

Yoga: An Essential Part of Training for Sports Persons

Mrs. Anita Singh

H O D. Physical Education
Gopi Chand Arya Mahila College,
Abohar – 152116 (Punjab)

Yoga plays an important role in games and sports. In yoga Asana, Pranayam, Suryanamskara and Meditation are usually performed by sports person for various purpose in sports. Yoga improves their concentration. It helps in developing fitness and it is also good for relaxation and good for rehabilitation after injury.

Yoga disciple use poses or asanas to prepare their bodies for meditation practice much as an athlete would prepare for a sports competition. The poses also serve as a means to alter one's consciousness and mental focus in the spiritual quest for, "Enlightenment" this spiritually transformation process is, in fact the overriding purpose of the practice of hatha yoga. In essence, yoga is designed to being body, mend and spirit into balance.

Through the practice of yoga, elite athletes and weak and warriors alike can benefit from this type of balance. This is especially true when athletes have pushed their bodies to the max resulting in weakness on injury. Yoga can restore a weakened body and built it back up . Yoga postures breathe work and inner focus on help rebalance, Strong then and restore overtaxed muscles, joints and ligaments through this restoration process. Athlete can increase their career longevity and develop an inner balance that will last a life time. Balancing the mind body and spirit is a primary philosophical principel of yoga. It is considered the true way to honor the body. Alhletes in all sports are finding that yogic conditioning not only elongates tight. Shortened muscles but also brings calmness and clarity to the mind. Some athletes begin the practice to rehabilitate and injury and to gain more flexibility, stability and strength. Other takes it up to increase their powers of concentration and quite the mind.

Contribution of Swami Ramdev Ji in Yoga.

The practice of yoga was first developed in India and has evolved over thousands of years. With the arrival of Swami Ramdev Ji yoga become very popular in India. Swami Ramdev is the worlds leading; most popular. Successful results – oriented yog master. He has become a household name owing to his ability to simplify yoga techniques for the masses and validate the benefits of yog and pranayam (a serious of breathing techniques aasan (postures) that are part of the ancient Indian Vedic science.

Swami Ramdev's Unique contribution has been in helping ordinary people from all walks of life, across the globe lead a healthy, fit and purposeful life Swami R.d. has sparked off a revolution by bringing about a divine transformation of body, mind and soul, Under his guidance, a large number of people have been alleviated from pain, suffering and are leading a more purposeful life. In the modern word yoga is termed as" Yoga is the remedy for doubt, confusion and intellectual dissatisfaction.

Method's of Yoga

Every religion of the world advocates some methods of union of god and soul. In Gita itself Lord Krishna has explained many type of soul and God communion (Yoga) . These are the following types of yoga.

1. Bhakti Yoga - The path of devotion and prayer
2. Karma Yoga - The path of right action.
3. Jnan Yoga - The path of discrimination.

- | | | | |
|----|--------------|---|---|
| 4. | Laya Yoga | - | The path to dissolve the ego in the infinite. |
| 5. | Tantra Yoga | - | The path of god units by with god through sexual power. |
| 6. | Mantra Yoga | - | The path of god union by chanting. |
| 7. | Hath Yoga | - | The path of bodily postures. |
| 8. | Ashtang Yoga | - | Royal path of yoga. |

Maharishi Patanjali proposed in his book of “Yoga Sutra” There are eight steps of yoga out of eight steps of yoga first five steps are Known as external yoga and can be practiced by every one. But last three steps are known as internal yoga.

These eight steps are-

- | | | | |
|----|------------|---|---|
| 1. | Yama | - | Mental discipline or moral conduct. |
| 2. | Niyama | - | Bodily discipline who follows Niyama can lead a happy and healthy life. When thought are purified, body must be purified. |
| 3. | Asana | - | Body posture. |
| 4. | Pranayama | - | Life control |
| 5. | Pratyahara | - | Interiorization |
| 6. | Dharna | - | Concentration |
| 7. | Dhyan | - | Meditation |
| 8. | Samadhi | - | Ecstasy |

Asanas, Pranayama, Suryanamaskar and meditation are the main methods of yoga which we can do in our daily life routine and we can make our mind and body healthy “Sound mind in a sound body”

Asanas – The posture in which body is comfortable and still for a longer duration is known as anasanas (postures)

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|--|
| a) | Meditation body posture | - | padam asan, Sukh Asan, Vejra Asan |
| b) | Relaxation body posture | - | shav Asan, Maker Asan. |
| c) | Cultural body posture | -- | Bhujang Asan, Sarwang Halasans, Dhanur, Chakara asans etc. |

Anasanas (postures) are very effective for physical, physiological and spiritual purposes –

1. Physically speaking postures improve the flexibility of muscles, amplitude of joints and height gain in children.
2. Physiologically speaking body postures improve the functioning of physiological systems, improve blood circulation, digestion, stimulate hormonal secretion, improve efficiency of sense.
3. Spiritually speaking body postures are the back bone of meditation.

These postures also help in awakening the spinal plexuses.

Pranayama – It means life control. Pranayama – (Rhythmic control of breath) is the biggest medicine of this world. Pran is the creation of Brahma (god) the supreme being. The inherent qualities of pran is “Motion”. The human body is composed of five elements- Akasha-space of vacuity, vayu-air, Agni- fire, Jala- water and Prithui- earth. From amongst these five elements vayu is said to be the essential element. Which keeps the body alive and maintain it the air, when inspired in the body by the process of breathing is called Pran.

According to Manu Maharaj Ji “ As the metal like gold, Silver etc. are purified when they are put in to the fire same way all the sense organs are purified by the Pranayama”.

These are various types of Pranayama

1. Sadharan Pranayam
2. Anulaon – Vilom Pranayama

3. Surya Bhedi Pranayama
4. Chandra Bhedi Pranayama
5. Ujjayi Pranayama
6. Shitkari Pranayama
7. Shitali Pranayama
8. Bhramari Pranayama
9. Plavani Pranayama

Yoga is the union of sun and moon. There must be a perfect coordination between sun nerve and moon nerve. There are 72 crore nerves considered in human body out of these 'Ida' Nadi (Sun nerve) 'Pingla' nadi (moon nerve) and Sushumna Nadi (nerve) are main right nostril is our sun nostril and left nostril is known moon nostril. At a particular time one nostril remains more active than the other. Through pranayama co-ordination between these two is set and nerves are purified. Inhalation through right nostril is warmer in comparison to inhalation through left nostril.

These are three parts of pranayama.

1. Purak - Inhalation
2. Kumbhak - Breath hold
3. Rechak - Exhalation

Various types of benefits yoga.

1. The physical Benefits - It improves athletic performance. Yoga can contribute to create a toned, flexible and strong body.

(a) Develop fitness -

Yoga, Asana, Pranayama and suryanamaskar, develops high level of physical fitness especially flexibility and endurance of sports person for different -2 games and sports.

(b) Improve concentration -

Some yogasana balancing pose, Pranayama like Anulom vilom. Bhramari etc. and meditation help to increase concentration of sportsman. Which are very important for games and sports like archery, shooting and others games also.

(c) Weight control -

Sportsman often gains weight during off season. This can easily be prevented by practicing all yoga techniques like asanas, pranayama etc.

(d) Improve all systems - Yogasana, Pranayama and Suryanamaskar improves all body systems like - Respiratory system, circulatory system, digestive system, nervous system and muscular system by doing yoga exercises daily.

(e) Increase immunity -

(f) Improves glandular functions - Daily practice of yoga improves glandular functions of body.

(g) Control the breath-

The breathing exercise of yoga like pranayama helps to control the breath. Which is very important for sportsman.

h) Cures all component of physical fitness like speed, strength, flexibility and endurance etc. These components are very important for physical fitness of a sports person for different -2 types of games like - Basketball, Athletics, Hockey, football, Lawn tennis, badminton etc.

- **The mental benefits** - Yoga helps you relax and handle stressful situations easily. Teachers you to quieten the mind so you can focus your energy where you want it to go - on a difficult yoga asana, on the tennis court or golf course or in the office. Encourages positive thoughts, self acceptance and self confidence.

Remove stress and anxiety –Meditation, relaxation poses and some pranayam cure stress and anxiety of sports person before competition and between and after competition.

- **The Health Benefits** –Regular practice of yoga asans and pranayam has in many cases provided relief in various ailments. Research and innumerable case, studies shows that yog and pranayam helps control – acidity, allergy, anxiety arthritis, Asthma, backache, blood pressure, carpal tunnel syndromes, constipation, depression, diabetes. Fatigue, gastric, disorders, headaches, heart diseases migraine, sciatica pain, sinus weakness etc. regular practice of yog and pranayam can lead of freedom from dependence on inhalers by asthma patients, freedom from insulin. Injections for diabetics freedom from regular medication by high blood pressure patients and freedom from blockages in blood vessels.
- **The spiritual benefits**-Yog builds awareness of the body, feelings. The world around and needs of others and empathy with nature. Promotes interdependence between mind. Body and spirit of sportsperson. It helps them live the concept of “oneness”

Conclusion

Yoga acts both as curative and preventive therapy. According to medical scientists – Yog and Pranayam therapy is successful because of the balance created in the nervous and endocrine system which directly influences all the other systems and organs of the body. The very essence of yog and pranayam lies in attaining mental peace, improved concentration powers, a relaxed state of diving and harmony in relationship. Through the practice of yog and prayanam we become aware of the interconnectedness between our emotional, mental and physical levels, Gradually this awareness leads to an understanding of the more subtle areas of existence. The ultimate goal of yog and pranayam is to make it possible to fuse together the gross material physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual levels with being.

The most important benefit of yoga and pranayam is physical and mental cleansing. The aging process, which is largely and artificial condition, caused by auto-intoxication or self poisoning, can be slowed down by practicing yog. By keeping the boby clean, flexible and well lubricated, one can significantly reduce the catabolic process of cell deterioration. To get the maximum benefits of yog one has to combine the practices of yoga asans, pranayam and meditation. So yoga is very beneficial for sports person as physically as mentally.

Reference

1. Sharma Sunil, Practice of Yoga, Sports Publication, New Delhi, 2008.
2. Dev Dharam Swami, प्राण सांधना एवं योग चिकित्सा विज्ञान, आर्ष महाविद्यालय गुरुकुल कालवा जीन्द हरियाणा.
3. Kael, H Kumar, Yoga For Health, New Delhi, 1986
4. www.yogasana.com.hk/