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Oct - Dec 2012 ISSUE

The Complete
Asana

Stiram and
Sukham

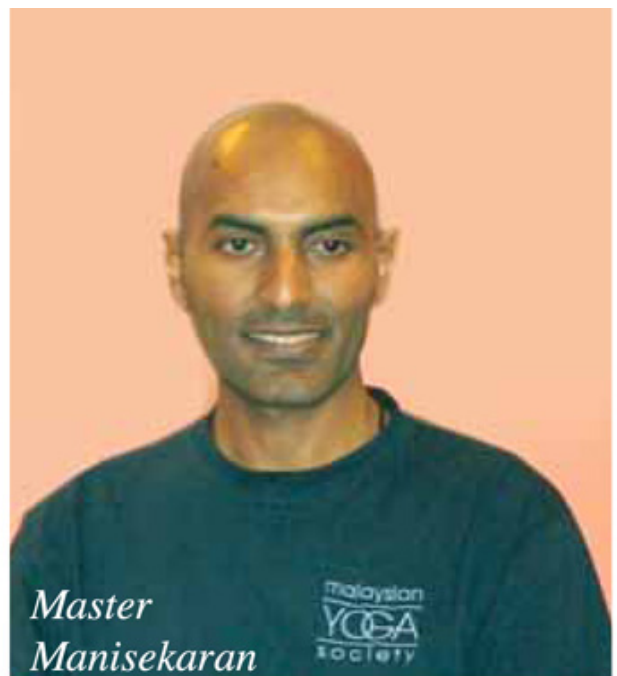


Message from Master Mani

The Malaysian International Yoga Competition brought back to mind many wonderful moments - the great joy of being part of this event and the sheer enthusiasm flowing from volunteers and participants. Every participating age group was enthusiastic and vibrant!

What we received were mixed comments from onlookers and also from the yoga fraternity. Most, as usual (being yogic), chose to see the actual positive and wonderful side of the project. They understood pragmatically how this project has helped thousands of children specifically and many adults generally to overcome their misconceptions and fear of yoga.

Throughout the modern history of yoga, it has been held in mysticism and recently giving the impression that it's only available to those of certain social status. Magazines have created a super niche effect of yoga



*Master
Manisekaran*

to the public. However the Malaysian International Yoga Competition (MIYC) has now set things back in order. Now everyone has witnessed that they too can practice yoga!

Let's herald in the flow of yoga to all segments of society. Let's all join hands to welcome the second coming of yoga after it first came into limelight about 2,500 years ago. This time around, yoga is going to heal the whole of society with its truth, purity and compassion.

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and Manisekaran Yoga***



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The Complete Asana

by Master Manisekaran

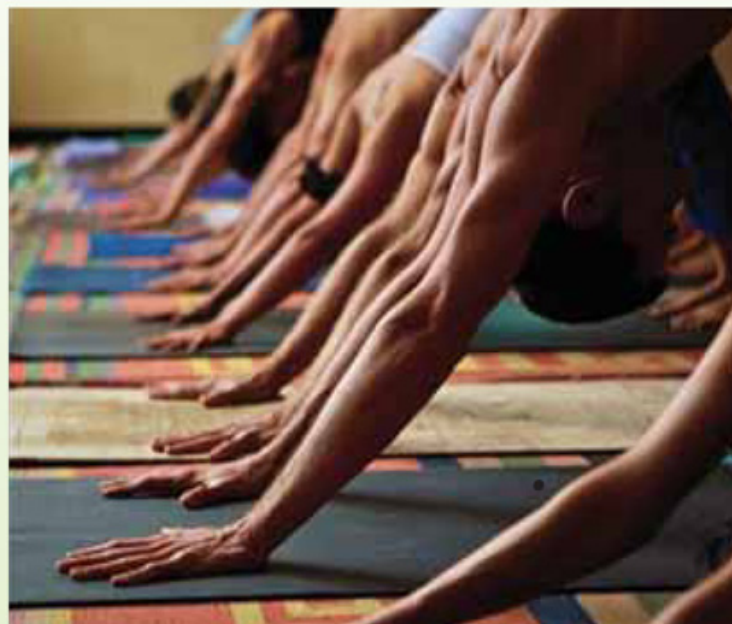
The concept of asana is many but not as many as the variety that it claims to have. There are reportedly 8.4 million asanas but these are mentioned as the potential state of the posture for nature and living things - all species. Asanas have also been categorised in the realm of the Gods. So it would be an understatement to say asana is complete by itself.

The practice of asana can be very meaningful especially if we bring it from nature, insects, animals, humans, super humans, and Gods. Gods here, meaning the Devas (the beings in higher realms). This is a yogic concept. You see, there was a time when communication of wisdom was through storytelling and on a mythical level, just as ancient Greece had Greek mythology .

Though the argument between the atheist yoga practitioner and the gnostic yoga practitioner has always been along this line but in the test of reality, both will find it hard to sustain their views, as both are not the objective of yoga. ..because neither is the answer to the question that yoga seeks.

Asana is part of one approach to yoga. There are many paths but asana is the most difficult. Most would deny this but in a scientific, logical and common sense analysis this can be easily and factually proven. It's tough to continue to wake up early in the morning and do the cleansing practices called Shatkarma, and then followed by the Asanas (yoga postures), Pranayama (yogic breathing practices) and then Dharana (yogic concentration), which finally leads to meditative states. Meditation is a state and it is brought upon by perfection of Asana, Pranayama and Dharana. You can't learn meditation. But you can naturally achieve it after perfecting the other 3 practices mentioned in the previous statement.

By building up a good habit of practicing asana we not only have the pathway open to higher states of awareness but also start to experience better health. Diseases slowly start to disappear, pains and aches dissolve and we become highly energetic. At the same time we also become more in control, calmer, relaxed and focused. Basically we regain our natural balance, or more precisely, we discover our true selves. It gives us such an exhilaration to know that we are actually good and wonderful! No more complexes, no more self pity , no more weaknesses, no more excuses and no more sorrow!



Practicing with the correct understanding is of the utmost importance as every single asana has to be accompanied with awareness of the breath. When to inhale, hold the breath, how long, how deep; when to exhale, hold the breath, how long? All these need Jnana (knowledge). We really need to rely on a very competent teacher, who also needs to be a serious practitioner and has the years behind him or her of serious, deep practice. Not only that, you need to study the characteristics of the teacher: Is there any proclamation of being special or worthy of worship? Are there any characteristic peculiarities that work against Ahimsa (non-harming)? If such traits are exhibited and are not helpful to you then best to find someone else to teach you!

The study, practice and experience of asana are really a lifetime undertaking. It takes years to feel the essence of asana working in your body and mind, yet it is worth every single effort that you invest in it.

Start with a high level and long term commitment, but also make it a hobby or a lifestyle change. Since it is healthy anyway, why not? Enthusiasm, correct objectives and realizing the benefits of yoga will go a long way in maintaining a steady practice.

Having all said, I wish YM readers a wonderful practical yogic life ahead and enjoy the fruits of good health, peace, success, wisdom and harmony. **YM**

Stiram and Sukham

by Sujatha Subramaniam

Stiram sukham asanam - The posture should be steady and comfortable

~ Patanjali (The Yoga Sutras)

Stiram, meaning steady and sukham, meaning comfort, pleasure. The quote above describes the asana as a posture that should be held steadily, and that would bring pleasure and comfort to the practitioner.

Many asanas versus a few asanas

In performing many asanas in a 1 hour session, there is no focus on what happens within the body, there is no awareness of the breath, no building on strengthening the connective tissues and muscles, no fluidity in moving in and out of the asanas. There is no time to experience stiram and sukham as the focus is on completing the asanas in an accelerated motion. It may also cause pain and injuries, as the body may not have stretched enough or have the strength to do some of the asanas correctly. The movements would also be jerky and the breathing would be erratic.

When there are fewer asanas, the opportunity for awareness of the body and breath is created. There is focus on the movement of the body as it moves fluidly in and out of the asanas. Stiram is achieved because the focus is on holding the asana, allowing the mind to focus on stretching and building the strength of the connective tissues and the muscles while inhaling and exhaling in a relaxed mode. Sukham is experienced when the body eases into an asana, where the body and mind is totally present, relaxed, communicating with each other and are at ease with that particular position.

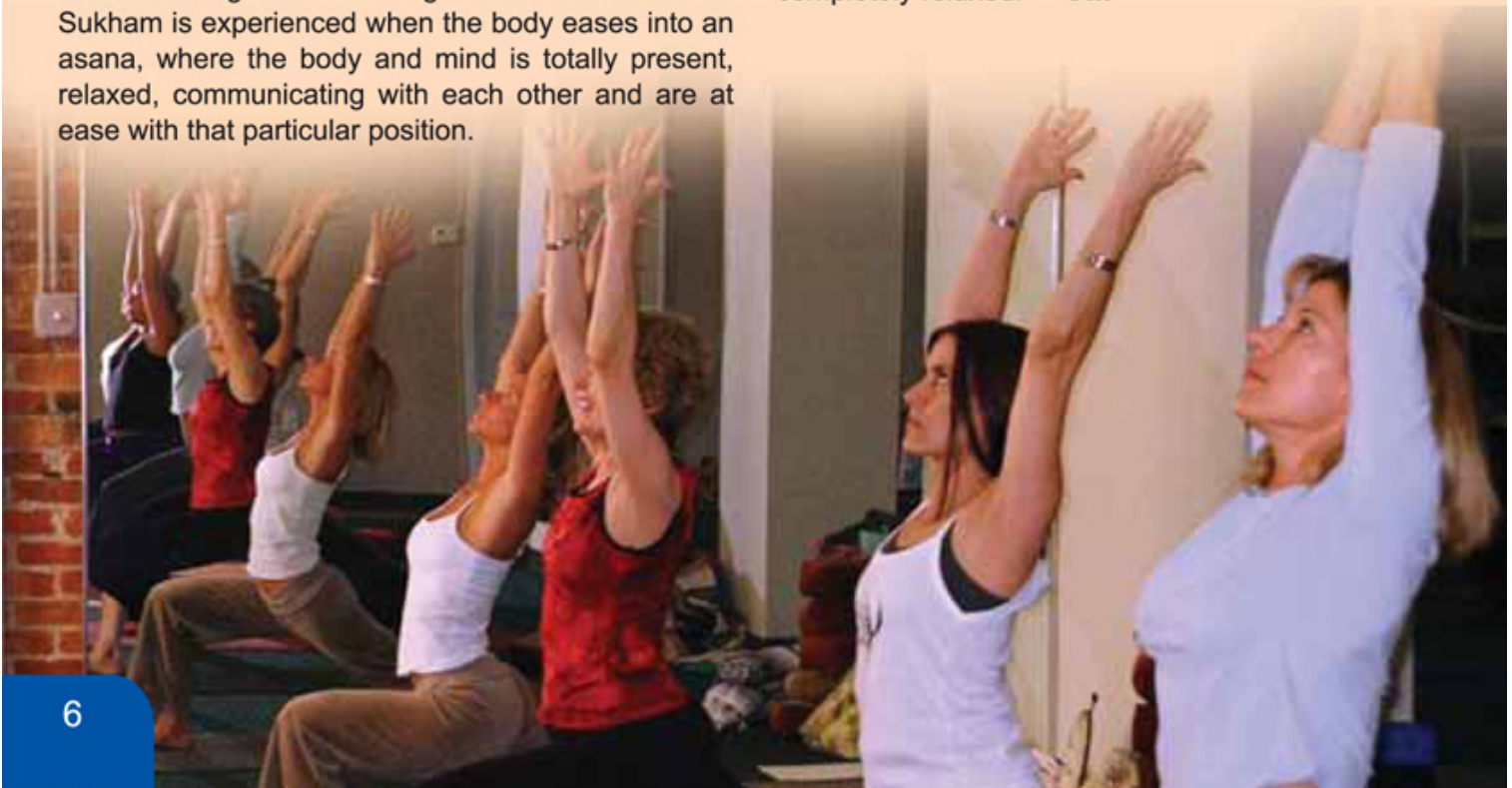
Many asanas versus a few challenging asanas

As above, with many asanas during a 1 hour session, it becomes more of an exercise of fast movement rather than building an awareness of the communication between body and mind.

When performing challenging asanas, in order to experience stiram, the body has to be strong enough to hold those asanas steadily. It is pointless to go into a challenging asana if you have not worked on strengthening the connective tissues and muscles.

Sukham is definitely not experienced here as the mind would be focusing on the aches and the pains of going into the asanas, while the breathing becomes inconsistent due to the inability of the mind to focus.

However, if the practitioner has been practicing yoga for some time, there is more confidence in their strength, motion and steadiness, an ability to focus their mind completely while going into an asana, thus experiencing stiram with no issues at all. And as they hold these asanas longer, the mind and the body experiences sukham. The breathing is calm, the mind is totally at ease and happy, and the body is completely relaxed. **YM**



The Knowledge of Prana

There are many movements propagating healing available and each have a specific benefit to mankind. However Prana Vidya encompasses all these benefits under a systematic knowledge of the fundamentals of the energy that forms the healing process itself. Can you imagine such a thorough knowledge? All throughout man's life, he searches to find the truth about healing, about life force (prana) and wanting to feel its magnificent power. Here in Prana Vidya, the knowledge of prana, we not only dive deeply into the science of prana but also understand it from the core, hence 'Vidya' - knowledge.

How to harness, channel, store, expand, develop, strengthen, multiply, and play with your life force? How to enjoy its sheer power and authority over life itself? All this and much more is in store for you in the Prana Vidya programme.

Prana Vidya as experienced by Kate Quah, a practitioner:

I have spent many years practicing yoga asanas and have always wanted to achieve a higher state of calmness and peace in my life. I would ardently pursue courses relevant to my yogic practices in hopes of experiencing divine transformation in my life. With my little knowledge of yoga, I was eager to bring my family into the practice but had always been met with cold response from my children. My teenage boys would rather choose the gym and build their six-packs muscles than sharing a yoga session with me. It was disheartening as a parent to see my children working on something that would bring more damage than good health. Nevertheless, I never stopped "yeh-yeh-yeh" about yoga with them.

I signed up for the Prana Vidya course 2 years ago which has given me an understanding and awareness of the various aspects of our psychic breath and psychic passages. This comprises breathing techniques and all forms of prana, the sole force that regulates the functioning of the body, and how we can channel this inherent energy within our own body to utilize it for healing purposes. Apart from healing for oneself, the course teaches various techniques to send energy to someone else in need of healing, even though he/she may be distance apart.

I started practicing Prana Vidya for my family and myself, then I realized that I am able to experience higher and different levels of energy within my body in my daily regimen. I learned how to meditate on my own life force with simple yet effective techniques. By practicing it on a regular basis, I am able to tune into an infinite supply of energy in the universe to gain vitality and relaxation that is extremely effective in



enhancing our wellbeing. It also complements my yoga and Kriya practices.

As time passed, friends began to regularly comment on my positive outlook and healthy well being. They would ask what I have been eating or doing to achieve an excellent state of health. I began to see phenomenal results when it came to healing my own body. My children started to show interest in yoga and began joining my practice sessions at home. We now share good interactions and bonding, within and beyond the family. My relatives and friends upon seeing this transition and harmony in my children, started to take up yoga. Far away relatives, whom we have not met for more than 30 years, wrote to me, wanting to meet up! My vibration is reaching out far and beyond! Projection of my energy of positive desires is coming back many folds to me.

I began to notice a free flow of events that I have always wanted, showing up in my life. I am attracting abundance to my life. All the above inspired me more to share my experience and practices with people. I learned to trust in myself and my inner wisdom. I enjoy success, good health, happiness, prosperity, nice relationships spiritually and more. My journey into the practice of Prana Vidya has given me the pleasure, satisfaction and nourishment in my life.

The Prana Vidya course is like a spring cleaning of the body and mind and it opens the door of our bio-plasmic body. With continued practice, I noticed increased concentration level, visualisation clarity and excellent willpower. This is a wonderful awakening of one's vital energy on the physical, mental and emotional levels.

Apart from opening up a new horizon in my life, Prana Vidya has also given me a deeper insight into the inherent force within me and enabled me to take charge of my life the way I want it. I have gained a powerful tool that not only transformed my life for better but also for all those around me. I feel like a "Doctor in the House" with an inner smile, of course! **YM**

EVENTS **Malaysian International Yoga Competition (MIYC) 2012**

– 31st August, a Day of Liberation *by Surya Tay*

Wasn't it just yesterday that we witnessed the first MIYC last year which coincidentally fell on the same day as "Bersih 2.0"?!

"I join to win, teacher..." 17 year old Gayu responded with an earnest smile and meaningful eyes, after I had finished my consoling speech to this group of teen students after MIYC 2011 concluded. Not that this particular poised young lady had batted an eyelid of disappointment for not taking any places in her category that year. I knew exactly what she meant. Gayu was not referring to seizing any of the amazing prizes or having a medal placed around her neck. She was referring to the winning spirit, the attitude that one has when she/he signs up to participate- to put in her/his personal best.

Inside my heart I was so proud of her performance anyway, especially admiring the gentle stillness that always exuded from this blossoming young yogini. Even if she did not turn upside down for the judges, I just loved the way she floats on her arms as she firmly lifts up into the Padma Mayurasana (Lotus Peacock) and back bending balancing on one leg to tenderly touch her toes to her forehead in the Natarajasana. Now, where did she learn all that from? ... Certainly not me! ... not when here I am still working out the secret of the "flowing with lightness" asana bit. Children and the child like young or adult, are full of surprising wonders when it comes to yoga asanas.

"Winning is not everything. Most importantly is that we did our best and have enjoyed the experience of

participation and ... emm... also building confidence, of course." I was rattling on earlier the duly thought over composed words of a yoga teacher who has to manage the few shaking heads of disappointed students, who had hoped to clinch one of the awesome prizes.

So once again in Kandiah Hall of Vivekenanda School, Brickfields, the very first venue of MYS Yoga Competition (5th May 2007, national level), we revisit as MIYC 2012. The warm woody ambience of this old school hall chock filled with buzzing participants and audience brought back memories. The wide stage was accommodating as a participant each from four different age group categories stepped up to take their place on a mat laid out side by side. Supporters clapped hard and cheered as they proceeded to display their five favourite asanas within the 4 minute limit. Breaths held whenever the odd one or two competitors stumbled and made their second chance qualifying attempt.

Outside the hall, throngs of sponsored school children participants were joining the unending queue to have their faces painted or hand stained with a decorative henna tattoo. For most of them, this was an exciting and unusual treat they were looking forward to since the announcements were made. Kind contributors of MYS had made it possible to ferry these lively children in bus loads from all corners of Klang Valley to the heart of K.L. Almost 200 in all!



Equally enthusiastic, were the adult participants from not just across country but spotted among the crowd were Thai, India, Iran and Japan nationals. The grounds of Vivekenanda School was alive with prana on this Merdeka Day. Could it possibly be also echoing the vibrations of the recently concluded Olympics?

For full story logon to:
www.malaysianyogasociety.org



Orphanage Visit *by Nirmell Jackson*

On 21st July 2012 MYS Yoga Sharing Group visited Rumah Kanak-Kanak W.P. in Kepong, and was greeted by curious faces of both the young and old. Mr. Vinoth, the caretaker, expressed appreciation for the offer of free yoga knowledge to their under privileged residents.

The importance of yoga practice was discussed with the children and they were guided through basic joints exercises. The children attentively responded to the yoga session facilitator's motherly, soft spoken instructions. Very soon they proved Master Manisekaran's words true about how natural balancing is for children. They could instantly follow most of the balancing poses taught and breezed through a myriad of balancing poses. Their faces gleamed with pride and happiness upon completing each asana. Yoga had quietly boosted the confidence of these young minds. One could tell when the silent children started talking and the lively ones became even louder!

When asked, "Why do we practice the Lion's Roar asana?" Some of the creative delightful replies were; "So that our tongues may become longer?", "To make our voice louder!", "To make our speech better!"

The smiles and sparkle in their eyes were sure signs that they loved the session. We then played the Mandala Drawing game and the end result was a colourful beautiful mandala creation!

Meantime the elderly residents of this home were also taught some basic joints exercises in another hall. Wonderful vegetarian lunch treat was served, and treasured gifts were presented before the MYS Sharing Group took leave. We thanked the caretaker for their kind hospitality.

The words of Mother Theresa seemed to echo, "The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved" and I am glad that good people like Mr. and Mrs. Vinoth are doing their part for the society in taking care of these children and elderly in need. **YM**



Cyber Kids & Teens *by Mogana*

Karma Yoga for children and teenagers is one of MYS's main missions. Exposing them to the good qualities of yoga is like sowing seeds into fertile soil, which will produce healthy and fruitful trees. Yoga will help children and teenagers be physically and mentally healthy, and lead a stress-free life.

On the 15th of August 2012, the MYS team was invited to SMK Cyberjaya to conduct a 2-hour yoga class for about 60 students. Initially there was reluctance to follow instructions, but they soon warmed up and began to enjoy, have fun and discover that yoga is not just about twisting and turning the body into difficult postures.

We commenced with joints exercises and progressed into intermediate asanas. Some braved themselves to come up to the stage to showcase their best asanas while the others followed suit. The asana session concluded with 15 minutes of yoga nidra and a simple breathing practice.

Students were then divided into groups to share the problems and challenges of being teenagers. It was a delight to find them very cooperative and opening up

to share their problems. The discussions allowed us to view matters from their perspective.

The highlight of the day was when some of the teenagers came forth to give their feedback. One of the boys commented that when such sessions are conducted, students who would normally waste their time chatting or loitering were able to spend 2 full hours of beneficial activity. Now, they are actually looking forward to participate in the next MYS activity. Every school and child that has crossed our path leaves different impressions on us as instructors. We learn that the style of teaching differs according to the situation. Hence while we teach to learn, we also learn to teach. LOVE, SERVE AND SHARE. **YM**



Yoga at National Sai Convention *by Mogana*

MYS was given the opportunity to conduct a yoga session during the National Sai Convention 2012 at the Glory Beach Resort, Port Dickson on the 11th of August 2012. About 1,200 Sathya Sai devotees from all over the country participated in the retreat. The retreat theme, 'Honouring Parents, Strengthening Family for Healthy Body and Healthy Family' was timely, in this period of rising divorce cases, broken families, baby dumping and other social ills.

We were greeted by a huge crowd in their traditional attire and wondered how to teach yoga in such a limited space. But the quick-thinking MYS team members soon came up with asanas that were suitable for everyone.

Anything is possible as long as there is a good intention behind it... This is the lesson that I learnt from the experience: yoga at anytime, anywhere and by anyone. Thanks to MYS yoga instructor Mr Navanesan's wonderful communication skills, everyone was happy and enjoyed each asana with laughter and applause throughout the session...

It was a wonderful experience to be a part of the community service group which was taking steps to create awareness. I always believed that there is no limitation in Karma Yoga: serve, serve and serve without expectation. **YM**



A

sana Of The Month

Chaturanga Dandasana

(Four-Limbed Staff Pose)



Step by Step:

- 1) Start by getting onto your knees and placing your palms on the floor (on the spots below your shoulders as in Marjari asana).
- 2) Extend your legs to the back keeping the spine as straight as possible with your arms in fully extended position, shoulder width apart.
- 3) Lower yourself slowly to the mat until the elbows line up horizontally with the spine.
- 4) Look forward to keep the spine and the legs in a straight line.

Tips:

Engage the core abdominal muscles by tucking the navel in and up, and tuck the tailbone in to prevent a collapse of the lower back.

Increase the use of the inner arm muscles further by tucking the elbows into the sides of the body and rotating the shoulders externally.

Benefits:

Strengthens the arms and wrists, and tones the abdomen muscles.

Increases strength, balance and stability by developing many muscles, including the triceps and biceps, pectoralis major in the chest, the abdominal muscles, deltoids, the scapular muscles and rotator cuff muscles.



Knowing Thyself Through Self Mastery

Self mastery means to project oneself in a holistic manner; to be centred and balanced in all situations; calm and concentrated in a hostile one; focused and dynamic at all times, through every situation and every action; and have the presence of mind to deal with anyone, no matter who, in the same cheerful and humble manner, while knowing and being in control of the situation and finishing the tasks at hand, in the sharpest of mind conditions.

Know Thyself: Discover the brilliant creative genius within you

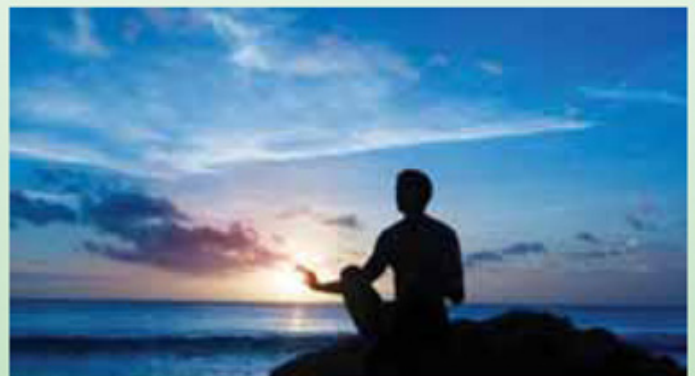
As the great polymath Leonardo da Vinci said, 'one can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself'. It is, in fact, easier to become a master of another, through intimidation or respect, than be an expert on the subject of one's own self.

Take the analogy of the iceberg for example. Ninety per cent, or the larger part, is hidden underwater while only the tip is apparent to unsuspecting eyes. Even so is the self.

In the vastness of that self lies the secret to the mysteries of the body, brain, mind and the universe. Find the ultimate balance in the centre of that self via Yoga Franchise's Self Mastery programme, which consists of ancient, time-tested, ingenious and powerful practices of:

1. Hatha yoga: To lose weight, strengthen the body, be healthy internally and externally, and be fit
2. Pranayama (Breathing practices): Breath better, feel lighter, live longer, stay youthful
3. Shatkarma (Cleansing): Clear toxins and impurities from nose, stomach, intestines
4. Relaxation Techniques: Postures for effective and complete relaxation

5. Bija Manas (Seeding): Planting positive seeds in the mind
6. Manas Dharana: For concentration and awareness of the self
7. Yoga Nidra (Yogic deep relaxation): Reduces stress, promote restful sleep, reduce high-blood pressure, rejuvenate heart and the whole body
8. Trataka: Enhance concentration, improve memory power, improve eyesight, clear the subconscious of unwanted memory
9. Kundalini (Opening of Chakras): Energise the whole body
10. Kriya Yoga (Concentration): Clarity of mind; reach peace and purpose in life; expand consciousness; find inner bliss
11. Yogic Texts (Yoga philosophy): Deeper knowledge of yoga to enrich yoga practices
12. Mudras (Gestures) & Bandhas (Energy lock): Redirect energy back to body



Know everything about the body, the mind and the makeup of the intricate workings of the human machinery, the energies within and the truth about the self.

Realise your infinite potentials. Be dynamic and industrious in body and mind while resting in an ever expanding peace and absolute calmness within.

Learn to be aware of every single thought and turn them into productive, positive and progressive actions that lighten up your entire life.

Live in truth while enjoying the deepest of wisdom flowing endlessly from within.

Mostly, learn to master yourself by learning not to control the mind but to fuel it in the most constructive and uplifting ways. Utilise your thought power, power of visualisation, power of imagination and learn to create the best possible outcomes, to elevate your life and also those around you.

Course Description

The Self Mastery programme covers the complete set of all major components of yoga. It is conducted either full-time (5 days) or part-time (5 months) basis.

Benefits

1. Evolve enterprising creativity
2. Develop “out of the box thinking” to turn dilemmas into springboards for success
3. Increase personal magnetism & charisma
4. Develop positive thinking
5. Improve concentration, focus & memory
6. Clarity of mind for decision making
7. Fulfil positive desires in life
8. Enhance communication skills
9. Manage & relief stress
10. Greater physical health
11. Remove unwanted habit subtly
12. Increase efficiency in any endeavour
13. Increase confidence
14. Improvement in interactive skills
15. Develop dynamic will power
16. Sharpens intuition
17. Enhances brain functions
18. Inspiration and creative expression

What is Kriya Yoga?

Kriya Yoga is a method, a sadhana. It is an ancient, scientific and time-tested means to harmonise naturally-occurring energies within the human framework so that they resonate with the more subtle underlying energies. It is a method of refining one's physical, psychic and mental forces so that individual awareness can penetrate the depths of one's nature. It systematically sharpens the way to ultimately realise the wonders of the infinite self.

Purpose of Kriya Yoga

The purpose of kriya yoga is to transform your whole life into a continuous expression of joy, bliss and wisdom. It is designed to transform *tamas* (lethargic state) into *sattva* (harmonised state). It will refine your whole being and bring about these changes:

1. Slowly whittles away fears, phobias, conflicts, depressions, false ideas, conditioning, etc, hidden in the depths of the subconscious mind.
2. Kriya yoga harmonises the whole mind from the surface layers to the depths.
3. Induces twenty-four hours a day relaxation; not a lazy relaxation, but a dynamic relaxation where one can spontaneously do much work than at present and with much more power and effectiveness.
4. Allows one to explore and know the mind and go beyond.
5. Induces mental clarity and intensifies spontaneous awareness.

These changes, brought about progressively, will transmute one's body-mind into a perfect instrument of action and wisdom. **YM**



A

rticles by Practitioners

My Slimming Journey *by N. Sundari Subasini*

After witnessing my eating habits and the neglect of my body weight, my eldest sister surprised me by bringing me to NSR Centre. Meeting NSR expert, Lee Yan, gave me the confidence that there are many important things in life that require attention for our well being. To take up the challenge, I signed up for the NSR Effective Slimming Programme.

My pre-NSR self had always followed the flow of life. I would eat as I wish, laze as much I wanted to, take my hunger for granted and more. Yes, these are what I call ignorance. Never did I have the knowledge of health from within and I never knew how simple good breathing can do miracles for my mind, body and soul.

Several aspects boosted me, ranging from meeting new friends to self made remedies. First of all, being able to perform and learn something without any inhibition and fear was the biggest gifts from Lee Yan to me (as a student). I realised that we ignore many aspects that do not seem to be important to us because we simply do not have time and above of all, knowledge. The knowledge I got from NSR brought me back to nature. Nature has produced so many magical herbs and remedies that we aren't aware of. Instead we chase after modern medicine.

Starting with Virgin Coconut Oil (by NSR) to fine herbs like Amalaki, to drinking lemon water daily, I experienced nature's magical benefits. We may simply say, "This food doesn't suit me so I should not eat or drink it." But at NSR I soon understood which types of food suited me best according to my body constitution. With Lee Yan's encouragement, it was an easy change that I positively introduced to my body.

The practices made me realise that some of my body parts are not used properly. The amazing power of just breathing in and out - simply awesome! What can simple breathing do to our body? Magically... A LOT. It controls our heart beat, controls our actions and even our thinking.

Did you know that breathing can even reduce our body temperature? Well, I didn't, until I stepped into NSR. Generally when we have pain in any part of the body, we would most likely not want to put any pressure or even move that part. But I learned that I can communicate with my body to know what is happening in that part; it is called connect-to-your-body. Yoga is not merely just exercising or aerobics in which you do strenuous



movements. It's about doing powerful and effective movements with great effects.

A good flow of warm blood is felt through the massages and Swedana (an Ayurvedic sauna treatment). I have always had the perception that being massaged is painful or knuckle cracking. But the massages I've had at NSR are relaxing and rejuvenating. After each massage, I can feel the inner heat that must have speeded up my blood flow. This is followed by Swedana, filled with herbs and nature-ness, which stimulates sweat. It's a great feeling to be steamed by such naturally rich contents of which I can feel the departure of toxins from my body. After the massage and sauna, I feel as if some bad energy has been extracted from my body leaving me more clean and rejuvenated.

To my amazement, I have actually lost centimeters. My waist feels shapelier and an old pair of pants fit me again! Through the practice, my mental health is able to accept any challenge thrown at me and keep myself emotionally balanced. My body feels more agile and joints have become more flexible, my confidence level increased. Being able to attend and learn something with a group of friends at NSR of similar needs, helped me to realize, "I am not the only one". Hence, we friends have several practices in class done in groups or pairs. Doing the practices is already fun, what more when shared with friends! The regular activities organized by Lee Yan serves to enhance outdoor applications of our practices together. Lee Yan "Teacher" (I call her) has been a great friend and motivator to move-on and not to easily give up. We have done a few nature hikes which created a stronger bond between all of us at NSR. I love being in NSR. **YM**

My Slimming Journey *by Siti Hariyanti*

Being a health conscious person, I am always finding different ways to have a fitter body. I became even more conscious after giving birth to my daughter in 2008. The changes that pregnancy brought to my body affected my self esteem.

Of the various exercises, I was somehow more attracted to yoga especially upon hearing all the benefits that come with it. There was a community hall weekly yoga class near where I used to live which I joined. To be honest, I didn't really enjoy the classes mainly because I didn't experience the benefits. At each class I was merely following without knowing if I was doing it right or not. I didn't know when to breathe in and breathe out. These classes only lasted for a few months for me before I stopped.

I then moved on to a different form of exercise and later took up a personal training programme. The idea of having one-to-one sessions with a certified trainer was attractive as the programme is customised just for your requirement. After 11 months I could really see the results. I had never been so fit before and of course I liked it. The only downfall was that I was never able to work out efficiently on my own (well, let's admit it, how many of us really push ourselves to the max on our own effort?). Besides, I needed the gym equipments to be able to work out. The trainer's fee wasn't cheap either so I decided to stop, thinking I could do it on my own.

After starting work at a hotel, the long hours and work stress soon took its toll and I ended up not exercising and began putting on weight. It didn't seem much to others but I could feel my clothes slowly getting tighter, tighter and I didn't feel good. I am one of those people who believe, "If you look good, you will feel good". I was always tired and felt sluggish.

At the end of 2011 I resigned from my post and the New Year came with a new resolution, "Change of Lifestyle". I decided to pick up yoga again with the objective of losing weight and having a better understanding of yoga. I discovered NSR Centre after attending an Open Day held by Yoga Franchise. The phrase that caught my eye was 'Slimming Yoga' on the leaflet.

I made an appointment and signed up the very next day. The explanation given by the instructor was clear so I signed up for the 6 month Rejuvenation & Toning programme. I have already lost 2 kg after a month plus at NSR (from 56.8kg to 54kg). I definitely feel lighter and more energetic.

What I like about the program is that it not only focuses on physical but psychological well being at the same time. The approach here is not just about

working out your body but also to help you understand how your body works. Now I understand that losing weight isn't just about burning excess calories or fat but the basic body detoxification process must also take place. Detox essentially prepares your body towards rejuvenation, so your body will function better.

More importantly is that the instructions given in class are easy to understand and clear. I now know how and when to breathe, in between asanas and I am able to practice on my own. At NSR I am able to understand the detailed benefits of each yoga posture, specifically for my slimming and toning journey. Understanding to me is very important because it creates an awareness so that you know what is happening to your body and then comes the motivation to practice.



that will help the process of rejuvenation. At first I couldn't believe how simple and easy it is with natural ingredients. The class group is also small which makes it comfortable. The NSR staff is also very friendly and accommodating so there are no feelings of insecurity or intimidation, unlike the feeling when one walks into a gym. I am very happy to experience the changes that are taking place. My bowel movement has improved tremendously. I am calmer as I can relax just by practicing a few breathing techniques I learnt in class. My total awareness has increased.

My body responds differently than it used to, towards certain medications or foods. Nowadays I am more aware of the imbalance that certain foods bring to my body. Overall, my experience here at NSR has been invaluable and I am excited to see, feel and learn as my journey continues.... **YM**

Prana from Within

by Suresh

When I first heard about Prana Vidya I thought it was actually related to Pranayama. But upon joining the course I soon realised that it is completely different and a more advanced yoga technique.

In yoga, as we keep practicing, it is important for us to progress with such advanced techniques. This is because they not only improve our quality of life, but also can bring a lot of values to our spiritual dimension as well.

In the past, many of these techniques were only known to selected individuals. It is a great privilege that we can learn these powerful ancient techniques in such a modern era.

Prana Vidya is a kriya type of practice, which involves lots of visualisations. Instead of the more physical techniques like asana, Prana Vidya focuses more on the inside. It provides a step-by-step systematic process which helps to activate our internal energy body.

During this course, I learnt about many subtle processes happening inside our body, called the five Prana's (Five Vayu's) and how they are responsible for various functions within our body. These natural functions can be mastered using the various techniques. So now, for instance, when I get a hiccup, I just apply the technique. And just by using the mind alone the hiccup can be contained. Such is the power of all these techniques.

Another important thing learnt from this course is energy protection (or sometimes known as the Psychic Shield). This is especially useful when I feel vulnerable as I can apply it and it really helps.

Apart from all these individual processes, Prana Vidya is a step-by-step method of awakening the energy body. The whole sequence requires at least 30 to 60 minutes of practice, and I can feel the energy literally rising-up every time. This raised energy can be used for healing as well as for higher purpose. The healing process happens inside for the betterment of the self and of course it can be used for healing others as well. Prana Vidya can also be applied for remote healing.

Unlike other techniques where the healer and the person to be healed must be present in the same place, by applying Prana Vidya we can use various methods to do remote healing. It is a much needed technique for those staying far away from their family and would like to heal each other.

Its core practice is based on the Third Eye (Ajna Chakra) so it not only activates the third eye, but also teaches us how to use it for healing and other higher purposes.

To sum it up Prana Vidya is not limited to healing on just a physical level, but also on the emotional and spiritual levels. Since the time I have learnt this technique, I have been practicing at least on a weekly basis, and these superior techniques have really helped to improve my day-to-day life. I highly recommend this course for anyone who is on a spiritual path. **YM**





Yogic Wisdom For Daily Living

sthira sukham āsanam

by Jamie Spatafore

The posture should be steady and comfortable II.46

Interestingly and most probably for a reason, asana (posture) is mentioned only twice in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The above verse is the more important of the two. Also of interest is why Patanjali never mentioned an actual asana. He doesn't say siddhasana or sukhasana should be steady and comfortable. He only says that asana should be steady and comfortable.

So if we take those two qualities as the only requirement of asana, would it not be appropriate to say that what we do for the rest of the time in our asana class is superfluous? It depends on our view.

Now we can see, what is a constant in our human race is what has just happened to the Yoga Sutras. A sage or seer pulls out timeless information that is gathered from the ether. He takes that information and puts it into a concept in order to be shared. No problem there. Where we get into problems is from that point on. How can we, without the ability to get past concepts, understand exactly where the sage is coming from? Short answer is, we can't.

What we do instead is what we have been famous for doing since we were manifested. We invent more concepts and ideas to place on top of the original one. Just look back at history, from this one simple concept of "posture should be steady and comfortable" a whole lifestyle and industry has been created in the present time. It probably went something like this. Patanjali shares the Yoga Sutras which, please understand, is not new. It is the absolute truth that is timeless. Anyway, he shares his creative conception of this absolute truth. A couple of

beings who are ripe in their minds come across these sutras and say "Hey, let us see if this old man is correct in what he has written. Let us go off to the mountains to practice and contemplate." From their practice comes the understanding that different postures could have a dramatic effect on the structure of the body. Therein comes the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Ah hah, this is a little bit better. There are more words to it. It is more of a guide. Now instead of a few beings we start to get a cascade of beings studying the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. They in turn develop more concepts from the insights they've gained into the body through their practices. Down through the ages we go until we get to the modern day classics like Light on Yoga given to us by BKS Iyengar. This gave us another quantum leap and from those thoughts came thousands of more ideas and practices.

You see what started out as one simple concept has become thousands, if not millions, of concepts. How many asanas are there? I guess there are as many as can physically be done by the body. It won't stop. It will continue being revised and adapted depending on the vibrations and evolution of the practitioner. What are we to make of this situation? What can we make of it? It is what it is. My regret is now we have thousands of groups, thousands of practitioners all fighting over what is right and wrong. But if we take the link all the way back to Patanjali we can see that what we are fighting over are only "watered" down ideas and concepts. At the origination there was no room for conflict because it was simple. Asana should be steady and comfortable. Peace.

A t Your Fingertips:

Achieving Flat Tummy

by Lee Yan



One of my students approached me and asked how to have a flat tummy. This is one of the most frequently asked questions, not just by students, but by everyone.

When we talk about a flat tummy, we need to look beyond and understand how our abdomen really is like. We are often bombarded with images of super slim models or celebrities featured in magazines, movies and even advertisements. Subconsciously, we start comparing our body to theirs. Having a flat tummy, of course, is a sign of a good digestion system, low visceral fats, and a healthy diet and lifestyle. With the understanding of our body, we can achieve not just aesthetically nice and flat tummy but a tummy that has agility, supple muscles and has core muscle strength.

I am excited to share my understanding of how a flat tummy can be achieved naturally and in a non-intrusive method so that we can feel lighter and happier along the way. Let's get a closer look at how the tummy is like. Inside the tummy, or abdomen, is where our important internal organs reside. This important cavity provides an important protection to our internal organs. We are always told to tone the core muscles as they are important. Yes, indeed. Our abdominal muscle is part of the core muscles and it helps to support our entire internal systems.

A flat tummy with great functional efficiency is even more important. When the tummy becomes too hard, it will restrict some of the movements, such as the expanding of the chest or lengthening of the back muscles. This affects our body posture and also our daily breathing pattern. When the tummy becomes too soft, it doesn't provide the support for the back and the internal system, leading to lower-back pain, postural

misalignment and etc. A supple and healthy abdomen is important and with the tips below, you will be able to enhance the health of your tummy with great suppleness, awareness, relaxation and strength.



Tip No. 1: Body Cleansing

Due to the food we eat and sedentary lifestyle, it is easy to pile up the fat around the waist and tummy area. Colon cleansing with specific ayurveda herbs is very effective to bring down the size of bulging abdomen cavity and also to remove and reduce the build-up of toxins in the intestinal area. By removing the waste, our digestive system and elimination system's functions are greatly improved and the tummy size will decrease.



Tip No. 2: Breathing Exercise

Due to the busy and fast-paced modern life, our sensory channels are often over-stimulated and a lot of people are constantly in STRESS. The constant activation of the stress mode will have a negative impact on our physical, mental and social well-being. For example, when in stress, the fight or flight mode is activated and the internal system raises the cortisol level in our body. This causes the body to accumulate fats around the abdominal area, waist, back and other

areas. To reduce fats in our body, a key component has to take place, which is relaxation. By activating the relaxing mechanism, the body will restore its biomechanical and hormonal systems back into balance. Abdominal breathing is one of the easiest and effective techniques to activate relaxation.

Instructions: Start by lying down on your back with your legs bent and feet flat on the floor. Put one hand on the chest and one hand on the abdomen and inhale slowly, allowing the abdomen to expand outward. It is helpful to imagine the stomach expanding like a balloon as you breathe in.

The diaphragm moves downward when you inhale, so the stomach muscles will move outward. The diaphragm relaxes and moves upward on the exhalation, so you don't have to "force the air out", the diaphragm does that for you naturally. Start the practice by spending 5-10 minutes a day and gradually increase the time as you become more comfortable with the process.



Tip No. 3: Eating habits

Most of us love food and sometimes when we have too much food, we feel sluggish and tired, and we wonder why. Sometimes we also try to go on a crash diet when the guilt of overeating kicks in. Yet, most of us don't see a long-lasting result for a flatter tummy and waist.

Diet has always been the main topic when we talk about losing weight, having slim waist and a trim tummy. Personally, I have tried and experimented with different types of food and different diets with the intention to have a healthy body shape. I realised that by simply following a strict diet without a clear understanding of our individual body constitution is a hindrance to achieve the ideal result we want.

Our body is unique and different. What our individual bodies need and want might be different from another person's. We have to start listening to our body and eat with awareness. It's as simple as asking ourselves a few questions. Is this healthy food? Is this food good for my body? Does my body agree with the food that

I'm eating? How do I feel after I eat? Do experiments and observe in a neutral position. You will be fascinated with the results. This is one of the key modules that I teach in my slimming programme to help students achieve a slimmer body.



Tip No. 4 : Stroke and touch

A simple light stroke around the tummy area will improve the circulation around the abdomen, helping to improve the functions of our internal organs and also help the body to relax. This massage technique is good in stimulating and facilitating the bowel movement. Abdominal massage should be avoided after meals. Stomach should be empty before the massage and allow at least four hours after food. Gingerly oil is a good choice for abdominal massage as the healing property of the oil will go deep into the layers of the skin.

1. Use gentle and light strokes around the navel in clock-wise direction. Allow the circular motion to start around the navel area and gradually expand. Start with the finger tips gently massaging the area around the navel from small circulation to a larger movement.
2. Now move the palm down to the lower abdomen and gently move clock-wise and anti-clock wise.
3. Lastly put the palm on the navel and breath softly and gently.

These are some of the tips to help to have a flat tummy. Do have an open heart and mind for we want positive changes to take place and have a healthier and flatter tummy. Through the joy of exploration and unfolding curiosity, you can continually rediscover your own individual paths to a balanced weight and happiness. Enjoy the techniques and tips. If you would like to know more about the NSR programmes, do drop an email at nsrcentre@gmail.com or call 03-77241072. **YM**

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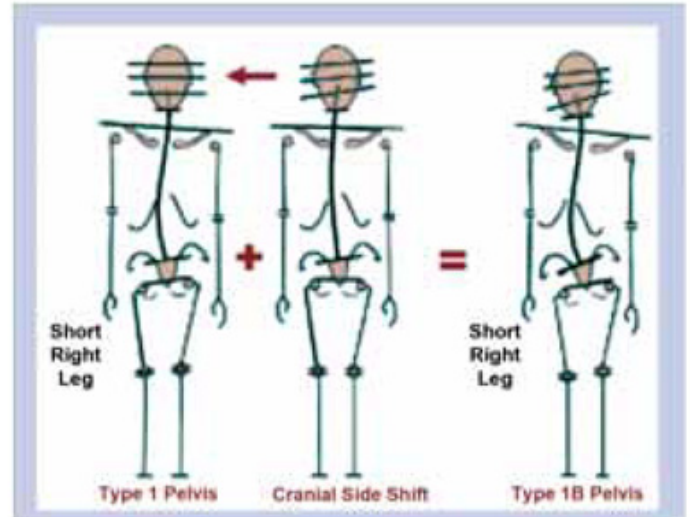


Yoga Therapy: Management of Teenage Spinal Health

(Scoliosis or Asymmetrical Posture)

Scoliosis is defined as a curvature in the spine from side to side which measures more than 10 degrees.

Spinal curves that improve during forward bending, side bending, and specific rotational movements are generally referred to as functional/secondary scoliotic curves. If the curve does not straighten during any of these maneuvers, it is considered a structural, fixed, or primary scoliosis. Many functional curves remain in the body too long and may become fixed as the brain valiantly attempts to compensate for asymmetry by altering length-tension balance in associated soft tissues. Scoliosis is also closely linked to low bone densities.



11 year old Jing Yi shares with Yoga Mail readers daily yoga techniques to keep the spine healthy:

Start the day with Surya Namaskar (12 steps Sun Exercise sequence)



Morning Mountain



Marching Mountain



Moo Cow pose



Easy Spinal Twist



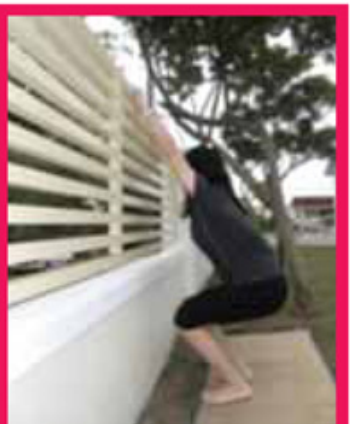
Warrior, Warrior,
Strong & Tall



Triangle Star -
Reaching up to the sky!



Hanging on a bar Squats



- Relaxation in Shavasana like a Star Fish on the bottom of the sea with Belly Breathing
- Breathing exercises (Pranayama): Nadi Shodana, Bhramari

Always seek guidance from a qualified yoga teacher or yoga therapist before practicing these techniques

Eco's Echoes

Healing of the Environment with Homa Therapy (*Part Two*)

Homa and Plants

The ghee is thrust into the atmosphere and attaches itself to the molecular structure of the soil, allowing the soil to retain more moisture. Plants grown in Homa atmosphere are better able to withstand droughts. Homa causes a change in the cellular structure of the plant which sends more nutrients to the fruit of the plant and less to the leaves, stem and roots. It has been found that the size, taste, texture and yield of fruits and vegetables grown in Homa atmosphere are superior while pest problems are reduced making organic gardening and farming easier.

When HOMA is done in the garden or under a tree the effect of the smoke first goes to the leaves. The smoke acts as a catalyst for the generation of chlorophyll in terms of a chemical reaction which can easily be shown to someone by a botanist.

Homa atmosphere, especially that of this concise Agnihotra, acts as a catalyst on plant metabolism, causing the plant to reach for the nutrients it needs, necessitating strength and then yielding the nutrients, giving the plant health and allowing it to more efficiently blend with the ecological balance of things.

The root system of a plant is like Nadi*. It draws its energy from a source and, if it has developed properly, it distributes the energy and nutrients throughout the plant, permitting harmonious and equivalent growth. When HOMA is performed properly it helps carry the nutrients equally throughout the plant by its vascular system.

Scientific experiments with Homa were conducted in India by Dr. Arvind D. Mondkar M.Sc; Ph.D (Micro) on the effects of Homa on bacterial population. For this study, Homa materials were prepared in copper pyramids and placed in two rooms of equal dimensions and the basal readings of number of microorganisms in both the rooms were taken scientifically. This was done exactly half an hour before the specific time. Homa was performed exactly at sunset in one of the rooms. Bacterial counts were taken again in both the rooms in a similar manner at

half hour intervals for the next two hours after the performance. It was quite interesting to note that microbial counts in the room where Homa was performed were reduced by 91.4% whereas the room where only fire was generated did not show appreciable changes in the microbial counts. This leads one to think that it was the process of Homa which was responsible for the reduction of bacterial counts and not the mere presence of fire.

Two other similar experiments revealed similar findings. The phenomenon could be explained by two reasons:

- Homa/Agnihotra fumes are rich in formaldehyde and other substances which have inhibitory effect on microorganisms.
- A phenomenon like smog formation and its diffusion in the upper strata might be a likely postulation.

In the regions of North and South poles, many times, carbon particles accumulate to form a layer called "smog". When fire is lit the hot currents push the smog into the upper strata and it is diffused in such a way that the carbon particles are no longer harmful in the residual concentration. In the present study perhaps Homa fumes might have dissociated the microorganisms in such a way that the residual population was no more harmful and was well within tolerable limit to human beings.

**Nadi system mentioned in ancient texts may be described as something like the nervous system but more subtle, and can be found on the subtle body of humans.*



Inner Insights

Namaskar Teacher

A personal yoga therapy student who is 11 has been attending weekly session with me since mid of last year. After the first few months of yoga, her doctor reported that her spine scoliosis had not worsen from the 30 degrees curve (which had it had progressively increased to over time). So her mom encouraged her to continue with weekly yoga.

When we met last Thursday, this young student told me that her latest report from the doctor was that the curve still remained at 30 degrees with no changes. And as I guided her through yoga that day, thoughts of the report kept playing in my mind. I couldn't help but feel a little bad that her spine had not improved.

In the midst of all this, this chatty young girl went on to talk about this other patient of same age at the clinic with a similar condition, whom the doctor had assessed before her. And this other girl's diagnosis was that her scoliosis had increased from 30% to 45% in a short time and she would be scheduled for an operation. She had refused to wear her brace due to vanity and did not do any yoga or swimming (the brace is to prevent the scoliosis curve from intensifying).

"You can't wear trendy sleeveless tops when you have a brace on and it itches after removing it!" she chatted on.

It took a while for this information to sink in through my own "disqualifying the positive" mentality. This student was actually trying to share her good news with me. That although she still had some pain due to her condition, and even though her curve did not reduce, she felt good because she had been wearing her brace 20 hours a day (hehe... instead of 22 hours recommended by her doc!), that she swam daily, that her mom brought her for yoga lessons, that she diligently practice yoga daily at home and played on the monkey bar.

Snapping out of my negative reverie I asked her, "How do you feel about the doctor's report?" To which she replied simply, "Happy..." shrugging with a pleased smile.

"I don't want to be pretty, I just like to be awesome and cool. At our International Day in school, there was a girl who just dressed in T-shirt and shorts and she had the flag painted all over her face. Now... that is Awesome and Cool!"

Reminds me that what is positive to another person may not seem positive to me until I learn see it through another's eyes. Every little bit contributed counts but the receiver has to do something to make full use of what is contributed. There is no need to think "I am the one shouldering everything for the student". One can only do best to help oneself.

Still much to learn,
Yoga Therapist Pupil

The reply:

Namaskar Yoga Therapist Pupil,

Such wonderful reflection happens quite frequently especially with kids being the subject of our mind's reaction. We seem to be able to see our own selves clearly through them. I read your email twice especially how she said it and to me she really enjoys being your student and more importantly a friend.

Tq for sharing, take care...
Teacher

Inner Insights:

Harness the power of the mind *by Dr Sujatha*

If you believe you can, you probably can. If you believe you won't, you most assuredly won't. Belief is the ignition switch that gets you off the launching pad. -- Denis Waitley, productivity consultant, and best-selling author

That in a nutshell is the power of the mind.

The moment we are born and we take our first breath; our life becomes totally dependent on everything around us. Our realities then become all that we pick-up and learn along the way through our family, friends, tradition, cultures and norms of the society that we live in. We often accept all these as being the absolute truth, based on other people's experience or what we have read or heard. Sometimes just out of a sense of loyalty, either to the tradition or the cultures of the land or to someone we look up to. A lot of times we do not question, doubt or ask for clarification and blindly accept such traditions.

It really seems to depend on who speaks the loudest. For example, we are told repeatedly that cholesterol is bad by the industry players and the lobbyist who shout the loudest. Is cholesterol really the sole cause of heart disease? - Definitely not! Yet how many of us have just accepted that as truth? The reality is that heart disease is a chronic inflammatory disease and is not just based on high cholesterol but also in the way we eat, exercise but more importantly, how we manage our thoughts daily. Our thoughts have a direct influence on our body systems especially the detox and the inflammatory responses, so cholesterol is not all bad. We actually need cholesterol and cannot survive without it as it is essential for brain function and many life-saving hormones that our body makes. Our every human cell needs it as part of its cell membrane.

With these kinds of external influences, our mind gets conditioned to believe all things. Do we ever realise that actually everything that happens to us, come through the power of our own mind and thoughts? We create our own situations and our own realities through our subtle and subconscious beliefs.

The whole of the universe is governed by a set of laws. These laws are eternal and hold true in every situation and for every being, yet we human beings tend to compartmentalise it. There are also many laws that we do not fully comprehend because our intellect has not perceived it. This does not mean that it does not exist. For instance the law of gravity was discovered by Sir Isaac Newton in the year 1687 so does it mean that before that discovery, the law was non-existent?

Similarly, if I being a doctor say you can heal yourself, would you believe me? You may wonder how? Well, this is because we have forgotten our innate nature, our inherent capacity to heal and create our own personal realities.

Every new profession or tool is a result of a need that man has created for himself. Seventy years ago there were no computers, yet, we carried on with life, living to the needs and necessities of that moment. The computer today does so much. But who was behind the making of the computer - the

human mind. With the advent of the computer age, along came new professions - software engineering, web designing, computer scientist and the list goes on. While new technologies have helped a great deal with our day to day existence and given us more time, convenience and choice, the flip side of that is that it has also brought about a whole host of medical problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle. Lifestyle diseases have shot through the roof in numbers. Therefore there will always be doctors to treat the seemingly endless list of health issues. However doctors only guide patients through their healing after giving them the necessary medication or surgically removing the diseased part. The main bulk of the healing is done by the mind itself, which in turn subtly influences the immune system, to heal. Healing is always taking place, triggered by subtle thoughts going on at a subconscious level. Therefore when the thoughts are constructive and positive, healing will be complete, but when there is doubt and fear, it will not.

The ancient time tested techniques that we are learning and have learnt, in our classes at MYS have helped us to enhance this inherent capability of healing by taming and training the mind. Faith healers and masters know this when they give holy ash or water which cures. The truth is that you have cured yourself through the faith and believe in the healer and the "holy substance". The Power of prayer is another good healer. Prayer is after all focussed positive vibrations. During prayer the mind is completely directed to a positive cause and is energized.

Therefore what we must understand and realise and spend time harnessing and looking after, is our mind - the greatest gift that one can possess. It can do wonders. It completely creates the world we live in and how we respond to it. Many of us may know the story of the two salesmen who are sent to a remote village in Africa, to assess the situation there for footwear; one comes back and says sadly to the boss, that there is no chance of selling foot wear as no one there wears slippers while the other excitedly tells the boss of a great potential since everyone is bare footed - the same scenario but different mind-set and different perception of the same apparent reality.

I can give countless more personal experiences working with cancer patients and getting them to use their mind to assist in their own healing, yet what I want to stress here is that it is time that we take control of our minds.

There are three basic ways to train and tame the mind in our day-to-day activities. First is through right words and actions; second is through observation and meditation and finally wisdom gained from one's own experience. This helps us to stop reacting to things around us, either physically, mentally or emotionally. In turn, it brings us much peace and a sense of balance. It makes us creative, optimistic, positive and wise. Once we have attained that, then the ability to use the mind will be beyond believe.

Remember the mind is what we need to conquer and all else will follow suit. **YM**

Inner Insights:

Yoga - A Wonderful Journey for Me & My Children

by Sujatha Param

My son, Rubesh, had been suffering from asthma since the tender age of 4. We couldn't take him to places like Batu Caves during Thaipusam as he was allergic to pollution which would trigger sneezing and non-stop coughing. Later, his condition developed into wheezing which led to asthma. The medical doctor recommended him to use a spray (which contains steroids) as the only remedy for his wheezing. As parents, we were not happy with this choice of treatment and started to look for an alternative. At that time my sister-in-law who was practising yoga with Master Mani suggested for our son to join the Kids Yoga class in Brickfields.

At the age of 6, we enrolled him in the Super Yoga Kids (SYK) weekly class and Rubesh never objected to attending every weekend. On the following month his 4 year old sister, Thanushri, also joined the class. Both siblings have participated in every Yoga Competition organised by MYS. They are very motivated to attempt advanced postures and have been diligent in their practise sessions. From this, they learned that 'practice makes perfect.'

Now at 13 and his sister at 11, Rubesh and Thanushri both continue to enjoy each and every class performing asanas and completing the mind acceleration worksheets, especially those that involve writing with both hands and memory related games. After practising these activities regularly, I noticed that they are now ambidextrous. This is a great delight as it means both of their left and right brains have been activated. Their immune system has improved and they rarely fall sick. We soon introduced our niece and nephew to join SYK and they have progressed so much to the point that they all represented MAYI by performing yoga together at Persatuan Idayakani.

Being parents, we are very happy to have guided them on a good path and laid good foundation for their health. Aside from asanas in SYK, which is only one of the eight limbs of Yoga they also learn about yama and niyama- the basic qualities of human life.

Looking at the tremendous changes in my children's health, I was motivated to give yoga a try. Just 3 months of beginner classes made me realised that I, too, can do yoga! I was ecstatic because I've been suffering from lower back pain and even my doctor



recommended the practise of yoga. After attending a few classes, I can really see the positive changes in my back condition. Tremendous physical and mental changes were noted in the following months with compliments to the asana, pranayama and yogic cleansing practices. The many interesting discussions we had about health have shown me a way to come out of my shell. And my husband whom has learnt Kriya Yoga from Master Mani also started joining the regular classes as continuation practices.

Having diligently learnt and practised yoga for a period of time my teacher, Master Nava, noticed that I can propel my development further and encouraged me to enrol into the International Yoga Instructor Course (IYIC). After completing IYIC, I was further encouraged to take up Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course (SYKIC) as the knowledge would definitely be helpful for me to guide my children.

Upon graduating from SYKIC, Sumi gave me the opportunity to replace some SYK classes. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching the kids yoga sessions which eventually kick started my new career as a yoga instructor. Sumi has been very encouraging and helpful in guiding and assisting me to open my own yoga centre where I can help others to obtain a healthy body, mind and soul. As the wise (siddhas) people say, "Human birth is a blessing," and we show our gratitude to this human body by making it fit and sound through daily yoga practices. Yoga gives us inner strength and extends clarity to our mind and thoughts. I would like to thank all the kind hearted people who have helped and guided me in my quest to spread yoga to the needy and also my husband who supported and encouraged me to advance in my yoga practices. Now I have come to understand the true meaning of the phrase "Learn to Teach, Teach to Learn" from MAYI. Namaskar.

Good Posture The Key to Looking Good and Feeling Good

Poor posture can damage kids. Yes, that's right. This is very well the statement that sends chills down a parent's spine!

A horrifying US statistics found that most of teenage spines were deformed and the main culprit has been identified as none other than the unfortunate choice of a sedentary lifestyle dated back to the years during growth spurts. Most children are found to have bad sitting postures – head sinking heavily on the shoulders, and shoulders slumped forward causing the ribs to press into their lungs.

Our very own lifestyle contributes heavily to poor posture – the long hours spent in front of the computer, the marathon TV programmes that glue us to the couch, the comfort of the soft couch that sinks in with weight, etc. All these are partners in crime when it comes to poor posture. Good posture, primarily during growth and development stages, keeps our bones and joints in correct alignment and allows healthy formation. Thus prevents abnormal musculoskeletal wear and tear. It's a great way of keeping our spine from becoming fixed with an abnormal bone growth which subsequently need a lot of effort (not to mention the agony!) to reverse.

Collective and prolonged poor posture puts a lot of strain on our bodies. The natural curves of the spine are compromised and in turn demand a lot more work by the muscles that surround it to 'hold up' the inefficient posture and to facilitate movements. Internal organs are compressed and not allowed the space they should have to function optimally. These strains are not normal for our bodies. The answer to putting the least amount of strain on our bodies is to adopt a good posture.

What do we need to do to give our children the gift of good posture? (By the way, nagging is NOT a gift!)

Babies

Allow our babies time to develop the usage of their bodies naturally. Babies develop neck control and lower back strength progressively – they turn and lift their head, roll over, sit up, get on all fours, crawl, and subsequently walk. Each stage is important for

muscle coordination and development. If we pamper our babies with the constant use of bouncers or walkers which could unknowingly inhibit the use of muscles, some muscle groups may not develop as strongly as they should.

Children

This is the red-alert stage as poor posture usually begins here and later turns into an irreversible pattern. At this stage, poor postures are evident but being young, their posture hasn't yet caused them any damaging problems. Let's look at one of the major contributor to poor posture – children's school bags. Let's face it. Heavy school bags have always been an issue so let's make the best out of it! Be sure to check that the bag is not too heavy. Ideally, it should not weigh more than 10% of your child's body weight. Be sure to have your child using both straps (padded straps preferred) with each strap distributing the school bag weight equally on both shoulders, and the bag should not hang below your child's waist.

Tips on packing their bags:

Heavy objects should be packed first and placed on the inside (closer to the spine and pelvis) in order to take the weight off their shoulder region and prevent the back from arching.

Teens

Teens slouch for various reasons, whether it's laziness or because of embarrassment as their bodies change. It's also undeniable that teens may spend long hours in front of computers and as a result, their posture may tend to be more hunched over. A hunched posture inhibits proper breathing which in turn reduces vitality, and puts strain on internal organs. If an extended sitting posture is necessary, then do so with a new awareness – stop every 45 minutes for a quick stretch (set a timer if you have to!)



Simple asanas for good postures:

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)

Method:

1. Lie down on your stomach and rest your forehead on the floor
2. Place your palms by the sides of your shoulders and your legs are together with ankles stretched
3. Breathe in and slowly lift your chest and head up
4. Press your hands down evenly with elbows slightly bent and keep them to the sides of your body
5. Relax your facial muscles and do natural breathing, up to the count of 3 while holding this position
6. Breathe out while you lower your chest and head down to the floor again

Repeat 3 times.

Option: The child can pretend to be a cobra by making a 'hissing' sound while he/she lifts his/her chest and head up



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 on Facebook (Syk Superyogakids)

Marjari Asana (Cat Pose)

Method:

1. Come onto your fours. Line up your wrists under shoulders and knees under your hips.
2. Assume natural breathing up to the count of 3 in this position.
3. Breathe in while you arch your back down by dropping your stomach down toward the floor as you lift your chest and head up
4. Breathe out while you do the reverse – arch your back up so that it forms a hump as you lower your head down
5. Assume natural breathing up to the count of 3 while holding this position

Repeat 3 times and relax with Shashankasana (Moon Pose)



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**October Intake available for both courses.
Enquire about the Package Price!**



Chef Yogi's Food Notes!

Basmati Rice and Vegetable Pulao



- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1 cup natural yogurt + 1½ cups of water
- 1 cup chopped mixed vegetable of your choice (eg: peas, long beans, carrot, cauliflower, broccoli and green beans)
- ½ teaspoon organic salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 piece of star anise
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon powder
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/8 teaspoon ground clove
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 teaspoon ghee

Method:

- 1) Wash rice thoroughly and drain. Melt the ghee in a pan and add all the ground spices and sauté till fragrant. Add the vegetables and sauté for another 3 minutes. Remove from heat.
- 2) Bring water to boil in a heavy-bottom pot. Add the rice, bay leaf, yogurt, vegetables and salt. Stir to mix.
- 3) Turn heat down to low, cover the pot and let it cook for 20-30 minutes. When rice is cooked the grains remain tender but separate.

Broccoli: High in cancer-fighting phytochemicals and anti-estrogenic indoles. Broccoli is also high in soluble fibre and low calorie, helping fat loss.

Spinach: One of the most alkaline foods. Spinach prevents muscle & bone loss, but also cancer and heart diseases because of its high nutrient profile.

Natural Yogurt: Helps increase good bacteria in the gut which aids protein digestion

Basmati Rice: The best source of energy and rich in carbohydrates and proteins

SCHEDULE OF COURSES: OCT – DEC 2012

OCTOBER

7/10/2012	DU	Manipuraka Workshop
7/10/2012	DU	Urdhva Retas Workshop
13/10/2012	BSR	Manipuraka Practice Session
14/10/2012	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
21/10/2012	DU	Smart Conversation Workshop
26-28/10/2012	DU	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
28/10/2012	BSR	Short Course on Effective Sleep
28/10/2012	BSR	Partner Yoga Instructor Course

NOVEMBER

2/11/2012	DU	Self Mastery
10/11/2012	BSR	Prana Vidya
11/11/2012	DU	International Yoga Instructor Foundation Course
19/11/2012	BSR	Self Mastery
19-23/11/2012	BFS/DU	SYK School Holiday Programme
25/11/2012	BSR	Herbs That Heal Workshop

DECEMBER

10-14/12/2012	BFS/DU	SYK School Holiday Programme
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BFS: Brickfields; BSR: Bangsar; DU: D'sara Uptown

*Subject to change without prior notice

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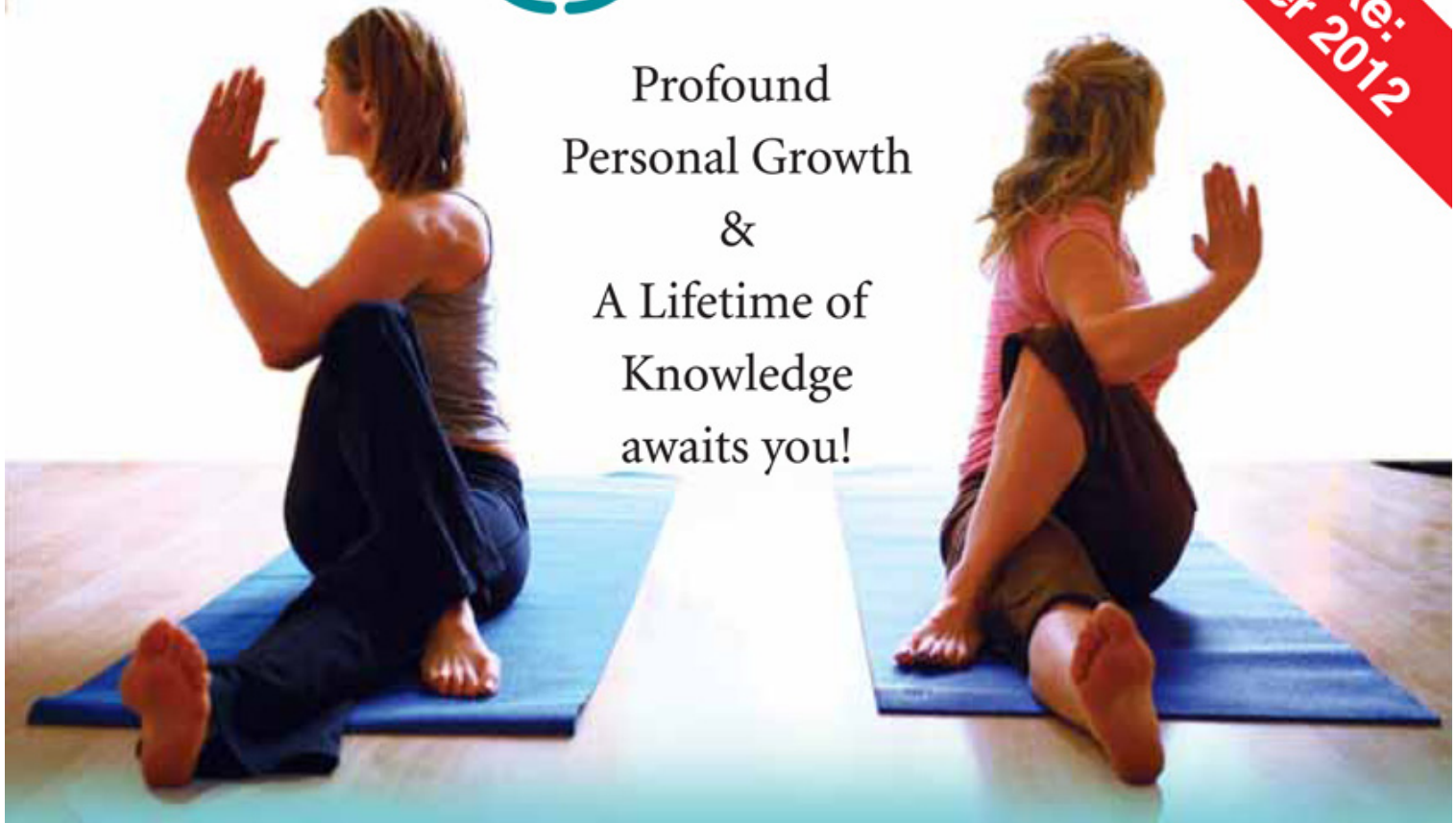
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