

YOGA : HISTORY AND BENEFITS



"There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth;

- 1) *Not going all the way; and*
- 2) *Not starting at all." -Buddah*

YOGA: A BRIEF DEFINITION

The word yoga is Sanskrit for *Yoke*, or union. In the practice of yoga we seek to create union between the mind and body

- 1 . Yoga is the perfect example of holistic health because of this combination of mind and body. After all the body cannot exist without the mind and vice versa.
- 2 . By repairing the body, we are more able to repair the mind. If you feel tense in the neck, shoulders, or hips, you'll find it more difficult to relax and be happy.
- 3 . In order to do this Yoga is comprised of the asana (physical postures) and a philosophy that offers tools to finding true, lasting happiness.

HISTORY

Yoga is a 5000 year old tradition. In India monks went into seclusion for years with the goal of creating a dis-ease free strong body. The original intention was to be able to sit in meditation for hours but with a achy body that is impossible to do.

The postures of yoga were each created for a specific health purpose. To Detoxify, realign musculature, strengthen muscle, and create flexibility.

Along with correcting the fallacies of the body, these yogis went about trying to find how to correct fallacies of the mind. An entire philosophy was created, based solely around leading a human being finding his or

her bliss. The teachings were so dead-on that they are still practiced 5000 years later.

Yoga has become more popular than ever, with celebrities, politicians, business people, and almost every walk of life currently practicing.

The important thing to understand about this way of thinking is yoga is not a religion. You can be from any background and reap its benefits.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF YOGA:

While the philosophy remains fairly consistent among different disciplines the physical aspect of yoga comes in a few forms.

-Vinyasa- a strengthening flow class, postures lead into postures

-Hatha- postures are held for minutes, this is believed to really affect the body, as each posture is designed to gain health benefits. The longer you hold the pose, the more effective it is.

-Vini- a gentle type of yoga, well suited for those just starting out, or for those who'd like to go at a slower pace

-Kundalini- this school of thought believes that nerve centers in the body can get clogged up or inactive and this leads to poor health. Kundalini's repetitive posture flows (kriyas) unlock these blocks and leave you feeling wonderfully energized yet peaceful.

-Thai Yoga Massage- in some circumstances it is more helpful to have your instructor stretch your body out. First working out the muscles with massage technique then stretching them.

-Aero Yoga- also known as partner yoga, involving holds, mutual balancing, and a lot of fun

-Iyengar Yoga- (prop yoga) created by a yoga master named Iyengar in India, this type of yoga is very therapeutic. You are placed into positions with various props (blocks, straps, chairs,

blankets) and once you are comfortable are left in the pose for

minutes. Poses are chosen by how you are feeling and various dis-ease in the body that needs to be relieved.

-Restorative Yoga-Similar to Iyengar Yoga only reclined (on the back or floor) very therapeutic and completely relaxing. It turns the body's endocrine and nervous system on so the body can heal itself.

BENEFITS OF YOGA

- When performed properly, in conjunction with proper related breathing techniques, Yoga helps stimulate the circulatory system, the digestive process as well as the nervous and endocrine system.

- Massaging of ALL Organs of the Body

- Yoga is perhaps the only form of activity which massages all the internal glands and organs of the body in a thorough manner, including those – such as the prostate - that hardly get externally stimulated during our entire lifetime. Yoga acts in a wholesome manner on the various body parts. This stimulation and massage of the organs in turn benefits us by keeping away disease and providing a forewarning at the first possible instance of a likely onset of disease or disorder.

- Increasing lubrication of the joints, ligaments and tendons – likewise, the well-researched yoga positions exercise the different tendons and ligaments of the body.

Surprisingly it has been found that the body which may have been quite rigid starts

experiencing a remarkable flexibility in even those parts which have not been consciously work upon. Why? It is here that the remarkable research behind yoga positions proves its mettle. Seemingly unrelated "non strenuous" yoga positions act upon certain parts of the body in an interrelated manner. When done together, they work in harmony to create a situation where flexibility is attained relatively easily.

Increasing Flexibility – yoga has positions that act upon the various joints of the body including those joints that are never really on the 'radar screen' let alone exercised.

Complete Detoxification – By gently stretching muscles and joints as well as massaging the various organs, yoga ensures the optimum blood supply to various parts of the body. This helps in the flushing out of toxins from every nook and cranny as well as providing nourishment up to the last point. This leads to benefits such as delayed ageing, energy and a remarkable zest for life.

Excellent toning of the muscles – Muscles that have become flaccid or weak are stimulated repeatedly to shed excess flab and flaccidity.

YOGA IS FOR EVERYONE

The beauty of Yoga is that it can be practiced by anyone. It doesn't matter how old you are or what shape you are in. If you desire a more limber body, Yoga is one of the quickest ways to attain it. Yoga also increases an individual's physical coordination and promotes better posture. And it does all this without potentially hazard negative effects that are often incurred in high-impact forms of exercise.

"Yoga teaches us to cure what need not be endured, and endure what cannot be cured."
B.K.S. Iyengar



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