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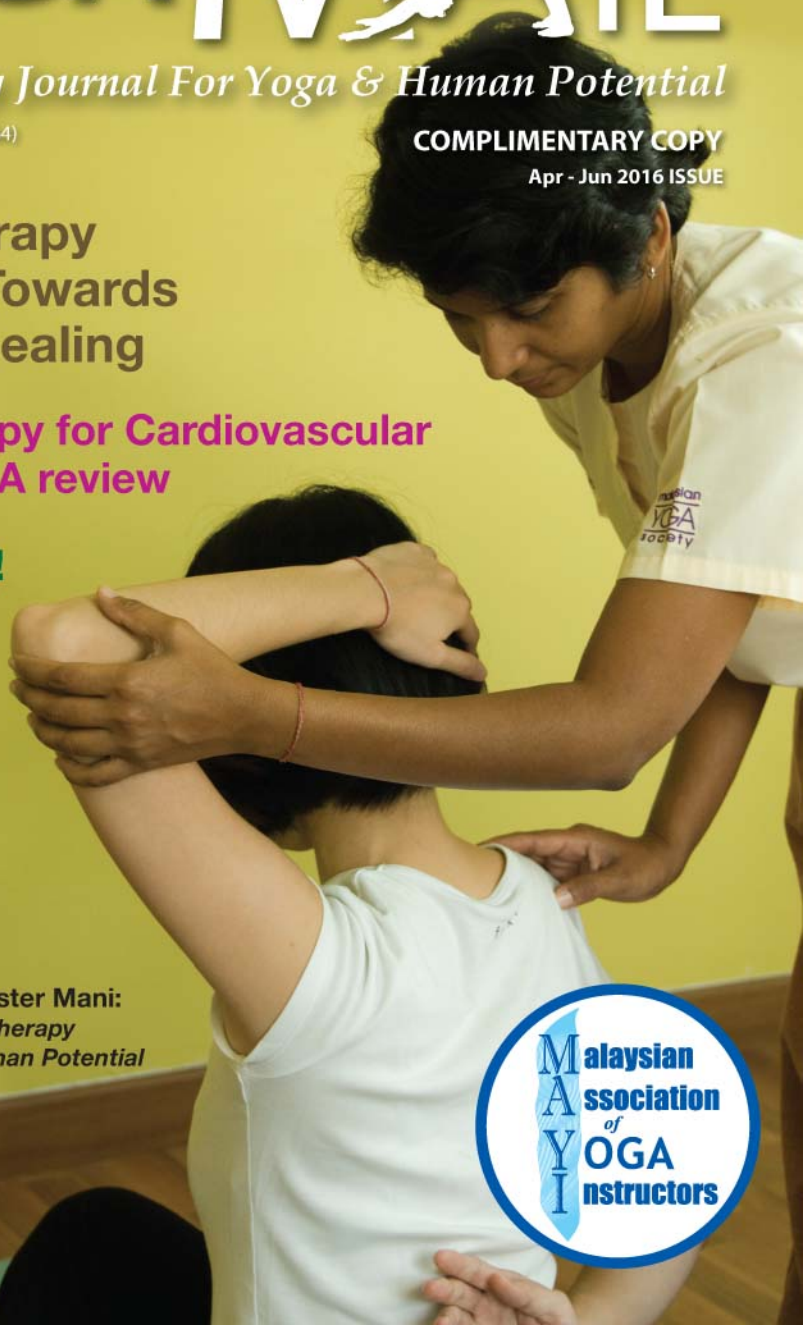
Yoga Therapy - A Path Towards Holistic Healing

Yoga Therapy for Cardiovascular Diseases – A review

Yoga Heals!



Message from Master Mani:
Yogic Approach to Therapy
– Exploration of Human Potential



Message from Master Mani

Yogic Approach to Therapy

– Exploration of Human Potential

Yoga therapy comes closest to the traditional teaching of asanas, or postures, in the modern era, where yoga is often equated with fitness.

In yoga therapy, great care is taken to facilitate the healing of the body and mind through a series of yogic practices, this encompasses both hatha yoga and raja yoga technologies.

Proliferation of hospitals throughout the world shows an increase in awareness to live long and healthy, so people are quick to seek medical treatment, especially when there's any sign of discomfort in the body.

Such is the desire of humanity that has propelled medical-related practices to Godly status.

Whereas, the ultimate contribution of yoga therapy is that it truly does have the potential to propel patients to Godly status — by eventually opening up the path to enlightenment. **YM**



*Master
Manisekaran*



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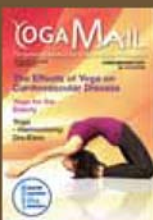
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Yoga Therapy

- A Path Towards Holistic Healing *by Dr Kuga*

In the ever so rapidly changing and highly competitive world, yoga, the ancient science of wholesome living, is fast regaining popularity. However, the potency of this science is suffering the consequences of dilution alongside evolution. It has been unwittingly labelled as a physical exercise and the deeper essence of this magical healing tool has been brushed aside. Yoga therapy is one such tool suffering the fate.

What is Yoga therapy? Do you massage the patient with a magical touch? How is Yoga therapy different from physiotherapy? Many a times these questions are projected to me when I introduce myself as a Yoga Therapist. For those with similar curiosity, your answers have come!

What is Yoga therapy?

Yoga therapy refers to a therapeutic approach to health conditions using the components in yoga such as asanas (postures), pranayama (breathing techniques), dhyana (meditation) and Yoga Nidra (deep relaxation), with appropriate diet and lifestyle adjustments. It is a complementary therapy to other mainstream heroes like modern medicine, Reiki healing, Ayurveda & Siddha medicines and many more. Yoga is now regarded in the Western world as a holistic approach to health and is classified by the National Institutes of Health, one of the world's foremost medical research centres, as a form of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). (1)

According to yogic philosophy, structural damage manifesting in the physical body has its trail in the subtler energy body. According to this philosophy, the human body is made of 5 layers (pancha koshas), which is intrinsically connected, and what happens in one kosha translates into the other. The layers are:

- Annamaya kosha (physical body)
- Pranamaya kosha (energy body)
- Manomaya kosha (mental body)
- Vijnanamaya kosha (intuitive body)
- Anandamaya kosha (bliss body)

Disturbance in the subtle energy body usually begins at the level of Manomaya kosha. It's largely attributed to the mental reactions (thoughts and emotions) towards the life stresses that one encounters on a daily basis. These emotional reactions such as worry, anxiety, anger, depression and many others, over a period of time, enhance the dissipation of energy,

triggering degenerative changes at the Annamaya kosha. Sedentary lifestyle also contributes in accentuating energy leaks and blockages, resulting in numerous health conditions.

Many refined scientific researches conducted in the recent past provide further insight into the relationship between life stresses and health. Evidences show that stress contributes to the etiology of heart disease, cancer and stroke as well as other chronic conditions and diseases (2). Stress has a negative impact on the immune system and prolonged exposure increases susceptibility to disease and leads to physical and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression (3,4).

Yoga recognises the innate intelligence of the body to heal and through the different practices in it this potential is awakened and accentuated. The blocks in the energy body are slowly dissolved, allowing the restoration of normal flow of energy, and hence directly translating it to the physical body. As miraculous as it may sound, the structural damage can be fully reversed and excellent health is no longer just a dream! Regulation of neurohormonal and immunohormonal pathways are triggered to allow optimum functioning of the mind and body.

How is yoga therapy different from physiotherapy?

Yoga therapy emphasises not just on physical stretching and relaxation of the injured skeletal musculature to tap the energy flow. It particularly emphasizes on deep relaxation and visualisation via the practice of Yoga Nidra. Therefore, Yoga therapy breaks the boundary of just physical healing and extends its potential into many chronic metabolic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and many more.

What happens throughout Yoga therapy?

"Tell us your story" is often how a typical session starts after a quick introduction between the therapist and the patient. We allow patients to express their underlying health problems, signs and symptoms that are affecting their quality of life and their emotions towards their current health status. The therapist will probe further with relevant questions pertaining to the issues addressed to identify the root cause of the complaints.

Once the root cause is identified, the therapist explains the yogic physiology behind the manifestations of the health problem and the different approach using yogic philosophy. The approach to each patient is tailor-made and may differ from one to another. The number of sessions required is determined by the therapist depending on the condition and progression of the condition.

Why Yoga Therapy?

Questions may arise at this junction in the minds of inquisitive readers, why go for yoga therapy when I can easily sign up for yoga classes at the nearest venue? In fact why pay for it when yoga is just a click away on the Internet?

Every individual is unique and no two living entity is absolutely alike. This statement holds true even for genetically identical twins. Likewise, although two individuals may be suffering from the same ailment, the root cause for each person runs across vast possibilities. For example, a young man in his mid-30s may have high blood pressure due to an underlying kidney disease whereas a gentleman his late 60s may suffer high blood pressure due to underlying atherosclerosis. To add on, the constitution of the physical body and physiological responses differs from one to another. Therefore it is absolutely mandatory to seek guidance from a well-trained yoga therapist for the therapist knows best which yoga regime is suitable for each scenario.

Though with the advent of Internet, information can be tapped in a jiffy, it often acts like a double-edged sword. Many articles are not governed and screened thoroughly and an enthusiast may impose a risk of worsening pre-existing conditions by becoming his own therapist without consulting the experts. This self-imposed risk may prove to be difficult to reverse as the body recognises these postures as a threat killing the opportunity for one to heal.

Generally, in a regular yoga class, the flow of teaching is not targeted for therapeutic purposes. The teacher may also not have the luxury of time to provide personal attention to each student. Besides, all yoga teachers are not necessarily trained yoga therapists and not all practices are suitable for all health conditions. Just like other practices, indications and contraindications must be stringently adhered to.

Who benefits from Yoga Therapy?

The benefit extends to a wide scope of ailments. It caters from simple musculoskeletal conditions like osteoarthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, sports-related injury and slipped disc, to mention a few, to chronic metabolic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, angina and so on. Not forgetting those suffering from hormonal imbalance, mood disorder and post-chemotherapy cancer conditions may equally benefit from yoga therapy.

Lastly, for readers who are still waiting for the story of the magical massage, here is a message for you: The magic is within you and yoga therapy helps you manoeuvre it. Take charge of your health today and become the magic yourself! **YM**



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Yoga Therapy for Cardiovascular Diseases – A Review

by Chandra Nanthakumar

Yoga is an ancient mind-body discipline where one loses all identity of oneself as a separate being and become united with one's nature. The systematic form of hatha yoga, which is the physical discipline of Classical Yoga, emerged in India in the 6th century (Saraswati, 1998). In primeval times, hatha yoga was practiced as a form of preparation for the higher states of consciousness.

Today, the practice of yoga, mainly hatha, is very popular not only in India, the US and Malaysia, but also in other industrialized countries. McCall (2007) reported that yoga has been practiced by Jews, atheists and agnostics even though meditation, one integral component of yoga, is often thought as a Buddhist practice. The flexibility about yoga is that it allows the individuals to use what is beneficial to them, and ignore the rest. In Malaysia, people from all walks of life practice yoga. Elements of yogic spirituality have been incorporated into some scientific-supported western psychotherapies such as Marsha Linehan's Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Steven Hayes' Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Ajaya, 2008).

While many practice yoga to improve flexibility and build up strength, others practice yoga as complementary medicine. Meditation (dhyana), which is an effective form of therapy for a variety of problems, remains as an integral part of yoga. Like modern science, yoga's approach is pragmatic, hence intervention of yoga (in the form of asanas, pranayama, prathyahara, dharana and/or dhyana) as therapy for various diseases has been widely studied.

This review looks at the intervention of yoga as complementary therapy in the treatment of cardiovascular diseases (CVD). CVD is associated with excess free fatty acids (FFA) and their deposition in the form of triglycerides (TG) within the cardiac muscles. The accumulation of triglyceride correlates to hypertension, insulin resistance, diabetes, pancreatic-beta-cell apoptosis, hypertrophic coronary artery disease and cardiomyopathy (Arunachalam, Yuvarathna & Baskar, 2013). Freedman, Dietz, Srinivasan & Berenson (1999) revealed that approximately 60 per cent of overweight children and adolescents in their study of a population of 9167 was inflicted with at least one CVD risk factor. These findings seem to correlate to that of Gungor (2014)



who professed that pediatric metabolic syndrome encompasses a cluster of risk factors which are associated with CVD and the main traits comprise insulin resistance, obesity, hyperlipidemia and hypertension. This matter is worrying as the clustering of these conditions does not stop at childhood; it persists in adulthood.

One of the groundbreaking studies that show cardiovascular risk factors present in childhood are predictive of coronary artery disease is the Bogalusa Heart Study (Berenson et al., 1998). The findings of this study revealed that the low density lipoprotein (LDL), cholesterol and body mass Index (BMI) measured in childhood predicted intima-media thickness (IMT) of the peripheral arterial vessels in young adults. Studies in children have disclosed that the left arterial and left ventricular dimensions are significantly bigger in obese children compared to children with a healthy BMI (Cote et al., 2013). In addition, there appears to be a positive relationship between cardiac size, and BMI, insulin resistance and waist-to-height ratio in obese children (Atabek, 2011).

Sahay (1986) reported that yoga has been used for the management of various cardiovascular –related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and chronic

insulin resistance conditions. Gordon et al. (2008) found that the intervention of hatha yoga for two hours per week over 24 weeks in the treatment of type 2 Diabetes Mellitus is effective. The intervention of hatha yoga showed lower levels of fasting blood glucose (FBG), serum total cholesterol (TC) and very low density lipoprotein (VLDL) concentrations. The findings of this study are similar to that of Bijlani et al. (2005) where the intervention of yoga had markedly reduced the FBG, serum TC, LDL and VLDL. Interestingly, Singh et al. (2001) also reported that yoga had a significant impact on the reduction of FBG and serum MDA, which is an oxidative stress indicator.

Arunachalam et al. (2013) demonstrated that the practice of yoga is effective in reducing the lipid profile abnormalities namely TG, TC, LDL and HDL in obese male young adults. There was hardly any difference in the outcome of both the practices in this study by end of week six. However, unlike the aerobic group, the yoga group demonstrated a constant and steady correction of the lipid profile. In another study, N. Shinde, K. J. Shinde, Khatri and Hande (2013) found yoga to be more effective than aerobics in decreasing BMI and improving pulmonary functions amongst the obese population. However, it must be noted that Shinde et al.'s sample consisted of older subjects and of both genders.

Khatri, Mathur, Gahlot, Jain & Agrawal (2007) and Sahay (2007) had demonstrated in their studies how yoga decreases blood glucose levels. Sahay's (2007) study also revealed that certain asanas namely dhanurasana, ardhmatsayendrasana, bhujangasana, naukasana, halasana, vajrasana and pachimotanasana are effective in reducing both fasting and post-prandial blood sugar not only in healthy volunteers but also in type 1 and type 2 diabetics. In one of the earliest studies, Sahay et al. (1984) demonstrated that the practice of pranayama can cause blood sugar levels to plummet significantly.

In conclusion, these findings augur very well for yoga practitioners who are healthy or otherwise as exorbitant levels of glucose in the body is the culprit of many CVD- related diseases. Based on the literature review, yoga has been shown to be beneficial in many CVD- related diseases. Hence, as a practitioner myself, I strongly recommend the practice of yoga for all those who wish to keep diseases at bay. **YM**

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Yoga Heals!

by Nemala

The practice of Yoga creates a union between the mind and body. A disconnection between these two often formulates a shift that pushes people out of balance, causing stress, enervation and ultimately, illness. When mind and body syncs; balance builds, one naturally feels healthier, sharper in mind, happier and higher in spirits. Yoga certainly forms an avenue for this as there has been much research done in past showing how regular yoga practices provides substantial health benefits (1,2,3,4).

Due to this special ability, Yoga has long been associated as not only a preventive method but more so as a form of therapy that allows healing to take place. However in the last few decades, there has been many occasions where Yoga is presented as the 'poster child' of improving life as a whole. It is no longer only aiding to heal physical, mental or emotional health but rather as an intricate fixer that subtly enhances quality of life and the experiences of living with betterment as the only side effect (4,5,6).

It also becomes a tool that allows people to reconnect with themselves and allows them to learn to see themselves, and their reactions to the world around them, from a different view of a completely fresh perspective.

Many individuals have stepped forward in life effortlessly with unexpected transformation taking place at exponential rate. This ancient practice is changing the normal day to day life of many from mundane to extraordinary. What is the secret you may wonder? I guess you can only find out by getting on to the field to see it yourself!

Below are testimonials from a few who have tapped the benefits of Yoga:

I started my yoga 5 years ago with asanas. After one year of joining the classes, I felt that I'm in search of something but wasn't sure of what.

Then I was introduced to pranayama, dhyana and kriya which opened the gateway to meditation. The feeling of satisfaction and my experiences through meditation was the answer for my search. As I continue practicing dhyana, I found my mind becoming calmer, happier, and more peaceful and

harmony, in addition my emotions too are manageable. That feeling of experiencing the inner body and spiritual force is extremely fantastic and blissful!

-Pellyshire-

As I practice Yoga Asana, my perception and understanding of what a "flexible and strong body" changed. I feel yoga asana works far more than just on muscles. It doesn't just lengthen and strengthen – although it does that very well.

Here's what's happened to my body since I began to practice yoga asana regularly:

- 1. Maintain an ideal body weight – Yoga Asana give me the best body I could possibly have (slim yet strong☺) with completely no restrictions on my food.*
- 2. Improved lung capacity – Though asana is not a cardio workout, but because we are mindful of our breath, constantly taking long deep breaths, my lung capacity improved. Plus, I'm also kriya and pranayama practitioner that definitely boost my improvement. I notice it when I started teaching, I can continue with full energy for even about 6 hours.*
- 3. Improved balance –The beauty of yoga is that it works on every single muscle in the body. Being able to hold myself up in inverted position, balancing with steadiness and utmost comfort (stiryam sukhham asanam). Balance that I mean here is also the inner strength and flexibility, and both improved just as much.*
- 4. Enhanced concentration - I'm now more aware of everything that is going on in my immediate environment and people.*

I now appreciate my body more and have great sense of wonder for it. I feel so blessed to be able to run, walk, jump, and twist.

-Priya-

Namaskar, my journey as a Kriya Kundalini practitioner began 6 months after starting Hatha Yoga at MAYI under Master Manisekaran. Initially the only goal was to attain a good health but the interest to explore inner dimensions of my personality lead me to take up the Kriya course.

Coming from a background of Property Development and real estate, I undergo highly stressful situations on daily basis which altered my nature to a more aggressive individual.

Only 2 months later which was half way through the Kriya course, I was already completely changed. A sense of calmness developed effortlessly. I made a point to dedicate for daily practise no matter how busy life gets. My only source of motivation to practice and continue evolving is the state of happiness achieved internally.

Master Manisekaran, constantly applies the practise of centeredness in all aspects of his teaching which makes the journey of a practitioner a smooth sail. My highest gratitude is to Master, thank you for teaching us the art of having a balanced life.

-Roy-

This year, 2016, came as a pleasant surprise in the form of Yoga Therapy to me. To my utmost joy, I was offered to become the resident therapist under the MAYI AyurYoga wing.

In yoga therapy, we use components of yoga such as asana, breathing exercises, meditation and deep relaxation techniques in therapeutic manner custom made to the health issue presented to us by an individual. It's an opportunity for me to teach and heal all at one go ☺. Words will not do justice to explain my experiences and self-growth in the last 3 months.

The sense of responsibility towards my students pushes me to learn and re-learn my techniques to deliver the best while I research further from different sources directly influencing the inner evolution of soul. During the therapy, I find that calmness and centeredness flows naturally as the session goes. Along with the student, I too take home the perks of feeling completely rejuvenated at the end of the session. As a whole, I am more sensitive towards human emotions, sufferings, and dilemma. It makes me feel thankful and grateful for all that which I have in my life and in short proves that life is beautiful, each and every moment is perfect just the way it is.

-Dr.Kuga (MBBS, Yoga Therapist)-

I've been with Master Mani since April 2007, when I started Kundalini Kriya Yoga. Back then Master used to teach us one Kriya for almost 2 months, which took a total of 2.5 years to complete. The entire 20 Kriya

was my daily routine until 2010 when office work started to become the main theme for me. I still practiced but not as regularly. Deep inside, I knew it was important that I kept a regular practise and Master's words often rang in my ears. This continued until late last year (Dec 2015) when I attended Master's first ever Advanced Dharana class, a 4 day retreat at Selesa Homes. It was indeed an eye opener. The deeper understanding rise within me, everything changed for me after the retreat. I decided and held up to my decision - It's been about 4 months since that retreat, and my now daily practices continuous to change many aspects of my life especially my relationships. I am beginning to experience a different type of relationship with loved ones, a relationship which epitomizes a deeper understanding of why things are the way they are. Suspending judgements and in fact completely keeping no room for it. Also, living in the present with gratitude towards everyone and everything around, in addition to living abundantly and being fearless towards life. Obviously all of these changed my outlook of how life needs to be lived as well. As Sadhakas, it's important to be aware of what pulls us down and continue learning further; enhancing our practices that shall draw us to the ultimate source or home sooner rather than later.

-Munis-

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EVENTS **Yoga Awareness Session at Dengkil**

by Saroja

Saturday 20th February 2016 was an unforgettable day for four Karma Yogis who were invited by Komuniti Perwani Dengkil Cyberjaya to conduct a four hour yoga programme at the Brahmakumaris Asia Retreat Center (ARC), Dengkil, Selangor. The team was surprised when only nine students out of the expected 50 attended the programme entitled "Towards 1st Class Teenagers" that morning. As the event organiser, I could understand the disappointment felt by the MYS team who travelled all the way from Kuala Lumpur to Dengkil. However, it was shortlived! I was shocked when Master Saravana Seelan, the team leader, calmly mentioned "Master has always taught us that even with one student, class should go on". It was a moment of tribute to the founder of MYS. I have nothing but praise and admiration for Master Manisekaran.



As this was the first programme carried out to promote physical, emotional and spiritual awareness among secondary school students in Dengkil area, parents were still unsure if such programmes could help their childrens' academic excellence. It is sad to know that some parents are still under the impression that academic achievement alone can ensure a child's success in life.

Yoga sessions were included as part of this one day programme to instill health awareness as well as develop concentration skills among the students. I requested the team to focus on teaching asanas and breathing techniques which will help them to focus better in their studies and to be energetic throughout the day.

Turiya and Seenu started the session with joint exercises followed by Surya Namaskar. All the nine students were excited to follow the movements accordingly since Turiya and Seenu were almost within their age group. Next, Teacher Puspa continued with poses which activate their mind and to stimulate their concentration skills. As I watched their participation in all the activities, I noticed that the students were eager to show what they can do and wanted to learn more. The teaching and learning process became easier as the instructors were friendly, approachable and had wonderful communication skills. The students felt at ease and easily got attached with all the three instructors. Since it was a small group of nine students, the instructors were able to give individual attention to each of them.

The final presentations by the three groups were amazing. The students demonstrated confidence, determination and never give up spirit in their group performance. It was truly a wonderful experience for the nine students who gained beneficial insights on yoga and how to incorporate them into their daily lives. In fact all of them showed keen interest to join the annual yoga camp organised by MYS during the school holidays in December. Thank you Master Seelan, Teacher Puspa, Turiya Deva and Seenu for your support and guidance and to make the event a success. You have started the awareness of yoga in Dengkil. Let's hope for more programmes in the future. **YM**



EVENTS Yoga at Sugam Karnatica

by Anuradha Kanasan

One Friday night, my yoga master messaged me to ask whether I would like to join him to guide a number of children to practise yoga on Sunday. I agreed at once. It has always been my dream to teach yoga for kids. And teaching yoga with my master is a real big dream come true. I eagerly awaited for the day.



The beautiful Sunday started off at 8am in Sugam Karnatica in Petaling Jaya. The peaceful surroundings and ambience was simply enchanting and created a great environment for yoga practice. There were about 50 children from 6 to 17 years old along with about 10 parents ready with their yoga mats, who were enthusiastic about the class. The majority of the class were new to yoga. The class started with an introduction about yoga and its importance especially to children by Master SK Durai and Master Saravana Sealana from the Malaysian Yoga Society. It was followed by Pawanmuktasana (wind releasing exercises for joints) and Surya Namaskar. I was given the opportunity to conduct the Pawanmuktasana session. Master SK Durai gave the instructions while I demonstrated the Surya Namaskar.

The 3-hour class continued with many other interesting asanas such as Paschimottanasana, Halasana, Bakasana and Chakrasana. It was fun to see them roaring their heart out in Simhagarjanasana. The children though were playful, but were excited and participated in the class. They were very keen in trying out all the poses. They burst into laughter every time they fell down while trying out some tough poses. They had good time giggling at each other when they were taught to do 'Superman Pose' (Viparita Shalabasana). Master SK Durai fascinated the kids with his flexibility while executing some advance yoga poses such as Sirsasana, Adho Muka Vrksasana and Mayurasana. The children's eyes were wide open as they watched him standing on his hands. The class concluded with Pranayama techniques conducted by Master Saravana Sealana.

These days, children live in a hurried world of busy parents, school pressures, incessant lessons, video games, malls and competitive sports. We do not think of these influences as stressful for kids, but often they are. Yoga can help counter these pressures. When children learn techniques for self-health, relaxation, and inner fulfilment, they can navigate life's challenges with a little more ease. Yoga at an early age encourages self-esteem and body awareness with a physical activity that's non-competitive. Physically, it enhances their flexibility, strength, coordination and body awareness. In addition, their concentration and sense of calmness and relaxation improves. Yoga brings that marvellous inner light that all children have to the surface.

This yoga session was my first experience teaching yoga for kids in a large group. Teaching yoga for children and teenagers is not only something that is worthwhile for them, but is therapeutic for us. Life feels so colourful and cheerful where you can get up in the morning knowing that the day is going to bring you opportunities to do yoga, to laugh, to play, to relax and to free the inner child. It was delightful to see some parents taking their time off to spend time with their children and have awareness of importance of yoga. They set a great example for many other parents.



Personally, I am so grateful to my master, Master SK Durai for giving me the opportunity to guide the children and parents through the warming up series. It's a blessing to be able to start teaching yoga with my master, my inspiration beside me. My first yoga teaching session affirmed that this is one of the things I am meant to do in life. I see the incredible power yoga can have on a person and I want to be part of that experience. I can't wait to see where this journey takes me next. **YM**

The Healing Powers of Yoga: Sharing from a Long-Time Practitioner

Mr Karu looks smart, mature, wise, calm and composed at all times. He's probably in his 60s, but the first time I saw him do Mayurasana, or peacock pose, with ease, I decided, "Oh no, not someone you can mess with."

I did not get the opportunity to speak to him at first, but when I did, there was such an eager flow of very encouraging, constructive and motivating words that I was amazed at how very friendly he is and so very talented and experienced where yoga is concerned.

That was a few years ago. Now, I know him as this warm and friendly person. There's no end to warmth and friendliness at our yoga centre, but only some people have this remarkable air of "mastery" and wisdom about them.

That wisdom started flowing when I had a conversation with Mr Karu about his experience as a yoga teacher and practitioner.

I heard that when he first came to do yoga with Master Mani, around 2002, he walked in with a stiff neck that was fixed to an odd angle. I questioned him about it and out came remarkable revelations.

Question: *You had a neck problem, Mr Karu?*

He said it was Cervical Spondylitis at a chronic level and he also had Vertigo at that time. He used to have excruciating pain at the neck and his head was always spinning. A doctor had said that the condition was only manageable with painkillers and he could probably do some form of specialised exercise to manage pain. That's how he ended up doing yoga with Master Mani.

Now, seeing him in Master's classes regularly, no one will suspect that he ever had Cervical Spondylitis. I didn't either.

Q: *How is your neck now?*

A: *Completely cured.*

Q: *When? And I suppose after you started doing yoga? Was there any specific asana Master Mani recommended to you?*

A: *I joined Master's class in 2002. In six months both Cervical Spondylitis and Vertigo were gone forever. Master only asked me to do the normal asanas we do in class.*



My mouth was agape now. "Only normal asanas? Were you aware of what was happening and can you explain the healing process?"

I smiled when he said of course he was aware and he could explain. This is where his mastery showed itself.

A: *With the strengthening of the neck muscles and spine, the improved flow of blood around the neck area and the increase in flexibility, the degenerative areas became rejuvenated. Before long the pain was gone and I was completely cured. Added to this is the confidence and innate positive believe that anything is curable.*

Q: *That's so good to hear. What would you tell people out there who are suffering due to ill health conditions?*

A: *Yoga is the only source for all ailments. It is designed that way, because of the movement with awareness and breathing, and the flow of prana (life force) with the assistance of chakra (energy centres) activation. The powerful combination of Asanas (postures), Shatkarma (cleansing techniques) and Pranayama can be very energising.*

Q: I know now that you also teach yoga, and I know you are one of Master Mani's most senior students. I see you in class every week. How long do you do yoga at home?

A: You know what they say, good teachers never stop learning. I don't miss classes with Master and I practise daily at least 60 to 90 minutes.

That explains it all. If you are a regular practitioner, you don't even have to verbalise your experience, people will know. Your body speaks, your very look is enough to convince people because yoga has that power. It shows itself in many ways: calm face, youthful look, energised walk, very composed and centred personality... very confident, healthy, energetic and beautiful - inside and outside. That is, if one understands what yoga is all about.

It was such a pleasure talking to such an experienced yoga practitioner that I wanted to know more.

Q: Now that you're teaching, do you see improvement in your students? Are there any specific cases you can refer to and say that this person has been healed?

A: Of course. Four of my students who were not able to conceive for a long time were able to conceive and now they have very healthy babies.

What? Now, that was mind-blowing information for me. Only by doing normal asanas? How on earth? I know of many women having conceived after doing Urdhva Retas, but normal asanas?

Q: How long Mr Karu? Can you explain how this is possible?

Yes, of course he could. In fact, he coached them through the classes until they were able to conceive and gave me superb explanation about it. This happened in a short period of time, from six months to one year and he said the women gave birth to very healthy, cheerful and quality babies.

A: Even with general muscular movements and proper breathing some women can gain enough strength to conceive. Some may not have been able to conceive due to weakness in the uterus, the surrounding area,

the reproductive organs, the lower back, spine and the area around the pelvic floor. Simple asanas are enough to overcome these issues.

Q: Are there specific asanas?

A: Yes. You can find them in the International Yoga Instructor Course manual. I followed what the manual said. Specifically, I can mention some leg-raising poses, Meru Dandasana, Kandarasana, Asthanga Namaskar that we do when we do Surya Namaskar and some lower-back strengthening asanas.

Q: How about men? Sometimes the problem can be with men.

A: Oh yes, that is true. There are specific asanas for men too. For example, Garudasana (eagle pose), which helps to strengthen the prostate glands. On the whole, both men and women will benefit from regular practice. Asanas must be done with awareness and breathing, then they will gain the benefits of yoga. Generally, the prospect of women becoming pregnant after a certain period becomes dim. Even when they are able to conceive, they may not be able to give birth to healthy babies. But now, even medical practitioners say that there is possibility to overcome this condition by regularly practising yoga.

Q: Well, then I guess the question is not whether it's possible, but whether people are ready to commit to a proper yogic regime. Thank you so much for explaining this to me Mr Karu. Can you tell me a little bit about Kriya Kundalini Yoga?

A: Kriya gives high energy level, steadiness of mind, improves focus and memory, sharpens the senses, enabling one to perceive things fast, escalates intuition and brings improvement to all aspects of life.

Besides, teaching yoga, Mr Karu is an active participant in all Malaysian Yoga Society's Karma Yoga projects. He's usually one of the first to volunteer. As someone who has been working and still is an aircraft engineering personnel, I really salute his amazing energy and compassionate sharing of his invaluable experience in yoga.

This is what we have here at the MAYI Yoga Academy-Malaysian Yoga Society circle: Amazing personalities! **YM**

A

Articles by Practitioners

How Yoga Saved Me

by Pugunes

In a fast and furious world, you're not even aware when you're getting trampled on. Growing up was a gloomy affair for me. I felt depleted of life and was constantly feeling low about myself. When yoga came into my life, everything changed. Looking back, now, I can't believe the changes that have happened in such a short span of time.

My first yoga lesson was in 2010 at Malaysian Yoga Society's (MYS) "Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn (LTTL)" karma yoga programme.

Naturally, at first, I was unsure, lacked focus and was not able to concentrate as I was not confident and had low self-esteem issues. But the yoga experience was real and aroused a good feeling that encouraged me to take up the same programme again in 2011. That's when the breakthrough happened. I was inspired to go deeper into learning this wonderful art that brought so much of confidence in me. It made me feel happy and inspired.

Saandhi, one of the MYS volunteers, explained to me the importance of teaching. She said it would give me the opportunity to learn yoga better and that was what the LTTL programme was all about. Saandhi herself is a wonderful teacher. Conversations with her helped open up my perception about yoga and how teaching would help tap the tremendous potentials within me. That motivated me to start teaching yoga in the school I worked in. I was not only a history teacher in school, but also a yoga teacher.

In the same year, I joined the Kundalini Kriya Yoga course as requested by Vijaya akka. As she was a mentor and a trusted friend, I just did what she asked me to do. Kriya was a major eye opener. I felt blessed and privileged to learn this technology from Master Manisekaran.

Transformations within and without started happening really fast and only regular conversations with Master and Vijaya akka helped me understand what was happening. It's not easy to perceive such humongous changes in a normal way.

Prior to all these practices I was very negative and moody. My perception of myself, of life and the world was not encouraging. I grew up with



grandparents who did not show love openly and I felt neglected by parents whom I rarely saw. As such, I was introverted, angry, depressed, moody and had major emotional issues. Feelings of guilt, unhappiness and insecurity always plagued me and I was always looking for love and recognition from the outside world. Faulty and negative thinking completely destroyed my inner peace.

And there was this one bad habit that got on to my nerves all the time – my inability to control sleep. I slept longer hours and did not feel refreshed when I woke up. The feeling of guilt always ensued, every time this happened.

In school my performance was affected by the constant negative feeling within. If one is not feeling well within, how to perform well in any task? The students' lackadaisical attitude could lead to irritation and aggression towards them and I ended up feeling more guilty and more negative. That was the pattern then, even though I loved teaching and wanted to communicate well with all the students.

I knew I had to do something about it. My initial approach was via listening to motivational talks and reading motivational books. But their effects were short-lived. The feelings of positivity, energy and enthusiasm dissolved so quickly that I had to re-charge myself all the time. I noticed that there was no constant nor lasting change. I could always fall back to the bad feelings within and experience zero transformation.

(Also reading had a negative effect on me. I usually follow whatever I read in these books in relation to happiness, which was not real... it left me in a state of delusion. As Master said, we shouldn't simply read any book we find, but choose those that are truly enlightening).

All these changed with Master Mani's firm but kind guidance. The powerful combinations of asana, pranayama, Yoga Nidra, Kriya yoga, etc. have become a part of my life now. Yoga liberated me and I completely surrendered to this wonderful science.

The changes I see in me now are solid and permanent. The motivation I feel is innate, it's not superficial and it's not temporary....

Then I watched how lovingly Master communicates with all students. I learnt a lot by being with him in all the MYS karma yoga projects and also from his own kind yet firm guidance towards me. Master taught me that yoga is not just about doing the asanas, it encompasses the whole of life and how our own perception, attitude and reaction to our own self and also others make a lot of difference.

With this understanding, the yoga practices helped me become calmer in handling the students, but firm at the same time. Some of the students noticed that and said, "Teacher now you don't seem to get angry". As Master taught us, I follow the Yama and Niyama principles and get very positive reactions from the students. I'm able to communicate with them and feel closer to them and treat them with respect without any judgements regarding their attitude. Now, in school, the students refer to me as a yoga teacher rather than a history teacher.

My performance in school has improved tremendously. There was a fantastic improvement in the students' SPM history results and I was overjoyed. In one of the years, all students passed in the history paper, even those who never paid attention in class. Yoga practices give me the energy to make things happen. Last year, our school was selected among the top 5 schools in KL with increased overall SPM results.

I'm a completely changed person now. From being a sore introvert, I've become a dynamic personality with lots of confidence to approach people. I have

approached other schools as well and conducted yoga lessons there. I've taught in one Tamil school in Malacca and a secondary school in Sg Buloh. One marked achievement is conducting a history seminar for 500 students from Forms 3 to 5 in a Private Chinese Secondary school in KL. I can't imagine these things happening without the love and strength given by Master and yoga.

Master always says this: the best help we can do for others is to teach them yoga. Yoga will help them be strong enough to handle their lives better. It's what I do whenever I can to help parents and siblings when they have health issues. Once my brother was suffering from chronic stomach pain due to stones in the kidney. I did healing for him and he said the pain lessened.

I must mention Yoga Nidra here. Yoga Nidra has helped me overcome the long-hour sleeping habit. All the yoga practices help to kick out tamasic, or lethargic, nature and give me lots of energy. They also help to kick out all my conditionings.

Yoga has transformed me. I realise that work is worship. I do all my work with positivity, energy and in an inspiring manner. People always complain about other people's behaviour, but do nothing to help, but yoga and people like Master help to tap our potentials and transform us to be at our best always.

In 2014, Master selected me to be the person in charge of National Yoga Camp. This was where all my new-found skills, understanding and realisations were put to test. It was a great opportunity to hone my leadership skills and to completely polish me. I became more alert and aware. Saandhi guided me a lot in this aspect. I really thank Master for empowering me in such brilliant ways.

These are the main drastic transformations that happened in me within these few years. Students in school now show lots of interest to do yoga. I find that things can change if I change my perception.

I didn't look for yoga, but yoga came to me. I did it without any expectation. I surrendered myself to it and it transformed me. Here I feel absolute gratitude to Master Mani, who is always helping me to improve myself, and Vijaya akka who always shows me kindness, compassion and purity. OM.

YM



Yoga Therapy: For Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)

by Nalini Singam

People with CFS suffer, from profound fatigue that no amount of sleep can relieve, and flu-like symptoms and chronic pain. Other symptoms include weakness, muscle pain (fibromyalgia), impaired memory and inability to concentrate, sleep that isn't refreshing, and post-exertion fatigue that can last more than 24 hours. Studies suggest that the immune system may be chronically active which could explain the fatigue and lack of energy as the body thinks it is constantly fighting an infection, using up a lot of energy.

CFS can be debilitating and a frustrating disorder to diagnose. Doctors conclude that a patient has CFS after they have ruled out all other possibilities, such as an underactive thyroid, sleep disorders, mental illness, chronic mononucleosis, eating disorders, cancer, autoimmune disease, hormonal disorders, and other ailments.

YOGA HELPS WITHOUT HURTING. Yoga's gentle, restorative poses increase circulation and oxygen flow to heal without irritating the body.

YOGA BALANCES. Often, people with chronic fatigue are out of touch with their natural body rhythms. They moved too fast, did too much, and their bodies have run down. Yoga helps them find a more natural pace and to listen to their body.

YOGA ENERGIZES. A person with CFS struggles with depleted energy, and yoga helps restore energy to the fatigued body, allowing the cells, senses, and nerves to quieten down.

YOGA EMPOWERS. Builds mental strength, resilience and compassionate acceptance.

YOGA TEACHES STILLNESS. Relaxation and meditation promotes conservation of energy and builds self-confidence. Moving the focus from the physical body and tuning the mind to the divine mood of ease (sukham) and effortlessness (sthyriam) in meditation.

HOW YOGA CAN HELP

The symptoms of CFS are often linked to mood and can vary from day to day. Pacing may be a useful way of managing CFS symptoms. It involves balancing periods of activity with periods of rest.

Pacing means neither overdoing it nor pushing oneself beyond the limits. Through the practice of yoga, one

learns how to make the most of energy. Yoga poses help relieve stress; adjust hormonal balance; induce relaxation; and enhance sleeping patterns.

Morning Practice

1. **Pawanmuktasana I** while still in bed to get the joints warmed up and energised
2. **Paschimottasana** soothes the nervous system by allowing energy to flow to the spinal column while increasing blood and oxygen flow to the heart and head.
3. Supported **Parvatasana** fosters blood flow to the head, neck, and heart.
4. **Uttanasana** soothes the nervous system, gradually increases blood flow to the brain, and frees the respiratory muscles of the neck from tension. (If you add upright poses, keep in mind that many people with CFS are prone to dizziness, especially upon standing. Focusing mainly on positions that are lying down, sitting, or standing in a very stable position may keep this from being a problem.)
5. **Lying over cross-bolsters** can help stimulate the nervous system in a quiet way and increase circulation to the adrenals, thyroid, and kidneys, which are a storehouse of energy.
6. **Instant Relaxation Technique**
7. **Kapalabathi**

Evening Practice

1. **Nadi Shodana**
2. **Prana Pranayama**
3. **Yoga Nidra**

TIPS for Yoga practice

- Find an experienced yoga teacher, preferably one who uses yoga therapeutically. A person with CFS must practice much more slowly and mindfully than other people. An experienced teacher who understands CFS will be able to patiently guide you into a suitable practice.
- Think of having private lessons. A general class would prove too demanding for a person who is fatigued. A private session with a yoga therapist can provide you with instructions tailored to your own needs.
- A little and often! Practice every day if only for five or 10 minutes. This is more beneficial than an hour once a week which can actually cause more harm than good.
- Be gentle with yourself. Start by practicing in bed. Use pillows and cushions to support your body. This phase will pass and you will soon be able to move on as your energy is restored.
- Breathe! Be conscious of your breathing as often as you can during the day. Practice the breathing exercises your teacher gives you even if you cannot do any more.

All yoga techniques should be learned from an experienced yoga therapist. For a free yoga therapy first consultation please call: **03-2260 5322** (Brickfields/Bangsar); **03-7727 6682** (Damansara Utama)

At Your Fingertips: Ashwagandha



Ashwagandha root is a herb that has been used for millennia by people all over the world, from African tribes to Native Americans. It is known as the “ginseng” of Ayurvedic medicine, and is considered to be an adaptogen - a type of herb that improves physical and athletic ability, strengthens immunity and increases reproductive virility. In current times, it has seen increasing popularity as a remedy for anxiety and overactive adrenal glands. Ashwagandha has hormone balancing, anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties which can prevent and treat a number of diseases.

plays a role in normal ageing and in neurological conditions such as epilepsy, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Its power to improve thinking ability and brain functions such as concentration and improved attention span helps alleviate symptoms of neurodegenerative diseases. In fact, Ashwagandha has demonstrated an ability to promote the growth of nerve cells, and protect the brain cells from the harmful effects of the environment.

A Sedative that Increases Vitality

Ashwagandha has been glorified over time for



Total Rejuvenation

With an abundance of antioxidants, iron and amino acids, it's no surprise that Ashwagandha is one of the powerful herbs in Ayurvedic healing. It is classified as rasayana i.e. rejuvenate in Ayurveda and used to promote physical and mental health, restore the body and increase longevity.

Traditionally Ashwagandha is used to treat various diseases associated with nerve tissue damage related to the destructive molecules known as free radicals. Free-radical damage

its exceptional ability to provide limitless energy during the day whilst simultaneously promoting quality sleep at night.

Despite its latin name *Withania somnifera* (*somnifera* means "sleep-bearing" in Latin), it is not a sedative. Ashwagandha has rejuvenative and nervine properties that produce energy, which in turn help the body to settle and sleep; thus it helps the body to address a stress related condition rather than masking it with sedatives. A herb that rejuvenates the nervous system, erases insomnia and eases stress.

It is commonly used in Ayurveda to increase vitality, particularly when recovering from chronic illnesses and pain management for arthritic conditions.

In fact, research shows that Ashwagandha effectively promotes energy and stamina without stimulating the heart.

Regulates Blood Sugar

Ashwagandha may help in regulating blood sugar, which aids in suppressing sugar cravings and unhealthy weight gain. Research has been conducted particularly in showing the decrease in fasting blood sugar levels to improve glucose metabolism. Blood sugar levels are thus stabilised, which is helpful for diabetics.

Hormone Regulation

Cortisol acts as a stress hormone in the body. Due to lifestyle choices, especially high stress levels and poor sleep, cortisol cycles are disrupted. This leads to a cascading chain of events in the entire body which especially affect the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis.

Cortisol levels are also related to obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Ashwagandha works on a nonspecific basis to normalize physiological function, working on the HPA and the neuroendocrine system; thus automatically regulating hormones involved in the metabolic system, cardiovascular system, immune system, central nervous system and reproductive system.

Male Fertility

Ashwagandha is used to restore male libido, cure impotence and increase male fertility. It is widely used in southern Asia as a male sexuality tonic. Research on Ashwagandha has concluded that extracts of the plant has a direct spermatogenic influence on the seminiferous tubules of immature rats presumably by exerting a testosterone-like effect. It is could also a potential source of hypoglycemic, diuretic and hypocholesterolemic agents.

Stress Management

During moments of stress, our "fight or flight" response is triggered. In today's society this response is constantly triggered, albeit in lesser intensity. It is this niggling but near constant state of stress that puts our adrenal glands into overdrive. Ashwagandha helps to restore the adrenal glands, stabilising moods as a result of adrenal recovery.

In fact, Ashwagandha is used in many tranquilizers and antidepressant drugs, since it helps relieve physical and mental stress and overcome depression.

A wonderful remedy for anxiety, high stress, insomnia or depression is to mix Ashwagandha with warm milk and some honey before bed. This will have the added boon of promoting deep, quality sleep and regulating the sleep cycle.

Beauty Benefits

Is your skin wrinkled, dry and sagging? Ashwagandha has potent antioxidant properties that protect the skin against free radical damage and slows down the ageing process by firming up your skin for a more youthful look.

Ashwagandha stimulates DHEA and stimulates the production of natural skin oils. It also promotes the production of vital compounds and proteins for healthy skin such as hyaluronic acid for skin hydration, elastin to keep skin supple and collagen for skin strength. **YM**

Want to know more about what Ashwagandha can do for you? Call MAYI AyurYoga at **03-6127 5693** for information or to purchase 100% pure and natural Ashwagandha powder.

Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

III.7 *trayam antarangam purvebhyah*

by Jamie Spatafore

These three aspects of Yoga are internal, compared to the previous five.

In a previous sutra (III.4) it is stated “These three together – dharana, dhyana, and samadhi – constitute integration” so we must infer that the three aspects of Yoga that are internal are dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Therefore, the previous five (which are external) are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara.

This is an important sutra. Everything else done up to this point has been going on externally. We can see the physical effects of cleanliness, truthfulness and firmness of posture. Most probably other people can too.

Now, we’ve come to the part where it gets a bit more difficult. Concentration, meditation, and absorption are all internal. Who is to know? How can they know? We can say that someone has a concentrated look but it does not make it true. I can make myself to “look” like I’m concentrating but really my mind is jumping all over the place. I can sit down with my eyes closed and “look” like I’m meditating but really I am thinking about how good a roti susu would taste.

The reason it gets tricky at this juncture is because there is a great opportunity to deceive ourselves. Because these aspects are internal we need a lot of honesty and sincerity of purpose. If not, we can easily put on a front for the world but internally, nothing much has happened. We must remember what has been said about the path of yoga in the Bhagavad Gita. Of 1,000 people, perhaps 10 will follow the path of yoga but of these perhaps only one treads the path successfully. It is not easy. How

can it be when we’ve been creatures of habit since our birth? We have a lot to overcome but it can be done. It has to be done eventually. That is the only reason we are here. Elsewhere in the Yoga Sutras, Patanjali states “Nature and intelligence exist solely to serve the seer’s true purpose, emancipation.” That is good news isn’t it? This world exists only to assist me in liberation.

There is another trick the mind likes to play. We expect to see changes similar to the previously mentioned external aspects of Yoga. By the very nature of these three internal aspects, we really can’t. If we are not careful, we can easily get down on ourselves and feel like everything we’ve done so far is a real waste of time and energy perhaps leading us to quit our sadhana. It isn’t. Although these aspects maybe subtle, they will have an effect. We have to have faith. There are many stories of sincere aspirants jumping from one practice to another. If we look closely, we can see that the point where they changed practice was at this stage, the internal.

Once we start to move internally, it becomes an issue of how dedicated we are. We have to be our own guide. No one will be able to give you internal instructions. It is uncharted territory. By all means, we should lean upon our teachers and guides and use their examples but the journey has to be taken on our own. This is why there is so much time spent on the external aspects. Firstly, they are much easier. Secondly, they have to be just right before the inward journey can even progress. The sages say that if the foundation is firm and steady, the building of the house takes no time at all.

So it is good if first we have a good foundation and second we have a real thirst for freedom. Peace.

YM



Eco's Echoes:

My ATTITUDE Towards Legacy Of Earth – Part 2

Where is our appreciation towards the blessing bestowed on us?

We will look into the formation of one of our earth's highlights, for one reason - to feel it's amazing processes, across the timeline, for it to form and stand on, touching the skies today.

Himalayas, is the least disturbed by technology so it preserves the originality. The Himalayas stretches 15,000 miles across Asia. The ranges are homes to 14 of the tallest mountains on the planet. And one rises above all others, the EVEREST. At 5½ miles tall, Everest is the highest mountain in the world.

A research by University of Oxford: Rock sample is taken from the top of the world, Everest. The rock is cut into thin sections, so thin till the light can pass through it. The highest rock sample in the world reveals its secret. From fossils records, the rock section can be dated. It is over 400 million years old. There is a mystery in here.

The rock samples show it was formed in an ancient marine environment. The question now is, how come a deep ocean sea lily fossils and ammonites came to be on top of the highest mountain on the planet?

To figure out how the seafloor came to be on top of the highest mountain in the world, geologists tried to find evidence that are millions of years old. They need to go way back before the Himalayas was formed.

Four hundred million years ago, no trace of the Himalayas existed. The sea lily and ammonites, which have fossilised on the summit of Everest is proof that there was once water where now the great mountain is standing. Giant squids were swimming around the seas that once lay between India and Asia. This is the key evidence we have that there was a major ocean between the continents (India and Asia). To find the marine fossils in the high Himalayas and on the summit of Everest, some immense geological force must have pushed the ocean floor in between the two continents upwards above the water.

Now, let's go to Antarctica to find out a few other evidence required for the discussion. In 1910, the famous Antarctica explorer, Robert Scott, began his ill fated expedition to the south pole. After reaching the pole, Scott and his 5 team members all died. When their bodies were discovered, among their equipment they found carefully labelled and kept fossils. The fossils were part of the ancient plant called, "Glossopteris". And that specimen is now preserved in the British Antarctic Survey.

Soon this humble tree fossil (Glossopteris) was found across the globe – In India, South America, Africa, Madagascar and Australia.

by Ravin.S

Geologists were puzzled: How come this one species of plant (Glossopteris), was spread between continents though separated by thousands of miles of oceans? There was only one conclusion - when the trees were alive 250 million years ago, the continents were all joint together. They were part of a super continent and the geologist called it "Gondwana" land. Now, it made perfect sense how Glossopteris was able to spread across this ancient land mass.

But then, Gondwana land was split apart by violent tectonic plate forces that pushed the continents apart. 80 million years ago, India broke away from its super continent Gondwana land and travelled to north. 50.5 million years ago, India eventually smashed into Asia. And that smashing point began to shape the world's highest peak mountain, the great Himalayas. Important point, India travelled 400 miles in just 30 million years. That's very fast in geological time. That speed and the smash explains the unique size of the Himalayas – the speeder and faster the collision, the bigger the rack.

The investigation has now uncovered the clue as a proof that India and Asia were once separate. Sea lily and ammonites on top of the Himalayan ranges are evidence that an ocean once existed between India and Asia. The fossils prove that India was part of the super continent called Gondwana land.

Another fact: Four hundred million years ago, the Himalaya started out life from the bottom of an immense ocean. Fifty million years ago, there was a crest in the sky as India smashed into the Asian land map. Since that time, tectonic forces created the tallest mountain in the world. There is a station which is able to pick up signals from satellites to monitor any movement to the ground of the Himalayan ranges and the India land map. Data samples are taken every second in a day. The reading from GPS shows that India is still moving about 2 inches every year. Fifty million years after its initial collision, it is still on its relentless journey northwards, pushing underneath Asia. And as it does so, Everest continues to be pushed higher.

We have just seen a grand design here. Related to the previous discussion in Part 1 of this write up, who are we to disrupt and cut down the connectivity with all this legacy of earth which came before us on this earth?

Millions of people talk about love, care and compassion towards nature. Love and compassion are not something we can explain. It is a feeling, a feeling beyond words. When we are connected to the earth's vibration, we would see all these, feel and be fascinated even at the slightest display of the spectacular earth. Our heart will rumble to make the change even for infinitesimal wrong doings. The attitude will get to change naturally, when the changes start from deep in our heart.



Inner Insights: My Mind-Blowing Body and Mind Transformation Journey

by Vanessa

"Hello, My name is yoga , I am going to change your life!"

When I saw this, it didn't make any sense. It looked more like an advertisement.

Well, my first yoga class was a complimentary from the company I worked in. I felt there was no harm in trying.

I still remember the first class. The lady instructor told us to perform Dhyana Bakasana (meditation crane pose) and I was truly impressed. "How is this even possible?" I asked my fellow practitioners. Due to my martial art background, this little experience "lighted up" the flame within to move with my body and see how far it could go. Hence the second class, third class...

After I quit my job, I started to frequent the gym, and hey, they had a yoga class. So, I started to focus only on the yoga classes because running on the treadmill was boring, plus the work was only on the cardio and leg muscles. Yoga, however, worked on the whole body and even the internal organs!

I started to get serious about yoga. I wanted a class that teaches authentic yoga — as it was practised thousands of years ago. I started to read yoga books, browse the Internet, ask friends and also try a few classes in different studios, but it just didn't feel right. One of my friends said if I was serious about yoga, I should learn from one that was recognised by the government.

That's when I came across MAYI Yoga Academy. I made a call and the person who answered the call was very friendly and modest. His voice was soft but firm. I had a good impression already and only much later I came to know that it was Master Mani himself — a great man with no ego. I was pretty pleased with the answers. I decided to join because MAYI certificates were recognised in Malaysia and elsewhere in the world and it was approved by Malaysia's Ministry of Education.

After a few classes with Master, I became even more impressed. The more I learnt, the more I wanted to know. The knowledge of yoga is so vast. Asanas (postures) are just a small part of yoga. I found that going to regular classes and reading books were not enough, I wanted to know more. That's when I was informed about the International Yoga Instructors Course (IYIC). It was the first stone I laid for my mind and body transformation journey.

After a few months of regular asana yoga practices and the IYIC programme, not only my body was transformed — becoming firmer, toned and healthier — but also my mindset and personality. People could see the changes in me. I had become calmer, more relaxed and soft spoken.

After a year, I took up other interesting courses like Manipuraka Awakening & Universal Healing Energy workshop and Urdhva Retas & Anti-Aging (reproductive health) workshop. After the first class, I had an amazing experience. I actually healed the bruises on my palm and knees. After that I also took up Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course.

Over the years, I have developed a passion for teaching yoga. I'm content and feel a sense of achievement when I get to share my knowledge. Deeper knowledge in teaching yoga has inspired me to take up the Yoga Therapist Course as well. Here I learnt about human anatomy, which muscles to work on for each asana and the therapy for different ailments.

In the earlier days, life's currents pushed me down from the heaven where I lived like a princess to the darkest of hell-like depression. I was stuck in it for a long time. And right there Master Mani picked me up, like a deeply wounded fawn. Through his counselling and the Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course, also known as the Self Mastery Course, I was able to find my true self and the meaning of life. Now, there's an innate positive feeling — bad thoughts have reduced, I can manage stress better and most importantly, it has helped me relax and prepare me for meditation, where I have found peace. Another benefit is that I could go into asanas easily and effortlessly because the

chakras are energised and the flow of prana (life force) in the body has improved.

A few months later, I got the chance to join a special course for Kriya practitioners — the Advanced Dharana (concentration) course. It was a mega boost for me. Here I learnt various concentration techniques... and deeper state of concentration leads to the state of Dhyana (meditation). When I enter this state, my mind becomes calm and I feel very peaceful. There are no more negative thoughts and no more suicidal ideas.

I must also write about the Shatkarmas (the six actions), or detox techniques. I started to exercise two of the detox techniques almost every day : 1. Jala Neti to cleanse the nasal passage, which also helps stabilise emotions, and 2. Kunjal, the stomach-wash technique to remove acidity, balance the emotions and remove stress.

After a year of practice, I noticed that a lot of things that used to bother me are no longer present and lately I noticed that it's difficult for me to get angry. This is pretty mind-blowing because I used to be agitated easily and boy, you do not want to see me mad!

Previously, I was not able to live in silence. I used to turn on the TV and radio as soon as I got home, even though I wasn't watching or listening. I needed sounds around me, so that I didn't feel lonely — silence drove me crazy! However, to my surprise, after Kriya and the Advance Dharana courses, I no longer turn on the radio and TV for no reason. I enjoy silence. I would trade birds' singing with music from the radio anytime and the sound of ocean waves with songs made by humans. Now, I enjoy looking at the trees along the road when I get

stuck in traffic jam and I'm thankful for them. I'm thankful for the rain that nourishes mother earth. I'm thankful to the green lights, the easy car park and everything. Being thankful lifts my mood. Life is not bad after all, life is wonderful.

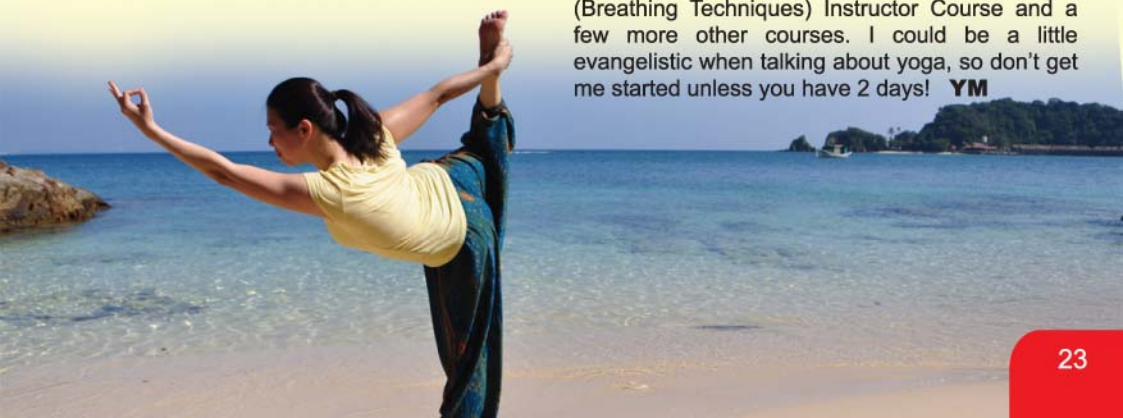
Now, I smile more, I appreciate nature more and I appreciate people more. I look at events and people more positively. One great quote from Master Mani: Look for the 1% of positivity even if there is 99% of negativity in each situation/people/things, and just focus on that 1%. I told myself: "Magnifying that 1%, shrinks the 99%!"

Love people, not things. I use "love" more with family and friends and I no longer indulge in material things. Nothing could really upset me. When there's inner peace, nothing and no one could affect your emotions.

I now understand that Yoga is not how much we can twist, or how low we can bend. It is a life transforming journey. It is a journey that leads to enlightenment. And the purpose of yoga is to serve humanity.

My heartfelt gratitude to the man who picked me up; the mentor that led me out of darkness towards the light of life — the guru that shares so much of his knowledge and wisdom that helps my self-development, and nourishes the garden of my mind and wisdom. The wise and noble man that shows me what is "Dharma" (the purpose of life) and the true friend who always has faith/trust in me no matter what — the great Master Manisekaran.

P/S: My journey doesn't end here, I am taking the Meditation Instructor Course, the Pranayama (Breathing Techniques) Instructor Course and a few more other courses. I could be a little evangelistic when talking about yoga, so don't get me started unless you have 2 days! **YM**



Ayur Yoga: Ayurveda and Massage

The word massage, derived from Greek, signifies kneading or pressing which consists of palpitation, rubbing and kneading. Massage is a scientific manipulation of the tissues of the body.

Our first contact with the world is through the sense of touch. The medium, our skin, is the largest surface area, compared to the other senses. Skin has the capacity to receive various signals and to respond to them differently. The sense of touch is the first of the five senses to become functional.

Touch has a tremendous healing effect. Therapeutic touch therapy such as massage dates back several centuries when healers worked miracles with their hands. They worked by instinct and intuition, using techniques they developed through regular practice, unwavering discipline, commitment to the well-being of the recipient and most importantly a feeling of oneness and harmony with the recipient.

Great importance was placed on massage for healing the sick and maintaining good health in ancient times. In fact, massage was one of the principle means of healing the sick and relieving pain.

History of Massage in the West

"The physician must be experienced in many things, but assuredly in rubbing, because rubbing can bind a joint that is too loose, and loosen a joint that is too rigid." - Hippocrates, 500 B.C.

Ancient warriors and soldiers underwent massage as part of their training regimes because massage helped them to manipulate their limbs and improve their agility in general.

Pliny, a Roman naturalist, was massaged regularly to relieve his asthma. Julius Caesar was pinched all over his body to ease his neuralgia - he had intense pain along a nerve in his head because he suffered from epilepsy. During the Middle Ages however, little was documented of massage in Europe due to the contempt generated for pleasures of the flesh - it was taboo to indulge in sensual activities.

Fast forward to the 19th century, Per Henrik Ling, a Swedish doctor, developed the Swedish massage. He



systemised his system from his knowledge of gymnastics and physiology and from Chinese, Egyptian, Greek and Roman techniques. The first college offering massage as part of the curriculum was established in 1813 in Stockholm.

History of Massage in the East

Perhaps due to the cultural taboo during the Middle Ages and then the scientific revolution, which brought about the rise in popularity of allopathic medicine in Europe, massage techniques have been more valued for their healing applications in the East.

In recent years though, homeopathic medicine is enjoying a resurgence all over the world and the therapeutic value of massage is again being recognised and flourishing throughout the world.

As more people search for natural approaches for health and wellness, Ayurveda is experiencing exponential growth in its industry. Ayurveda literally translates to the Science of Life ("Veda", means knowledge or science, "Ayur" means Life). The techniques of Ayurveda were preserved in ancient Sanskrit texts dating as far back as 2,500 B.C. These texts deal with the art of maintaining perfect balance in the functions of the body. Following the tenets of Ayurvedic massage and diet gives freedom from physical and emotional diseases.

Where better to start than the 'Mother of all healing systems'?

Ayurvedic Massage

Ayurveda works by adjusting the intercellular fluid in the body - lymph - to create an electrical and chemical balance among organs to preserve their proper functioning. In Ayurveda, medicated oils are used for balancing the currents in the lymph. Lymphatic massage has proven very effective in stimulating massage reflexes in the body and helps recipients to relax.

The Ayurvedic system of medicine interprets the lymphatic system as a property of Kapha. Ayurvedic massage includes pressure points which are gently massaged with pure and organic oils such as sesame, coconut, mustard and almond to achieve balance in the body's energy system. Through regular massage balance can be maintained or restored to the body's electro-chemical pathways and serves to prevent health problems. Lymphatic massage associated with manipulation of the marmas (vital points or pressure points) has been carried forward in its most developed form into modern times by athletes in India.

The Lymphatic System

In Biblical times, oil was used to anoint a person. Even before that Hippocrates prescribed oil anointment. Herophilus, Galen and Pare (300 B.C.) described lymphatic vessels. In the 16th century, Andreas Vesalius of Brussels and Bartolomeus Eustachius of Rome believed it to be part of the venous system. In the 17th century Olaus Runback discovered that lymphatic vessels have valves that permit one-way flow of lymph as well as a separate return fluid system in the body.

The lymphatic system plays a key role in Ayurvedic massage practices. Seasonal purification is what helps us remain healthy and strong. This purification needs to happen physically as well as mentally. The routine can start early in the morning, starting with cleansing through ablution and bowel movements, moving to sweating through exercise and massage, to bathing and finally to meditation which helps to clean the mind of negative and unwanted thoughts. These processes tend to drain out the 'juices' in the body that are in excess. The body, therefore, requires oiling and lubricating to maintain its texture and moisture. The best available way for one to do it is through massage, which not only strengthens the skin but makes it soft and improves its colour and texture. The oil helps to reduce the erratic nature of vata and gets rid of any stiffness or ache in muscles.

"My job involves long hours of sitting at my desk working on a computer, and as a result of that I developed a constant ache in my upper back. I have been suffering from this pain for one to two years with no relief, despite trying various treatments. Over the last few months, I've started to get a radiating pain in my arm as well. Finally I heard of Ayurvedic massage and decided to give it a try. After just one session, my pain had dramatically reduced." - Viknesh



Massaging towards the heart has a meditative quality and if oil is put into the navel, it is believed to improve the flow of prana (life force or energy) throughout the body. Massage of the head helps to calm and strengthen the sense organs. The shikha, the whorl at the top of the head, is the main area to be massaged. This they say is from where the life force or prana flows freely so as to maintain a clear consciousness.

In many Eastern cultures and even in South America, massage is an intrinsic part of life. Children and newborn babies are massaged until they reach a particular age. Before marriage, one undergoes ceremonial massage. Pregnant women are massaged gently and pressure is gradually increased after delivery to expedite the body's healing, flush out waste material and maintain good health. Special massage is also conducted for infants. Apart from the physical benefits of regular massage, the immune system of babies is stimulated by the mere caress of its mother.

Warm oil can be applied and rubbed into the body daily to preserve youth and health. For more information on what Ayurvedic massage can do for you, feel free to get in touch with any of our friendly consultants. Better still book an appointment today and experience the amazing rejuvenating and relaxing effects of Ayurvedic massage! **YM**

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Locations:
Selayang Utama (HQ), Bangsar, Brickfields,
Damansara Utama, Puchong



"I'm not small! I'm fun-size!" Throughout our daily life, whether we intentionally acknowledge it or not, there are always constant reminders about our height – our placement in a queue at school, reaching for something placed in a high cabinet or shelf, buying long pants and skirts which seem to cascade to the floor (and could potentially double up as a mop!), and for those who drives, adjustment of the seat in the car when needed to drive.

Many parents are concerned about their children's height (mainly the lack of) and have been trying all sorts of remedies, mostly old wives' remedies, to help their children 'grow'. In fact, some parents may have discreetly or indiscreetly suggest to their children to hang on the monkey bars in hope that gravity will work its magic and bestow them with added height of a couple more inches.

Although our biological built-up and physical attributes are gifts from our parents and ancestors, a research in Britain suggests that attaining a good height is not only about genes. Our lifestyle – the food we eat, the way we live and the way we think are also important factors to our growth as well. Other than exercises, the state of our minds is also important. Heard of the word 'psychosomatic'? The Oxford Dictionary defined it as 'a physical illness (or other conditions) caused or made worse by a mental factor such as stress'.

A relaxed and stress-free mind allows the body to produce the Human Growth Hormone (HGH), also known as somatotropin, easily. The growth hormone is secreted by the pituitary gland which is also the master of all glands as it controls the functioning of the other endocrine glands. This hormone stimulates growth, cell reproduction and cell regeneration in human. Hence, it is important in human development.

Reaching Heights with Yoga!



As we would already know, the word 'Yoga' is instantaneously associated with its therapeutic effects, particularly for personal physical, mental and emotional health. It integrates the psycho-physiological systems. Through the various practices of Yoga such as asana, pranayama and meditation, Yoga strengthens the body, calms the mind and nurtures the emotions these are the essentials for healthy growth. A consistent yoga routine can help to revitalise the body system, allowing it to grow healthily and make the mind calmer and balanced.

Yoga asanas which can help in promoting height are mainly poses which allow your spine to become upright and those of lengthening movement, such as:

Tadasana (Palm Tree Pose) – an ideal pose to lengthen and straighten the spine to improve posture and increase height by stretching the muscles and ligaments, enabling bones to grow longer. Tadasana also helps to develop physical and mental balance.

Chakrasana (Wheel Pose) – while increasing the elasticity of the spinal cord, this pose influences all hormonal secretions.

Trikonasana (Triangle Pose) – when performing the Trikonasana, the torso is being lengthened, giving it a refined posture.

Majari-asana (Cat Stretch Pose) – in this pose, the spine receives complete extension in both forward and backward directions, enabling the expansion of the cartilage discs in the spinal column.

Surya Namaskar – important routine for a whole body workout. Various parts of the body including the abdominal organs are stretched and compressed, warranting optimum functioning of the organs, while the spine is alternately flexed and stretched resulting in better spinal flexibility.

As mentioned earlier, being relaxed and stress-free are the best conditions for the production of HGH, and two of the most effective ways of arriving to a relaxed and stress-free mind is through the practices of deep breathing and meditation. Breathing releases the built-up stress and tensions which clouds the mind and tenses up the muscles. Deep abdominal breathing is the best to rejuvenate the whole body with oxygen, and the gentle pace throughout the breathing practice allow the body and mind to ease into a calm and relaxed state.

The physical, mental and emotional systems are interconnected, and each aspect nourishes the other. Our emotional state and mental faculty prominently influence our health and growth. A healthy mind is the key to a healthy

growth. Meditation calms the mind and promotes mindfulness. Above that, the practices of meditation further integrate the body and mind to achieve goals set by the individual, and keeping the mind positive and clear of its direction leading to success.

While Yoga can help in healthy growth, the rate of growth differs from one individual to another. Other than Yoga practices, another apparent contributor of healthy growth is nutrition. Always remember to eat well and eat food which nourishes the body and mind, and be mindful when eating – put away all gadgets and switch off the television during meal times. Replace artificial flavouring with spices and herbs which are natural in origin. Natural herbs are known to nourish and nurture the body, giving it a strong and healthy foundation in which to grow.

Yoga addresses the whole person as an integrated unit. It incorporates all aspects of the person through the various practices and grants long lasting effects to the practitioners. So, practice often and with full awareness. While children are highly recommended to adopt a Yoga routine, teenagers and parents are also encouraged to include Yoga in their schedules. In fact, it will be most beneficial for the whole family to practice Yoga together. A family who practices Yoga together, grow healthily together.

YM

SYK classes include:

Yoga Kids Class, Teens Yoga Class, Family Yoga Class and Pregnancy Yoga Class. For more information about Super Yoga Kids, log on to www.superyogakids.com or find us at

Brickfields (03.2260 5322),

Bangsar (03.2282 4980),

Damansara Utama (03.7726 6682),

Selayang Utama (03.6127 5693) and

Puchong (03.8080 4742).

Facebook: SYK Superyogakids



Featured Asana

Vyaghrasana (Tiger Pose)

Step by Step:

1. Assume the starting position of marjari-asana and look forward.
2. Relax the whole body.
3. (Inhale) Arching the back downwards, straighten the right leg, stretching it up and back.
4. Bend the right knee.
5. Look up and bring the toes towards the back of the head.
6. Hold the breath for a few seconds in this position.
7. Straighten the right leg, bend the knee and swing the leg under the hips.
8. Simultaneously, arch the back up and bend the head down, bringing the knee towards the nose (exhale).
9. The right foot should not touch the floor.
10. The thigh presses against the chest.
11. Hold for a few seconds while retaining the breath outside.
12. Move the foot straight back and again stretch the leg.
13. Bend the knee and continue with the slow swinging movements.
14. After practising on one side, relax in marjari-asana.
15. Repeat with the other leg.



Benefits:

- Loosens the back by bending it alternately in both directions and tones the spinal nerves.
- Relaxes the sciatic nerves, relieving sciatica, and loosens up the legs and hip joints.
- Tones the female reproductive organs and is especially beneficial for women after childbirth and those who have given birth to many children.
- Stretches the abdominal muscles, promotes digestion and stimulates blood circulation.
- Reduces weight from the hips and thighs.
- Maintains and improves flexibility of the spine, and hip mobility. Strengthens the muscles of the abdomen, back, buttocks, hips and legs and deepens the breath. A beneficial exercise for mothers shortly after giving birth.



Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Vegetarian Burger Patty



Ingredients A

- 1 ½ cup chickpea (boiled)
- ¼ cup oats or wheat flour
- ¼ cup walnut or almond
- ½ cup finely chopped cilantro or parsley
- ¼ teaspoon red chilli powder, garam masala, cumin powder
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt as needed

Ingredients B

Finely chopped bell pepper, corns and a carrot.

Method

1. Grind all the ingredients A in a mixer. When they are well blended, place them into a bowl.
2. Add ingredients B and mix everything well.
3. Then, take handful of the mixture and shape it into a burger patty. The thickness of the patty is according to your preference.
4. Then, you can grill, fry or even refrigerate it to be eaten any other day.

SCHEDULE OF COURSES: APR - JUL2016

APR

3/4/2016	BSR/DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
10/4/2016	BSR	Manipuraka Awakening & Universal Healing Energy Workshop
10/4/2016	BSR	Urdhva Retas & Anti-Aging Workshop
10/4/2016	PCH	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
11/4/2016	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
11/4/2016	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
11/4/2016	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
16/4/2016	SU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
16/4/2016	PCH/BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
18/4/2016	BSR/BFS	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
21/4/2016	DU	Prana Vidya Course
23/4/2016	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
24/4/2016	DU	Introduction to Chakras - the Wheels of Life Workshop
24/4/2016	DU/PCH	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
30/4/2016	BSR	Dhyana (Meditation) Instructor/Practitioner Course

MAY

1/5/2016	JOHOR	Day Trip: UK Agro Farm
1/5/2016	BFS	Full Intestinal Cleansing
7/5/2016	PCH	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
7/5/2016	SU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
7/5/2016	DU	Mother's Day Yoga Workshop
8/5/2016	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
8/5/2016	BSR/DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
8/5/2016	BFS	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
12/5/2016	DU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
15/5/2016	BSR	Jala Neti Workshop
22/5/2016	BFS	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
29/5/2016	DU	The Natural Beauty Workshop
23-28/05/2016	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
27/5/2016	BSR	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
29/5/2016	PCH	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course

JUN

5/6/2016	SU	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
12/6/2016	PCH	Manipuraka Awakening & Universal Healing Energy Workshop
12/6/2016	PCH	Urdhva Retas & Anti-Aging Workshop
13-17/6/2016	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
17/6/2016	BSR/ BFS	Pregnancy Yoga Instructors Course
18/6/2016	DU	Father's Day Yoga Workshop
19/6/2016	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
26/6/2016	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
26/6/2016	DU	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
26/6/2016	BSR	Short Course on Effective Sleep

JUL

3/7/2016	SU	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
6/7/2016	Fraser's Hills	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course Retreat (5D/4N)
10/7/2016	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
10/7/2016	BSR	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner Workshop
10/7/2016	DU	Herbs that Heal - Natural Remedies at Your Fingertips Workshop
18/7/2016	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

WORKSHOPS FOR YOUR WELL BEING



MANIPURAKA AWAKENING & UNIVERSAL HEALING ENERGY

10 APRIL
BANGSAR

12 JUNE
PUCHONG

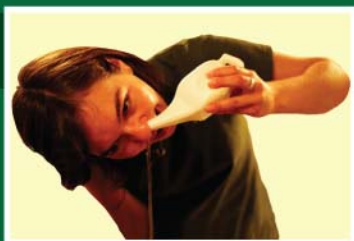
A workshop that awakens the inner energy centres (chakras) and channels (nadi) within your body to energise and enhance your overall well-being.

10 APRIL
BANGSAR

12 JUNE
PUCHONG

URDHVA RETAS & ANTI-AGING

A workshop for perfect health of the reproductive system, and youthfulness by harnessing the most powerful energy in humankind and withstand the ravages of aging.



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15 MAY
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Learn the traditional yet functional technique of nasal irrigation that can be practiced by everyone. An excellent practice to alleviate nasal allergy.

26 JUNE
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SHORT COURSE ON EFFECTIVE SLEEP

Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect your health. Grant yourself the rights to rest effectively for a better health by understanding the mechanics of an effective sleep.



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◆
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YOGA MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

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Practicing meditation on daily basis allows you to weave silence and stillness into your mind and body to create a life of greater compassion and fulfillment.

Meditation is a journey to the center of our very being; a journey to emotional freedom; and a journey to the reawakening of our conditioned self.

**This course is registered with the Ministry of Education and is endorsed by the Malaysian Association of Yoga Instructors.*

LEARN MORE THAN

25 MEDITATION TECHNIQUES
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