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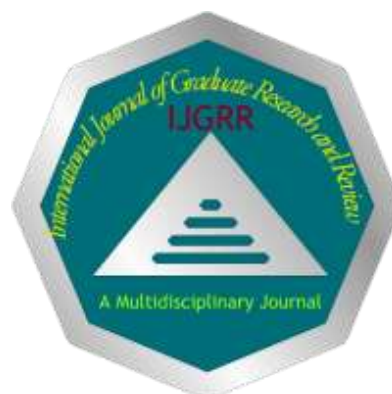
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Yoga for Healthy Life

“If we know the divine art of concentration, if we know the divine art of meditation, if we know the divine art of contemplation, easily and consciously we can unite the inner world and the outer world.”

–Sri Chinmoy

In the present modern world of 21st century, our environment is struggling for survival; on the other hand, physical and psychological stress level of human beings is increasing day by day. We cannot control the increasing stress created by other people and external environment, but can easily find out the ways to face them by empowerment of our inner power by means of Yoga. Yoga is a creation which has the ability to strengthen our inner power by connecting us to the super-power a.k.a. God who controls this universe. The aim of yoga is achievement of physical, mental and spiritual harmony. Yoga is an internal expedition that creates an awareness and understanding of ourselves and leads us to self-transformation. It is a primordial science of self-development which reorganises our mind and body. It leads to perfect balance and harmony between them. In other words, it is an art of controlling our mind, body and breath and unlocking the hidden potential energies. Yoga can be in the form of meditation or it could be in the form of physical exercise. Many human beings are so busy with their personal lives that they have even forgotten the correct way to breathe. Yoga is a way of life for good living and for the benefit of the body. Yoga is the only technique through which the body of any human being can be healthy without any trainer, equipment and medicine. There are various types of Yoga developed by different scholars in this field. Ex. *Hatha Yoga, Vinyasa, Ashtanga Yoga, Power Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Jivamukti Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Anusara Yoga, Sivananda Yoga, Viniyoga, Kundalini Yoga, Yin Yoga, Raj Yoga* etc.

By perfect practice of Yoga, multidirectional benefits can be achieved. Such as:

- Increase in flexibility
- Increase in muscle tone and strength
- Improves our circulatory and cardio health
- Helps us sleep better
- Increase our energy levels
- Improves athletic performance
- Reduces injuries
- Detoxifies our organs
- Improves our body posture
- Helps us getting over anxiety and depression
- Helps with chronic pain
- Releases endorphins that improves our mood
- Weight loss, a strong and flexible body, glowing beautiful skin, peaceful mind, good health etc.

Whatever you may be looking for, yoga has it on offer. However, very often, yoga is only partially understood as being limited to *asanas* (yoga poses). As such, its benefits are only comprehended to

be at the body level and we fail to realize the immense benefits yoga offers in uniting the body, mind and breath. When you are in harmony, the journey through life is calmer, happier and more fulfilling.

United Nations declared June 21 as the International Yoga day on 11 December 2014. This declaration came after the call for the adoption of June 21 as International Day of Yoga by the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, during his address to UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014. This initiative found support from many global leaders, with 175 nations co-sponsoring there solution. From the perspective of yoga, the summer solstice marks the transition to *Dakshinayana*, which is considered as the time when there is natural support for those pursuing spiritual practices. 21st June is also the longest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.

Health is believed to be the state of mental and physical status of an individual, in which he/she is functionally well adapted inwardly as concerns his body parts, and outwardly as concerns his environments. According to WHO – “*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.*” Recently this definition has been modified and the following sentence has been added, “*Attainment of a level of health that will enable every individual to lead a socially and economically productive life*”.

Meditation is a state of being in the place beyond every day consciousness, which is where spiritual empowerment begins. Spiritual awareness gives us the power to choose good and positive thoughts over those which are negative and wasteful. According to Bhagavad Gita- “*Those who eat too much or eat too little, who sleep too much or sleep too little, will not succeed in meditation. However, those who are temperate in eating, sleeping, work and recreation, will come to the end of sorrow through meditation.*” We start to respond to situations, rather than just reacting to them. We begin to live with harmony. We create better, happier and healthier relationships and change our lives by being in a positive state of mind.

The global burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) constitutes a major public health challenge and threatens to undermine the social and economic development. An estimated 38 million deaths (68% of the 56 million deaths) that occurred globally in 2012 were due to non-communicable diseases, comprising mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes. More than 40% of them (16 million) were premature deaths and almost three quarters of all NCD deaths (28 million), occurred in low and middle income countries. Mental health problems are on increase in the world. The non-communicable diseases including mental health affiliations share stressful environment and four behavioural risk factors of unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and harmful use of alcohol. Economic growth and modernization have wide opened the entry point for the spread of unhealthy lifestyles, a precursor for non-communicable diseases, in nearly all countries. It is believed that if a person is physically healthy, he/she may be mentally sick. Mind body medicine is growing well these days, in which mind is reprogrammed by the help of meditation practices and ultimately body becomes healthy. This editorial has concluded that Yoga has enough potential to establish harmony between mind and body and keeps both healthy.

“Through meditation and by giving full attention to one thing at a time, we can learn to direct attention where we choose.”

–Eknath Easwaran

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