

The Yogic Approach to STRESS MANAGEMENT

By Lakshmi Devi of Supatha Yoga & Pilates

Coping effectively with stress begins with awareness. If one has developed a clear sense of how it feels to be relaxed and energized, both physically and mentally, then the effects of stressful situations can be noticed easily and immediately. If an overall condition of strength and balance has been achieved to some degree, then it becomes possible to feel less threatened and more open minded; less reactive and more thoughtful. The key to coping with stress is to be able to respond creatively to each situation rather than with behavior conditions by past experiences. Stress Management can mean a lot of different things. Various approaches may be behavioral, cognitive, or conceptual and address issues from self-esteem to time management to goal setting. The Yogic approach differs in that it begins with an awareness of the individual as a whole and systematically deals with stress as it manifest on every level of our experience - from the physical to the most subtle.

In the Western view, the individual is thought to consist of body and mind. Elaborate philosophies have described the dichotomy between the two, giving the mind (the ego) predominance and superiority. "I think therefore I am" crystallizes this concept of the mind as the center of being. Western psychology believes consciousness to be solely a function of the mind and anything beyond the ego to be the unconscious. "Only recently has the idea of the mind-body connection gained greater acceptance through the study of stress-related illness. And the emerging field of psycho-neuro-immunology, yet these disciplines do not necessarily encompass the spiritual or higher consciousness.

Even though the diagram suggest that the Koshas are layers that are distinct from one another, they are more like fields of energy vibrating at different intensities. What happens in one field has a profound effect on all the others. The direct translation of maya kosha is the sheath or body (kosha) brought about by illusion (maya) – the illusion that we are separate from the pure spirit. Yet these sheaths are in the sense our vehicles to return home to our source or ATMAN (Supreme Self Awareness).

This is important in understanding the Yogic approach to stress. Although our experience of stress begins in the mind, it to varying degrees ends up trapped in the body and has an impact at every level. Because the mind is so difficult to approach directly, it is most effective to begin to work through stress at the gross level-The Body. I use the analogy of a motor cycle, when you want to stop the bike; you don't jam a screwdriver into the engine. You stop by movement at the wheels by gently applying pressure to the brakes. In the same way, when you want to slow down the agitation in the mind, start by slowing down and easing the tension in the body. The mind cannot be peaceful if the body is strained and tense.

Approaching a challenging circumstance with a balanced posture helps us distinguish more clearly between the factors over which we can and cannot have influence. This balance helps us assess more accurately the condition of other people that may be involved, and decide whether to engage them further or not. Our self-awareness further serves in deciding

when we are ready to extend ourselves, and when we are better off withdrawing from a situation to restore our balance.

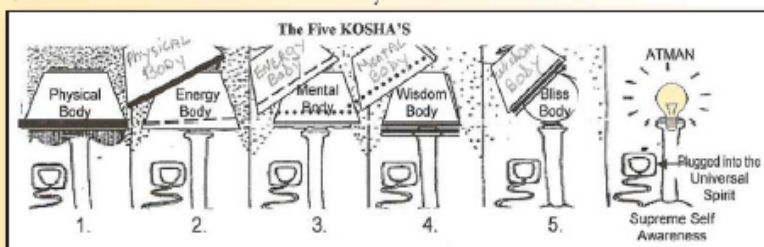
Come experience the relaxation response and be given tools on how to access it throughout your day whenever the need may arise. SUPATHA yoga classes begin with breath awareness and stretching in unison with the breath to relax and rebalance the Mind-Body connection, followed by strengthening and re-energizing postures, then a cooling down period incorporating breathing techniques ending with

a guided deep relaxation, to further quiet the mind, an aromatherapy Reiki message and finally we approach the mind directly through concentration and meditation. It is only then that the mind itself can be transcended to experience that inner peace.

Lakshmi is a certified Advanced Reiki Practitioner and Master offering Healing Sessions by appointment... call 908-996-6428 or visit www.SupathaYoga.com for additional information.

In the Yogic view, the individual is made up of Five Koshas –Bodies or Sheaths

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|----------------------|---|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. ANNAMAYA Kosha | - | Physical Body | - | Functionality |
| 2. PRANAMAYA Kosha | - | Energy Body | - | Vitality |
| 3. MANAMAYA Kosha | - | Mental Body | - | Conceptual Mind |
| 4. VIJNANAMAYA Kosha | - | Wisdom Body | - | Discriminative Mind |
| 5. ANANDAMAYA Kosha | - | Bliss Body | - | Intuitive Mind |



Informational sources... "Stress Management cartoon" Randi Glasbergen 2005, "Integral Yoga Hatha" – Yogratri Sri Swami Satchidananda, "Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease" – Dr. Dean Ornish, "Full Catastrophe Living" – Jon Kabat-Zinn, "The Relaxation Response" – Herbert Benson, "Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: A guide to Stress, Stress-Related Diseases and Coping" – Robert Sapolsky, "Freedom from Stress: A Holistic Approach" – Phil Nuernberger

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-SATURDAY 3-27-2010 @ 1:15pm

APRIL

YOGA for CYCLIST
-TUESDAY 4-6-2010 @ 6:45pm

SCOLIOSIS and Practicing YOGA
-SATURDAY 4-17-2010 @ 1:15pm

YOGA POSTURES for ARTHRITIS
-SATURDAY 4-24-2010 @ 1:15pm

MAY

The ESSENTIALS of MEDITATION
-TUESDAY 5-4-2010 @ 6:45pm

SAFE YOGA for OSTEOPOROSIS
-SATURDAY 5-15-2010 @ 1:15pm

SUN SALUTATION
-TUESDAY 5-25-2010 @ 6:45pm

PREPARING for BABY- PRE-NATAL
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Register on-line... www.SupathaYoga.com.