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Managing the Pandemic the Yogic Way

**Conscious Living
- As We Heal The Earth,
The Earth Heals Us**



**Message from
Master Mani:
Facing the
Covid-19 Pandemic**

Message from Master Mani

Facing the Covid-19 Pandemic



*Master
Manisekaran*

This year has been the toughest to deal with, with lots of changes happening whether we want them to or not. It is almost impossible to deal with the fact that millions are losing their jobs; many are closing down their businesses or losing their loved ones; and many more are being affected by loneliness and isolation. We can do better with greater awareness, which will help us manage our coping mechanism more efficiently. However, as in almost any emergencies, this is easier said than done. We just have to learn from this pandemic and prepare ourselves better for future calamities - whether natural or man-made.

But bear in mind that when man tortures nature through his greed, it cries out... and some form of catastrophe befalls innocent bystanders.

So, should we always be bystanders, or active participants in preventing such follies from happening in the future? The way to participate is to be aware, and speak facts based on truth rather than facts based on dishonest or manipulated ideas.

My heart goes out to the millions who are suffering great losses due to this pandemic. I hope more people will pursue disease-preventive practices, such as yoga, meditation, slow walks, swimming in natural waters, eating more fruits and vegetables, and etc.

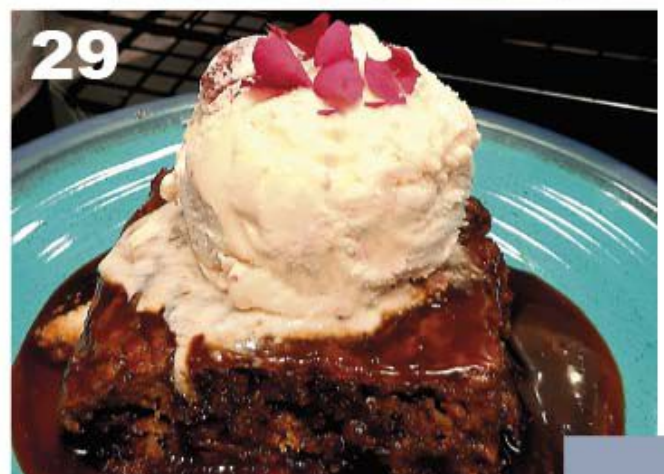
And also keep their minds clean and honest, plus work hard so that humanity moves in the path of Dharma (righteous action).

I surrender to the supreme universal power and pray for the betterment of humanity.

YM

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Managing the Pandemic the Yogic Way

by Dr Chandra Nanthakumar



The year 2020 was hailed with the invasion of the corona virus on planet earth, which has claimed many innocent lives worldwide. The onslaught which started late last year in China spread all over the world this year and has yet to end; countries have implemented lockdowns and movement control orders to contain the spread of this lethal infection. Scientists have put forth several theories on the methods of transmission; however, there is yet a definitive evidence of the actual mode of spread (Ghose, 2020). While scientists are working round the clock to find a cure, humanity should not only maintain hygiene, but also make use of the tools at hand to care for themselves.

The pandemic has greatly impacted people's way of life - not being able to cruise about freely, socialise with friends, or having to work or study from home. However, looking at the hindsight, this scenario has benefited Mother Nature to a great extent, at least during the movement

control order period. With fewer automobiles on the streets and a complete halt on construction and several other pollution-prone businesses, the atmospheric air, which was once adulterated, had become purer and fresher. Mother nature finally had the opportunity to heal!

For a very long time, human beings have been immersed in a "rat race" society where their careers, more often than not, have been put on a pedestal for the sake of position and possession. "I don't have time to exercise."; "I am busy at work."; "I am working over the weekend." are some of the common statements we would have heard from workaholics. While it is imperative to have a job to earn a livelihood, many have stretched their limits far and beyond, ignoring their general well-being, just to keep up with the joneses. Some are even too busy to have a "sit-down" lunch that eating at the work



station has become quite a common sight at some workplaces. Hence, the partial or complete lockdown in the recent months have really been a blessing in disguise for many to start reevaluating their lifestyles. Even though the pandemic has triggered great losses to the world economy, it has bestowed equal amounts of goodness upon humanity.

While medical personnel are treating and caring for patients inflicted with this high-risk infection in hospitals, others confined to their own homes have chance to sit back and relax amidst preparing meals and caring for the family.

Those who have been practicing yoga sporadically, now have all the time in the world to connect with their inner selves through this ancient scientific practice. Unlike other forms of exercises, which require equipment or a special environment, this ancient mind-body practice can be done within the comfort of one's home. Even medical personnel can practice this mind-body regiment when they are at home.

The practice of yoga encompasses, amongst other things, body movements coordinated with breath, breathing techniques, concentration and meditation techniques. These components if practised regularly, have the ability to bring about magnificent changes within. Moreover, consistent practice has been shown to boost one's immunity. With ample free time at hand and not having to race and beat the traffic to get to work on time, one could simply wake up the same time and instead get down to practice.

With the current situation of the pandemic being indefinite, practicing yoga daily may be a smart move for several obvious reasons. Besides boosting one's immunity, it keeps one agile and fit through the rigorous asanas. (Harvard Medical School..., 2020). Asanas such as the warrior pose helps tone thigh muscles, while leg lifts work on strengthening the abdominal region. The pranayama practices, on the other hand, enhance the exchange of gases that take place in the respiratory system while increasing the prana, or chi, in the body. In addition, practices like kapalabhati help remove expired air and toxins from the body while cleansing the frontal brain. The yogic breathing balances the ida (yin) and the pingala (yang), bringing about greater vitality to the body and mind. The shavasana, dharana and dhyana practices lull the body and mind into a state of relaxation and deeper connection with the higher self, and that is when rejuvenation and healing take place.

YM

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Conscious Living - As We Heal The Earth, The Earth Heals Us

by Nicole Yong.Y.Y.

Morality, Nature and Health

When science started opening new prospects of knowledge with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, almost all ecosystems were changed by human activities. Over destruction of forests for urban development, industrial farming and deplorable modern methods of raising livestock, factories, mega-dams and power plants are increasing now. The waste material generated by technological and scientific processes severely pollute the soil, river, ocean and air.

Although there are certain laws and rules to enforce the protection of reserve jungles and waste management, they are not strict enough. The short sighted powerful individuals or corporations, which have no moral restraint, are greedy for quick and huge profits. They disrupt the ecological balance and not only pollute the physical environment and contribute to global warming, but also put human health at risk.

These days, the environmental NGO researchers have been increasingly drawn towards understanding how global warming, ultraviolet effect and habitat loss may cause destruction in species' lives and extinction of species; and the worst is the rise of diseases and pandemics.

Loss of Morality and Rise of Pandemics

The destruction and degradation of forests cause global warming. They lead to changes in vegetation and animal life, and cause diseases to spread faster. Changes in land use consequently bring wildlife, livestock and humans into closer contact with each other and aid the spread of diseases.

How? The destruction and degradation of forests cause reduction in natural habitats, and the animals and species have to live closer than ever to one another and to humans. When the ecosystems

are damaged, there's a risk of viruses from animals looking for new hosts – us.

For example, history shows that deforestation increases the Malaria and Ebola disease outbreak rates as humans come into close contact with previously untouched wildlife.

Wild landscape used for industrial farming bring risks as well. When thousands of animals are put in a very small space and have not much place to move, the high humidity and temperature increase the animals' chances to fall sick. And each time viruses spread among animals, they may result in faster spread in the small space. When these animals come into contact with humans, diseases such as bird flu, H1N1 and tuberculosis can be transmitted to humans.

Meanwhile, the trade of live wild animals bring the dangerous possibility of contact between humans and the diseases. It was shown that recent outbreaks of Covid-19 or MERS may have originated in markets that sell a mix of wild and livestock, creating the conditions for the development of outbreaks.

It is the humans' greed in misusing, exploiting and harming the sacred nature that causes the rise of pandemics, not nature itself. The air, water and soil are polluted with toxins from modern material living, and we drink, eat and breathe pollution indirectly. Due to this, the human immune system weakens indirectly too. Further serious outbreaks can no longer be ignored as humans have interfered with the forces of nature.

Yoga Eco-Philosophy - What has it taught us?

Today's health and economic crisis alerts us to have an urgent need for an in-depth reflection on the relationship between human beings and nature. The pandemic has opened our eyes to respect mother nature.



What is the yogic perspective of nature? As a Jnana Yogi, we have learnt the principles taught in the classic Vedic text Isha Upanishad:

"Īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ: a ruling principle pervades the whole Cosmos. 'Isa' is the word used in the Upanishad. A controlling, restraining, determining, harmonising and satisfying principle is Isa, or Isvara. All these aspects are present in it. It gives life to all things." - By Swami Krishnananda.

Upanishad has revealed that the existence of life on earth is part of the universe. No creation is superior to any other. The earth, all the living beings and non-living beings do not belong to humans. Humans are a part of nature.

When we examine Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, which was compiled a few thousand years ago, the first component of the first limb of Yama (right living ethic) is Ahimsa (non-harming).

More than a few thousand years ago, yogis had expressed the value of ahimsa as a core value of philosophy, spirituality and ethics. Ahimsa is the greatest Dharma (right duty). Yogis honour the natural rhythm. They avoid activities associated with violence or harming, and follow a vegetarian diet. Ahimsa guides us to live in harmony with the laws of nature and respect nature. The ancient sages, rishis and yogis were the original ecologists. They teach us Ahimsa and to respect nature, to ensure environment sustainability.

Expanding Self Consciousness: Our Personal Green Earth Mission...

We can see the efforts initiated by some countries and environmental NGOs, such as the enforcement of environmental laws, tree plantations, water management and rejuvenation of rivers, and encourage chemical-free organic farming and the vision to educate children on all these. While they are important, they are not enough to ensure environmental sustainability. We need to care for the environment as a part of our

value system. It awakens a sense of belonging and ownership for the planet. We have to realise that we have to care for nature like we care for our own bodies.

Here's a list of small steps we can take to align our lives with nature and expand our consciousness to completely connect with it. These are the four fundamental areas we can concentrate on:

- I) What we eat
- II) How we use energy
- III) Our purchase habits
- IV) Nature meditation

I) What we eat

A vegetarian diet reduces personal carbon emission by more than one tonne per year. It dramatically lowers the environmental impact as raising animals for food requires far more resources in terms of land use and growth of plants for food of the same caloric value and nutritional content. Study shows that one chicken is able to feed three to four people, but the 50kg of food grains (to raise one chicken), can feed around 400-450 people.

Study shows production of one kilogram of beef is responsible for as much carbon dioxide emission as driving more than 250km in a car. Imagine, when a majority of people choose vegetarian diets, the cost of combating climate change will drop by 50 percent.

Furthermore, our body is designed for a vegetarian diet. We are like herbivores, our intestines are longer than carnivores'. If we consume meat, the food passes through our intestines much more slowly and takes a longer time to digest. This may take up to 72 hours. In this time, it can rot and cause toxins to build up. Ayurveda says that this is "Ama" - toxins that build up in the body due to improper diet and improper lifestyle. Ama is the main cause of most of the diseases as it clogs the body channel and causes an inefficient nutrient delivery to cells.

Thus it's wise to be a vegetarian. It's even better to support organic fruits and vegetables, and directly or indirectly support non-chemical insecticides and fertilisers farming.

II) How we use energy

We can always choose earth-friendly products or cultivate good habits in our daily lives. We can choose a car with high fuel-efficiency and share the ride with others, improve insulation, use a fan instead of air-cond, install timers and motion sensors, air-dry our clothes, use rechargeable batteries, turn off lights during day time, use solar system and car pool.

For short journeys within 15 to 30 minutes' walking distance, we can calculate our carbon footprint and ask ourselves how we can walk more lovingly.

III) Our purchase habits

Reducing, reusing, and recycling are ideal ways to conserve earth's resources. We are not minimalists, but simply try to be more conscious of how and what we consume. It can make a world of difference.

When we reduce plastic consumption we can beat plastic pollution in the long run; such as bringing our own shopping bags, refuse use of plastic straws, carry a reusable water bottle, pack lunch with reusable containers, etc.

By the way, we must examine our life values - do we really need to buy so many clothes and fashion accessories, home decoration, home appliances and so on?

The answer to all these questions can certainly allow us to think about issues like conservation and renewable sources of energy and reducing of our carbon footprint.

IV) Nature meditation

We may try to connect with nature through Nature Meditation. Then our mental state becomes calm, body relaxes and our taste preference changes

naturally. Our body desires food that gives a light feeling and moves away from heavy foods that harm our bodies and mental states. Many have gradually become vegetarians after frequent practice of meditation.

Take the following 14-day Nature Meditation practice. This will connect us with nature, let us experience the vital healing energy, deepen our awareness and help us to cultivate positive behaviour.

Basic Nature Meditation (with eyes open):

This meditation can be done while taking a slow morning walk in our garden for about 20 minutes.

- Allow the breath to flow gently, walk slowly and be relaxed.
- Focus your awareness on the experience of nature - observe the different colours of flowers, trees, butterflies and birds; listen to the sound of birds and water or stream; feel the gentle wind and warm sun light; breathe in the fresh air and feel the earth beneath us.
- When the mind wanders and thoughts arise, simply bring them back to the present moment and experience nature.
- Enjoy the complete feel of serenity and rejuvenation.
- After the practice, slowly inhale and bring awareness back to the body and senses.
- Appreciate the deep connection and harmony we have created with nature.

Conclusion:

Our consciousness must rise above greed and resonate with the earth ethics in order to heal Mother Earth, which is our only home. We need to have reverence for earth and nature, and treat them as sacred and treat people as sacred as well. It will promote a sense of loving and caring for all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti. YM

Articles by Practitioners

Surviving this Pandemic

by Adelena Gustafsson



We are living in very challenging yet interesting times. Do you remember the day you thought 2020 was going to be a better year than 2019? I recall seeing posts on the social media where we celebrated the holiday season and bid goodbye to the bad and good of 2019 while welcoming 2020 and wishing for it to be the year. Sadly, we were somewhat mistaken and now sit in a situation we never thought would be possible. Covid-19 has proven to be a game changer for us and it has affected us in so many different ways. There are many negatives but also some very surprising positives.

As most of the countries are on lockdown, I am in a country that is seen as doing the complete opposite. I live in Sweden and despite being in a small town in the southeast with close to no infection, I can't help but feel helpless sometimes knowing that some people are not doing their part to respect the social distancing order.

Most people are doing their part, but it feels like we are on standby, and not knowing how things will turn out has my tummy in knots. My parents are in Malaysia and for that reason I sometimes



struggle with the fact that I am not able to go to them at this time but knowing that they are safe does make me feel a little better about it.

Living in Sweden I can only imagine what it's like living in lockdown but never truly understand how it would feel. Being here with everything going on somewhat normal, I sometimes find myself feeling helpless at avoiding the inevitable. I have no choice but to keep going. At times like these I have turned more into my practice using awareness as key to surviving this pandemic.

In order to keep my mental focus, I focus on my breathing. I found during my drive to work, I could practice 'Yogic Breathing' with breath holds from the start of a speed change to the next while keeping focus at the speed limit. This

exercises my lung capacity and gives it strength. Pranayama is one of my favourite tools to keep the mind calm and find my way back to focus.

In 2014, a study was done on 50 first year medical students from Meenakshi medical college. They were between 17 and 19 years old. They were given the task of performing the Surya Namaskar and Pranayama for at least 30 minutes a day for 2 months. Surya Namaskar is always my go to practice when I don't have the time. I would do a minimum of 2 sets on each side just to get the blood flow going. One set would usually take 5 minutes. I would incorporate my breathing during my flow. "With the regular practice of breath holding the individual's central and peripheral chemoreceptors get adapted to the anoxia, this result is achieved by the body by causing hypo metabolism. Thus, reflecting as prolonged breath hold and decreased urge to breathe while doing so. In addition to this, the training of the stretch receptors in the respiratory muscles, chest wall and also walls of the alveoli support the breath holding." (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4316242/>)

Jala Neti and Kunjal are two cleansing techniques I have adopted since I began my journey as a yoga instructor and it has done wonders for my body. Because of my daily practice of Jala Neti, I now no longer suffer from pollen allergies. Kunjal is a practice I do on a weekly basis, and sometimes when I feel the need, such as when I'm feeling restless and heavy in my chest or just when I feel like I have a sore throat coming along. The combination of the two cleansing practices has succeeded in getting rid of anxious feelings and even an oncoming cold.

As most of you are probably more aware now is how we live our daily lives from what we touch to how we react. Do you now notice how much you touch your face in a day? In 2015 a study was done on 26 students at the University of

New South Wales to observe how many times they touched their faces (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25637115>). The results showed that they did so on an average of 23 times an hour. As we are aware now, face touching gives a higher risk of infection with any type of virus. Good hand hygiene is definitely important but how do you keep yourself from touching your face as often? I find that keeping my hands busy helps, so by practicing some wrist rotation usually does the trick. It keeps my mind focused, at ease and at the same time making me aware of what I'm doing with my hands.

Keeping my mental stability and physical strength is also something I strive. The same goes for my 3-year old son. Whenever I roll out my mat to practise, my son would usually do the same. He would follow my cues for the Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) and we continue with some balancing asanas and end with a quick Pranayama. Practising yoga keeps us both centred and calm at the same time keeping our immunity stronger. His favourites are the mountain pose or downward dog, the tree pose, and the eagle pose.

Despite all that is happening in the world and in our lives, I find myself feeling stable and I have literally landed myself in 2 jobs, after being in a job limbo for a long time. I see this as a blessing and I am grateful for it, but at the same time saddened by the fact that some have not been so lucky.

I have seen some struggle through these times and some thriving despite it. This pandemic has proven that in all the negatives, positives can be found as we are now noticing that nature is healing. We will too regain better health and hopefully with more awareness of our surroundings and how we treat each other as we adjust to a new normal. **YM**



Being healthy in today's world while living amongst stressed members of humanity in the rat race deemed necessary for survival may sound like a difficult feat to accomplish.

This is why many tend to skip daily exercise due to misinformation, thinking that only food is needed to keep the body functional. This may not necessarily be right as food also suffers due to the rat race. The production of fast food, for instance, contains almost no proper nutrition and therefore will affect the body negatively if nothing is done to rectify this issue.

However, living a healthy lifestyle may not be as difficult to achieve as we may believe. A healthy lifestyle includes a nutritious diet, sufficient physical activities and having a healthy mind. In this piece, we will be focusing on achieving a healthy lifestyle through the practice of Yoga.

We can start off by working on our feet and legs. Gently wriggling our toes, squeezing them every now and then in this manner: As we gently inhale, gently squeeze the toes and hold the squeeze and the breath for a couple of seconds comfortably. Exhale as we stretch the toes and then hold the stretch and breath for a few seconds comfortably. This helps to promote better blood circulation to our feet.

This is important as many of us tend to be seated for an extended period of time without putting any pressure or using the muscles of our feet. Bending and stretching the knees also helps to promote blood flow, preventing cramps due to being stationary for too long and can also tone up our leg muscles.

Moving on to the hands, many of us are now dependent on our mobile appliances to get us through the day, be it for communicating, entertainment or work. Thus, our wrists and fingers are always at work but in the same stiff



position. This usually causes many to have Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. This can be easily prevented by resting our wrists during fixed intervals. We can start off by gently rotating our wrists in both directions and then pointing them upwards and downwards every 30 minutes. Making a tight fist and then releasing our fingers one by one also helps to relax our fingers and hands.

Next, we can also work on our neck joint as part of using simple yoga to achieve health. We tend to keep our necks at a fixed position and stiffen it while working on our laptops, desktops and mobile phones. We can relax our neck by gently tilting our head upwards and downwards, turning to the left and right and also by tilting it to the left and right with our chin facing up. These exercises help to stretch and work on every part of our neck and also stretches our shoulder joints.

The last physical part that we can focus on is our eyes. Staring at screens for an extended period of time can definitely cause our vision to be impaired sooner or later. However, we can help relieve our eyes and also maintain our vision with some simple eye exercises done every twenty to thirty minutes. Spectacles should be removed during this practice for more effectiveness. We can start by keeping our head still and moving only our eyes to look up and down, then left and right for multiple sets. Then, we make diagonal crosses or 'x' shapes and also draw circles with our eyes. Lastly, we look down at our nose tip and up to the centre of our eyebrows for a few seconds each. This exercise also helps to improve concentration.

Next, we can move on to a couple of breathing, or pranayama, techniques that can help promote health. The first and second techniques are both cooling techniques, respectively known as sheetali and sheetkari. Sheetali is done by rolling the tongue and

forming an 'O' then breathing in through the mouth followed by breathing out through the nose. Meanwhile, Sheetkari is done by breathing in through the mouth with our teeth clenched tight and tongue rolled to the back of the mouth then breathing out through the nose. These two practices help to generate cool air in our mouth, which is very helpful for dealing with the hot Malaysian weather. This also helps us stay away from iced water or other cold products when trying to cool ourselves down.

Yet another pranayama technique is the Nadi Shodana, or alternate nostrils breathing exercise. This practice can help to clear out blockages in our nasal passage and relieve any minor respiratory issues. Nadi Shodana is done in three steps. Firstly, block the right nostril with the right thumb and breathe in through the left nostril. Then, hold your breath for a few seconds. Lastly, block the left nostril with the right ring finger and breathe out through the right nostril. Then, perform these steps in the same sequence but with the alternate nostril. Doing this for multiple sets with breath awareness in between can be relaxing and also instantly relieving.

Yoga practices can be done anywhere and anytime. These are some of the simple Yoga poses and stretches that can be done at home, at the workplace or even while commuting. Just remember that we practice the exercises according to our capacity and with breath awareness, which means slow inhalation, a gentle pause in between, a slow exhalation and another gentle pause after. Most of the exercises mentioned in this article are from the Hatha Yoga practice of the Pawanmuktasana series, which is also known as joint exercises. With the awareness that health is not out of reach and can be achieved through Yoga, we can definitely hope for better health amongst Malaysians. **YM**

Yoga has received significant attention worldwide; ironically very few people truly understand the essence of this ancient science. Yoga is often conceptualized as a slow, stretching routine most suited for the elderly. Hence, it is seemingly less appealing for youngsters including myself who have succumbed to such misconceptions and hence, downplayed its practices. Yoga, which means “to join”, is an ancient spiritual practice that possesses various physical and psychological implications in enhancing one’s wellbeing.

As a gym enthusiast and a rather sporty individual who formerly played competitive games like badminton, I was ignorant of the benefits of yoga until I was introduced to it by my peer at the gym. His amazing body flexibility and wisdom enthralled me. He shared his experiences about how yoga significantly improved his flexibility which in turn enhanced his gym training along with his psychological health. His incredible transformation through yoga, which seemed too good to be true, sparked curiosity in me and the desire to explore more about yoga.

My friend introduced me to MAYI Yoga Academy where I enrolled in the hatha yoga class designed to improve posture and flexibility. I still vividly remember my first session where I felt so rejuvenated, energized and mentally alert after performing various “asanas” (yoga postures). MAYI’s approach to yoga encouraged me to unwind at my own pace, allowing me to enjoy it without having to stress about my poor flexibility. Over time, I was able to see significant improvement in my flexibility which subsequently augmented my strength and mobility at the gym, especially my squats. The yoga sutras (i.e. yogic philosophy) complemented the yoga lessons. Master Manisekaran conveyed the enigmatic messages of the sutras with great spiritual proficiency, encouraging his students to harness a sense of spirituality and develop a positive outlook in life.

Yoga at MAYI has completely dispelled my preconceived notion of this beautiful science. As a



student of psychology, I find the wisdom derived from yoga extremely intriguing. It has honed my critical thinking skills and instilled a sense of spirituality in my own life. Yoga has not only assisted with my resistance training, but also my psychological well-being as I am able to be more reflective about my life and appreciative of the well-meaning people around me. Though I am still a novice, I have learned that yoga transcends all ages and is definitely a rewarding pursuit.

I have shared various yogic philosophies taught at MAYI with many of my university professors who are now keen to learn about the power of yoga, as well as support my desire to research the prospects of yoga in assisting clients with mental health issues in a clinical environment.

In summary, at MAYI Yoga Academy, I have learnt that the art (and science) of yoga can be enjoyed by everyone regardless of age. Yoga for me is not merely a stretching routine. It is a fusion of philosophy and science that includes a physical component that can ultimately reward one with a deep sense of spirituality which is essential for one’s well-being. I hope to be able to raise more awareness and establish precedence for yoga through my research one day. **YM**



It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. That was the initial mixed feeling in attending a detox session amidst the hilltop and lush greenery of temperate Fraser's Hill, Pahang. Covid-19 had already put a damper on me and everyone around me with its deadly implications, and with no vaccine in sight at least for a while. A detox session seemed a good way to distract myself and relax while undergoing a cleansing inside the body. Coupled with yoga sessions and meditation, it had the perfect combination of rejuvenation of the mind, body and soul. As the advertisement had promised, 'detox and rejuvenation programme in a peaceful and serene environment'.

This was my first experience doing a three days two nights detox programme using 100% ancient ayurveda and yoga techniques. Filled with anticipation and curiosity, I ventured into the unknown sphere. Thankfully, I was with 19 other people, mainly women, and with experienced yoga and ayurvedic practitioners, who would guide us through the whole detox process. MAYI's Master Manisekaran provided the physical (yoga) and mental preparation (pranayama) of the detox programme. This experience for me, personally, was very calming and relaxing. It was the feeling of lightness in my whole body, which made the experience very special.

After arriving at the hotel, a get-to-know-you-session and a light yoga workout ensued. This was followed by a delicious vegetarian steam-boat dinner. With a full stomach and a warm, fuzzy feeling of a satisfying meal, the trataka and meditation sessions were relaxing and enjoyable.

Trataka in Sanskrit means to look, or gaze. It is a yogic purification (shatkarma) and a tantric method of meditation that involves staring at a single point, such as a small object, black dot or candle flame. It is said to bring energy to the "third eye" (ajna chakra) and promote various psychic abilities. Getting to the level of psychic abilities is a long way off as one must hold a steady gaze for a period of time. This helps to enhance the ability to concentrate; cleans and heals the eyes; and helps with insomnia, among others. Master Manisekaran, who was leading the session, mentioned that it was a good exercise for children to do, to help them with their focus and concentration. My experience was one of a beginner and I confess that I had to bring my mind back to the flame several times. In a quiet, dark room, with only the flame of the candles dancing, it was the perfect scene to appreciate the stillness and the darkness of the environment. After the briefing for the next morning session of Kunjal, Neti and Shankaprakshalana (yogic full intestinal cleansing), it was lights out.

The Detox Begins

Kunjal Kriya is a technique for cleaning the digestive system (from the stomach to the mouth). It includes drinking lukewarm, salty water until the stomach gets full, and then intentionally vomiting it through the mouth. Animals, like cats and dogs, use this technique as well when food is undigested. Drinking warm salty water was the lesser evil for me compared with intentionally vomiting the contents of my stomach. After brief moments of "oh dear, what have I got myself into" the process became a lot easier to manage.



Jala Neti (nasal) helps to alleviate chronic headaches and migraines. Nasal cleaning yoga helps to reduce the symptoms of drowsiness and regular practice helps to get rid of it. I had the experience of doing Jala Neti previously, so this second experience was less stressful, although I forgot to tilt my head in the first try. The MAYI assistants were on hand to provide necessary help and guidance to get the angle of the head at the correct position. Subsequently, the technique fell in place, I "neti-ed" my nasal passage and it felt clean and fresh.



Shankaprakshalana (complete cleaning of the intestines) was the most strenuous part of the detox programme for me. After drinking 2 litres of warm, salty water, I was ready to expel last night's dinner from my intestines quickly. However, this took a little longer than expected, despite the stretching and twisting exercises, such as Tadasasana, Tiryaka Tadasana, Kati Chakrasana, Tiryaka Bhujangasana and Udarakarshanasana. The MAYI assistants were ever so helpful to provide encouragement, and ensured that I had followed the instructions of the detox process correctly and that I was feeling fine.

Once the detox was completed, my bowels had been cleansed and I had rested my tired body and mind, a healthy kicheri dinner, consisting of rice, mung beans and ghee, was provided to lubricate the stomach lining and give a fullness to the intestines. The benefits of Shankaprakshalana is that it purifies the blood, detoxifies the body and

helps to develop good digestion. It eliminates allergies and skin diseases such as acne, neurodermatitis or psoriasis. We were advised by the MAYI assistants to continue eating the kicheri diet for the next 3 days to gain more benefits of the detox while the more adventurous participants could continue the kicheri diet for 1 month! We were also provided a cooking demonstration on how to prepare the kicheri and what were the other alternative ingredients, i.e. carrots or potatoes, that could be used to replace the mung beans. This is for some variety in the kicheri menu.

Mindfulness Walk

It was not all detox and yoga though. The beautiful and cooling surroundings of Frasers Hill begged to be explored. All the participants were encouraged to join a mindfulness walk around the area to enjoy the surroundings filled with flora and fauna. As it was a weekend, there were many people in Frasers Hill, creating a busy atmosphere of people - walking, enjoying the coolness and taking photos of the loveliness around them.



Loving the feel of lightness

The best part of the whole detox experience must be the feeling of lightness that I felt throughout my body once the detox processes were completed. I felt rejuvenated, energised and ready to come down the hill and face the challenges of Covid-19 again, despite the uncertainties of the situation. Sometimes, we just need a pick-me-up, no matter how small, to feel a little better, a little happier, and mostly, to feel that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. **YM**

AyurYoga: Striking a Balance between Nature and Humanity

by Jessica.S



Have you been a little stressed out lately? Overwhelmed? Does your life feel like it's out of control? It is clear that nature is undergoing rapid changes. The struggle of the world to deal with such unanticipated eruptions has always been a challenge due to a number of reasons, such as the novelty of causative organisms, its unexpected virulence, delayed detection, rapid widespread, lack of treatment and many more. In these uncertain and unprecedented circumstances in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, dealing with stress and trying to find a balance is even more challenging. When that balance is lost, we end up feeling broken, and trying to find that balance seems more difficult than ever. But amidst all this, it is crucial that we try to maintain our overall well-being, and that is only possible if we strive for a balanced life.

If we look at Ayurveda, it surely has its own slow way of bringing an imbalanced lifestyle back to balance. So it is clear that Ayurveda at this point is a bit like a quick fix to managing a human body. If we really start looking at "managing" as a bigger problem in the context of humanity, it is clear that Ayurveda is great in helping an individual human while it is blind to the cause of the greater collective that we are and hence, while it solves the problem for one and now. What we need is to develop an understanding of the Ayurvedic ways of managing a human body. Ayurveda invites conscious seekers of health to commune with Mother Nature in peace and mimic her ways.

Coping with social distancing, uncertainty, worry and isolation is creating many different physical and emotional responses in all of us. Ayurveda teaches us that we are all unique individuals based on our doshic types. The doshas are a reflection of the 5 great elements of fire, water, earth, air and space. Vata is characterised by the mobile nature of Wind (Air) energy. Pitta embodies the transformative nature of Fire energy and Kapha reflects the binding nature of Water energy. The qualities of the elements present themselves in our physical and emotional (mind) bodies. The balance of the doshas can be influenced by changes in our environment, the seasons, our food intake, interaction with others and lifestyle (including exercise and jobs); of which have been greatly influenced by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown. You may have noticed that people are reacting differently to the changes we are facing at the moment. Observing people in your household, yourself or when chatting to people on the phone or virtually gives us a valuable insight into understanding the dance of the doshas and what we can do to maintain mind-body balance and stay healthy.

Vata Types

When imbalanced or in times of stress, Vata tends towards anxiety, overthinking and erratic behaviour. The mind feels overactive, you may find it difficult to focus on individual tasks and your sleep may become disrupted. With Vata types, imbalance can occur quickly and a cycle of sleep and digestive disruption is very common. To balance the mobile, erratic nature of Vata, grounding activities are important. Gentle yoga and meditation and connecting with friends and family is important, especially now as we are all following social distancing guidelines.

Pitta Types

Imbalanced Pitta types during this time may feel frustrated as they do not have the answers to lots of questions at the moment. They may feel that they want to find strategic solutions to situations out of their control, which can further lead to imbalance. To maintain balance in Pitta types, now is a great opportunity to try something new or use your skills to help others. It's OK to slow down a little. Rest is as important to activity. Make sure you are getting enough sleep: 7-8 hours per night.

Kapha Types

May feel a little more comfortable about staying at home. For short periods this is fine, but in the long term, Kapha types can become "stuck" at home. Their desire and motivation to get moving and maintaining healthy habits can diminish. Over time this can lead to imbalance in Kapha types, groundedness moves to heaviness of body and of mind, and when imbalance occurs over time they will tend to retreat emotionally, experiencing low mood, depression, lethargy and weight gain. Establish a regular routine. Do not oversleep. This will have a big impact on how you feel. You will feel heavy and sluggish for the rest of the day. Don't be tempted to have sweet treats and snacks at home, it's just too tempting. Connect with others as much as possible. Every day, speak to someone.

If everything gets too overwhelming, pause and ask yourself "how am I feeling?". Check yourself regularly. The true happiness of a man is having clear conscience and being useful to humanity. Ayurveda has a lot of suggestions on how to uplift and maintain immunity to keep the balance between nature and humanity.

Stay Hydrated

Because you aren't getting as much physical activity chances are that you also aren't drinking enough water. Drinking lots of water will help your mood, focus, metabolism and also hair and skin to stay less dry.

Mouth Rinse and Gargle

Warm liquids and oils are used as gargles or mouth rinses to cleanse the mouth and throat thoroughly. Gargles with these medicated decoctions have demonstrated beneficial effects in dry mouth, postoperative sore throat, oral ulcers, gingivitis and bacterial growth.

Steam Inhalation

Steam inhalation and hot fomentation (with aromatic oils) provide satisfactory clinical relief in nasal and throat congestion, bronchoconstriction, headache and sinusitis. Its role in improving nasal conditioning, improving nasal mucus velocity and reducing congestion and inflammation has been reported in several clinical studies.

Ways To Boost Up Immunity Through Herbs

Prepare an herbal tea with the ingredients including Tulsi (Basil), Dalchini (Cinnamon), Black Pepper, Dry Ginger and Raisin. Drink this

once or twice every day. Make use of the spices, including Turmeric, Cumin, Coriander and Garlic, across the different recipes while cooking.

Take Care of Your Physical Health

Invest in your physical well-being. Avoid eating junk food. Eat fruits and vegetables that will boost your immunity. Try and get as much exercise as you can indoors. Practice the yogic procedures like Yoga Asanas, Pranayama and Meditation for about 30 minutes a day.

We are all experiencing a difficult phase in our lives. It is crucial that we try to maintain our overall well-being, and that is only possible if we strive for a balanced life. The only way to get through this is staying positive. But that does not mean that you ignore your worries. Instead, you must accept them and try to think of ways in which you can cope with them. Practice self-love and be nice to people, they need you to rediscover their humanity. **YM**

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Coping and Being During Covid-19 Pandemic

SuperYogaKids corner

by Dr Sumathi



I still remember clearly the evening I sat at the dining table with my husband, discussing whether we should keep our boys home from school amid all the Covid-19 reports. It was a difficult discussion and we ended it without any conclusion – to be continued, we decided. It was to my immense relief that the government announced the Movement Control Order (MCO) the next day, because I didn't have to shoulder the responsibility of keeping my children out of school. Now, I could gratefully keep my family at home, away from the looming threat, without doubting I had made the right decision.

Then came the planning, I was going to make this the best, most productive time of our lives – yes, I was going to plan for absolutely everyone in the family and ensure maximum productivity and growth. The plan looked like this:

7:00 am – Everybody wakes up

7:30 am – Yoga and meditation with the family

8:00 am – Breakfast followed by lessons (for the children) / work (for the adults)

The day then continues with a healthy, wholesome lunch in which instant noodles play no part ever, followed by creative activity and active time for the whole family. You get the idea?

I, personally had great visions of signing up for numerous online courses and coming out of MCO with a wealth of new knowledge and certificates, catching up on all the paintings that are yearning for my attention, finally reading the books patiently waiting on my overflowing bookshelves and watching the movies I keep promising myself!

How have my plans panned out over the past 2 months you ask? Well, all we've managed to do regularly and on schedule to date is have our meals together – something that I'm very grateful for because fascinating stories get exchanged at the dining table. We seem to have settled into a new normal – and it doesn't involve any of my well laid plans of 2 months ago. No certificates of achievements for me and 'Maggi Kari' is a family favourite that provides much needed respite from kitchen duties every now and then. This new schedule seems to be working well for us in these times.



Yoga and meditation are my interest – so I go it alone. Some days it happens and some days it doesn't. Some days little hands and feet join me on the mat of their own accord. Over time, I've become okay with this. Breakfast is followed by time for school work. Teachers have been amazingly resourceful in providing the boys with material to continue learning from home –

YouTube videos and quizzes that hold their attention and make the learning experience fun. I am tremendously in awe of these amazing beings who despite having challenges of their own are dedicated to keep doing what they can for our children in these trying times.

After lunch, the boys spend time playing or watching television. And the astounding and futuristic entities that come out of a few hours with a box full of Legos and a child's imagination are absolutely mind blowing. In the evenings, if the weather permits, we play outside and if it doesn't, we pull out boardgames. Every interaction has been and continues to be an opportunity for heartfelt sharing and uncontrolled outbursts of laughter – these are no doubt my favourite and will remain etched in my memory forever.

And while this new routine has quietly fallen into place and is helping give all of us a sense of structure, we are also learning that not everyone feels up to the routine at all times – and that's ok. We're learning that everyone needs "me time" in different quantities and in varying styles and to ask for it is okay. We respectfully and gracefully allow the other to recharge in the way that suits them best. We learn to manoeuvre around the wants and needs of members of the family – someone doesn't like loud music, let's use earphones, someone needs to jump around all the time – there you go, use the trampoline.

We are learning how to accept and make allowances for each other. We take each other's needs and wants into consideration and we cooperate and collaborate. We are acquiring skills in conflict resolution. Apologies are much quicker and more heartfelt in these times. We are all learning new skills. The boys spend more time in the kitchen with me: "Can I cut this? Can I stir this? This goes in next right?" My husband is making efforts to cook up new dishes too, much to the family's delight.

I feel we have really excelled in the creativity department as well. From spending time creating art, to reviving games from our childhood – anyone for a game of ‘Win, Lose or Draw’? – to creating a ‘Jungle Safari’ to celebrate a little one’s birthday. Both boys speak with shining eyes and enthusiastic voices about that birthday. We have celebrated two birthdays with another just around the corner – just the four of us. It has been as fabulous as if we had invited the whole huge family over.

As I look at my own personal growth over these two months – I’ve come to know and understand myself so much more than I ever have in the past. The efforts I make to treat myself with kindness and compassion is notable – I feel like I’m finally walking the talk. The amount of reading and learning I’ve been doing in order to support my family emotionally through these difficult times is substantial. And it warms my heart when I watch interactions that would previously go south, turn into opportunities for repair, healing and connection now, simply because there is no rush to be anywhere else in this moment and we have spent time on refining the skills that support the process.

When I was asked if I had any thoughts about the soon to be eight weeks of being at home with family – I answered that I really hadn’t given it much thought – we are just coping and being. And now as I reflect, I realise we are doing so much more than that – we are growing and thriving – and wonderfully so!

Personally, I am learning to let go of expectations and the need for perfection. I am learning to accept myself without judgement, understanding my limitations and embracing my strengths. These are exactly the qualities I want to role model for my growing children.

As a family, we are learning how to accept each other without judgement, we are extending support to each other in the most warm and apt way we can think of and we are learning to communicate our needs clearly to each other. We are learning to take responsibility and apologise for our part in conflicts, while reaching out to each other to resolve the underlying issues. We are being present and enjoying the here and now alone and with each other. If this is not laying down strong roots, I really don’t know what is. I’m not saying any of this is a done deal, or that this is the ideal for every family. I’m saying these are the values that are important for my family and this is a process – as I said, we are learning. No one is looking for perfection, only progress.

We are most definitely growing and thriving... and I am infinitely grateful that we are... I would like to add that I am aware my family is one of the extremely privileged ones who get to stay home and together during this global pandemic. We get to work, study and continue to learn and grow without really worrying where our food for the day is coming from. This is something that I remind myself of every single day and I am eternally thankful for. I am intensely aware that not everyone in the world is so privileged. We help out in any way we can within our means, and hope that help and care reaches those who are in need of it. **Namaskar. YM**

SYK classes include:

Yoga Kids Class, Teens Yoga Class, Family Yoga Class, and Pregnancy Yoga Class.

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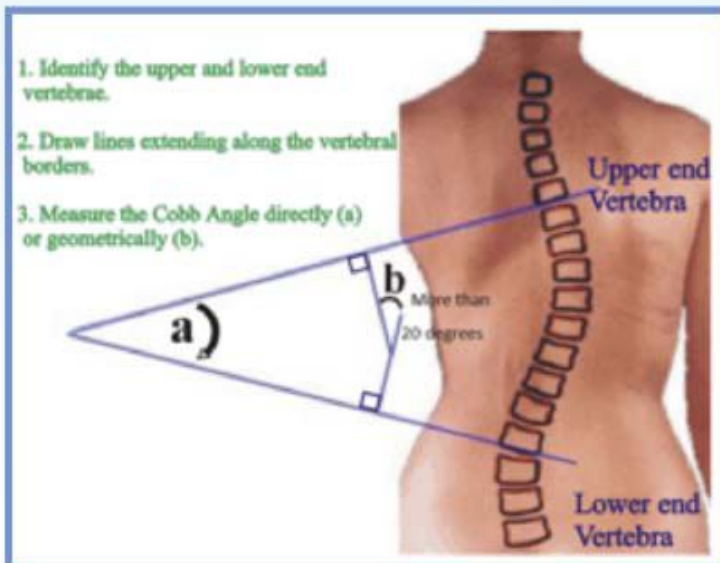
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- Scoliosis refers to a condition where the spine is bent sideways instead of a straight alignment when seen from the back or front.
- The spine can be curved to one half of the body like the letter 'C' or bent to both halves of the body one after the other like the letter 'S'.
- The severity of scoliosis is usually measured by using a Cobb Angle's method like shown below.



- Studies show that if scoliosis is not intervened, there is a high chance of it progressively leading to some complications cosmetically and internally (physical and mental).
 - On the outside, the imbalance of the shoulder blades, tilted pelvis, limb length discrepancy and a hump on the back of the body may become very obvious and affect the patient's self-perception and body image.
 - On the inside, many organs such as the heart, lungs, bladder and other finer nerves are usually compressed, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness, numbness, burning urine sensation, constipation, dullness of the mind, fullness of stomach and many more.
 - Yoga asana has proven to be helpful both as supportive and standalone mode of intervention in restoring the curvature of the spine back to favourable alignment.
 - The asana is sequenced to bring balance in the muscles; supporting and running parallel to the spine. Depending on the degree of curvature, other muscles too need to be targeted and worked on in a stepwise manner.
 - Minor degree scoliosis can easily be worked on at home based on the guidelines below:
- The following sequence of Asanas can help to relieve the tight muscles that pull the spine to one side. It allows for a good lengthening of the spine, relieving any nervous compression in between the vertebral bones. It stimulates the muscles to realign towards the centre and help to restore the spinal curvature.
- Please **AVOID** any twisting pose in the early stage of practice.
- The severity of the curvature is decided based on the Cobb's Angle.
 - Minor (below 20 degree)
 - Moderate (below 40 degree)
 - Severe (Above 40 degree)
 - The usual treatment approach is:
 - < 20 degree – Gentle exercises (yoga, swimming and brisk walking), postural education, and observing the progress of curvature without active intervention.
 - < 40 degree – Gentle exercises (yoga, swimming and brisk walking), postural education, and wearing brace to prevent the curve from progressing further.
 - > 40 degrees – Usually in this category, patients are advised to have a corrective spine surgery.

1. Tadasana (Palm Tree Pose)

Lengthens the spine, signals for balance in muscles at the back



- Can be done without heel raise in the initial phase.
- Balance weight to feel equal on both sides of the heel.
- Pelvis to be squared and facing forward (Check for rotation and undo it).
- Shoulder blades are pulled downwards and drawn closer towards the spine.
- Arms stretched above the head, parallel to or behind the ears with elbow pointing outside.
- Feel tall, like someone pulling you from above.
- Hold pose for 5 to 10 breaths. Repeat 2x.

2. Marjari-asana (Cat Stretch Pose)

Activates erector spinae muscles and massages the spine



- Start in neutral cat pose. Place the palms under the shoulders and knees under the hips with the knees kept hip-width apart. See to it that there is a square forming between the palms and knees.
- Relax the shoulder blades and activate the chest by drawing

the shoulder blades backwards, closer towards the spine.

- Mildly bend the elbows to protect them.
- Tuck the toes on the mat and hold the heels from moving when in pose.
- Inhale and drop the belly down while lifting the chest, neck and head up. Hold for 3 deep breaths here.
- Exhale slowly and deeply while tucking the buttocks in, drawing the belly deep inside and rounding the upper back. Hold for 3 deep breaths here.
- Repeat 2x.

3. Parvatasana (Mountain Pose)

Activates and stretches hamstring, calves, soles and spine



- Start in neutral cat pose. Place the palms under the shoulders and knees under the hips with the knees hip-width apart. See to it that there is a square forming between the palms and knees.
- Relax the shoulder blades and activate the chest by drawing

the shoulder blades backwards closer towards the spine.

- Mildly bend the elbows to protect them.
- Lift the knees off the ground and push the buttocks backwards and upwards towards the sky.
- Lock the knees and try to press the heel downwards on the floor while keeping the feet facing forward.
- Look in between the legs and do 3 to 5 deep breathings.
- Exhale slowly and release the pose.
- Repeat 2x.

4. Balasana (Child Pose)

Stretches the gluteal region while relaxing the spine



- Start in neutral cat pose. Place the palms under the shoulders and knees under the hips with the knees hip-width apart. See to it that there is a square forming between the palms and knees.

- Flatten the ankles and slowly drop the buttocks towards the heels. Place a pillow in between the buttocks and heels to bridge the gap if any.
- Ensure feet is parallel to one another at the back, toes facing back.
- Knees can be open to create space for abdomen to relax.
- Drop the weight on the shoulders completely and allow a good space to be maintained between the ear lobe and the top of the shoulders.
- Rest here for 10 deep breaths.
- Repeat 2x.

5. Halasana (Plough Pose)

Uses the lower body weight to induce traction on the spine



- Start in shavasana (corpse pose). Relax the whole body by doing a few rounds of deep breathing. Consciously relax all muscles which are tight by bringing the mind to focus on it and breathe the tension away.

- Once ready, draw the knees close to the abdomen and gently lift it high up towards the sky.
- Use the body's momentum to lift the lower back with the support of the hands (place the hands at the lower back and give a gentle push).
- Slowly and cautiously lower down the feet backwards until a comfortable point (continue using the hands to support the back while dropping the feet backwards).
- Ensure breathing is comfortable, back is straight and pelvis is neutral.
- Rest here for 10 deep breaths before slowly returning to shavasana.
- Repeat 2x.

Natural Living

Balancing the 'Inner Environment'

by Roy



We live in the digital era filled with amazing innovations. Human lives are connected more than ever with the accessible Internet. However, does the digital era and fast-paced living distance us from our essential provider - mother nature? Lately, it seems that Mother Nature has been trying to get our attention. Its signals are increasingly louder, strident, and hard to miss. Some of these signals have produced a lethal aftermath.

According to the United Nations, the current number of storms, floods, and heatwaves is five times greater than it was in 1970. Although this increase should be partially attributed to the fact that we have better data now than we did half a century ago, numerous studies point to the heightened frequency of extreme weather phenomena these days: abnormally high or low temperatures, torrential rains, mudslides, prolonged droughts, and fierce forest fires. The

number of people displaced by the effects of climate change is now greater than ever before.

Despite these various distress signals, humanity has hitherto been unable to alter its current disastrous actions to our planet. This lack of effective action is not just due to certain corporations and countries pushing their capitalist-oriented agendas at the expense of nature, but also due to our deep-rooted human nature.

First, we have to understand that the world is a projection of our own minds, that the external environment is only a reflection of the environment within our own selves. Also, Nature is all out of balance because our minds, emotions, and nature are out of sync. We have lost control of the mind due to lack of right thinking and right action in relation to ourselves, to the environment and to others.

Maybe it is time we started taking responsibility for this inner environment of ours rather than seeking outside for environmental solutions because society and the world cannot be changed unless we first change and upgrade the quality of our own thinking patterns, emotional responses, and consciousness. The mental and emotional pollution within us is a greater hazard than any external pollution, and it has to be cleaned up first. To bring about this change, to restore our own inner balance and to harmonise the inner and outer worlds is the work of yogic science.

Yoga can successfully re-educate the twenty-first-century mind and reveal the deeper qualities of peace, love, tolerance, acceptance, and understanding which have become buried deep underneath the debris of selfishness and desire. Yoga means a complete life, both inner and outer. It means a life of opening up to oneself, to others, to the environment and to the cosmos. It brings the unruly mind and emotions back under our control and restores peace, poise and tranquillity to our inner world, thus deepening our understanding of, and relationship to, not only ourselves but also to Nature and the world around us.

When we practice yoga, our body, mind, and emotions become more refined and subtle. Our whole way of acting and thinking changes and begins to undergo a transformation. We then begin to feel the environment as a part of our own selves, and therefore worthy of love and respect. If something is wrong outside, we will very quickly feel it within ourselves due to the heightened awareness which yoga provides. Conversely, if the environment is sick and depleted, we will become sick and depleted too. Yoga helps us develop an inner wholeness and integrity which is then projected outwards to the other parts of the whole of which we are only a minute fraction.

The process of cultivating self-awareness allows us to sense other living beings which is part of the eco-system we live in. A very important environmental consciousness we must cultivate involves preventing the cruel taking of innocent animal lives, which the peaceful and sympathetic natural mind cannot accept. Instead of killing and mistreating animals, we can learn from them by living closer to them and observing how they interact with the environment. Animals are closer to Nature than we are. Animals follow Nature's laws and rhythms with perfect acceptance, eat the right amount of the right food at the right time, rise and sleep with the sun, mate only at fixed times, and take from the environment only that which is necessary for their daily need.



It is our moral conduct and a sense of self-restraint which endorse life and society, and enable us to maintain individual, social, and therefore global balance and integrity. Furthermore, it is right thinking and actions that put us in touch with our natural qualities and help us gain mastery over our inner environment. When we incorporate them into our lives, our minds start to broaden and open out into new vistas of experience, into a world of expanded awareness and understanding. In the ecological scheme of natural laws, it is the ethical side of our human nature which we have to pay the greatest attention now, and then we can begin the re-education of the modern mind, heal broken emotions and fractured awareness, and provide ourselves with a strong, steady base from which to lead a healthy integrated life. **YM**

Namaskar dearest readers,

On the 18th of March 2020, our country went through a nationwide lockdown to combat the global pandemic of Corona Virus. Our government took considerable measures to make sure that the safety of our citizens became the mission of hundreds and thousands of those in the front line - the police, military and medical officers were on their toes round the clock. We thank them with utmost reverence for the sacrifices made to keep all of us safe.

Due to the pandemic, the Malaysian Yoga Society (MYS) partook in a support initiative in response to the calls of distress from members of our society. The President of MYS, Master Manisekaran, assembled a team of youths nicknamed MAYI Youth, and with the support of 25 dynamic young individuals, the Covid-19 Lifeline Support task was executed.

Our main aim was to reach out to the vulnerable members of the society who were impacted by sudden loss of income during the Movement Control Order (MCO). We also reached out to single mothers, senior citizens, and the physically disabled. MAYI Youth team commenced the project with the aid of many friends and families who provided support in cash and kind. With a support team readily available on social media platforms, we were able to connect with our targeted community members.



With the assistance of dynamic volunteers from far and near, our team worked on a 24 to 48-hour response strategy to reach out to areas within Klang Valley (i.e. Petaling Jaya, Puchong, Kota Damansara, Selayang, Gombak, Rawang, and Klang). We registered our list of needy families with the local welfare council (JKM) to ensure smooth handing over of the food supplies. The groceries which were mainly dry food consisted of a package of basic items such as a 10 kg bag of rice, cooking oil, milk, spices, tea sachets, biscuits and some other essentials. Each family was given a package to tide them over for three weeks.

On hearing the plight of families running low on cooking supplies in other states, we decided to extend a helping hand to a few neighbouring states namely Selangor, Perak, Pahang, and Penang. By the 4th week of the MCO, we had reached out to more than 500 families consisting of more than 2,000 individuals. We were fortunate to also provide aid to many families of foreign workers who were on a day to day wage. The volunteer members displayed outstanding courage to reach out to fellow members of humanity. We can only utter our utmost heartfelt gratitude to all those who served selflessly and made sacrifices with love to help fellow beings. **YM**



Featured Asana

Kashtha Takshanasana (Chopping Wood)

Step by Step:

1. Starting position: Squat with the feet flat on the floor about 45cm apart. The knees should be fully bent and separated.
2. Clasp the fingers of both hands together and place them just above the floor between the feet. Straighten the arms and keep them straight throughout the practice. The elbows should be inside the knees and the eyes should remain open.
3. Imagine chopping wood – Inhale as you raise the arms above and behind the head, stretching the spine upward.
4. Look up towards the hands.
5. Make a downward stroke with the arms, as if chopping wood. Expel the breath (exhale) making a 'Ha!' sound. The hands should return near the floor in between the feet.
6. This is one round.

Benefits:

- Loosens up the pelvic girdle and tones the pelvic muscles.
- Has a special effect on the usually inaccessible muscles of the back between the shoulder blades, as well as the shoulder joints and upper back muscles.
- Helps to release frustration and lighten the mood.



Vegan Sticky Date Pudding

By: Nicole Yong Yen Yee

Wet Ingredients:

- 180g Dates (kurma), (about 20 pcs) pitted, chopped as finely as well.
- 400ml Organic soy milk
- 2 teaspoons Apple cider vinegar
- 5 tablespoon/ 75ml Extra virgin coconut oil
- 1 tablespoon Organic black strap molasses

Dry Ingredients:

- 250g Unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- 40g Organic coconut sugar

Caramel Sauce:

- 200ml Coconut milk
- 200g Organic coconut Sugar
- 1 tablespoon Organic black strap molasses

Decorations:

Yogurt ice-cream

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Place the organic soy milk and dates in a saucepan and bring the mixture to a boil. Turn off the heat, and set aside.
3. Grease 9-inch square baking pan with oil and place a layer of parchment paper. Set aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, mix all the dry ingredients except organic coconut sugar.
5. When the dates have softened, add in the rest of the wet ingredients in the saucepan and stir evenly.
6. Pour the wet ingredients into the large mixing bowl with the dry ingredients. Mix all into the batter. Then, add in the organic coconut sugar and mix it gently.
7. Pour the batter into the baking pan and place it in the oven. Bake around 15 minutes, then lower the temperature to 180°C. Bake for another 25 minutes until golden colour, or a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.
8. Once baked, allow the cake to cool a bit then use toothpick to poke holes all over the top of the cake.
9. Warm up the caramel sauce in a sauce pan, and pour it on top of the cake.
10. Serve warm with a scoop yogurt ice cream and some extra caramel sauce.



Schedule of Courses: Dec 2020 - Mar 2021

DEC 20

04/12/2020	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
05/12/2020	USJ	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
06/12/2020	BSR	Yoga Therapist Certification Course
06/12/2020	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
07/12/2020	DU	Dance Yoga Instructor Course
07/12/2020	BFS	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
07/12/2020	SK	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
07/12/2020	KLG	Super Yoga Kids School Holiday Programme
12/12/2020	BSR & Online	Pranayama (Breathing Technique) Instructor/Practitioner Course
14/12/2020	KLG	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
14/12/2020	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
14/12/2020	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate (Chinese)
14/12/2020	KLG	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
17/12/2020	DU	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advanced

JAN 21

10/01/2021	USJ	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
16/01/2021	BFS/BSR	Wellness Yoga Workshop for Scoliosis Management
16/01/2021	KLG	Mini Detox Workshop
17/01/2021	KLG	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
17/01/2021	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
24/01/2021	USJ	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
24/01/2021	SLG	Mini Detox Workshop
31/01/2021	BFS/USJ	Full Intestinal Cleansing Practical Session

FEB

01/02/2021	BSR	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course (female intake)
04/02/2021	BSR	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
06/02/2021	KLG	International Yoga Instructor Course - Intermediate
07/02/2021	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
14/02/2021	USJ	YogaAsana - Arm Balance and Core Activation Series Workshop
22/02/2021	BSR	Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course
27/02/2021	SLG	Jala Neti Workshop
27/02/2021	KLG	Mini Detox Workshop
28/02/2021	USJ	YogaAsana - the Back Bend Series Workshop

MAR

06/03/2021	KLG	Mini Detox Workshop
07/03/2021	BSR	Kundalini Kriya Yoga Course
13/03/2021	BSR	Pranayama (Breathing Technique) Instructor/Practitioner Course
14/03/2021	USJ	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
14/03/2021	BSR/USJ	YogaAsana - Handstand and Core Activation Series Workshop
14/03/2021	BFS	Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course
14/03/2021	KLG	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
15/03/2021	USJ	International Yoga Instructor Course - Foundation
15/03/2021	KLG	Ayurveda Massage Therapist Course
28/03/2021	USJ/BSR	Asthanga Yoga Workshop
28/03/2021	BSR	International Yoga Instructor Course - Advanced
27/03/2021	SLG	Wellness Yoga Workshop for Scoliosis Management



Pregnancy Yoga Instructor Course

Learn specialised interactive and therapeutic techniques to help mothers-to-be go through pregnancy and meet their crucial moment at the delivery ward with a clear mind, positive outlook, total confidence, dexterity, and super inner and outer strength.

4th Dec 2020
Bangsar

4th Feb 2021
Bangsar



Super Yoga Kids Instructor Course

Learn how to use fun presentation and dynamic techniques to capture the children's interest while closely following the traditional yogic teachings to nurture children holistically.

6th Dec 2020
Bangsar

22nd Feb 2021
Bangsar



Yoga Therapist Certification Course

A systematic yoga course that teaches therapeutic yoga applications for various ailments to help ourselves as well as others improve on specific health conditions. Learn step wise management in using yoga techniques to manage common ailments.

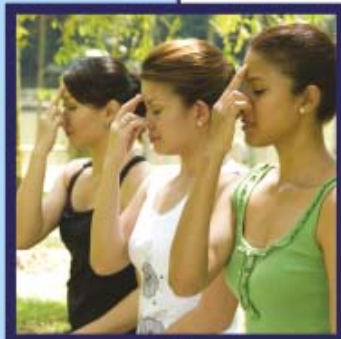
6th Dec 2020
Bangsar



Dance Yoga Instructor Course

This course adopts a cross-training methodology which combines both dance and yoga along with creative visualisations and choreography, drawing the creative talent while while expressing it beautifully.

7th Dec 2020
Damansara



Pranayama (Breathing Technique) Instructor / Practitioner Course

A great course to equip yourself with almost 100 types of pranayama techniques, mudras, and bandhas which are essential to yoga instructors' teaching as well as self practice.

12th Dec 2020
Bangsar

13th Mar 2021
Bangsar

INTERNATIONAL YOGA INSTRUCTOR COURSE (IYIC) DUAL CERTIFICATION



CO-CERTIFIED BY MALAYSIAN ASSOCIATION OF YOGA INSTRUCTORS
THIS COURSE IS REGISTERED WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PUSAT LATIHAN YOGA JASMANI (reg no: BZ5H805)

YOGA ALLIANCE REGISTERED
YOGA SCHOOL: 200-HOUR
YOGA TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

The International Yoga Instructor Course (IYIC) bases its success on personalised training and hands-on approach that nurture the confidence of budding teachers. Equip yourself with the highly effective IYIC teaching skills and expertise that will empower you to make the positive career change you have always dreamed about.

What you can expect in IYIC:

- Learn how to make the class lively, fun-filled, interesting, meaningful and promising.
- The accelerated methods taught at IYIC enables one to be fully equipped and independent in conducting classes.
- For existing teachers, it deepens the meaning of yoga, yogic principles and the practices.
- It opens the mind to the fullest potential of teaching.
- It creates a favourable environment of growth for both teacher and students.
- Learn new skills and gain deeper knowledge through detailed training.

For each level (Foundation, Intermediate, and Advanced), participants will get specialised training on various techniques, which include:

- Introduction of Yoga Philosophy
- Pranayama (Breathing Techniques) & Inner Clarity and Mind Management
- Teaching Methodologies (preparation and dissemination of teaching, effective communication skills, lesson planning, preparation of lesson portfolios, etc.)
- Asanas (Postures), Anatomy and Physiology, Shatkarma (Cleansing Techniques)

Intakes available at
Brickfields / Bangsar / Damansara / Selayang / Subang / Klang

Brickfields	3, Jalan Ang Seng 3, Brickfields, 50470 Kuala Lumpur.	+603 2260 5322
Bangsar	81A (1st Flr), Jalan Bangsar, 59200 Kuala Lumpur.	+603 2282 4980
Damansara Utama	89A&B (1st & 2nd Flr), Jalan SS21/37, D'sara Utama, 47400 PJ, Selangor.	+603 7726 6682
Selayang	8-1 & 9-1, Jalan Paragon Utama, Selayang Utama, 68100 Bt. Caves, Selangor.	+603 6127 5693
Subang	11(2nd Flr), Jalan USJ10/1A, 47620 Subang Jaya, Selangor.	+603 8021 7980
Klang	18A, Jalan Sanggul 1, Bandar Puteri, 41200 Klang, Selangor.	+603 5161 9110