

YOGA MAIL

The Industry Journal For Yoga & Human Potential

PP 15266/06/2013(033264)
VOLUME 8 ISSUE 3

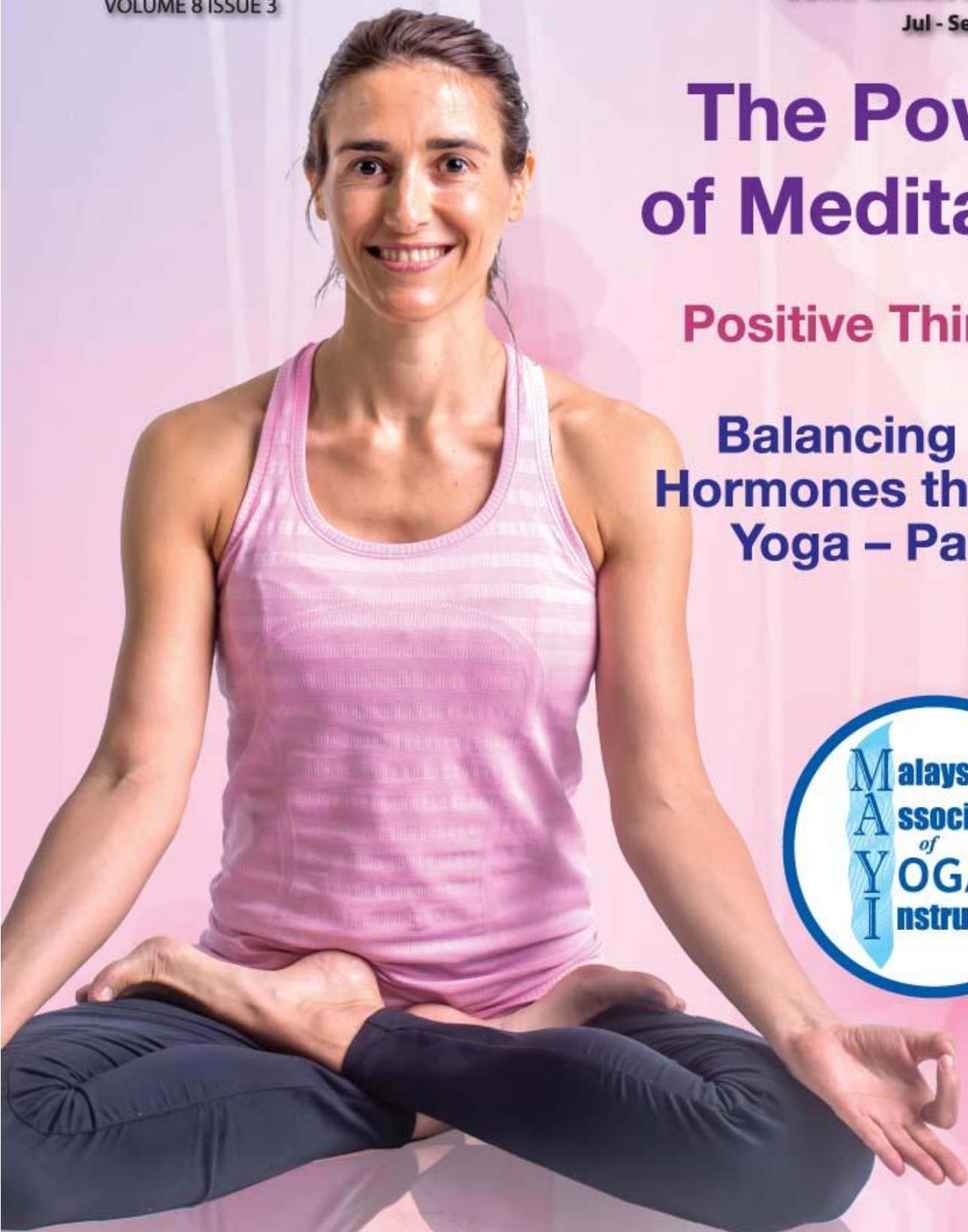
COMPLIMENTARY COPY

Jul - Sep 2015 ISSUE

The Power of Meditation

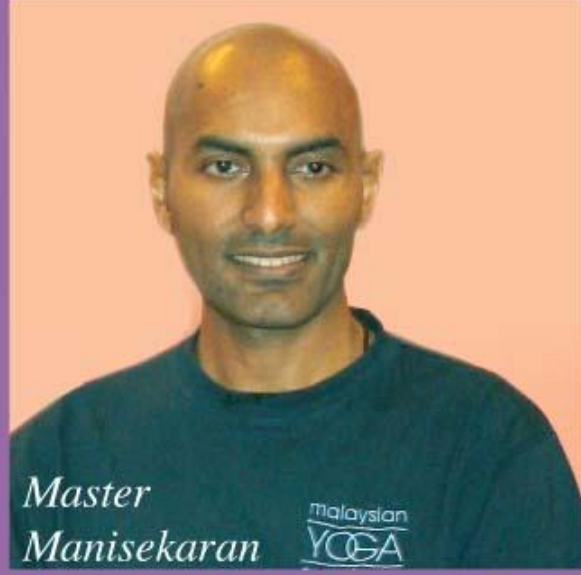
Positive Thinking

**Balancing the
Hormones through
Yoga – Part 1**



Message from Master Mani

The True Art Of MEDITATION



Master
Manisekaran

Malaysian
YOGA

Asana (postures) yoga is becoming popular day by day, but meditation, which was at its height of popularity some 20 or so years ago, seems to have taken a back seat. Why?

Whilst asanas can be seen in the practices, meditation can't, hence no one is able to gauge its evolution in the practitioner. The biggest challenge therefore is learning, practising, refining and evolving to the stage of mastering meditation, which seems like a tedious process. Next would be learning it from a competent teacher who teaches without making it abstract, mystical and complex.

Let us explore some ways of understanding the basics of meditation and starting on the journey today. The starting point would be to learn to enjoy it as a form of simple self-realisation, i.e. to see everything inside the mind as it is without reacting, indulging or brushing it away by either suppressing/repressing it. Not to indulge and not to suppress — this is the ultimate art of conscious self-realisation.

What happens then? You start feeling alive, conscious, aware, and be in the moment without thinking of being in the moment, whereas those with untrained minds, having read about being in the moment, are actually recalling the memory of this idea from what they would have read or heard about. The actual experience of living in the moment, all the time, would be state-of-the-art mind, right?

Will it culminate in an ever-evolving consciousness, moving you into states of Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi? Is it possible to slide into all the limbs of yoga naturally by achieving the state of equanimity through the simple process I have explained above?

Yes, it is possible. It is easy and it just needs you to find the right teacher. When you have found the right teacher, everything falls into place. The teacher will reflect what he teaches. So in this case, since the art of true meditation has to be free from being branded as abstract, mystical and complex, the teacher too has to be free from such traps.

Meditation is freedom, so seek a teacher who shows you freedom within and freedom even from the teacher. This, for me, is the first step in meditation.

I see so many eager aspirants, young and old, sincerely seeking to learn yoga and meditation, but end up in cults or dogmas instead... and become lifelong followers of these. We can learn meditation but we need not be slaves; we can respect our teachers but we need not lose our minds and dignity; we can love our guides but we don't have to lose our SELF.

Meditation can only arise in absolute freedom. Seek a teacher who is free from all forms of airs and complexities, those who desire disciples or those who make themselves look mystical and holier than others.

Why am I emphasising this as a precursor to meditation? Only because I have seen that the majority of the propagators of spirituality, yoga and meditation have not understood the beauty, simplicity and innocence of meditation, yoga and life.

Have a blessed life with this knowledge and don't ever give up until you find the meditation that brings you unalloyed freedom, bliss and enlightenment. **YM**



Visit us at Facebook:

Malaysian Association Of Yoga Instructors
and Manisekaran Yoga

Content

- 2 Message from Master Mani
- 5-6 The Power of Meditation
- 7-8 Balancing the Hormones through Yoga – Part 1
- 9-10 Positive Thinking
- 11 Events: *Slimming Yoga Session for “Yeppadi Iruntha Naan Ippadi Aiten” Programme*
- 12 Events: *International Yoga Day 2015: Refreshing Yoga Session at TTDI Park*
- 13-14 Articles by Practitioners
- *Are Men Shying Away from Yoga?*
- 15-16 - *Who Am I?*
- 17 Yoga Therapy: *For Sluggish Liver*
- 18-19 At Your Fingertips: *Kumari - Aloe Vera*
- 20 Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living



5-6



12



15-16



18-19



29

- 21 Eco's Echoes: *Neuroplasticity and Yoga (Part 1)*
- 22 Inner Insights:
- *Life Changing Experience*
- 23 - *Yoga - My Breath, Body and Mind Experience*
- 24-25 Ayur Yoga: *Beautiful Skin, Naturally*
- 26-27 Super Yoga Kids Corner: *Meditation Caring for the Teenage Minds*
- 28 Featured Asana: *Marjari-Asana (Cat Stretch Pose)*
- 29 Chef Yogi's Food Notes!
- 30 Schedule of Courses: Jul - Nov 2015

Advisor:
Master Mani

Editorial
(Writers and Contributors)
Surya Tay
Vijaya
Lee Yan
Meiwan
Navanesan
Jamie Spatafore
Other contributors

Advertising & Circulation:
Kasturi

Graphic Designer:
Danny Kwok

Cover Design by:
Danny Kwok

Printed by:
Vivar Printing Sdn Bhd
(125107-D)
Lot 25, Rawang Intergrated
Industrial Park,
Jalan Batu Arang,
48000 Rawang,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Published by:
Sumathi A/P Jeganathan,
The Yoga Franchise,
No.3, Jalan Ang Seng 3,
50470 Brickfields KL



Guided by one of
the world's leading
yoga exponent

Manisekaran

Fully sponsored by:

MAYI
YOGA ACADEMY
MindBody • Authentic • Yoga • Inspiration

- Brickfields
+603 2260 5322
- Bangsar
+603 2282 4980
- Damansara Utama
+603 7726 6682

Complimentary copies of YogaMail are available at the following locations:

- **MAYI Yoga Academy and affiliated studios**
- **Secret Recipe**
- **Starbucks**

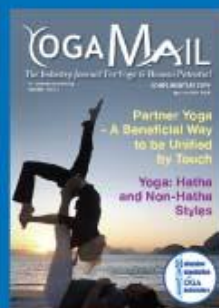
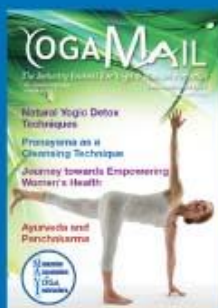
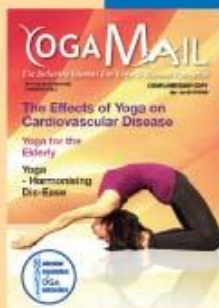
Advantages of advertising with Yoga Mail

- Quarterly publication with focus on well being and sustainable living
- 10,000 copies printed per issue
- Distribution throughout the Klang Valley, Penang, Johor and East Malaysia
- Food outlets, health centres, targeted retail outlets, condominiums
- Copies are sent directly to all members of MAYI & MYS
- Past issues available on MAYI and MYS websites
- Special discount rates for long term advertising partners
- Attractive advertising rate card



Contact:
03-2260 5322

Visit our websites:
www.mayi.org.my /
www.malaysianyogasociety.org



Meditation is a state of being. While it is common for many practitioners to assume a sitting position like padmasana (lotus pose) to meditate, I personally believe one can engage in meditation even when he or she is in motion. Patanjali reveals that one of the simplest ways to meditate is to allow the mind to rest on a Self-Realized being who has transcended not only human passions but also attachments (Stiles, 2013). Similarly, the way I see it, meditation is a process of focusing one's attention (i.e. dharana) while witnessing the thought forms that emerge and disappear from the mind, without judging them. According to Chopra and Simon (2006), meditation is that ability to enter the gap in between thoughts, while catching a glimpse of the unbounded awareness domain. As meditation offers a direct path to the awakening of the Law of Pure Potentiality in one's life, its effects are immeasurable. The following paragraphs highlight the effectiveness of meditation in various psychological and physiological conditions.

As stress is the fundamental cause of all mind-body disorders and dysfunctions, it must be brought under control or eradicated from the human biological system. This potent "killer" is known to induce the production of a hormone called cortisol, which increases one's appetite for foods rich in sugar, carbohydrate and fat. Subsequently, if not controlled, high levels of stress can lead to weight gain, which in turn will bring about debility in an individual. The way we deal with stress is crucial to our well-being. Meditation helps one to relief stress. Regular practice of meditation not only brings about balance in the central nervous system and hormone levels, but also increases brain coherence. The beauty of this powerful practice is that it allows one to take charge of their emotions, and in the process of doing so, the body becomes calm and relaxed.

Meditation can also reduce blood pressure. A study conducted by Bai et al. (2015) found that participants suffering from high blood pressure had their systolic and diastolic levels lowered after practicing meditation. The reduction appeared more pronounced in the systolic levels. In one particular study published in 2008 in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, it was found that 40 of the 60 high-blood pressure patients who started meditating were able to discontinue their blood pressure medication (Crane, 2014).



Besides, meditation is effective in helping people overcome anxiety and depression. A 20-week study conducted with 36 female volunteers aged between 63 and 79 found that there was a decrease in the levels of anxiety and depression (DeBerry, 1982). Amazingly, meditation has been found to be effective in helping individuals with suicidal behavior. Research has shown that individuals with a previous history of suicidal depression showed normal brain patterns after being subjected to meditation-based treatment for a period of eight weeks (Barnhofer et.al, 2007).

Furthermore, studies have shown that meditation makes people not only happy, but also more focused with greater self-awareness. This is due to the increase in the brain signals in the left side of the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for positive emotions. In one study conducted by Harvard researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital, it was discovered that meditation literally rebuilds the brain's grey matter in just eight weeks (McGreevey, 2011). The MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) analysis of 16 participants who meditated for approximately 30 minutes every day for a period of eight weeks showed increased grey-matter in the hippocampus, which is crucial for memory and learning. This evidence further enhances the super powers of meditation and it only goes to show that meditation not only provides cognitive but also psychological benefits

In summary, the omnipotence of meditation is undeniable. The beauty of this technique is that it can be done at almost no cost at all. All it requires is moments of your precious time and the blessings of a Guru or a spiritual master. If you have not started meditating, you may want to embark on it right away not only to enjoy the benefits of health and to relish peace of mind, but also to seek the thrill of knowing thyself.

YM

**For a guided explanation of Meditation by Master Manisekaran, turn to page 31.*

References

- Bai, Z., Chang, J, Chen, C, Li, P., Yang, K. & Chi, I. (2015). Investigating the effect of transcendental meditation on blood pressure: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *Journal of Human Hypertension*. doi:10.1038/jhh.2015.6
- Barnhofer, T., Duggan, D., Crane, C., Hepburn, S. Fennell, M.J.V., & Williams, J. M. G. (2007). Effects of meditation on frontal α -asymmetry in previously suicidal individuals. *Neuroreport*. 18(7). 709-712. doi: 10.1097/WNR.0b013e3280d943cd
- Chopra, D. & Simon, D. (2006). *The seven spiritual laws of yoga: A practical guide to healing, body, mind and spirit*. India: Wiley Pvt. Ltd.
- Crane, K. (2014). 8 ways meditation can improve your life. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/19/meditation-benefits_n_5842870.html
- DeBerry, S. (1982). The effects of meditation-relaxation on anxiety and depression in a geriatric population. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice*, 19(4), 512-521. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0088465>
- McGreevey, S. (2011). Eight weeks to a better brain. Retrieved from <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2011/01/eight-weeks-to-a-better-brain/>
- Stiles, M. (2013). *Structural yoga therapy: Adapting to the individual*. San Francisco, CA: Red Wheel / Weiser LLC.



Balancing the Hormones through Yoga – Part 1

by Nemala

We all know of people with unpredictable mood swings. In a moment they are pleasant and cheerful and in another they are emotional and frustrated for no apparent reason. And that can extend to the borders of irrationality even.

It could be our own parent, spouse, sibling or friend. Lots of people blame it on the hormones and they could be right.

Let's take a look at these and see if there's a way around to it.

Hormones are chemical messengers that act on different aspects of bodily functions and processes, which include growth, cognitive function and mood. They are secreted from the endocrine glands in the body. Some of the major ones are: the pituitary gland, pineal gland, thymus, thyroid and adrenal glands.

While most of our body's systems work sufficiently without intervention, practising yoga helps to maximise the endocrine system's operations and goes a long way in helping to balance the hormones. Yoga poses that regulate certain glands and organs help to maintain the hormonal balance through consistent production and proper distribution upon need.

Pituitary is one of the most important hormonal glands, also known as the 'master gland'. It secretes its own hormones or signals the release of hormones from other glands like the thyroid and adrenals. The human growth hormone, or HGH, is also secreted by the pituitary gland. It is responsible for one's growth from infancy to childhood, and continues to influence largely through adulthood by nurturing the tissues and organs.

Mostly in men, the symptoms of aging are often the result of a growth hormone and testosterone decline. By the time a man reaches 40, he's lost almost half the growth hormones he had at 20.

Many scientists also wonder if this hormone could be a coupling effect for the loss of bone and muscle mass in women after menopause. Such imbalances in both men and women can happen at any age. Most often we only hear of hormone treatment that successfully improves these situation.

Despite that, a study in India showed that 12 weeks of yogic training produces a significant increase of HGH in blood for both male and female groups of their study, whereas no such changes were observed in their control group. The yogic training was inclusive of Surya Namaskara (Sun Salutation) or Shithilikarana (loosening) practices, cleansing process, or Shatkarma, Asanas (static and dynamic postures), Pranayamas (breathing practices) and Dhyana (meditation). The professor concluded that this combination of yogic training could maintain the basal level of HGH in the human body, thus promoting healthy aging, which is in line with the claim made by the seers and sages of India in the ancient yogic texts (1).

Besides that, yoga interventions are also shown to improve conditions derived from lack of hormonal efficiency such as diabetes. Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar level. A study published by the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine in 2005 showed an intervention of yoga caused significant change in their participants' glucose and lipid profile (cholesterol).

The intervention was mainly in the form of asanas, pranayama, yogic relaxation techniques and meditation, among others. There were also films on the philosophy of yoga, the place of yoga in daily life, group

support, individualised advice, lectures on stress management, nutrition and insight into illness as well.

Another study also demonstrated the effectiveness of hatha yoga on fasting blood glucose with type 2 diabetes and suggests that it may have therapeutic preventative and protective effects on diabetes, mainly by decreasing oxidative stress and improving antioxidant status (2,3,4).

Moving to Cortisol – a life-sustaining adrenal hormone, commonly known as “the stress hormone”. Cortisol influences, regulates or modulates many of the changes that occur in the body in response to stress. To name a few: the blood sugar (glucose) levels, immune responses, blood pressure, heart and blood vessel tone and contraction, and central nervous system activation. Though it is vital to health for the adrenals to secrete more cortisol in response to stress, it is also very important that cortisol levels return to normal subsequent to a stressful event. Unfortunately, in our current high-stress culture, the stress response is activated so often that the body does not always have a chance to return to normal. Rest assured, with the right practice of yoga this can be sorted.

To be continued.... **YM**

References

1. Chatterjee, S., & Mondal, S. (2014). *Effect of Regular Yogic Training on Growth Hormone and Dehydroepiandrosterone Sulfate as an Endocrine Marker of Aging. Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2014.
2. Thompson, J. L., Butterfield, G. E., Gylfadottir, U. K., Yesavage, J., Marcus, R., Hintz, R. L., & Hoffman, A. R. (1998). *Effects of Human Growth Hormone, Insulin-Like Growth Factor I, and Diet and Exercise on Body Composition of Obese Postmenopausal Women The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*, 83(5), 1477-1484.
3. L.A. Gordon, E.Y. Morrison, D.A. McGrowder, R. Young, Y.T. Fraser, E.M. Zamora, et al. *Effect of exercise therapy on lipid profile and oxidative stress indicators in patients with type 2 diabetes. BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 13 (2008), p. 21
4. R.L. Bijlani, R.P. Wempati, R.K. Yadav, R.B. Ray, V. Gupta, R. Sharma, et al. *A brief but comprehensive lifestyle education program based on yoga reduces risk factors for cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus. Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 11 (2005), pp. 267-274



P ositive Thinking

by K. Saravana Sealan

"You people come only once a year to preach good values, you leave and then only appear the following year. I'm sure that all of you would have gone through this age and done things that you might have regretted. But today, you are here to tell us what to do and what not to do," said a teenager whom we met when our Malaysian Yoga Society's (MYS) karma yoga team went to a secondary school recently to offer counselling and introduce yoga.

He continued, "Who is here to hold our hands and guide us through?"

It was our first day in the school. We were there to meet students who needed counselling. They were not only lagging in studies, but also had behavioural issues.

Those words, uttered by a brave young man, helped us zoom into the issues at hand. I guess, they would have encountered numerous occasions when change was demanded of them without being given chances to hear them out completely, and this young man was hoping for their cries to be considered as well.

The sentence, "who is here to hold our hands and guide us through?" made me stop and ponder. It suggested that he was hurting and he has yet to see a prudent support system to nurture him in a way that will be consistently appealing and conducive to these teenagers, especially this group of teenagers who are said to be misbehaving.

We were teenagers once and we know the challenges we faced. It's like being in a transitional body that is ever changing; that has an adult's mind that wants to be set free to explore its boundaries while still functioning in a child's heart — yearning for attention, care and love.

At the same time, the school teachers today are challenged with the need to address the behavioural issues that come from children who are socially challenged. On top of that, they have a heavy workload to handle as well.

These days schools have counselling teachers, but there is only so much a counselling teacher could do.

On the one hand, just like the domino effect, as the so called 'rat race' for wealth and career advancement intensifies, the socio-economic issues become wider, contributing to escalating stress for the economically challenged. On the other, some children could be stressed due to lack of parental guidance or overemphasis on academic excellence.

Looking at the growing concerns, I believe each one of us, who are expecting a harmonious life, has a social obligation to consciously play a role in contributing towards a forward moving society.

Having successfully conducted MYS' National Yoga Camps since 2012, I feel I have arrived with the best group of people and am ready to fulfil my social obligations.

I believe, with a similar set up, we now have the wheel for the social reform to help shoulder the society's concerns. Now, a more personal and deeper concern needs to be addressed. How can I offer a hand in helping MYS realise its vision effectively? A deeper concern is the sort of mindset I ought to embrace in order to play an active role in helping move the organisation's mission statement forward.

Looking at the diverse loopholes for students to fall prey into social ills, we see the complexity of life in its truest nature and I believe it's time for each one of us to STOP and re-think our

priorities. Stop. Not to just hastily shift priorities, but have a clear take on what is going on by embracing a positive thinking process, in order to effectively help the situation.

As the saying, "The end of education is character" suggests, we could see that 'character' is the crucial element of a positive lifestyle.

The next question is what creates a positive character? Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American essayist, lecturer and poet, who was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society, said this:

*"Sow a thought and you reap an action;
sow an act and you reap a habit;
sow a habit and you reap a character;
sow a character and you reap a destiny."*

We could conclude that a thought is the seed that determines the destiny, our destiny, collectively, and "a positive thought would naturally create a positive ambience for growth".

So, what exactly is positive thinking? We might be tempted to assume that it implies seeing the world through rosy lenses by ignoring or glossing over the negative aspects of life. However, positive thinking actually means approaching life's challenges with a positive outlook. It does not necessarily mean avoiding or ignoring the bad things; instead, it involves making the most of potentially bad situations, trying to see the reality in that situation and bring about creative changes, while continually viewing ourselves and others in a positive light.

However, thoughts originate from intentions and our intentions spur from our needs.

Our needs may vary from person to person based on:

- Biological and Physiological needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, reproduction, sleep.
- Safety needs - protection from elements, security, order, law, stability.

- Love and belongingness needs - friendship, intimacy, affection and love - from work group, family, friends and romantic relationships.
- Esteem needs - self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance, prestige, managerial responsibility.
- Cognitive needs - knowledge, meaning.
- Aesthetic needs - appreciation and search for beauty, balance, form.
- Self-Actualisation needs - realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences.
- Transcendence needs - helping others to achieve self actualisation.

Our intellectual capacity may not be sufficient to accommodate and facilitate all the eight needs stated above to bring about a harmonious balance, hence we can take the yogic approach as suggested in Chapter 4.18 in Patanjali Yoga Sutra, which says:

4.18 (sada jnatah chitta vrittayah tat prabhu purusasya aparinamitvat)

The activities of the mind are always known by the pure consciousness, because that pure consciousness is superior to, support of, and master over the mind.

When we go beyond the mind, we attain mastery of the mind.

Then we can decide how to operate the tool called mind, better.

An intention creates the kind of thought we engage in and permeate.

When we touch the pure consciousness, we are able to touch lives with utmost compassion it requires, enabling a harmonious lifestyle. **YM**

EVENTS

Slimming Yoga Session for “Yeppadi Iruntha Naan Ippadi Aiten” Programme

by K. Saravana Sealan

Very recently, THR Raaga, the leading Tamil radio station in Malaysia, organised a weight-loss challenge programme called “Yeppadi Iruntha Naan Ippadi Aiten”. Nine people, comprising 4 ladies and 5 men, took part in the programme.

MAYI Yoga Academy had the privilege of playing host to these amazing participants, at the Bangsar centre, by introducing yoga to them, particularly slimming yoga, pranayama (breathing techniques), cleansing techniques (shatkarma) and a proper diet.

The session began with the participants sharing their purpose in joining the contest:

- A housewife said she has to take care of her health as the family's welfare was on her shoulders;
- A married lady, who had not been able to conceive due to her being overweight, decided to lose weight so that she could try for a child; and
- A gentleman said he was in the IT line and it was crucial for him to look fit and not appear sluggish as it reflected professionalism.

Each participant had an inspiring story to share and it gave me the extra zest to deliver the best despite spending only a few hours with them.

Almost all the participants pointed to their group dynamics as a motivation to stay in the contest.

The power and effectiveness of group dynamics is simply inspiring!

Then came the yoga practices. After the joint exercises and Surya Namaskar, they were introduced to specific slimming asanas. All the participants took part very enthusiastically despite their limitations, while the trainers practised moderation to cater to their abilities.

They were very relieved when they were allowed to relax in shavasana, followed by a guided visualisation on self-acceptance — to help them address stress, accept themselves as they were,

and to allow the natural dynamic changes to take place.

Towards the end of the session, they were introduced to Pranayama (breathing exercises) and Shatkarma (cleansing) techniques. They were also briefed on the need for a proper diet, in making healthier food choices, and to remove toxins from the body.

The yoga awareness programme ended with such joy and positive reinforcement that they stayed back to chit-chat with the MAYI team.



A few words from the participants:

I've always been afraid of Yoga because I thought it required flexibility. I tried it for the first time today and I feel very relaxed, fresh and complete. I never imagined that I could experience such mental peace because my mind is always in constant fluctuation due to business stress and pressure. The session was very relaxing and peaceful. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity.

-Devan

I felt my mental stress being released as I was engaged in the asanas. It was like being taken to another world. I thank MAYI Yoga Academy and THR Raaga for this opportunity.

-Ms Yugmeswari

YM

EVENTS

International Yoga Day 2015: Refreshing Yoga Session at TTDI Park

by Nirmell Satthiyasilan

As the earth orbits around the sun, there comes a day in a year when it experiences the longest 'day' and receives long hours of sunlight. This is called the summer solstice and it occurs around 21st June each year. With reference to yoga, the Vedic calendar marks the summer solstice as the transition of sun from Uttarayana to Dakshinayana. (Uttara: North; Ayana: Movement). Historically, this was also the day when knowledge of yoga was said to have been first imparted to mankind by the first yoga practitioner known as Adi Yogi. Thus, it seems fitting that 21st June be declared as the International Yoga Day. This vision was realised after the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, addressed the issue at the United Nations General Assembly on 27th September 2014.

As part of our ever-growing effort to promote yoga awareness and its health benefits, the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) and MAYI Yoga Academy jointly hosted the 'International Yoga Day 2015' at the TTDI Bukit Kiara Park.

Participants started to flock in at around 7am and by 7.30am there were already about 100 participants at the three-tier walkway area. Many more followed suit and began to take their spots along the jogging trail, flanking both sides of the wide steps.

Saandhi Sambad conducted the yoga asana (posture) session. Seated at the highest point of the steps, she had an excellent bird's eye view of the participants. The session began with the joint exercises, followed by other interesting postures. Many of the participants were either first timers or new practitioners, nevertheless their enthusiasm was displayed throughout the blissful 45-minute session. Other MYS volunteers and certified yoga instructors, Suki, Kamalan, Turiya and Proshana, were also there to give assistance.

The yoga asana session concluded with a short relaxation practice. After which, participants were introduced to the second instructor, Priya Tee, for a partner yoga session. The session certainly wowed the crowd as they had the opportunity to mingle with each other and make new friends. Most importantly, the participants provided support and motivation for each other. Upon the completion of the partner yoga session, many expressed happiness and gratitude. This positive mood was very infectious indeed as passersby stopped to either watch, take pictures or see if there was space for them to be included as well. The MYS instructors guided many latecomers to suitable spots – by then the crowd had already swollen to the grass field closer to the lake.

The event concluded with an amazing Yoga Nidra session – experiencing the state of yogic sleep in the realms of nature – in the open air, with the chirping of birds above the head and cool wind blowing on the faces of all those who were present. What a refreshing and memorable experience! The session concluded at 9.30am as everyone gathered for a group photo. Many supported and sang praises for the event and stayed to enquire about yoga classes and courses.

This event, organised by MYS and MAYI Yoga Academy at Kiara Park, was definitely a success. Next year, we aim to reach out to a wider crowd on a grander scale to continuously promote yoga as a healthy way of life. **YM**



A

Articles by Practitioners

Are Men Shying Away from Yoga?

by Navanithya Ramasamy

If you ask the average person what yoga is, he or she will immediately think of a beautiful woman with a slender body doing stretches, bends and twists that look like pretzels — that shows how society perceives yoga and how limited it has become. Typically, they say, the ratio of women to men rarely goes much below 80 to 20. In fact, a 2012 survey by Yoga Journal says that out of 20.4 million people who practised yoga in the United States, only 18 per cent are men. On the surface, it seems like yoga is dominated by women despite the notable health benefits to both sexes.

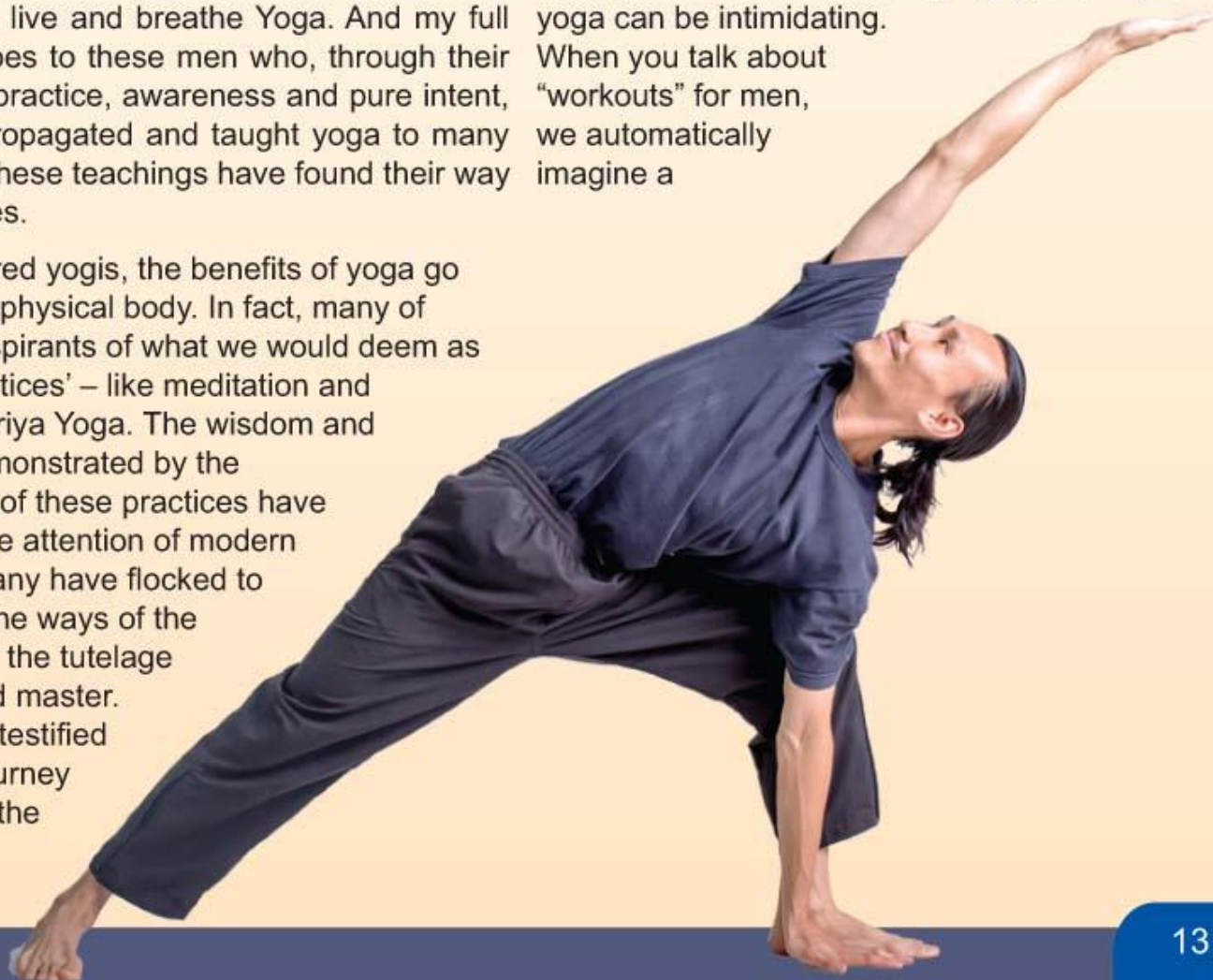
I was rather surprised by the above finding as traditionally yoga was widely practised by men. If we take a step back into history, we'd find that most of the revered yogis were men. With a click of a button, one would find an endless list of notable and accomplished male yogis who literally eat, live and breathe Yoga. And my full gratitude goes to these men who, through their disciplined practice, awareness and pure intent, had then propagated and taught yoga to many more, and these teachings have found their way to our shores.

To the revered yogis, the benefits of yoga go beyond the physical body. In fact, many of them are aspirants of what we would deem as 'higher practices' — like meditation and Kundalini Kriya Yoga. The wisdom and insights demonstrated by the practitioner of these practices have garnered the attention of modern seekers. Many have flocked to and learnt the ways of the yogis under the tutelage of a realised master. Many have testified that their journey began with the physical

practices such as the asanas, in which they experienced tremendous health benefits — due to which they have been 'bought' into the testament that yoga was indeed beneficial for them. Their quests continued and led them to meditation and Kundalini Kriya Yoga practices, which gave magnified benefits to their mental and emotional health as well.

Fast forward to the present, it was a quest for me to understand why fewer men go to yoga classes compared with women. As far as I'm aware, the Yoga Sutra has never proclaimed that yoga was only for a specific gender. Yet, when the question is posted to men, the most common reason given is "It's a 'girls' workout and I can't do yoga because I'm not flexible". It's like saying "I'm too weak, so I can't lift weights". As I did a survey with 30 men, trying to get the ultimate answer, I realised that for the average guy, starting on yoga can be intimidating.

When you talk about "workouts" for men, we automatically imagine a



guy lifting a dumbbell, a barbell or doing a lunge. And when we mention yoga, the common perception is that most yoga classes are attended by a majority of fit, flexible women in tight clothes. But that shouldn't stop men from trying.

As I was writing this article, I realised that rather than ruminating about all the possible reasons why the current world of yoga is dominated by women, it's more important to find the source of the issue to encourage more men to practise yoga. When you google "Benefits of Yoga" you will hit millions of search results on studies suggesting that practising yoga lowers heart rate and blood pressure; helps relieve anxiety, depression and insomnia; and improves overall physical fitness, strength and flexibility, etc. These are the known facts, but I wanted the cherry on top of my cake. To prove my point, I did a research about men doing yoga... not just any men... they are superstars in their respective fields, and why do they do it? Read on...

Among some well-known figures who embrace yoga is Ryan Giggs, a highly decorated footballer in the English football history — who says yoga helped him minimise injury and maximise a career at the highest level for more than 23 years. Apart from strengthening the muscles and improving flexibility, he says yoga also keeps him fit and gets him out on the training pitch to train every day — keeping his body in robust health and ready for anything.

"If I do a yoga session the next day (after a game), I'm nowhere near as stiff and I'll be back training at the right level a lot quicker," claimed Giggs.

Another popular icon, Adam Levine, the lead singer of Maroon 5, practises one workout like a religion — Yoga! In his interview with Men Health magazine, Levine mentioned that Yoga anchors his balancing act. "I have a hard time sitting still. I can be all over the place. Yoga has given me the ability to be more focused and make better decisions that come from a clear place."

Sachin Tendulkar, a former Indian cricketer and captain, widely regarded to be one of the greatest cricketers and batsmen of all time, does yoga as well. As a professional sportsman, it's essential to have the mind and physical body at the optimal level. He first practised yoga to relieve his backache, and later to manage a peculiar problem with his foot. Through guided practices, he was able to elude surgery and recovered quickly. Yoga has certainly helped him with injury management throughout his glorious cricket career!

In the world of basketball, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar is no stranger. Basketball is an endurance sports and it's important for the players to control their breath. Kareem was hooked with yoga the moment he was introduced to it and has since been consciously using yoga techniques in his practices and games. As mentioned in the Men Health magazine, "Abdul-Jabbar is unequivocal in the contributions yoga made to his longevity".

"As preventative medicine, it's unequaled," he says. "Once I started practising it, I've had no muscle injuries during my career. Yoga can help any athlete with hip joint, muscles, tendons, and knee issues. Plus it keeps you in touch with your body." Kareem, 68, started practising yoga at age 14 and relied on yoga to heal his injuries throughout his glorious 20 years of basketball career. He has maintained his health despite being a 7-foot sportsman, where most athletes of this height and span of career would've suffered the wear and tear of their younger days.

Two things these superstars have in common are that they are MEN and they practise YOGA! What's interesting here is how yoga can help an individual in the physical and spiritual level regardless of our gender and occupation — students, office workers, sportsmen, celebrities, etc. All can benefit from the various practices of yoga.

Inspired? Let's get on the yoga mat now! Namaste! **YM**

A

rticles by Practitioners Who Am I?

by Vijaya

My moment of truth came as I was attempting to walk down the 14km track from Sri Mata Vaishno Devi temple with Master Mani on June 5 2015. Master takes every opportunity there to teach me something or reveal some truth, so as I was trying to get into some conversation with him, I asked, "Master, is your pace the same as just now?"

I was referring to his earlier walk with Velawan, deep in some conversation.

"No," he said, I'm walking a bit faster now. I was walking like this just now", he said, showing me a slower and more relaxed pace, "and now it's like this", he casually showed as he increased speed.

It's generally interesting to see Master walk because his pace is usually composed, enduring, full of stamina, concentrated, non-stop and steady all the way. We've done so much of trekking in many of our trips to the different parts of India that I know for sure I can't keep up with his natural pace.

Talking about paces, he remarked very casually that I'm not myself. I was slightly taken aback, but not surprised.

Whether I'm myself or not myself, I wouldn't be aware at times but Master definitely would. I know that, so it was not a surprising remark.

But his next sentence and next move left me jammed up in an unsettled thought region for the next five hours down the long, cold, painful track along the covered walkway of the Trikuta mountain.

It was a stark contrast to what he had announced to me earlier, "I don't have any thoughts in my head right now", which meant being in the present moment in the absolute, pure state of consciousness.

"If you are yourself, our paces would not be the same," he remarked. And I saw myself slipping down into some hurting realisation, because the little desire I had of walking with my Guru down the holy mountain just got thrown away from the height above 5000ft altitude. Sob!

His pace naturally proceeded as it was and I painfully watched him walk ahead. Mine dropped into a slight



MAYI Group

confusion that I had to deal with for the next 5 hours down that long and lonely track. In a while Pugunes and Saandhi caught up with me and there were hundreds and hundreds of devotees coming up the mountain still, even as the sun was slowly setting behind the breath-taking mountain view... with their ponies, porters and palanquins, some chanting and dancing gleefully, dragging their tiny children behind, in an environment that was becoming increasingly chilly.

An estimated 10 million people were said to be going up for the darshan of Sri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji every year.

I wondered then of my own pace.

It's so important to be ourselves, to be truthful to our own being and to be in contact with our real nature, but why do we deviate, why do we pretend, and why do we put up appearances?

Until and unless we stop pretending and stop adding up illusory layers to ourselves, we are never going to find the truth within and no... there's no way we are going to realise God or the Higher Self, no matter how many Vaishno Devi temples we've been to, no matter how many Kailash blessings we've got or how many holy sites we've visited.



Gulmarg



MAYI group at Vaishno Devi temple

WHO AM I? That is the question to be asked and that is the question Master so cleverly implied while the 31 of us in the bus, played a game of introducing ourselves in a creative way.

Now that I've experienced snow fall, sledging and glamorous photo shoots in Gulmarg, does that make me a better person? Is that going to help me find myself? The real one... Who am I?

But then deep down I know that it wasn't so much what he meant. I've been getting almost nine long years of training to be in the present moment and why is that so hard? To be in the present moment, I mean.

I've ventured with him before on this subject, perhaps a few weeks earlier. In fact all the time, in all these eight plus years...

"Master, what is the state we are supposed to keep the mind in? The 'budhi' where we allow creativity to flow in at all times?" I queried.

"Pure consciousness is a higher state, Vijaya," he quipped.

That was the very lesson I was getting while trekking up and down the Kriya Babaji cave in Dunagiri last September even.

Gosh! I know Master is the most patient person on the entire planet and the most considerate, kind and compassionate. Sumi is equally that. After the 5 hours of test, Saandhi, Pugunes and I got treated to the most delicious Indian Pizzas ever. In my hunger I ate up Master's portion as well.

More than anything else in this adventurous and challenging trip to Kashmir May 30 to June 6 2015, I enjoyed the rendezvous with Master, Sumi and the rest of the teammates. It's perhaps the rarest of

opportunities to have your Guru as your closest friend, but it's possible in this century and I'm blessed.

I've asked him about truth before, how do I get to it? Why is it such a bewildering thing? Even the truth to "Who am I?"

His answer was exactly what all Masters, all great souls that have been on this planet have said:

"Be like a child and you shall see truth."

I have always loved that fascinating verse from the bible:

"...I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes!"

Just because one recites more phrases from the Upanishads, or more verses from the Bhagavad Gita doesn't make him a better candidate for self-realisation. One has to realise the truth — which is his own self.... and be like a child.

Why do governments measure achievements in monetary forms, they should start measuring how many of their citizens live truthful to themselves and they'd have a very advanced country indeed.

Some people think they are their US\$4 billion worth of jewellerys, some think they are their RM2 billion worth of luxury cars, some men think they are their "president or chief executive officer" posts or their many luxury homes and jets.... None of it are them. These are layers added unto them, making it more difficult to touch base with their real selves.

Whether one is any one of this, it doesn't make him or her better than any other person. We've been made of the same metal and the bravest and cleverest ever is the one who realises it.

Riches come and go, trips come and go, journeys come and go... lives come and go... are we nearer truth or not, that is the question for each human to ask. and.. "WHO AM I... really? **YM**

Dal Lake, Srinagar





Yoga Therapy: For Sluggish Liver

by Surya Tay

Sometimes called the engine of the body, the liver performs about 500 vital functions, most of which contribute to good health. As some of the important functions of the liver includes regulating most chemical levels in the blood, detoxification of the blood, protein synthesis, excretion of bilirubin,

hormones, cholesterol, drugs and production of bile, which helps in digestion of fats, sluggish liver is potentially the source of many ailments

Below are some yoga postures that will tone the liver and keep it healthy:



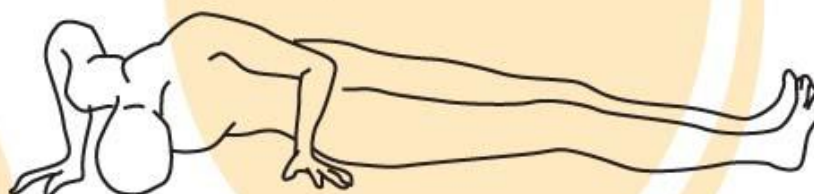
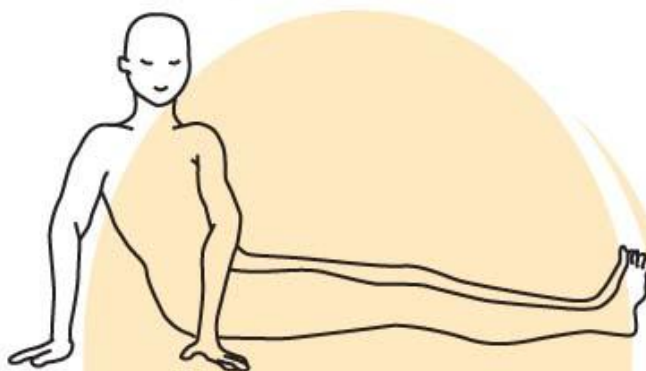
Paschimottasana



Meru vakrasana



Ardha padma padmottasana



Bhu namanasana



Meru Dandasana

Shatkarma (Cleansing Techniques):

1. Kunjal (Stomach Cleansing)
2. Laghoo shankhaprakshalana (Short Intestinal Cleansing)

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)

A

t Your Fingertips:

Kumari – Aloe Vera *by Lee Yan*

For more than 3,500 years, healers and physicians have touted the benefits of this fragrant desert lily. There are about 200 species of aloe, but aloe vera, meaning (true aloe) in Latin, is considered the most effective healer. The leaf of the aloe contains a special gel or emollient that is used extensively in cosmetics and skin creams. Aloe gel is regarded as one of nature's best natural moisturisers. The juice is bitter and extracted for medicinal use.

Queen Cleopatra regarded the gel as a fountain of youth and used it to preserve her skin against the ravages of the Egyptian sun. The Egyptians were also believed to have used the aloe plant in their embalming process. Aloe has been used at least 2,000 years by the Chinese, who call aloe vera "Lu Hui". In India it is widely known as Ghrit Kumari, or just commonly as Kumari (Young Maiden), and in Ayurveda it is a very useful herb for balancing all three doshas, or biological humours.

Aloe vera leaf is composed of three layers:

1. An inner clear gel that contains 99% water and the rest is made of glucomannans, amino acids, lipids, sterols and vitamins. It is highly effective in treating all kinds of skin wounds, burns and disorders.
2. The middle layer of latex, which is the bitter yellow sap, contains anthraquinones and glycosides. This part of the leaf is effective in gastrointestinal disorders and is a strong laxative.
3. The outer thick layer called rind protects the inner parts.

Variety of Aloe

Aloe vera chinensis and Aloe Barbadensis are mainly being used as Kumari in India. Aloe vera contains 75 potentially active constituents: vitamins, enzymes, minerals, sugars, lignin, saponins, salicylic acids and amino acids. Its leaves also contain many phytochemicals, beneficial to our health.

Benefits for Skin

The gel contains properties that are specifically healing for the skin and mucous membranes. It enhances the quality of skin. Applying aloe vera gel to your face regularly will help to diminish the lines and wrinkles associated with ageing and loss of elasticity in the skin. This is due to the simple fact that aloe vera possesses excellent moisturising capabilities and contains both vitamin C and E, both of which are



known to be vital for healthy skin and also help to improve natural firmness, leaving your skin soft, supple and hydrated.

It is particularly helpful when applied on damaged skin. It aids in the healing of first-degree burns, sunburn, minor skin wounds and even painful shingles by relieving pain and reducing itching. The gel also provides an air proof moisturising barrier so that wounds do not dry out.

It can also be used topically to treat psoriasis, ulcers, eczema, seborrhoeic dermatitis and mouth ulcers. It is also one of the best ayurveda herbs for healing burns, scars, wounds and stretch marks.

Benefits for the Eyes

Aloe gel can be applied externally to the eye lids and around the eyes. It is very soothing for eye inflammation and eyelid swelling.

Benefits for Women's Health

Its bitter taste when consumed, stimulates and enhances women's reproductive system and tissues. It is useful to improve flow of menstrual fluid, which is impaired due to oja and catabolism of tissues. It also acts as uterine cleanser.

Kumari is a wonderful tonic for the female reproductive system. Its cooling and unctuous properties make it very effective for treating the hot and dry symptoms, especially for menopausal women. Kumari is recommended for those suffering from excessive pain during menstruation, such as stomach cramps, back pain, abdominal distension and to alleviate menstrual conditions for young girls. It is also beneficial as it improves ovulation chances and

is used in treating amenorrhea – absence of periods or decreased bleeding.

Internal Health

The gel of the inner portion of the leaf is a mild laxative as its bitter principle works via the liver to encourage the release of bile. This effect can help to regulate blood sugar diabetics and lipid levels in our blood.

It is a specific cooling and demulcent herb that directly clears the heat in our body and heals mucous membranes. Conditions such as hyperacidity, peptic ulcers, ulcerative colitis and any bleeding from the intestines can be improved.

It is also being used traditionally as a remedy for intestinal function and yeast infections as it has the ability to regulate bacteria levels in the intestines.



Aloe Vera for Heart

Aloe has blood thinning action. It is very useful against cholesterol. So, it is very useful in treating atherosclerosis (blood vessels clogged with clot and fat deposition).

Tips and traditional usage of Aloe

Aloe vera for constipation

To relieve constipation, take 10 grams of pulp and make into paste, add with 2 grams of rock salt, mix well and boil to evaporate water content. Then administer in a dose of 3 to 6 grams, once a day.

External application of aloe vera pulp

The leaf pulp is useful to heal burn wounds, boils, acne, blisters and allergic skin disorders. Its pulp is added with turmeric powder and heated for a minute and this is applied externally.

The same paste can be applied over the mouth ulcers two or three times a day.

Oil prepared with Aloe vera, in sesame oil or olive oil base, is very useful against diaper rashes.

Aloe vera for Asthma

Aloe vera leaf is heated on burning charcoal, cuticle is removed and pulp is scraped and squeezed in cloth to get the juice. One teaspoon of this juice is added with two drops of ghee and 4 drops of honey and licked hourly to relieve the attack of breathlessness and wheezing.

Aloe vera for eye redness and burning sensation

2 grams of above purified (dry roasted) alum powder is mixed with 20 grams of Aloe vera pulp and tied into two packs in clean pieces of cloth. These cloth packs are tied on eyes and kept overnight while sleeping. They are removed the next morning. By this, eyes become clear, vision improves, redness and burning sensations get subsided.

Aloe vera for diabetes:

Five phytosterols of aloe vera have been identified with anti-diabetic activity.

Aloe vera has been clinically proven for anti-diabetic property. It is a good antioxidant and it maintains healthy structure of the blood vessels. Both of these are very vital in diabetic care. A diabetic patient often suffers from blood vessel-related disorders and is in need of antioxidant. Hence, aloe vera is a very useful herb in diabetes management.

Caution:

External application of Aloe vera may sometimes cause allergies, so it is advised to test on a small part of the skin first. It can also lead to diarrhea, hence regulated consumption is recommended. Oral consumption of Aloe vera is not recommended during pregnancy due to stimulation of uterine contractions. In breastfeeding mothers, it may sometime cause gastrointestinal issues to the infant.



NSR Kumari is produced with whole aloe leaf, dried and in powdered form. For more information on NSR Kumari or other herbs and oils please contact us at **03-7724 1072** or email us at nsrcentre@gmail.com. Website: www.nsrcentre.com

Avidya (lack of spiritual understanding) is the cause of the false identification of the seer with the seen.

We have a lack of understanding that keeps us trapped. We confuse our true self (the seer) with the objects that are seen. It is not entirely our own fault. Our parents share some of the blame. So do their parents and so on. In fact, all of our ancestors share some blame in this eternal error. It started so long ago and has yet to be resolved.

One of my favourite quotes is from Rousseau. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains". This tells you how widespread this problem of false identification is. We are born perfect. Perfect beings who happen to reside in this body for a finite amount of time. However, it does not last. When we watch small children interacting with the world, we intuitively get a sense that they are perfect. It is because they have not been given an identity by their parents, society and culture. Sure they may have a name but it is still new. It has not become a part of them yet. God bless our parents, they really mean no harm but in fact they have enslaved us. They have given us a name. That name pertains to this body and mind only. How can a name pertain to a soul that you cannot see or touch? They have given us a name and they begin to use it. Over time, the name begins to stick and we begin to identify this body and mind with that name. We are in chains.

Then we go to school. Society takes our only form of identification, which is our name, and expands on it. Now we are not just trapped by our own body/mind, we are trapped by everyone else's too. Society then proceeds to assimilate all of us. It makes us think the same. Act the same. React the same. Woe unto the person who sees through the game and doesn't want to play. He/she will be forced to play it. What if I taught my kids that the sky is not blue? This is a fact you know? The sky is not blue at all. The most we can say is it has the appearance of being blue but it is not blue. Anyway, what if I taught my kids this truth? They will go to school and fail. Their failure will cause them to be an outcast from society and the rest of their life is ruined. You see how it works? Even something that is true will be considered false if it goes against what society has deemed acceptable. We are in chains.

Then as we grow older we are given the heaviest chains of all — Religion. We are told that we are a part of a certain group that has certain beliefs and follows certain rules. At least it is better if they can tell us why we follow certain rules or practise certain rituals. Most of them cannot because they do not know themselves. Religion has become a dead, robotic ritual that we do, not because we understand, but because we are told to. All the while, we are given chains upon chains to carry around. It is really some burden. No wonder we can never have peace. Who can be peaceful? The only thing on our minds is how heavy these chains are and wishing we could get rid of them.

We can, but first we have to acknowledge that there must be something more to what we have been taught all these years. Look around. Since the beginning of time has man really done anything good to his fellow beings, to the animals, to the planet? Surely anyone can see that there has to be more to life than this? That is the start. The questioning is the start. Question everything. Be inquisitive about everything. Go with your gut feeling and see where it leads you.

Do not listen to those who blindly follow everyone else. This journey takes a person with guts. It takes someone who is willing to turn around and go against the flow of culture, tradition and religion that pushes us one way even if we do not want to go. Be strong. Have faith in your teacher. Keep moving forward so that we can break these chains that we have been given. We did not ask for them. They were thrust upon us. Since we did not ask, we have every right to get rid of them as we see fit. Now is the time to use a different perspective and see things as they really are, even if the truth hurts or makes us uncomfortable. It is time to take a stand. **YM**

Eco's Echoes:

Neuroplasticity and Yoga – Part 1

by Ravin. S

"Your work is to discover your world and then with all your heart give yourself to it." - Buddha

Life is a penance, and so sanctify. Our consciousness plays the ultimate role throughout the past, present and future, and also in the choice of our health, living environment and the space we are living in. We change the subtle energies within and around us with every thought, action and emotion. This shows that the universe is just a projection of events that are happening in response to our actions. It gives nothing less than direct access to every possibility that we could ever pray for and believe in, deeply.

And "YES", the moment we inhaled for the first time, we were charged with the power to translate the possibilities of our minds into the reality of the world. To fully awaken our potential, it requires a subtle change in the way we think of ourselves. Though knowing this, due to some reasons, most of us unconsciously surround and fill ourselves up with all those that we don't want.

This writing is dedicated to those who have been mourning for years and those whose lives have been disturbed by deep wounds of unexpected tragedies. It is for those who have lost their loved ones, those suffering separations or repetitive failures after attempting to better their lives or those who feel that everything has ended for them and there is no further hope to rise and shine again.

There is something we need to do in the mind and there is something we need to do from the heart. Once we understand this, we can take charge of LIFE.

What challenges are there that can't be overcome? What ailments can't be cured and what situation can't be enhanced if we are able to tap into the force and change the quantum blueprint where all of these things come from?

Neuroplasticity has the answer.

The science of neuroplasticity states that the human brain has the ability to create new neural pathways. What does that mean? It means:

The possibility for new life EXISTS!

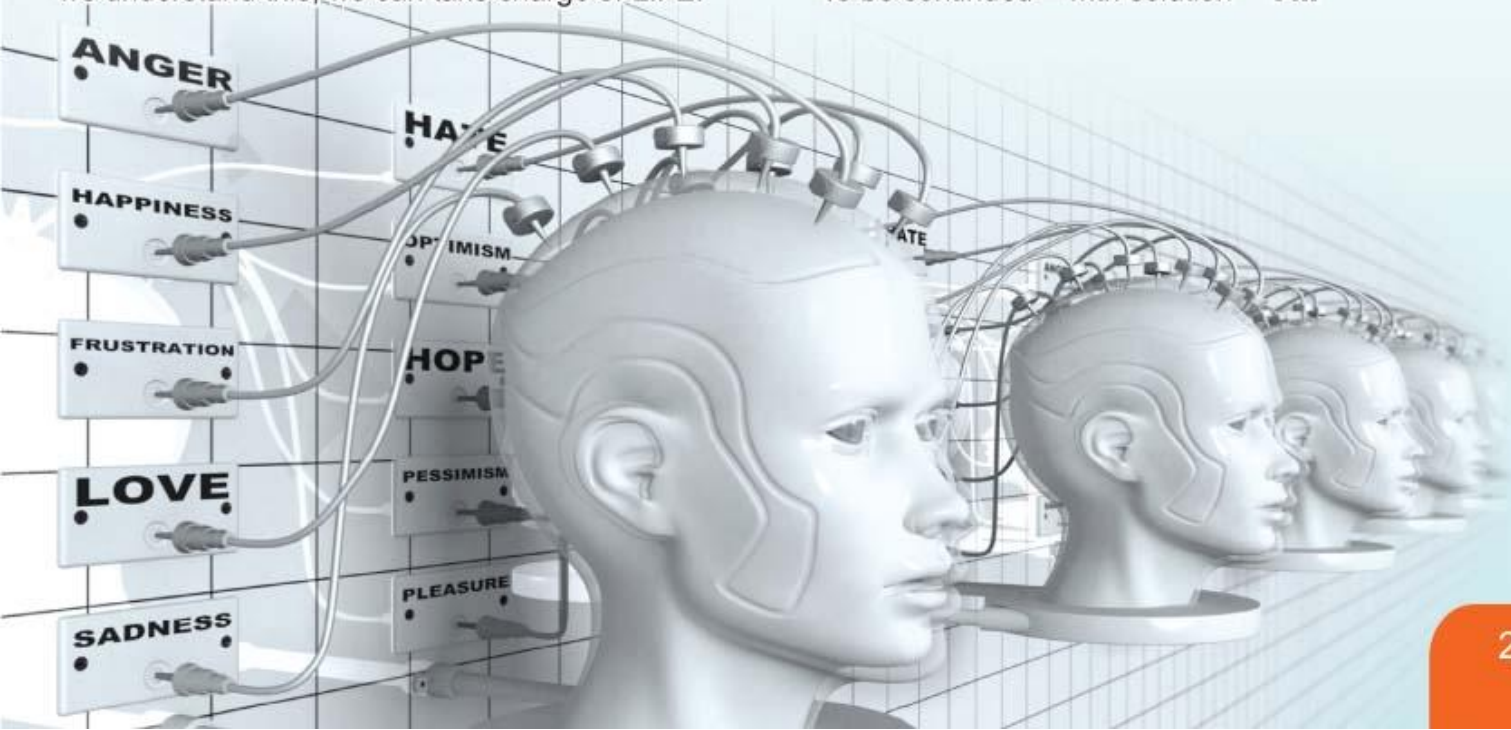
The possibility to become new human EXISTS!

The possibility to create new consciousness EXISTS!

The existing neural pathways will heal and disappear if left on their own. Nothing special needs to be done to fill the existing river of neural pathways. We just need to make a dam and divert the water there. The existing pattern of thinking will then "dry up" or disappear automatically.

The field of neurophysiology says that engram (engraved memory in your brain) creates mental neural pathways in the brain like rivulets in sand that allow water to flow in certain patterns. Each time we react in certain ways, for example when we get angry, we are strengthening that pathway. The more frequently we react in the same way, the more frequently we are strengthening that particular engram. If we habitually fall sick due to stress or fear, then we are actually strengthening the engram of falling sick.

To be continued – with solution **YM**



Inner Insights: Life-Changing Experience *by N.R.*

I got to know about the yoga programmes at MAYI Yoga Academy as I was surfing the internet. I was looking for a course that would help me improve my health, something that does not involve medication, as I was tired of that. For many years doctors had been giving me cortisone inhalers, pills after pills for my stomach as I had severe pain and sometimes to the extent that I was not able to even drink water. I also had a knee injury since I was 17 and it has been bothering me since then. All this pain would cause more stress and this stress would cause more pain... it was tiring to go on like this.

The part of the world which I come from, yoga is not a known activity. In fact I had never heard of it before. When I came to Malaysia, I befriended a few friends who practise yoga and they explained benefits of the practices to me. However, I thought to myself, "How can yoga solve medical problems? This doesn't make sense!" But then I was so desperate that I decided to try it anyway. So I went online and started looking for the best institutions available in Malaysia to teach yoga. I settled with this institution as it is accredited in Malaysia.

When I first came to register, I did not know what yoga was, I didn't do any background research and had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I just had this strong feeling that I have to do this. I decided that I will not go step by step, I will just dive straight in, so I signed up for a 5-day intensive instructors course. It was a crazy step but I knew I had to do it.

On the first day of the International Yoga Instructor Course (IYIC) I felt like I was the odd one out. Every other student had done yoga for at least 4 years and some for many more years! Everyone seemed so flexible during the sessions but I was struggling to do the simplest movements. As time went by I started realising

that yoga is not an exercise, rather it's a method of learning how to unite the mind, the body and the breath. This gave me more confidence even though in terms of flexibility I seemed to have a long way to go, the trainer was very patient and understanding and told me to take breaks whenever I felt necessary. It was such a supportive and nice environment that my feelings of insecurity faded away.

At the end of those 5 days, I felt as if I was a different person. My knee pain had gone down to half, I felt my breathing was deeper and therefore I felt fresher! I didn't need much sleep anymore as I would wake up a few hours earlier than usual to practise my yoga and start a day full of energy. I also realised that even the way I looked at things was different. I looked at things more positively and with more hope.

A few months have passed and now my knee pain has disappeared. I can eat and drink anything that I like without pain, and all the other minor pains like shoulder and back, all have disappeared, as if I have moved into a new body, a more strong and fresh one. The frequency of my visits to my doctor has decreased - instead of once every 2 weeks to once every 3 months or even more!

Yoga is not a magic potion that just cures all ills, but it's a way of life, once we learn to live a balanced life, to eat healthy, to breathe deeply, to stretch our muscles, to think positively and contribute to society, all these things together will make things fall into place. Yoga is about living a coherent life, a life that is holistic and complete materially and spiritually.

Now I am attending the Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course as well. I feel that yoga must be taught to everyone from an early age so that it becomes a habit and a way of life. This is how I will be contributing to every society that I live in. **YM**

Inner Insights: Yoga – My Breath, Body and Mind Experience

by Kavi Vitya

It all began in December 2013 — the day I had the shock of my life after seeing a photograph of myself. I noticed that I had grown tremendously huge and the realisation completely stressed me out. Then I started to search for a solution. I've always been interested in Yoga and even seeing people performing the poses was an inspiration. Rumi's words were ringing in my ears when a good friend of mine coincidentally told me about her enrolment into a yoga class in Bangsar, which was to commence in January — "What you seek, is seeking you".

I always wondered if yoga could help me to reduce weight because my gym instructor had told me that yoga is only a flexibility training. I put the thought aside and followed my heart which said, "Hey Vitya, why don't you try? No harm in trying as many have benefited from it". So I enrolled into the monthly yoga sessions at MAYI Yoga Academy.

I could feel some differences after joining the classes. I felt more energised and light not just physically but also in the mind. That is when I realised that yoga is a combination of body and mind. I subsequently signed up for the annual membership programme and started being more consistent in the practice. As I'm doing the postures, I slowly learnt to take control of my body and engage my muscles. I felt like I'm the master of my body and I gradually learned to be more comfortable with it and accept it as it is. This helped me to progress by the day.

Life has certainly never been the same since. I became more cheerful, happy and calm. By learning and practicing the art of being centred and calm in any situation, I've learned to manage agitations and stresses in a proper way — via meditation and pranayama. The techniques helped me to focus better in work and daily life. This was immediately noticed by family members and friends who mentioned it to me.

There were days I could not go through without using tissue papers, due to sinusitis. The doctor gives so much of medicines that I usually end up feeling weaker by the day. Since I was already looking for an alternative solution, I enrolled into the Jala Neti workshop, which is a nasal cleansing technique that could help ease my condition. In the workshop, I learnt the Jala Neti technique, which helped to clean my nose without any pain. Surprisingly, it helped to clear all the phlegm from my sinus passage and my

breathing improved tremendously. With Jala Neti, I also incorporated the Kapalhati pranayama technique. The positive effects of the practices were noticeable within one week, and within a month, there was no need for me to be on medication anymore! Amazing isn't it? These experiences motivated me to deepen the yogic practices and I enrolled into the International Yoga Instructor Course (IYIC) conducted by Master Manisekaran.

IYIC is a life-changing experience — it's beyond description how I felt throughout the process. I met new people of different backgrounds during the course and had so much fun learning the asanas in different ways, for example we tried group yoga and partner yoga. We were also introduced to the 8 limbs of yoga and Patanjali yoga sutras to strengthen the practices. After being an instructor I managed to spread the awareness to my colleagues and to my family members. I'm glad I could share the benefits and the best part is, they told me they liked it too!

I'm inspired to teach yoga because I want everyone to benefit from the practice. This practice of breath, body and mind is not a rocket science it's a simple and joyful practice we can incorporate in everyday life. The moment we believe and start the practice, it will flow beautifully. There is no qualification to practice yoga you can be from any background, any age and any gender, yoga will accept you the way you are ☺. I bet you will enjoy it too! Wishing everyone good health and peace. Namaskar and OM. **YM**



Ayur Yoga: Beautiful Skin, Naturally

The history of cosmetics spans at least 6,000 years and is present in almost every society on earth. In fact, some argue that cosmetic body art was the earliest form of ritual in human culture, dating back over 100,000 years ago.

Needless to say, humans have had a preoccupation with beauty since the beginning of History.

With the advancement made in medicine and science, our beauty rituals have drastically changed over the last few decades. There is a new trend emerging though — going back to ancient recipes and natural ingredients. Having been passed from generation to generation for thousands of years, these practices have certainly stood the test of time and are now making a comeback.

Where modern medicine looks to topical agents or isolated extracts and supplements to maintain and improve skin health, Ayurveda takes a more holistic approach.

The root of any skin condition lies in the imbalance of the Doshas, or the Ayurvedic psycho-physiological principles. A person's Ayurvedic skin type can be Vata (air), Pitta (fire) or Kapha (earth) or even a combination of two or more of these doshas. Furthermore, lifestyle, diet, sleep and environmental factors can aggravate and cause imbalances to the doshas as well. Hence a good place to start is to identify the current dominant dosha in the skin to treat it.

Vata Skin

The Vata skin type generally tends to be thin, dry, rough and flaky. The capillaries are usually more visible due to the thinness of the skin; and the lips and nails are paler due to poor circulation. Vata skin types are at risk of premature ageing due to decreased moisture levels and a lack of nourished tissues.



Foods for Vata

Nourishing food that is easy to digest helps ease the burden on Vata's not-so-strong digestive fire. Warm, nutritious and moist foods such as whole grains, warm milk and cooked veggies do well for Vata types. Ginger also increases the metabolism and improves Vata's digestion.

Herbs for Vata

Vata types are constantly on the move, taking on too many activities and spreading themselves too thin. Ashwaganda helps to ground Vata by reducing excessive mental activity and increasing the absorption of nutrients in the gut, making skin look younger and less wrinkled.

Pitta Skin

Pitta skins are usually ruddy or red, sensitive to sun exposure and burn easily. High levels of Pitta result in skin rashes, acne, psoriasis and inflammatory skin conditions. As a result, Pitta skins need to cool down the skin.

Foods for Pitta

The excessive heat generated by Pitta evaporates water from skin at a higher rate. As such, foods with high water contents are best suited to Pitta types, helping them to replenish and rehydrate. Sweet, watery fruits such as melons, ripe mangoes and pears are very beneficial. Coconut oil and rose petal jam are also excellent in reducing skin inflammation and heat.

Herbs for Pitta

Neem is one of the most powerful herbs for purifying the blood and reducing Pitta. It is

detoxifying, anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-parasitic, thus a wonderful herb for both oral use and topical application for any skin issues.

Kapha skin

When kept in balance, Kapha skin types are the most beautiful with plump, glowing skin that ages slowly. But when kapha is aggravated, it produces a buildup of toxins, which results in oily skin, large pores, a dull and clammy complexion and possibly skin growths. As such, the main focus to keep Kapha skin in check is to provide efficient removal of toxins.

Food for Kapha

Kapha types tend to have the slowest digestion, which is what puts them at risk for toxic buildup, as incomplete digestion results in the production of Ama or toxins. Spicy, warming foods such as chilli and ginger help to stimulate the digestion.

Herbs for Kapha

When taken as an oral supplement, turmeric helps to naturally move the lymphatic fluids in skin-associated lymphatic tissue. This supports healthy cellular micro-circulation and the optimal function of skin — just what is needed for Kapha skin types. □

Try these home remedies for a healthy and natural way to improve and maintain the health and beauty of your skin. If you would like to know more, contact any of our AyurYoga centres for a free skin consultation, a personalised skin care regime or to know more about our facials and skin care packages to achieve beautifully smooth and glowing skin naturally. **YM**

Stepping into the adolescent years is like venturing into a new territory. Growing teens are constantly subjected to increased physical, mental and emotional demands.

The increase of social networking outside the family has quickly become a test for them to prioritise their time between studies and social relationships. They are starting to get a taste of responsibility for their own decisions and judgements, their ability to discern good from bad, and the self-control to refrain from destructive peer pressures. All these seem like a whirlpool of responsibilities which have suddenly landed on their shoulders out of nowhere.

The academic standards which have become increasingly stringent add further stress onto teens who are in the midst of managing the evolving physical, mental and emotional development. There is no denying that the education system plays an important role in the development of humanity. Yet, it is the education of the mind and heart that sustains humanity. Many of us find it challenging to discipline the mind and to manage our emotions. The world offers plenty of good things which nurture us. However, the existence of these good things will all be in vain if we are not aware of them and/or are unable to assimilate them. The constant bombardment of external stimuli have somewhat gotten us habituated to gearing our awareness to the external surrounding and cause a depletion in inner awareness. But it is only with an aware mind that the knowledge and wisdom gained from our interaction with the society and the surrounding can in turn be developed and utilised for a greater purpose.

Sports activities are unavoidable for all school-going teens. The schools' curriculum requires all students to participate in some sort of sports throughout their school year and this can become challenging to teens whose muscles are



not well developed to meet the physical demands of competitive or recreational sports, or whose minds are constantly dissipated and unable to focus on the sports and tasks at hand. The awkwardness of their performance due to uncoordinated mind and body movements may lead to embarrassment and low self-esteem.

All the issues mentioned above can be managed through the practices of Yoga. Apart from the well-known yoga asana practices, the yogic practice of mindfulness is highly important for the growing teen. Mindfulness is the ability to attend to the present moment in a calm and peaceful manner, without being judgemental of the self or the situation.

As parents and educators, it is important for us to understand that teens too are exposed to the damaging effects of stress. Teaching mindfulness to teenagers is equivalent to giving them the tool that helps them sharpen their awareness and manage their moods and emotions. Teens are learning to cope with the challenges amidst the confusion set forth by the rapid changes of

physical and physiological developments and adults cannot be by their sides, constantly breathing down their necks telling them what to do or how to behave. Such actions will only lead to turning off of interest to interact and confide in adults in things that matter to them.

As puberty sets in, teens are naturally thrown into a diverse range of fluctuating emotions. They may not even be able to understand their emotions and reactions to certain situations, and are equally frustrated as their parents and mentors who need to communicate with them. Here, adults need to understand the reason to teens' sudden outburst or seemingly irrational behaviours which are often, at this stage, labelled as being immature – understand that their brains are still growing and developing and this yet-to-be complete physical development of the brain's development is chiefly responsible for much of the cognitive and emotional immaturity displayed.

Teaching mindfulness through meditation is the most effective way for teens to regain their calm and composure to deal with everyday stresses and to make sense of their own physical, mental and emotional development. The great sense of self awareness is most crucial for them to positively understand the self and to interact with the society. It's essential for teens to nurture good qualities from within themselves in order for these to be carried on to adulthood where they are required to make comprehensive and sound decisions daily.

The practice of meditation has been reportedly shown to increase grey matter in the portion of the brain responsible for self-awareness and compassion, and researchers have found that mindfulness meditation can actually change the structure of the brain in such a way that it heightens learning and memory, and decreases the brain cell volume in the amygdala, which is responsible for fear, anxiety and stress – the conditions that teens are facing incessantly. In short, meditation improves the overall psychological well-being. With this, apart from the apparent benefits for the teens, we can surely imagine that even the family dynamics would improve as the communication and relationship between the members improve.

Introducing mindfulness and meditation practices to teens demands adult's participation as well (particularly parents and educators/mentors). It is more than enrolling teens into meditation classes and waiting for the benefits to manifest. Surely, teens who do the practices will display significant positive changes. Yet, for a long-lasting and optimal result, adults must also lead by example. If we so much as demand an ounce of calmness from our teenagers, we must first display a tonne of it. We need not paint a smile on our faces like of that on a clown's. But we should surely demonstrate our ability to manage stress by responding and managing it appropriately where it's due, rather than reacting to it. This applies more so when we are interacting with them. By doing so, we are showing them that emotions, stresses and anxieties ARE indeed manageable, and that we respect them as a growing adolescent who can portray their individuality in a well-mannered way.

Teens who undergo mindfulness trainings and meditation practices gradually become more attuned to themselves and society, and are more able to manage their emotions and communicate. This group of teens are like the first tile of the dominoes, which passes on this amazing aura to their peers.

Just as exercise transforms our bodies, meditation transforms our brains and mind. Ensure that your teenager gets the wholesome yoga practices! **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 Facebook: SYK Superyogakids. Contact: Brickfields (03.2260 5322), Bangsar (03.2282 4980), Damansara Utama (03.7726 6682) and Selayang Utama (03.6127 5693).



Marjari-Asana (Cat Stretch Pose)



Step by Step:

1. Sit in vajrasana.
2. Raise the buttocks and stand on the knees.
3. Lean forward and place the hands flat on the floor beneath the shoulders with the fingers facing forward.
4. The hands should be in line with the knees, the arms and thighs should be perpendicular to the floor.



5. The knees may be slightly separated so that they are well aligned under the hips.
6. This is the starting position.
7. Inhale while raising the head and depressing the spine so that the back becomes concave.
8. Expand the abdomen fully and fill the lungs with the maximum amount of air. Hold the breath for 3 seconds.
9. Exhale while lowering the head and stretching the spine upward.
10. At the end of the exhalation, contract the abdomen and pull in the buttocks.
11. The head will now be between the arms, facing the thighs.

12. Hold the breath for 3 seconds, accentuating the arch of the spine and the abdominal contraction.
13. This is one round.

Benefits:

- Improves the flexibility of the neck, shoulders and spine.
- Gently tones the female reproductive system, giving relief from menstrual cramps and leucorrhea.
- May be safely practiced during pregnancy. Forceful contraction of the abdomen, however, should be avoided.



Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Vegetarian Cream Cheese Fruit Tarts



The Crust (can be done in advance and store in container)

Ingredients

- 170 g butter in room temperature
- 50 g icing sugar (sifted)
- 290 g of wheat flour (sifted)
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla essence
- Tart moulder

Method

1. Beat the butter with icing sugar and then add the vanilla essence.
2. Once the butter and icing is creamy and fluffy, slowly add one scoop of flour and mix with spatula.
3. Continue adding the flour until you get a nice, soft dough that can be moulded.
4. Apply butter to grease the mould then shape the dough into it.
5. Bake it with the temperature setting 170 oC about 20-25 minutes.
6. Then let it to cool.

The Filling

Ingredients

- 150 g of cream cheese (room temperature)
- 50-100 g icing sugar (desired amount)
- Vanilla essence
- Fruits (Desired fruits)

Method

1. Using an electric mixer, beat all the ingredients together until nice and fluffy.
2. Use piping bag to fill the cream cheese into it.
3. Serve and enjoy!!! Happy trying!

SCHEDULE OF COURSES: JUL - NOV 2015

JULY

6/7/2015	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
12/7/2015	SU	Manipuraka Workshop
12/7/2015	SU	Urdhva Retas Workshop
13/7/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
19/7/2015	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
24/7/2015	BSR	Workshop: Introduction to Chakra - the Wheels of Life
20-24/7/2015	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
25/7/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
26/7/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
26/7/2015	DU	Workshop: AyurYoga Youthful Living
27/7/2015	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

AUG

2/8/2015	BSR	Advanced International Yoga Instructor Course
2/8/2015	SU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
7/8/2015	DU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
9/8/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
15/8/2015	BSR	Partner Yoga Instructor Course
15/8/2015	DU	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
16/8/2015	DU	Workshop: Shatkarma (The 6 Cleansing & Detox Techniques)
23/8/2015	DU	Workshop: The Fine Art of Small Talk
23/8/2015	TTDI Park	Yoga in the Park: Yoga Therapy
23/8/2015	BSR	Workshop: Jala Neti
29/8/2015	BFS	Full Intestinal Cleansing - Practical Session
29/8/2015	SU	Full Intestinal Cleansing - Practical Session

SEPT

6/9/2015	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
6/9/2015	BSR	Workshop: Manage the Emotion of Anger
7-11/9/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
7/9/2015	DU	Silver Senior Yoga Programme (English/Chinese)
13/9/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
13/9/2015	DU	Precision & Alignment: Level 1 Practitioner
13/9/2015	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
20/9/2015	BSR	Workshop: Herbs That Heal - Natural Remedies at Your Fingertips
23-27/9/2015	Fraser's Hill	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course - Retreat
29/9/2015	SU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

OCT

1/10/2015	SU	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
3/10/2015	BSR	Dhyana (Meditation) Instructor Course
3/10/2015	SU	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
4/10/2015	SU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
4/10/2015	DU/BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advance
18/10/2015	BSR	Workshop: Anatomy & Physiology - the Body from Within
25/10/2015	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course

NOV

1/11/2015	DU	Manipuraka Workshop
1/11/2015	DU	Urdhva Retas Workshop
8/11/2015	TTDI Park	Yoga in the Park: Youthful Yoga
8/11/2015	BSR	Workshop: Partner with Precision - Movements with Awareness
9/11/2015	DU	Yoga Practitioner Short Course (English/Chinese)
15/11/2015	BSR	MAYI Graduation Ceremony 2015
20/11-1/12/15	Fraser's Hill	International Yoga Instructor Course- Foundation, Intermediate & Advance - Retreat

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

DHYANA (MEDITATION) INSTRUCTOR/PRACTITIONER COURSE

COMMENCES ON: 3RD OCT 2015 AT BANGSAR

THERE IS NO YOGA WITHOUT DHYANA

The journey of Yoga starts with the Asana (physical postures), moves into Pranayama (breath control) and finally culminates in Dhyana (meditation).
Otherwise there is a shallow sense of progress in Yoga.

A glimpse of what the course offers:

Meditation

- a guided explanation by Master Manisekaran

Now after closing the eyes the world of objects disappears, next would be awareness of posture, after some time posture becomes steady and comfortable and body feels disconnected from awareness.

Now the mental world is perceived; you learn to watch the mind and eventually, after a few moments of raw watching, awareness jumps behind the mental processes; who is watching this?

At this moment don't further condition the mind by saying anything, even saying "this is the 'I' or 'self'", just watch the watcher; again who is watching the watcher? When one can stop all notions and conditionings (including the conditioning of thinking of inner self connotations including 'I', 'self'), then only truth begins to reveal from within.

Thereafter one comes to the direct experience or at least has a glimpse of that which lies inside each one of us and one is convinced of the importance of guidance, reverence to the practice, sticking to the practice wholeheartedly and that spirituality is not dissociated with daily living and one can grow within without external spiritual labels.

Continue to dive within and realisation comes. That which is truly beyond: beyond your ideas, projections, yearnings, desires, and illusions (even of spirituality), starts to be revealed from within. In the beginning it would be vague, next confusing, then doubts may arise; but further diving deeper still produces clarity, satisfaction, peace, tranquillity; finally unparalleled bliss and attainment of realisation or liberation (moksha) becomes apparent as its own reality in the consciousness.

CONCLUDE THE YEAR WITH TWO YEAR-END EMPOWERING COURSES AT FRASER'S HILL

CONDUCTED BY ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING EXPONENTS OF YOGA,
MASTER MANISEKARAN

**KUNDALINI
KRIYA YOGA COURSE**
23TH - 27TH SEPT 2015



ATTAIN THE HIGHEST LEVEL
OF BRAIN FUNCTIONING
THROUGH THIS ANCIENT
YET EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

LEARN 20 KUNDALINI
KRIYA YOGA TECHNIQUES

BE INTRODUCED TO
IMPORTANT PRANAYAMA
(BREATHING TECHNIQUES)
& MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

* ACKNOWLEDGED BY PRACTITIONERS AS THE
ULTIMATE SELF-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME!

**INTERNATIONAL
YOGA INSTRUCTOR COURSE**
20TH NOV - 1ST DEC 2015



RELAX IN A DYNAMIC YET
HARMONIOUS ENVIRONMENT

LEARN THE ESSENTIALS OF YOGA
TAUGHT BY A YOGA EXPONENT

BE CERTIFIED BY M'SIAN ASSOC.
OF YOGA INSTRUCTORS

TEACH INTERNATIONALLY WITH
UTMOST SKILL & CONFIDENCE

* THE IYIC SYLLABUS IS APPROVED BY
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION M'SIA



Brickfields	3, Jalan Ang Seng 3, Brickfields, KL.	+603 2260 5322
Bangsar	81A (1st Flr), Jalan Bangsar, KL.	+603 2282 4980
Damansara Uptown	89A&B (1st & 2nd Flr), Jalan SS21/37, D'sara Utama, PJ.	+603 7726 6682
Selayang Utama	8-1 & 9-1, Jalan Paragon Utama, Selayang Utama, Bt Caves.	+603 6127 5693
website: www.mayiyogaacademy.com		email: yoga@mayiyogaacademy.com