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Modern lifestyle and Yoga: An analysis

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Abstract

With the advancement of science and technology, men have conquered many aspects and achieve things beyond our imagination. Scientists, technocrats and all the resource persons in different fields changed our world in a place of abundance, comfort, luxury and convert the most complex phenomenon into a simple form. But, the mankind is still in danger. The research in medical and health eradicate most of the communicable diseases and people are no longer lives but much more of those lives spent living in ill health. The quality of life deteriorated gradually. It is found that seven out of every ten deaths are caused by conditions like heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney damages. One of the major causes this health problems is modern lifestyle habits. The modern lifestyle gives us with comfort and convenience, but the people do not take care of their health. Our materialistic greediness day by day increases like acquisition of more sophisticated consumer and household items, purchasing of new plots or flats, more jewellery items, luxury vehicles etc that troubles our mind and our mind became uncontrolled. The environmental pollution, lack of noble thoughts and virtues, depended and more crazy towards junk food and sedentary lifestyle habits also leads to a daily stressful life and these are the cause of all troubles in modern life. All this trouble can be avoided if only we are more cautious about our health and lifestyle habits and yoga is an ideal solution for all these problems. The beauty of yoga is that it is for all people, regardless of their age, lifestyle, finances, health, religion, family relations, circumstances etc. The main aim of yoga is to attain peace and tranquility within and it is not necessary to give up our normal living to find this. Everybody can receive the benefits of yoga. Yoga works on a practical level and does not expect extraordinary conditions of self-discipline; instead it allows us to enjoy the good things in life, provided we do not become a slave of our desires.

Keywords: Yoga, modern lifestyle, ashtanga yoga, asana, pranayama, yama and niyama

Introduction

The term 'modern' pertaining to present and recent time. Lifestyle means the way a person lives to one's own ability. It includes day to day behaviours and functions of individuals in job, activities, fun and their regular diet. Modern lifestyle means new or up to date of living. Modern lifestyle is also synonymous with luxury and closely associated with time and technology. Introduction of advanced technology in every sphere, man become more ease and leads to a comfort and luxury life. The present generation is becoming completely dependent on new technology. Technology has been drastically changing the way of our society function. People use to more acquaint with mobile phone, TV, computers, luxury car and household commodities. This leads to a lazy and lethargic lifestyle habits. Now, due to easy availability of many consumer items in the market attracts each and every consumer and they try to procure the item either by spending their saving or taking loan from the banks etc. Our attitude has changed and people are constantly running after luxury in order to find happiness and peace is within us and in our surrounding. It is true that the modern lifestyle has drastically changed the way we live and the way it has affected our health and fitness. According to WHO, 60% of related factors to individual health and quality of life are correlated to lifestyle. Millions of people follow an unhealthy lifestyle. Hence, the people face the health problems like illness, disability, metabolic diseases, joint and skeletal problems, cardio-vascular diseases, hypertension, overweight, and so on, even death. All these health problems are associated by an unhealthy lifestyle. The relationship of lifestyle with health should be highly considered. Modern lifestyle has lost the harmony in mind-body relationship which has caused several stress based diseases and yoga has become a valid tool in modern medicine. Yoga is a spiritual science which has its aims to develop holistic health as well as the development of our physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual aspects.

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Common risks of the modern lifestyle and their causes

As we all know that a coin has two sides, similarly the modern lifestyle has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantage of modern lifestyle is development of Nation. Due to rapid introduction of new technology particularly mobile phone and computer make us easier to travel, communicate and work so on. The education system also developed with the help of internet. Every year, the civil, mechanical, electrical, electronics and automobile engineering works are rapidly in progress. The new sophisticated medical equipments and disease preventive medicine has been invented by the medical scientist for the benefit of humankind. The disadvantages of the modern lifestyle are more complicated. Modern living has made people weak, unhealthy and disease prone. A sedentary lifestyle coupled with a rich food habit, has made us all prone to disease and illness. Now a days, most of the people are depending on fast food which affects their health. Even food habits particularly in younger generation has changed. The numbers of people are suffering from cardiac and thoracic diseases. Now a days, diseases like diabetes and cancer are very common in our country. All these ailments are the results of our lifestyle habits. In India, the percentage of obesity has also been increased comparable to past and childhood obesity is also a serious threat to the entire mankind. Long working hours at desk jobs particularly in software industry and banking sector are prone to hypo-kinetic diseases like low back pain, knee pain, cervical spondylitis and hypertension etc. The environmental condition particularly global warming, air, noise and water pollution are all serious threats for the entire world. The garbage problem is another issue in every country. Moreover, the new generation gradually forget their own culture and tradition. All these problems are associated with:

- Attitude towards more easy and comfort life
- Lack of self discipline and self control
- Greed and money oriented
- Selfish attitude
- Unexpected desires and ambitions
- Over busy life that leads to stress
- Self-discipline and self control
- Over population
- Urbanisation
- Industrializations

Yoga to deal with the modern lifestyle:

Yoga is misunderstood and confined with *asana* and *pranayama* with many people. The term yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word 'yug' which means union, the union of *atma* the individual soul with the universal soul *Paramatma*. Yoga is one of the six orthodox school of Indian Philosophy. These six school of Indian philosophy are *Naya*, *Baiseshika*, *Sankhya*, *Yoga*, *Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*. The other three group of Indian Philosophy are Buddhist, Jain and Charvak which comes under heterodox philosophy. The philosophy of yoga regards the world as full of suffering, all experiences are ultimately pain. The quality of pain is greater than the quantity of pleasure, so that the wise people realize it and turn themselves away from the so called pleasure of life. This philosophy is further says human suffering are due to five kinds of *klesha* affliction or burden. These are *avidya* (ignorance), *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (mental attachment), *dvesa* (aversion or hatred) and *abhinivesha* the complex burden of irresistible passion for life coupled with unknown of death. These five afflictions are the burden which the soul wants to lay off. In the modern world of materialistic thinking, most of the people understand health is merely as a disease-free state,

but also it is a positive state of being where one's body, mind and spirit exist and maintain a harmonious balance. To reach this state of being, the path of yoga must be followed. Yoga is concerned with maintaining a state of equilibrium of body, mind and soul. Patanjali is the founding father of Ashtanga Yoga (eight fold paths) that is *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Dhyana*, *Dharana*, and *Samadhi*. Patanjali explain rightly in his second verse '*Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*', which means, yoga is the cessation of all the modifications of mind'. *Vritti* here means all painful or non-painful elements of the mind which keep on surfacing in the forms of thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Yoga is rooted in the notion of developing a positive personality. Therefore ethical discipline or the practice of correct conduct is necessary for success in yoga and also in daily life to attain peace. At least, people should follow five principles of *yama* and *niyama* respectively. The five principles of *yama* are *Ahimsha* (non-violence), *Satya* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (honesty), *Brahmacharya* (Sensual abstinence), *Aparigraha* (non-acquisitiveness). The *Niyama* also consist of five principles, namely *shaucha* (internal and external purification), *santosha* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *swadhyaya* (self-study) and *Ishwara pranidhana* (surrender to divinity). This is the basis of *yama* and *niyama*, the two moral backbones of yoga. They define the attributes to be practised in everyday life. *Yama* is the first limb of Patanjali's ashtanga yoga and means 'taking a vow' while *niyama* is the second limb and means 'rule of conduct'. *Yama* and *niyama* are inter-dependent. *Niyama* strengthens and safeguards *yama*. For example, if one is contented, the other will not steal, hurt others or tell lies and will find it easy to practise non-covetousness. The third and fourth limb of yoga is *Asana* and *Pranayama*. Regular practice of *asana* and *pranayama* helps the individual to keep their body and mind fit. In a simplest form, the regular practice of pranayama will help to improve more oxygen uptake capacity. The first four limbs *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* are considered external cleansing practices. The next fifth to eight stages are *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* are advance form of *ashtanga* yoga. These stages are related to internal cleansing practices, which deals with the senses, the mind, and attaining a higher state of consciousness.

Conclusion

Yoga is based on philosophy that is practical and for our day-to-day living. Yoga is an integral part of our educational as well as health care systems. The beauty of yoga is that it is for all people, regardless of their age, lifestyle, finances, health, religion, family relations, circumstances etc. The main aim of yoga is to attain peace and tranquillity within and it is not necessary to give up our normal living to find this. Everybody can receive the benefits of yoga. Yoga works on a practical level and it should not be confined to *asana* and *pranayama*. The people must understand and practice the principles of the first and second limb of *ashtanga* yoga which is *yama* and *niyama*. Modern research has established the scientific basis of yogic techniques and yoga has now gained international acceptance. Yoga has numerous physical benefits. The *asana* and *pranayama* (stretching and breathing exercises) improves muscle tone, flexibility, strength and stamina. Yoga also reduces stress, tension and it is an effective form of psychological therapy. It reduces nervousness and improves health and concentration of our mind. Yoga helps in treating a wide variety of emotional and mental disorders, including acute anxiety, depression, and mood swings. It also helps to

lower blood pressure and improve blood circulation in the body. It cures insomnia and regular practice leads to better and deeper sleep. Every day, people should spend at least forty-five minutes to one hour to practice yoga for a better healthy living.

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