

## Yoga Therapy for Better Health

Yoga therapy has been in practice for centuries as a means of attaining both physical and mental health. This article takes a brief look at the role of yoga as a form of therapy and an example of simple yoga breathing techniques for staying healthy and relaxed.

### Yoga Therapy for the Mind

Not only do yoga exercises keep the body in good form but also provide invaluable mental health benefits. Pranayama (or control over breathing) has been found a great form of yoga therapy for checking negative emotions. Clinical evidence reveals that alternate nostril breathing, as practiced in yoga, creates a positive balance in the two hemispheres of the brain and the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Yoga therapy, based on breathing, also lightens the mood, relieves somberness, and restores mental energy. In fact, yogis regard psychotherapy as the modern form of yoga therapy.

### Yoga and Food

A study of the American Cancer Society in 1999 found that more than one-third of all the cancer deaths occur due to bad nutrition. Developing healthy eating habits can prevent these and yoga therapy can be of great value in this matter. It has a centuries old eating philosophy centered on balanced whole-foods diets. These principles were the cause of the longevity of ancient yogis (over a hundred years usually).

Yoga principles advocate that foods should be taken in as much of their natural state as possible (hence the name whole-foods) and should not be processed much before use. Such diet makes possible the three functions of digestion i.e. absorption, assimilation, and elimination.

### Simple Yoga Therapy via Breathing

While yoga breathing exercises are invaluable in their effects, many of these do not require hours of practice. These take only a few minutes and yet keep the body and mind healthy. Following is one such series of breathing exercises that take only six minutes to complete. Follow this regularly, daily, and you can feel a clear improvement in your energy and ability to function. However, this exercise should not be performed by people suffering from cervical problems.

Start by resting your arms on the sides. Rotate your shoulders, first clockwise and then counterclockwise, five times each. Bend your head as if trying to touch the shoulders. Repeat it five times on each side. Then bend the head forward and backward alternately. Keep the neck erect and, while bending forward, press the chin against the neck.

Now close your eyes and let your mind relax. Breathe normally, while remaining conscious to the inhalation and exhalation. Feel the movements of your breathing. This technique is wonderfully de-stressing.

Closing your eyes, take deep gentle breaths. Feel the incoming air from the bottom i.e. stomach upwards to the top of the lungs. Now exhale the air, letting it out first from the top and then downward from the stomach. Repeat this ten times, using 'imagination of breathing in fresh oxygen'. Remember, that a standing position is best for this exercise.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

### About the Author

Eddie Lamb provides an array information on a range of topics including hobbies and pastimes. You'll find a host of useful articles all about yoga listed on our site map page at <http://www.YogaStressBuster.com>