provide oxygen for the whole body system to function efficiently, breathing techniques

PRENATAL YOGA FOR A HEALTHY MOTHER AND



are noted to calm the nervous system and to improve the digestive system through deep breathing, and regulate blood pressure and heart rate — all of which are a boon for the expectant mother as these are the common conditions experienced during pregnancy. Breathing techniques can also be practiced to help to manage contraction during delivery.

Along with the yoga stretches and pranayama, relaxation techniques are also widely practiced to aid in decreasing the expectant mother's anxieties, physical and mental stresses and fatigue, and also to help her cope with labour better and allow it to progress easily. When the expectant mother is thoroughly calm and joyful, she is allowing herself to relax and re-direct the awareness to the growth within her body.

Although many texts impart the benefits of yoga for the expectant mothers during pregnancy and labour, some researchers were intrigued about the effects they have on the foetus. Through thorough research they have found that exercising during prenatal period is beneficial for the foetus.

Linda E. May, a physiologist and anatomist at Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences, who has been heading up a series of studies on foetal heart development says, "It is my hope that these findings will show that efforts focused on improving health need to start during pregnancy rather than in childhood. Most of the focus today is on school-age children, but interventions should be focused long before that."

A 2008 pilot study conducted by May and her collaborators at KCUMB and the Kansas City University of Medicine found that pregnant women who exercised at least 30 minutes three times a week had fetuses with lower heart rate — a sign of heart health — during the final weeks of development.

They further revealed that the fetuses' improved cardiovascular heart control is maintained one month after pregnancy, which indicates that the mother's efforts to stay active have long lasting effects.

In reflection of May's researches, it would seem now that there are more reasons to exercise during pregnancy than before. If appropriate and carefully chosen exercises are practiced during pregnancy, it would give our children a healthier head start. It is always advisable to clear any doubts with your doctor regarding the exercise of your choice and to source for certified and reputable instructors to guide you through the exercise routine.

Before commencing the exercises, it is recommended to prepare the body with a gentle warm-up routine. Thereafter, the main exercises are to be practiced with awareness and thought of love and kindness to the body and self, without any strain or tension. The whole exercise routine should conclude with calm breathing practices and soothing relaxation techniques to allow joy to manifest and encompass the body and mind.

A healthy mother makes a healthy baby, and a healthy baby makes a happy family! Happy exercising! **YM**



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Featured Asana

Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Spinal Twist)

Step by Step:

1. Sit with the legs stretched out in front of the body.
2. Bend the right leg and place the right foot flat on the floor on the outside of the left knee.
3. Bend the left leg and bring the foot through (under the right thigh) to be positioned around the right buttock.
4. Pass the left arm through the space between the chest and the right knee, and place it against the outside of the right leg.
5. Hold the right foot or ankle with the left hand so that the right knee is close to the left armpit and sit up as straight as possible.
6. Inhale as you raise the right arm in front of the body and gaze at the fingertips.
7. Exhale as you slowly twist to the right, simultaneously moving the arm, trunk and head.
8. Use the left arm as a lever against the right leg to twist the trunk as far as possible and comfortable without using the back muscles.
9. Follow the tips of the fingers of the right hand with the gaze and look over the right shoulder without straining the back.
10. Place the right palm on the floor close to the tailbone and keep your gaze ahead (parallel to the floor).
11. Breathe normally when you are holding this position.
12. Inhale while you reverse the movements to come out of the posture.
13. Repeat on the other side.

Benefits:

- Simultaneously stretches the muscles on one side of the back and abdomen while contracting the muscles on the other side.
- Tones the nerves of the spine, makes the back muscles supple, relieves lumbago and muscular spasms, and reduces the tendency of adjoining vertebrae to develop inflammatory problems and calcium deposits.
- Massages the abdominal organs, alleviating digestive ailments
- Regulates the secretions of the adrenal gland, liver and pancreas, and is beneficial for the kidneys.



Contraindication:

- Pregnant women should avoid this practice.
- People suffering from peptic ulcer, hernia or hyperthyroidism should only practice this pose under the guidance of a competent teacher.
- People with sciatica or slipped disc should not practice it.

Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Vietnamese Vegetarian Rice Paper Rolls



Ingredients

- 2-3 pieces firm tofu
- 60g cellophane/rice noodles
- 150g carrot, cut into thin strips
- 150g bean sprouts
- 150g white cabbage shredded finely
- 150g snow peas, blanched in hot water and sliced finely
- 100g crushed peanuts
- ½ handful Thai basil leaves
- ½ handful coriander leaves
- 24 rice paper wrappers
- Oil, for frying

Sweet Chilli Dipping Sauce Ingredients

- ¼ cup sweet chilli sauce
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- ¼ tsp fresh grated ginger
- ¼ tsp sesame seeds
- ¼ tsp Sesame Oil
- ¼ tsp dried chilli flakes (optional)

Method

1. Pan-fry the tofu in the hot oil until golden brown. Drain well on paper towel. When the tofu is cool enough to handle, cut the tofu into 1 cm strips.
2. Cook the noodles in boiling water for 2 minutes, then drain and refresh in cold water. Drain and set aside. Cut the noodles into short lengths.
3. Dip a rice paper wrapper in water for 1 second. Do not soak the wrapper as it will become too soft and tear when rolled. Place the wrapper on a clean tea towel. Wait for 20 seconds, then transfer to a flat surface.
4. Place the tofu, vegetable strips, peanuts, noodles, coriander and basil leaves on the bottom third of the wrapper. Bring the bottom of the wrapper up over the filling, fold in the sides and then roll up. Set aside, seam-side down, while you prepare the remaining spring rolls.
5. Serve with the dipping sauce.

Method

Add sweet chilli, soy sauce, sesame oil, sesame seeds and grated ginger into a bowl and mix with a fork or small whisk until well blended. Balancing the sweet and saltiness by adjusting the amount of soy sauce and sweet chilli sauce

SCHEDULE OF COURSES: APR - JUL 2015

APRIL 2015

2/4/2015	DU	Slimming Programme
2/4/2015	BSR	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
3/4/2015	SU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
4/4/2015	BSR	Prana Vidya Course
5/4/2015	BSR	Manipuraka Workshop
5/4/2015	BSR	Urdhva Retas Workshop
10/4/2015	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
12/4/2015	DU	Short Course on Effective Sleep
13/4/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
13/4/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
18/4/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
19/4/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
19/4/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
19/4/2015	TTDI Park	Yoga Outing (TTDI Park) with Healthy Diet
20/4/2015	DU	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
26/4/2015	BFS	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 1

MAY 2015

1/5/2015	BFS	Full Intestinal Cleansing
4/5/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
9/5/2015	SU	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
9/5/2015	BSR	Pranayama (Breathing Techniques) Instructor/Practitioner Course
10/5/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
15/5/2015	DU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
17/5/2015	SU	Jala Neti workshop
23/5/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
24/5/2015	DU	Anti-Aging - the Bodyworks of Inner Rejuvenation Workshop
28/5/2015	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
30/5/2015	India	Tour to Kashmir, India
30/5/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate

JUNE 2015

2/6/2015	DU	Ayurvedic Massage Therapist Course
6/6/2015	BSR	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
13/6/2015	SU	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
14/6/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
14/6/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
14/6/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
19/6/2015	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
21/6/2015	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop 1
21/6/2015	BSR	Introduction to Chakra - the Wheels of Life Workshop
28/6/2015	BSR	Jala Neti Workshop

JULY 2015

4/7/2015	SU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
5/7/2015	DU	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
12/7/2015	SU	Manipuraka Workshop
12/7/2015	SU	Urdhva Retas Workshop
19/7/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
19/7/2015	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
26/7/2015	DU	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
10-17/7/2015	Retreat	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation & Intermediate

"BFS: Brickfields; BSR: Bangsar; DU: D'sara Uptown; SU: Selayang Utama

*Dates are subject to change without prior notice. Kindly refer to www.mayi.org.my for updates"

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