

Yoga is the way of life for sportsman...

The Sanskrit word yoga means 'to join' or 'to yoke'. Yoga is the only form of exercise that emphasizes body, mind, and soul. Whereas other exercise methods focus on physical wellbeing. The ultimate aim of yoga is to establish equilibrium between physical fitness, mental health, and emotional balance.

Yoga is an activity that can be practiced by individuals of any age and fitness level. The physical poses are a stretch and hold method of exercise, which improves flexibility and increases suppleness. Higher flexibility is the ability to perform a greater range of motion. The greater the flexibility lower the chance of injury in sports or during movements. Greater flexibility also offers higher performance in sports due to correct movement and less internal resistance. The yoga asanas also improve balance. The body's balancing ability also reflects neuro-muscular coordination among the muscles. The balancing ability offers good stance and better execution of action while playing games and sports. The balancing ability is inversely correlated to lesser injury due to the avoidance of falls during play in games and sports.

The pranayama is an important part of the yoga practice. These techniques regulate the breath, calm the mind, and increase energy levels. A living person constantly keeps breathing without any extra effort. But with time, due to aging and other factors, the breathing becomes very shallow and the capacity of the lungs reduces. Breathing exercises, which are known as pranayam, improve the vital capacity of the lungs, which directly and indirectly improve the cardiovascular health of an individual. Pranayama can be performed by a person in his or her bed too if he or she is not well. Pranayama can be performed by a person of any age and gender. The pranayama allows inhaling more air (more oxygen). In many research studies, it is found that pranayama helps improve cardiovascular health.

The pranayama breathing practice is also a form of meditation. When we focus on our breathing, we stop thinking about the other aspects that may be the reason for stress in our lives. The breathing practice is one of the best ways to relieve stress. The stress reduction also improves hypertension (B.P.). The pranayama and similar breathing practices give benefits to the swimmers, shooters, and many other sports.

In sports, a word called 'Threshold' is used for 'Hypoxemia' and 'Hypoxia'. Hypoxemia is the low amount of oxygen in the blood, and hypoxia is the low amount of oxygen in tissues (muscles). This condition can be avoided if the athletes have better vital capacity. Pranayama is helpful to the athletes to overcome both conditions immediately if they can inhale a higher volume of air. Another Threshold for athletes is known as Lactic Acid Tolerance capacity. When athletes perform activities of higher intensity, the lactic acid accumulation increases in the body, and the athlete feels tired. The oxygen intake in higher amounts may delay the Lactic acid accumulation. Therefore, many athletes engage in cardiovascular activity. The pranayama may enable the athletes to increase air intake capacity, which may delay the lactic acid accumulation. This way, the pranayama helps athletes and others to overcome tiredness and feel energetic.

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment, without judgment, focusing on your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. It involves observing experiences as they unfold, rather than getting carried away by them. The yoga philosophy says 'atma se parmatma ka milan', which means not only the body, but your soul should feel that it has achieved or turned into the eternal divine god, which has no pain and no stress. The body should be free from pain, the Soul should be free from thoughts, mind must have control over feelings.

Yoga practice provides the feeling of euphoria in the same way that other exercise regimes do. The state of euphoria reduces stress and makes a person feel happy and achieve the feeling of inner peace. The active person always feels young and energetic in comparison to a sedentary one.

Yogic lifestyle is about the practice of Yamas and Niyamas. These are ethical guidelines for living a virtuous life, including non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-possessiveness. The yogic lifestyle also emphasizes Karma Yoga. This path emphasizes selfless action and working without attachment to the results. This can be understood with the example. On occasion of the competitions and sports tournaments, it has been observed that several people don't participate due to fear of loss. But when the competition ends, they find that if they had played or participated in the competition, they could have won or they could have done better. If consolation prizes are given to every participant, then such a person may regret not participating in the competition. This is a common human psychology. In another example, if a person (name A) participates in a race with another person (name B) and during the race opponent (name B) falls. In such a situation advantage is to name A participant. But the probability of such a thing is the same for both individuals. The result of any efforts may depend upon more than one factor. Therefore, without thinking about the result, one must keep doing is good work in personal and professional life as well as a yogic lifestyle.

Yoga and meditation improve mental focus and concentration. Higher mental focus and concentration have direct and indirect benefits in achieving various goals in life. Less mental focus is like searching for someone without having his or her complete address. So, the person searching will go to multiple places before reaching the actual spot. A person with a clear mindset and thought can concentrate on his or her work and achieve the goal in a shorter time with less effort and distractions.

Yogic lifestyle is also about healthy habits of a balanced diet and yogic diet, regular exercise, and mindful living. It is not a secret anymore that Yoga improves flexibility, strength, balance, and posture. It also reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. Yoga improves focus and concentration. Yoga significantly improves self-awareness, inner peace, and a deeper connection to oneself and the world.