

SIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTRE SINGAPORE

JUNE '09 NEWSLETTER

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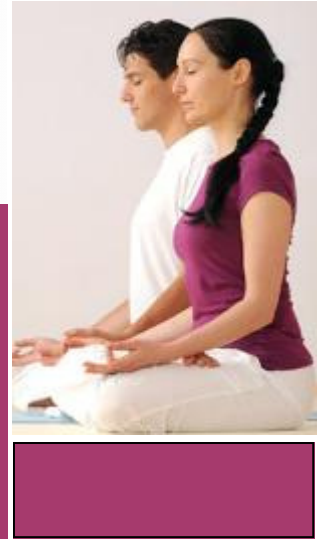
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From Centre:-Centre Close on 28 June'09, Sunday



Meditation-article

Consciously or unconsciously we are all seeking the peace of mind that meditation brings. All of us have our own ways of finding this peace, our own meditative habits—from the old lady who sits knitting by the fire to the boatman whiling away a summer's afternoon by the river, oblivious to the passing of time. For when our attention is fully engaged, the mind becomes silent; when we succeed in restricting our thoughts to one object, the incessant internal chattering stops. Indeed the contentment we feel when our minds are absorbed often comes less from the activity itself than from the fact that, in concentrating, our worries or problems are forgotten.

But these activities can only bring us a short interlude of peace for as long as they absorb our interest. Once the mind is again distracted, it returns to its normal routine of aimless wandering-wasting its energy on thoughts of the past or dreams of the future, continually sidestepping the matter at hand. To find a more lasting contentment, you need to train the mind in meditation.

Meditation is the practice by which there is constant observation of the mind. It means focusing the mind on one point, stilling the mind in order to perceive the Self. By stopping the waves of thoughts you come to understand your true nature and discover the wisdom and tranquility that lie within.

Focusing on the flame of a candle, say, or on a mantra, you repeatedly bring your attention back to the object of concentration, reducing the movement of the mind to a small circle. At first your thoughts will insist on wandering; but with steady practice you will succeed in extending the time the mind is focused. In the beginning, while your attention still wavers, meditation is more properly called concentration. The difference between the two is one of degree, not of technique. Swami Vishnu-devananda explains it this way: "During concentration, one keeps a tight rein on the mind; during meditation the rein is no longer necessary for the mind stays of its own accord on one single thought wave."

In Patanjali's Eight Limbs, concentration and meditation are the sixth and seventh steps of Raja Yoga. The eighth is Samadhi or super-consciousness, a state beyond time, space and causation where body and mind are transcended and total unity exists. In Samadhi the meditator and the object of concentration become one - for it is the ego that creates a sense of separation or duality. According to the ancient Vedas, concentration or Dharana is fixing the mind on one thought for twelve seconds; meditation of Dhyana is equal to twelve Dharanas - about two and a half minutes -and Samadhi to twelve Dhyanas-just under half an hour.

In the same way that focusing the rays of the sun with a magnifying glass makes them hot enough to burn, so focusing the scattered rays of thought makes the mind penetrating and powerful. With the continued practice of meditation, you discover a greater sense of purpose and strength of will and your thinking becomes clearer and more concentrated, affecting all you do.

As Swami Vishnu-devananda has written: "Meditation does not come easily. A beautiful tree grows slowly. One must wait for the blossom, the ripening of the fruit and the ultimate taste. The blossom of meditation is an expressible peace that permeates the entire being. Its fruit.....is indescribable."

Four weekly-sessions Meditation course Himalayan Tradition -workshop

Dates:

Saturdays May 30th, June 6th, 13th, 20th.

Time:

12.15 – 1.45pm (one and a half hour)

Venue:

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
21B Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089835

Fees:

Donation based. Donation is to support the Himalayan Yoga Meditation Society to spread the teaching of meditation in Singapore and more people will benefit.

Program:

Systematic guidance in the practice of meditation

What to bring:

Wear comfortable clothing for warming-up exercise to prepare the body to sit in meditation. You might also want to bring an adjustable cushion (folded blanket or rug) at least 3 inches high to support comfortable sitting.

Teacher's Profile:

Mr. Yoong has been a long-time student of Swami Rama of the Himalayas and initiated by this one of the greatest sages of our time. He has been traveled and conducted many workshops and courses on integrating meditation into yoga teachings. He constantly travels to Swami Rama's ashram in Rishikesh to practice long periods of silence. He is first a student and practitioner of meditation and then a teacher.

RSVP:

Please email to info@sivananda.com.sg

or call 90679100 / 98386704 to register.

How Yoga and Ayurveda Help in Easing Bowel Movements-healing yoga

Having regular bowel movements is a sign of good digestion and colon health. In Ayurveda (a system of traditional medicine native to India), movement is viewed as Vata quality (Vata is the dosha (body type) characterized by air-like qualities such as dryness and lightness). The function of bowel movement is attributed to one of the divisions of Vata, known as apana vata.



Apana vata is responsible for the expulsion of materials from the lower part of the body. Hence, when a person is suffering from constipation, it means the apana vata is not functioning well in the body. Constipation involves infrequent, sluggish and sometimes painful elimination. Ayurveda also classifies bowel movement as a natural urge which should not be suppressed or initiated at will. Continued suppression or forceful effort can lead to irregularity in their natural occurrence.

be suppressed or inhibited at will. Continued suppression of peristaltic effort can lead to irregularity in their natural occurrence.

Yoga can ease constipation-and theoretically lower the risk of colon cancer-because moving the body facilitates more rapid transport of food and waste products through the bowels. The functioning of the apana vata can be rectified through a proper asana and pranayama practice. Exhalation works on the lower abdominal area and is also a process of elimination. Therefore, to relieve constipation, the emphasis is on deep and long exhalation in yoga postures and breathing. The use of exhalation also calms the person and helps in mentally letting go.

Some asanas, when coordinated with a firm contraction of the belly on exhalation, can increase circulation to the lower abdomen and stimulate the movement of wastes along the digestive tract. Forward bends and twisting postures are particularly effective. It is also helpful to stretch the belly through gentle backward bends.

Another important factor to consider in yoga therapy for treating constipation is ensuring that one's diet is balanced and the timing of meals regular. Excessive consumption of spicy and deep fried food increases heat in the body and upsets the agni (digestive fire), making digestion difficult. Eating irregular meals, over-eating, or eating too late at night tends to stress the digestive system, and creates irregular bowel movements.

To ensure that your bowels move on a daily basis, besides incorporating a suitable asana and pranayama practice, add more fiber and water to your diet. An Ayurvedic blend of herbs called triphala is also helpful. A bowel tonic, triphala tones the bowel wall and helps the colon function at its optimal level.

References

Kraftsow, Gary. (1999). *Yoga for Wellness*. New York: Penguin Books.

Mohan, A. G. & Mohan, Indra. (2004). *Yoga Therapy: A Guide to the Therapeutic Use of Yoga and Ayurveda for Health and Fitness*. Boston: Shambhala.

Demers, Carrie, MD. (2009). *Ayurveda's Deep Detox*, in Yoga + Joyful Living (Spring 2009 issue). Published by The Himalayan Institute.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
8.45 - 9.45 am							Kids
9.30 - 10.30 am						Satsang	10.00 - 11.15pm Beginner
10.45 - 12.00 pm						Open	11.30 - 12.45pm Open
12.15- 1.30pm							
6.30 - 7.45 pm	Open	Open	Open	Open	Beginner		
8.00 - 9.15 pm	Open	Beginner	Open	Beginner	Open		

Description:

Satsang = 20 mins silent meditation, followed by Bhajan and Arati.

Beginner = work on coordination between breathing and basic postures; gaining flexibility.

Open = intermediate to advanced students practice together (not suitable for beginner).

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