



YOGA AS A THEREPY FOR OBESITY CONTROL

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Today the subject of obesity is of much concern to millions of peoples all over the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) has described the problem of obesity as a “Worldwide Epidemic” Now a day the subject of obesity is of much concern to million of people all over the world. Not only has it sparked a lot of talk, but it has also begun to be a ranked as serious rise comparable to certain diseases. The number of people who are obese is rising rapidly worldwide. Making obesity one of the fastest developing public health problem. Asanas, Pranayam and Meditation help to control the obesity as well as lot of physical and mental problems.

- I. Causes of obesity
- II. How obesity affects a person
- III. Yoga to the rescue of the obese
- IV. Components of yogic practice
- V. Asanas
- VI. Rhythmical Breathing

I. Causes of obesity :

We can attribute many causes to obesity.

1. Stress plays a vital role in causing obesity. Psychological disturbances propel a person to seek comfort in food-such a person may consume excess food. Children suffering from such disturbances, tend to become obese.
2. Improper dietary habits can predispose an individual to obesity. When a person starts consuming foods rich in sugar, starch, fats, and highly processed foods, there is extra weight gain.
3. Technological advancements in modern life has resulted in less physical activity. At homes, people use electrical gadgets that

save on hard physical labour, thereby resulting in sedentary lifestyle.

4. Nervous tension and disturbances in emotional and mental health can lead to obesity.
5. Improper functioning of the endocrine glands or digestive disorders cause obesity.
6. Intake of drugs like steroids can make an individual crave for more food and enhances his or her hunger level, resulting in weight gain.
7. Hereditary factors also play an important part in making a person obese.

II. How obesity affects a person :

When a person suffers from excess weight, the process of breathing is affected, which slows down agile physical movements. An obese person is also likely to suffer diseases like blood pressure, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, etc.

Obese persons also suffer emotionally and show withdrawal symptoms i.e., they are usually shy to show themselves up. They also suffer abnormal hunger pangs and seem to be consumed with thoughts of food. Laziness and indolence becomes their second nature.

III. Yoga to the rescue of the obese

Yoga is an age-old system of healing that seeks to restore imbalances in the body, mind and soul. Yoga practices help in energizing the body, which has been in an inactive mode due to obesity. Importantly, yoga helps in cleansing the body of toxins and reduces fatigue. Asanas or yoga postures help to burn up excess fat, improve metabolism, tone up muscles and help the practitioner enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Pranayama

Breathing exercises or pranayama calms the mind, and promotes mental alertness. When pranayama is performed, craving for food stops and a person begins to enjoy a normal appetite. Additionally, the practitioner begins to develop a positive mental attitude, and is able to face life with renewed hope and confidence.

Meditation

Meditation is an important step in achieving inner balance and tranquility. The practitioner experiences inner silence, when he connects with the divinity within.

IV. Components of yogic practices :

1. Asanas
2. Pranayama
3. Bandas or energy blocks
4. Deep internal Cleansing methods or kriyas
5. Healing gestures or mudras
6. Deep relaxation or yoga nidra
7. Meditation or connecting the self with the divine

Yogis say that our human body has seven energy centres located in the spine. These energy centres or chakras are centres of spiritual energy; they receive the prana from the cosmic reservoir of energy and distribute it to the physical body. The chakras are located in the astral body (an energy field surrounding the gross body), which have corresponding plexuses, centres or points, in the physical or gross body. These chakras emanate energy and vibrate in a certain frequency.

The manipura chakra or the solar plexus is the source of will power and self-assertiveness. All the metabolic activities in the body are controlled by this chakra.

Energy blockages are cleansed by asanas and pranayama; these help in activating the energy centers.

Regular yogic practice energizes and helps the obese acquire the power to control their eating habits. The desired mental strength to break away from wrong dietary habits is gained only by yogic practice.

Since yoga works in the realm of body-mind-soul, its benefits are manifold. Yoga,

- Improves digestion.
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces cholesterol
- Helps in stress management
- Helps in weight reduction
- Accelerates healing

Above all, yoga breaks the pattern of negative thought and behavior and normalizes the functioning of body organs and systems. Importantly, yoga encourages the practitioner to achieve goals by enabling a focused mind and promotes everlasting peace.

V. Asanas

The key factors that govern yoga are exercise and relaxation. While performing an Asana, it is important to beware of the body movements.

The yogic poses are to be performed according to one's comfort level, without coercion. When executed in a calm, relaxed manner, the body responds to the directions of the mind, which brings about a transformation. With each passing day, the body's flexibility increases and the movements become fluid and harmonious.

A Peek Into Obesity-Related Yogic Postures

A. Paschimothasana (Sitting crane) : This Asana is also called the seated forward bend.

Steps:

- Sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you, in such a way that the feet touch each other.
- Keep the spine erect.
- Inhale and lift the arms above the head.
- Exhale and bring your arms to touch the toes of your feet.
- Bend the back to touch the knees with the head.
- The knees can be bent slightly to make the head touch the knees.
- Maintain this position up to a few breaths and relax.

B. Shalabhasana (grasshopper pose)

1. Lie on your abdomen.
2. The chin should rest on the floor and the legs must be held together with arms at the sides.

3. Inhale and slightly lift the legs upward until a stretch is felt along the back.
4. Hold for few breaths.
5. Exhale and come back to the original position.

Note : The above-mentioned asanas are easy to perform and they should be done in a relaxed pace. The practice of asanas should never be done in a hurry and attention should be paid to body movements. The asanas should be done with concentration, as it prepares the mind for meditation.

There are more asanas like : Bhujangasana, Halasana, Dhanurasana, Veerasana, Trikonasana, Ardha Matsyendrasana, Ardhakapotasana, Uttanasana, Ardhasarvangasana, Virabhadrasana, Trikonasana, Tadasana, Pawanmuktasana, Uttanpadasana.

VI. Rhythmical Breathing

Regular breathing brings about balance in the body, by calming the mind. It is said that he who has calm nerves, has a calm mind too.

Pranayama helps in controlling the breath. Ideally, pranayama should be practiced without being in a hurry with adequate focus on the breath.

Steps :

1. Inhale through both nostrils to a count of 4.
2. The breath should be retained for a count of 8.
3. Exhale the breath through both the nostrils to a count of 4.
4. Retain the breath outside or remain without breath for a count of 8.

Pranayama is easy to practice, and helps an obese person to develop the will power to control excessive eating.

Meditation

When a person empties the mind of restless thoughts and turns the mind to the divine within, is the essence of meditation. Prayer, chanting or being absorbed in soulful spiritual music can accompany the period of meditation to induce relaxation.

Conclusion :

Regular practice of Yoga can certainly reduce the obesity and weight loss, but one needs to learn specific Yoga Techniques, which are more effective for reducing the weight.

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