

energise with yoga

by Patricia Ezechie



Photo: Marte Lundy Rekeas of MLR Photo

FIVE MINUTES A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY



Inhale deeply , relax & lengthen through spine, Exhale. Take 10 breaths



Inhale deeply , Lengthen arms above head Exhale. Take 3 breaths



Inhale & exhale deeply Release left arm down. Take 3 breaths



Inhale deeply , Lengthen arms up. Exhale. Take 3 breaths



Inhale & exhale deeply Release right arm down. Take 3 breaths



Inhale deeply , relax & lengthen through spine, Exhale. Take 10 breaths



Inhale & Exhale, Relax.



Inhale & lengthen up. Exhale and twist. Take 3 breaths & release



Inhale & Exhale. Relax.



Inhale & lengthen up. Exhale and twist. Take 3 breaths & release

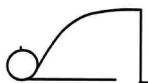


Inhale & Exhale. Relax.

Inhale & lengthen up. Exhale & relaease down. Take 5 breaths.



Inhale deeply , relax through spine, keep back of neck long, chin tucked Exhale.



Inhale deeply push down through feet and lift hips towards celing exhale & hold. Release down



Inhale deeply & bring knees into chest, exhale and release through lower back. Relax



Exhale and relaease legs down. Completely relax through body, inhaling and exhaling through each muscke group. Relax body, relax mind.

WWW.YOGASTICKMEN.COM

© Yogastickmen 2007

21st Century life is fast – fast, demanding and sometimes unrelenting. The advances we have made in science and technology have provided us with a quality of life that would have been unimaginable just a century ago. Life expectancy has almost doubled, we have seen the world shrink to the point where we are able to communicate with almost every region instantaneously, and diseases which were once destroyers of whole communities have been completely eradicated. But as incredible as these advances are and continue to be, we have had to keep pace with them. This has led to a tremendous increase in physical and mental demands. The result is stress – a word also synonymous with 21st Century life.

In 2000, stress related ailments accounted for around 75% of GP consultations in the UK. Stress has been proved to increase immune related illnesses through its suppression of the immune system, and has also been shown to play a contributory role in diseases such as cancer, ulcerative colitis and rheumatoid arthritis. Stress has been linked to mental illness, including schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and depression, sleep and eating disorders, and one of the greatest challenges facing society at this current time: obesity. In the last 20 years this has quadrupled in the UK and it is currently estimated to affect over 20% of the population.

Stress is the epidemic of the 21st century but unlike so many diseases in the past, the remedy is simple, inexpensive and takes as little as 5 minutes a day. We just need to LEARN TO RELAX and make active relaxation a part of our daily lives. Please note, that by relaxation I do not mean relaxing with cup of tea or glass of wine, or lounging in front of the telly. I am referring to the deep relaxation that

“Now scientific research has finally borne out what we Yoga enthusiasts have known for some time. Relaxation is good for you!”

can only be achieved by releasing tension from the body on a physical level, while calming and quieting the mind. Such relaxation is synonymous with practices such as Yoga.

As yogi/nis we are well aware of the positive benefits of Yoga and relaxation for both mind and body. Now scientific research has finally borne out what we Yoga enthusiasts have known for some time. Relaxation is good for you!

Harvard Medical School recently published a study showing that deep relaxation causes physical changes to the body, and that established practitioners of Yoga and other relaxation techniques have far greater ability to fight disease. Genes responsible for protecting us from pain and disorders such as infertility, high blood pressure and rheumatoid arthritis are ‘switched on’ in yogi/nis.

The ‘switching on’ of protective genes, ‘The Relaxation Effect’, is speculated to be as powerful as medical drugs (without the side effects). More importantly, everyone can benefit by taking up these practices at any time. Even more exciting news is that effects are cumulative. The more regular and sustained your practice, the stronger the effect and the stronger the immune system. So the cure for 21st centuryitis, more commonly known as ‘stress’, is simple: LEARN TO RELAX and make relaxation a part of your everyday life. It doesn’t have to be complicated, expensive or time consuming. Just start with 5 minutes a day and begin to relax your way to perfect health.

To contact details and apply for a FREE CD, see page 41

metamorphosis

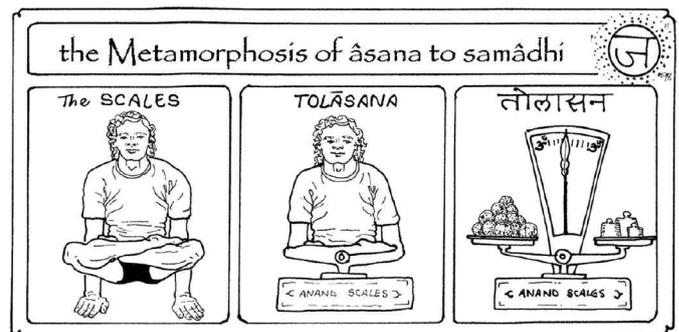
by Janita

tolāsana – the scales

Scales: what exactly do we mean by that? Scales are an instrument to compare mass, and are also the symbol for justice. We draw things to scale, you can tip the scales, you can rate things on a scale of 1 to 10. Your voice can go up and down the scales and even in another sense have them fall from your eyes - I could go on and on. But usually the term invokes the image of a pair of scales, something with which to measure or balance. And what is balance? It is the state of equilibrium, of having all your faculties in harmony.

In Yoga we seek to find balance - not only in the physical body, but also more subtly in the 3 gunas, the 3 doshas, the 3 shariras and the 5 koshas, in order to be in perfect harmony with the Absolute. This is the true aim of Yoga.

The three gunas are the qualities or constituents of prakriti, nature. They are sattva (purity), rajas (passion) and tamas (inertia). Sattva, apart from being the principle of purity, lucidity, is also the territory of the 5 cognitive senses, the jnanendriyas (that is the ears, eyes, skin, tongue and nose) and of manas, the mind. Rajas provides the 5 organs of action – the tongue, hands, legs, and the organs of reproduction and elimination. Tamas is the province of the 5 elements, the tanmatra – earth, water, fire, air and ether.



The 3 doshas (and here I am referring to the ‘bodily humours’ rather than the faults or impurities which detract from spiritual evolution, cited in ancient texts) direct the physiological and physio-chemical activities of the body; they are vata, pitta and kapha, and the balance of these 3 is necessary for good health. Vata is air and ether; pitta is fire and water; kapha is earth and water, thus they are linked to the tanmatra.

The 3 shariras are the three bodies of the being – the static, dense body called sthula sharira, the subtle body called sukshma sharira, and the causal body called karana sharira.

These 3 shariras contain the 5 sheaths or envelopes of the being, the koshas. Sthula sharira contains the annamayakosha, the sheath constituted of gross matter and sustained by food. To maintain balance in this sheath one practises asana, kriya, relaxation and pure diet. Sukshma sharira contains pranamayakosha, manomayakosha and vijñanamayakosha. Pranamayakosha, the sheath composed of energy, is balanced through the mastery of breathing and energy control. Manomayakosha is the mental sheath and is composed of awareness, feeling and judgment not derived from subjective experience.

Manomayakosha is balanced through meditation and devotional sessions. Vijñanamayakosha, the intellectual sheath, is maintained in balance through right understanding of purpose and priorities. And lastly anandamayakosha, the ‘bliss sheath’, is balanced through the practice of joy in all circumstances, and work in a state of relaxation.