Role of Yoga in Promotion of Health
HEMALATA KRISHNARAO KARVEKAR, GODBOLE M. M., JADHAV K. K.

Introduction

Ayurveda believes in the concept of prevention is better than cure. As stated by Acharya Charak-Swatsthasya swasthya rakshanam, Aaturasya vikara prashamanam. Considering the motto of Ayurveda, the subject swasthavritta mainly deals with prevention and promotion of every individual of their physical, mental and social health.

Yoga is an old discipline from India. It is both spiritual and physical. Yoga uses breathing techniques, exercise and meditation. It claims to improve health and happiness.

Ayurveda have been developed as the methods of bodily purification. The aim of Yoga is to cleanse the internal organs and thereby create harmony between the major panic flow, Ida and Pingala and attending physical and mental purification and balance.

According to both Ayurveda and Hatha Yoga, an imbalance of the Doshas will result in illness. In Yoga, we try to protect ourselves from injury and attempt to avoid harming ourselves by overindulging in unhealthy foods.

The true essence of Yoga revolves around elevating the life force or ‘Kundalini’ at the base of the Spine. It aims to achieve this through a series of physical and mental exercises. At the physical level, the methods comprise various Yoga posture or ‘Asanas’ that aim to keep the body healthy. The mental techniques include breathing exercises or ‘Pranayama’ and meditation or ‘Dhyana’ to discipline the mind.

The ultimate goal of Yoga is, however, to help the individual to transcend the self and attain enlightenment. As the Bhagavad Gita says,

Samtvam yoga uchyate. Bhagvad Gita 2/48

Yogaha karmasu kaushalam. Bhagvad Gita 2/50

A person is said to have achieved Yoga, the union with the self, when the perfectly disciplined mind gets freedom from all desires and becomes absorbed in the self alone.

The modern lifestyle lures us with comfort and convenience, in the form of gadgets & gizmos that have become vital to our daily lives. But, it comes with a big price tag and we pay for it with lifestyle diseases like obesity, hypertension & cardiac problems among the others.

In this modern world, our environment is fighting for survival and we human suffer from more & more physical and psychological stress, we cannot always control them but can learn how to face them and to this end Yoga is as good an invention it has ever been.

Review of Yoga

Importance of Yoga

Yoga is not a religion; it is a way of living that aims towards ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body.’ Yogic exercises recharge the body with cosmic energy and facilitates:

- Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony
- Promotes self-healing
- Removes negative blocks from the mind and toxins from the body
- Enhances personal power
- Increases self-awareness
- Help in attention, focus and concentration, especially important for children
- Reduces stress and tension in the physical body by activating the parasympathetic nervous system

Yogic Practices for Health and Wellness

The art of practicing Yoga helps in controlling an individual’s mind, body and soul. It brings together physical and mental disciplines to achieve a peaceful body and mind; it helps manage stress and anxiety and keeps you relaxing. It also helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and body tone. It improves respiration, energy and vitality.

The widely practiced Yoga Sadhanas are: Yama, Niyama, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi, Bandhas and Mudras, Shatkarmas, Yuktahara, Mantra-japa, Yukta-karma etc.

Yamas are restraints and Niyamas are observances. These are considered to be prerequisites for further Yogic practices. Asanas capable of bringing about stability of body and mind.

Sthir sukhasanam. Pa.yo.da. 2/46

Pranayama consist of developing awareness of one’s