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## Yogic Exercises And Nature Cure - Treatment For Some Common Ailments

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Yoga is an ancient science that has been practised in India by our ancestors. Practice of yoga has been referred to in our Vedas, Upnishads, Puranas, Smritis and Bhagwat Gita. Patanjali Yoga Sutra is a universally accepted treatise for the control of modification of mind and soul alongwith body also. This paper presents the several invaluable techniques and exercises of healthy living practised in yoga and nature-cure practices which have been advocated by our ancient sages. Today's modern life, in which we are living in such a polluted atmosphere and odd conditions coupled with the growing stresses and strains, has multiplied this article's necessity and importance enormously. The present study is based on the secondary studies incorporated in our ancient literature as narrated by our yoga and nature cure exponents.

### Meaning of Yoga

The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj which means to bind, to join, to attach, to unite and to yoke. It also means union or communion. It is the true union of our Will with the Will of God.

In Bhagwad Gita Lord Krishna says, "The mind is restless and hard to control. But it can be trained by constant practice (abhyasa) and by freedom from desires (vairagya). A man who can not control his mind will find it difficult to attain this divine communion; but the self-controlled man can attain it if he tries hard and directs his energy by the right means." "Yoga karmesu kaushalam" – Bhagwad Gita. "It means to complete every work efficiently. Yoga is skill in actions. It is balance. It is known as the disconnection (vivyoga) of the connection (Samyoga) with suffering." Bhagwad Gita Patanjali in Yog Sutra, "yogas chitta vritti Nirodhah." It means controlling the thought waves of the mind.

Radhakrishna says, "Yoga is that ancient path which leads individual from darkness to light." Yog Bhashya, "yoga is ecstasy (Samadhi)."

The knowledge of Indian philosophy is essential in order to understand the concepts and principles of yoga. It is believed that the real spiritual wisdom leading to Moksha can only be acquired by getting perfection in yoga. Although yoga has acclaimed a worldwide recognition but it is observed that this popularity of yoga is mainly due to its healthcare aspect i.e. Hatha Yoga alone. It is said that a healthy and sound mind invariably necessitates a healthy and sound body. Hatha Yoga is a surest way to acquire a disease free and vigorous body. It has laid tremendous emphasis to the practice of Asanas and cleansing acts. The asanas are practised to energise the body and mind with the requisite vitality and vigour. In this process, yogic exercises and pranayam, have a very important role to play by helping to keep the body healthy and help the mind to concentrate in the right direction for achieving the higher goals of life.

## Yogic Exercises

Among yogic exercises, many asanas and pranayam practices have been elaborated here for keeping the body healthy and curative purposes. It is important to mention here a few good and easy asanas and pranayam methods for achieving the objective of this study.

1. **Tadasan** : Tadasan is such a position in which a person stands in a standing erect pose. One must stand with heels and toes. Knees should be tightened and body weight must be on both feet. The arms should be stretched over the head. While keeping stomach in, chest up and spine erect. Tadasan is useful for the patients who are suffering from constipation, indigestion, pain in abdomen and diarrhoea cough and common cold.
2. **Vrikshasan** : One must stand like a vriksha or tree as one stands in tadasan. Technique of bending the right leg and placing the right foot heel at the root of the left thigh and allowing the right foot to rest on the thigh must be adopted. Balance of the body should be on the left foot after raising the hands above the head and joining the palms. It keeps the balance and maintain the erect posture. It tones the leg muscles, nervous system and improves concentration of mind.
3. **Padmasan** : It is known as lotus pose asana. In this the whole spine should remain erect and soles of the feet turned up. Bend the right leg from the knee and by holding the right foot with hands and place it on the left thigh. Bend the left leg from the knee and by holding the left foot with hands, place it on the right thigh. In padamasan, hands should be placed in front of the navel with one palm placed over the other. It removes stiffness of knees and ankles and keeps the abdomen and spine healthy.
4. **Gomukhasana** : This asana is cow faced pose. In this first sit on the ground, bend the left heel and sit over it. Place the right leg over the left tucking the heel close to the left buttock. Raise the right hand, bend it at the elbow and take it to the back of the shoulders. It helps in keeping the shoulder joints healthy, flexible and strong. It is a very useful for curing ailments related to the functioning of lungs. It is very much beneficial for those who are suffering from cold, cough, piles, eczema, skin diseases asthma, arthritis and cervical spondylosis etc.
5. **Vajrasan** : It is a sitting pose with folded legs. It is useful for the patients of constipation, indigestion, gastric trouble, diarrhoea, common cold, insomnia, piles and asthma etc.
6. **Bhujangasa** : It is a snake and cobra pose. It is practised in such common ailments like asthma, arthritis, diabetes, pre mature ejaculation, cough and gastric trouble etc.
7. **Matsyasan** : Matsyasan is practised in a fish pose. Lie back on the floor while keeping the bent legs on the floor. This asana is good for back pain. It is also helpful to restore the gap between spinal discs, cold, cough, insomnia and obesity etc.
8. **Chakrasan** : It is practised in a circle. It is also known as urdhva (upward) dhanurasana. In this, the person lies down with back on the floor, bends the arms and places the palms under the shoulders. One must bend the legs from the knees and place the feet near the hips. It is helpful in indigestion, cold, cough and insomnia etc.
9. **Sarvangasan** : This shoulder stand pose affects the whole body. One must lie flat on the back with legs straight and place the hands on the sides of the thighs with palms on the floor. It is good enough in the treatment of insomnia, piles, obesity, eczema and skin diseases and diabetes mellitus also.
10. **Halasan** : Halasan benefits abdominal organs, keeps spine supple, relieves backache, prevents gas troubles and relieves stomach pain etc.
11. **Shirshasan** : It is a head stand pose. Practice of shirshasan increases memory and thinking power. It increases lung power, relieves cold and cough.
12. **Shavasana** : It refers to a pose similar to a shava or corpse lying on the floor. It is useful for the patients of Asthma. It removes fatigue, calms the mind and soothes the nerves.

**Pranayama :** Pranayama is very prominent part of yoga science of controlling breathing action. It includes inhalation of breathing, pause and suspension of breathing; exhalation of breathing, pause and suspension of breathing in association with certain body poses. By implementing and controlling these patterns, we can strengthen the respiratory system, soothe the nervous system and control the mind. It is of four types.

1. **Ujjai Pranayama :** In this pranayama, lungs are fully expanded. Sit in a padmasana pose. Rest the chin on the joint between collar bones and the upper part of breast bone. Stretch the arms and the back of the hands on knees. Touch index fingers with the thumbs and keep the other fingers straight. To start Ujjai, take a slow, steady and deep breath through the nostrils. Hold the breath for a second or two. Exhale slowly till the lungs are completely empty. Repeat the cycle for about five minutes.
2. **Kapalabhati Pranayama :** In this, the air is forcibly drawn in and out like the bellows of a black smith. In kapalbhati, one is to sit in padmasana, take a slow, full breath (inhalation) and exhale fast and forcefully. After this, one is to hold the breath for a second and repeat the cycle of five to ten times. This pranayama tones the liver, spleen and pancreas. It tones the abdominal muscles and also improves digestion.
3. **Sheetali Pranayam :** This pranayama cools the whole system so it is known as sheetali. One has to inhale by drawing the air from over the tongue and making a sound. Action is to be taken like drinking a cold drink with a straw. It soothes the eyes, tones the liver and spleen. It also improves digestion.
4. **Sheetakari Pranayam :** It is quite similar to sheetali pranayam. After sitting on padmasana pose, taking the tip of the tongue out between the teeth, keeping the tongue flat. One must inhale by drawing the air from over the tongue and making a sound (SSSS). After inhalation, withdraw the tongue in and close the mouth. Hold the breath for three to five seconds. Then exhale slowly through the nose while making a sound of (huuuu). Raise the head and repeat actions 3-7 times. Go on doing at least for five minutes and at the end lie down in shavasana. Its benefits are useful for eyes, liver, spleen and good for digestion.

Now it would be essential to narrate the nature – cure treatment for some common ailments. Nature – cure is a very old method of healing. Its references are found in our Vedas and other ancient texts. The Swastha Vritta described in Ayurveda is basically Naturopathy. Naturopathy is a science of healthy living. Nature-cure is also an art and as well as science of healthy living. It is rightly defined as a system of man building in harmony with constructive principles of Nature on physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of living. It is a system of health promotive, disease preventive curative and restorative. Few ailments may be treated through Nature Cure as given below : Constipation is the root cause of all diseases. For the treatment of constipation, the first step is to keep on fast for two to three days. During fast, lemon juice with honey in a luke warm water and lemon water enema is advisable in the morning daily. Surya Namaskara is also very useful for the treatment. The use of castor oil is prescribed in case of chronic constipation. Morning walk, mild pack over abdomen and help both of cold water is the best method for the treatment of constipation. In the morning before going to toilet a glass of cold water in summer and a glass of fresh water in winter may be taken and after a little walk is also advisable before going to toilet.

Another ailment is indigestion. It is the disorder of digestive system. For its treatment, mud pack over abdomen, hip bath and wet abdominal pack are advised. Lemon water enema, if practised once or twice a week is also helpful. Pain in abdomen is also a common problem. When this problem emerges, warm water enema should be practised for cleansing of bowels. Hot and cold fomentation, mud pack over abdomen and hip bath of warm water may stop the pain and give relief.

In case of coughing, it is of two types i.e. wet cough and dry cough. For nature – cure treatment, hot foot bath and chest pack are to be adopted. The patient should not take milk and milk products. Ginger juice mixed with honey and boiled water will be very effective in all cough conditions. Kunjula may be adopted regularly in the morning for three – four days along with Jal Neti so that respiratory tract may be cleansed. The sufferers of gastric trouble may also be treated with Nature Cure method. After cleansing the bowels with lemon water enema, mud pack and hip bath may be taken. Weekly fast, Agnisara Kriya and Nauli Kriya work like panacea in this disease.

Common cold and fever are indicators of accumulation of morbid matter in excess quantity in the body. For the treatment of common cold, the cleansing of stomach should be done by performing enema, kunjala and jalneti. By observing fast, digestive system may be given rest. During fast, lemon juice mixed with a glass of warm water may be taken three times a day. Hot foot bath and steam inhalation may be taken. The treatment of fever requires fasting, cold water enema, whole body sponge and cold hip bath. Ice-pack should be kept over the head if fever is high.

Diarrhoea is termed as the tendency of frequent loose motions. In case of diarrhoea, elimination of faecal matter and toxic substances which has been accumulated in the intestines may be done. It is cleansed by taking enema of fresh water mixed with lemon juice. Hip bath of cold water along with wet abdomen pack and mud pack over abdomen should be advised for quick relief.

Besides all these above mentioned diseases, some common ailments like colitis, headache, insomnia, piles, obesity, Eczema, skin diseases and high blood pressure can be treated if methods of Naturopathy are properly followed. Yogic purificatory procedures like Mud pack, kunjala, Jala Neti, Hip bath, warm water enema, fasting and Vastra Dhauti must cautiously be practised. Nature cure treatments and yogic exercises may be proved beneficial if performed regularly along with good eating habits like simple and sattvic meal.

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