

The Yoga of Detoxification

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Yoga master, Swami Vishnudavananda said that one only requires to practice 5 basic principles properly, to maintain the state of optimum health. They are Breathing, Relaxation, Exercise, Diet and Positive Thinking.

The breath is a natural cleanser of the inner body. According to yoga, it is also an excellent source of vitality (or *prana*). Practicing deep full yogic breaths has been medically shown to effectively reduce high blood pressure, which is the precursor of the most severe cardiovascular conditions. This and other yogic breathing techniques (pranayama) will leave you in an experientially tangible state of relaxed vitality and content mind.

The great eastern luminary Swami Sivananda says that the most prevalent 'dis-ease' in society today is that we have forgotten how to relax properly. This is fundamental in developing the ability to conserve energy and allow the body the opportunity to turn on the healing mechanism. It is in the relaxed state that the inherent self-protective wisdom of the body is able to spontaneously unfold, to cleanse and heal.

The detoxifying benefit of mindful yogic movement is obvious to the practitioner. The twists, stretches and compressions gently massage the tissues and internal organs, infusing them with oxygen-rich blood. One of the key benefits of yoga practice is that it removes the adverse effects of stagnation from all the systems of the body such as the muscular, skeletal, respiratory, digestive, endocrine and cardiovascular. Better yet, in the words of renown doctor Mehmet Oz M.D., "virtually all patients, however ill, can perform some form of yoga, even if limited to deep breathing."

Yoga recommends a lactovegetarian diet with an emphasis on local organic food. Complex carbohydrates such as whole wheat, brown rice, and fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes in their natural forms are preferred. They not only take longer to digest (preventing over eating), their fibers also cleanse the digestive system along the way. Yogic dietary practices include eating in a joyful state with presence, and eating in moderation following the movement of the sun (digestive 'fire' is prime at noon). Finally, the other great cleanser for the inner body, as with the outer, is water.

Meditation is an excellent practice for mental detoxification. When practitioners sit in stillness, they become accustomed to observing their thoughts with diminished identification. Energy is not overly dissipated in entertaining turbulent thoughts and there is greater clarity of mind. Research done by Dr. Herbert Benson M.D. from the Harvard Medical School has shown that meditation produces physiological responses that are exactly opposite to that of stress. Instead of increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased breathing, increased metabolism, they all decrease. (www.bodhiprinciple.com)

Bhaskar Goswami is the founder of Bodhi, an organization that uses the tools of yoga practice to bring optimum health and wellness into the workplace. He has recently released a CD titled 'Open Yoga' featuring original music by two-time Grammy nominated artist Adrian Carr. This is a beautiful yoga practice CD exploring a focused, meditative style, following in the Sivananda Tradition. It is suitable for all levels. To order your copy, please call 514 944 5346. Credit card payment is accepted. \$20 tax included.