

YOGA THERAPY

Patanjali says that Yoga is a science of preventing suffering.

The ancient discipline of Yoga offers us a timeless and holistic model of health and healing. Yoga is not exercise, nor is it a method for curing physical disease. It is about healing the individual person holistically, which means healing not only the body, but every aspect of the human system, including the mind and the emotions. Healing through Yoga may or may not result in the elimination of physical diseases from the body.

Yoga is a holistic healing system that addresses the needs of the whole person its approach to healing is extremely personalized.

You cannot heal the whole person unless you seek to understand the whole person. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that there can be no healing without the student's active participation. Unlike most healing systems, Yoga is self-empowering.

Suffering expresses itself in four ways:

Emotional state: When we become sick, our emotional patterns change, which is another way of saying that our emotions mirror our situation.

Negative mental attitudes: We may become very pessimistic or negative,

Physiological changes in the body: There may be changes in bodily patterns.

Breathing pattern: The normal breath is long and smooth, but if it becomes short or labored or very heavy.

Here below is a simple breathing technique and a relaxation practice designed as an example for daily use.

BREATHING AND FULL AND FULL YOGA BREATHING (Adapted from Pauline Jensen's Manual)

This is a preparatory breathing practice for doing Pranayama. It corrects the breathing pattern and increases the vital capacity of the lungs. It has 3 sections.

(a) Abdominal Breathing or Diaphragmatic Breathing

Sit erect but relaxed. Exhale. Inhale completely, slowly and continuously. The abdomen is made to bulge continuously with the air entering especially into the lower sections of the lungs. Before exhaling stop the breath for a second. While exhaling the abdomen is drawn inwards continuously and slowly. Before the breath is reversed, stop the breath

for a second and inhale. Repeat the breathing cycle. There should be no jerks in the whole process. It should be smooth, continuous and relaxing. The diaphragm separating the thorax from the abdomen descends during inhalation with the bulging of the abdomen. This increases the air-flow into the lower sections of the lungs.

(b) Thoracic (chest) breathing or intercostal breathing .In this sectional breathing performed while sitting erect, inhalation and exhalation are performed by expanding and contracting the chest only. Air flows through both nostrils slowly and continuously. The abdomen is controlled to avoid its bulging. The middle lobes are opened up fully by this type of breathing.

(c) Upper lobar breathing or clavicular breathing Sit erect . Raise the collar bones while inhaling. Keep the abdominal muscles contracted. The air is forced into the uppermost regions of the lungs thus ventilating the upper lobes. The sparingly used upper lobes of the lungs will be properly aerated by this breathing.

(d) Full Yogic Breathing

In complete Yogic breathing technique, all the above three types will be combined. During inhalation clavicular, chest, abdominal raise occurs sequentially and during exhalation the same sequence namely abdominal, chest and clavicular breathings occur. The whole process should be relaxing and comfortable, without any tension in the face.

RELAXATION

Lie down on the ground allowing the back to rest fully. Let the whole body collapse. Legs apart, arms away from waist, palms facing up. Have the feel of the whole body.

Observe abdominal muscles:

Feel the abdominal muscles bulging up and sinking down. The movements automatically get regularised and slow as we keep feeling the same. Count 10 cycles.

Association with breath:

Now recognise the inhalation associated with upward movement of the abdominal muscles and exhalation with the sinking down of the abdomen. Feel the deep breath down through the lungs and full exhalation emptying the lungs each time. No forceful breathing is done, but natural breathing is observed and felt. Continue for 10 cycles.

With feeling:

Each time we exhale, our body relaxes normally. Similarly when we inhale, our body gets energised due to supply of oxygen.

Let us feel these effects as we exhale and inhale in Shavasana. Let us feel the collapse of the body sinking as if into the ground each time we exhale; abdominal muscles going down. A little pause and the abdominal muscles start bulging up. Feel the whole body is getting light and energetic as we inhale fully. Enjoy the feeling of deep relaxation of the whole body as we exhale and strengthen the feeling of energization as we inhale. Repeat the process for 10 cycles. Normally the time taken for this Shavasana varies from 3 to 4 minutes. The patients learn the art of relaxing the body, natural relaxed breathing and develop a sense of deep awareness by this practice.

Awareness of the contact between the body and the floor:

Feel where the back of the head is touching the floor; the shoulders, the upper arms, the elbow; the lower arm; the back of the hand; the upper back; the middle of the back; the lower back; the back of the thighs; the calves; and the heels; feel the contact that the whole body has with the floor.

Body Parts Rotation:

After listening to the instructions, repeat them silently to yourself and take your awareness to that part of the body. Beginning with the right hand side. Right hand thumb; Index finger; middle finger; ring finger and little finger; palm of the hand; back of the hand; Wrist; lower arm, elbow; upper arm; shoulder; right side of the chest; abdomen; pelvic region; right thigh; knee; shin; calf; ankle; upper foot; heel sole of the foot; big toe; second; third; fourth and fifth. Repeat the same on the left side. Then to both heels; calves; back of the knees; back of the thighs; lower back; middle of the back; upper back; back of the neck; back of the head; top of the head; forehead; R & L eyes, nose; R&L cheeks; mouth; chin ; the whole face; front of the neck; chest; abdomen; pelvic region; thighs; knees; shins; feet; both legs, the torso, head and arms; the whole body (repeat several times).

Remain in silence. Then say let go of body awareness and become aware of your body lying on the floor in the room. Familiarize with the room. Then wriggle toes and fingers; move head from side to side; stretch the arms; then roll over onto your right side for a few minutes before slowly getting up.