



Short Commentary

Posture Correction and Meditation With Reference To Yoga

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Abstract

In the twentieth century, with changing lifestyle, i must say more of sedentary lifestyle, growing technologies, crazy working hours, pressures, deadline, competition, responsibilities and growing stress is reason for new set of challenges, physical and mental which have to be faced by most of the individuals. This is also the cause of early pathological disorders. One becomes victim of wrong posture due to monotonous routine, improper work environment and lack of exercises. We are conscious about our health and follow specific fitness regime and diet, but awareness of body and its structure is also equally important. We are conscious about our external look, but we ignore internal beauty of our body. Maintaining balance of well-arranged body created by the environment and our energy should be well preserved. Yoga plays an important role in creating this awareness, posture practice to keep us physically healthy, meditation to keep our mind healthy and raj yoga teaches us to have insight to know the goal of our soul which is 'peace'. Article emphasis on posture awareness during work, exercises and different activities. It also explains the importance of posture correction and how important is body awareness with reference to effect of gravitation force on our body, to bring change in our body to maintain symmetry/ balance and preserve it. It also emphasizes on how important posture is for meditation. I have tried to bring different viewpoint towards meditation. It also covers Ashtanga yoga, 8 limbs of yoga which is the best guide to teach us how to live our life, with systematic progression in setting up our goals towards the purpose of our life. It also mentions few important facts in this article, Kids learn through imitating our behavior physically and socially. Gaining knowledge and wisdom is fate, passing this knowledge to next generation is our responsibility. This article is introduction to larger topic of posture correction. In the later article I will be covering musculoskeletal structure of our body, their movement, and how yoga therapy will clarify the present activities, its effect on structure of the body, bringing change through yoga therapy or posture practice and maintaining it through body awareness.

To summarize, Lifestyle Management is crucial and is need of an hour. This can be achieved through Yoga that is awareness of body and mind. Lifestyle management is spending quality time at work, family, friends and oneself, how well we manage our body and mind that is physical and virtual health and how we primacies our priorities. Yoga is not just stretching and postures, but yoga is posture recognition and modification, stretching with awareness.

Introduction

This article aims to my attempt to draw attention to importance of body postures and how practice of Yoga can help in correcting bad postures and deformities. I will also touch upon the power of Yoga in aligning body, mind, and soul through meditation which will help in our daily routine. I have a different point of view towards meditation which will be more appropriate in this sedentary lifestyle.

The word 'Yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', which means union, union of body, mind and soul. Yoga is an ancient art based on a harmonizing system of development for the body, mind and spirit. The continuous practice of yoga will lead us to a sense of peace and wellbeing [1]. Dictionary meaning of yoga is ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation and adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced for health and relaxation. When we think of yoga, first thing that comes to our mind is meditation, peace of mind, relaxation. Impact on body and posture is often overlooked or missed. As said earlier yoga is union of mind, body and soul. In everyday life, at work, with our family, both mind and body should be in harmony to complete any action successfully. This will lead to healthy, positive and successful life which we are striving for throughout our life. Lack of harmony leads to distress and it affects us mentally and physically. To achieve peace of mind and reach at the point of meditation, one must also go through physical stability. For meditation we need good and comfortable posture.

When we say postural correction, first thing comes to our mind is our parents or grandparents correcting our posture while eating, studying, sleeping. From their point of view, it is correct; they do that because they care. But this is at very superficial level. This is the correction of what we see, and we feel is wrong, but we tend to neglect the posture which we have inculcated from years together. Gravitational force and our center of gravity play very important role in determining our posture. Do we ever think of importance of gravitational force on our body, how it works in each posture, and whether the equilibrium of our body is maintained? Is our center of gravity in alignment or is it shifted as per our sitting posture which then disturbs the equilibrium of our body [2]. Now how yoga will help in achieving this? As mentioned earlier yoga is union of body and mind.

This is achieved through stability. That is, stability in mobility and mobility in stability. We always perform all the postures using every part of our body, towards right, left, vertical and horizontal. When we do that, we realize the asymmetry pattern of our body and correct it. We hold a posture for longer time to train those muscles which then allows us to gain more flexibility and lightness which then helps us to be agile and quick in our actions. This is mobility in stability. And when we go into some posture and stay in that posture, is stability from mobility. This is performed every day in our daily routine while working or doing other chores. This awareness is achieved through yoga practice and teacher's guidance. Mind plays an important part in understanding the symmetry and maintaining the equilibrium of the body. Once this is established, the next step that is meditation is possible [3].

Body weight and obesity are not the only factors causing pain in joints. Bad posture, if not corrected in time can cause bone deformities and painful joints Postural correction is the need of the hour. It is not always the weight of the body which is causing pain in joints. Our body frame is made from bones and forms the structure of our body. And the muscles, fats and organs are placed symmetrically to form shape of our body. Everybody cannot be thin, and it is not true that thin people don't suffer from deformity or don't have pain. With yoga practice, postural correction is possible, with equal distribution of required fats, burning of unnecessary fats and maintaining the form of the body [4]. This will give a form to the body and not thin body.

This postural correction is also important while performing yoga posture. We must perform under guidance of the teacher. There are various postures standing, sitting, lying down, inverted, back bending and forward bending. All these postures are not done just as mentioned but one must understand how to place the appendages in each of the movement. E.g. when we are performing standing posture, we must see placement of our foot, hip, shoulders and hands. Similarly, in sitting, lying down and forward bending postures [5]. While performing inverted posture, we need to be aware whether the pressure is on neck or on shoulders. Our neck is very sensitive, and it is meant only to hold the weight of our head and not our whole body. Similarly, while doing back bending, the pressure should not be on lumbar

area, that is we should not bend in lumbar area, which can give more pressure on the curvature and thus giving us pain. This is not only important for the person who is performing but also important for all the yoga teachers to know.

According to Ashtanga yoga called as 8 limbs of yoga, which are Yama (attitude towards our environment), Niyama (attitude towards us), Asana (physical posture), Pranayama (restraint or expansion of breath), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana (meditation), Samadhi (complete integration). As mentioned earlier, we will consider meditation at work front and for everyone to perform. So, the first step is to know what is right and what is wrong, set our priorities, to know our area of interest and passion. Yama and Niyama, we must understand our attitude towards our work, position/ posture we sit and the actions, same goes at home and attitude towards ourselves, how much time do we give to ourselves through exercise, through mediation. The basic postural correction starts from work and at home and giving time to ourselves or keeping some time for ourselves in our daily routine is second in line. Postural correction is very important in this fast changing and more challenging and vulnerable lifestyle [6].

What is postural correction? Human being is different from other animals because he can stand on two legs, walk on two legs, sit down keeping back straight and lie down on back with straight legs [7]. Also, we have intelligence which makes human race most superior of all Like in earlier times; we don't hunt or eat raw food. In today's world we must work hard to earn money and in exchange we satisfy our basic needs and other luxuries of life. At work, the action is monotonous, using same set of muscles continuous for years which leads to disturbance of the symmetry of the body/ disturbing the balance of the body. This leads to discomfort, pain and stress which eventually leads to deformity. Physical discomfort leads to voluntary deformity like arthritis, spondylitis etc. and stress leads to involuntary deformities like diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension etc. This doesn't happen instantly but it is a result of years of postural negligence and lack of knowledge. We evolved from active to sedentary lifestyle [8].

There is also one important aspect which we usually tend to forget, whatever we learn throughout our life

from childhood till we are adults, is genetically or environmentally pass on to our next generation. A baby after he/she is born, he imitates (his/her parents, people round) how we walk, stand, sit, talk, express and communicate. Therefore, if we are teaching them how to be a good human being, they are also learning our attitude towards our own body. Postural correction can also be explained as rehabilitation and rejuvenation. Rehabilitation is the action of restoring someone to health or normal life through training. Rejuvenation is the action or process of making someone or something look or feel better or more vital. This is what postural correction is. But what is missing in both above meanings as per dictionary, is giving knowledge and understanding to the person who is under distress. With help of doctor or therapist one will improve his health but unless the person is not aware of the cause of his deformity, he will again suffer and again go in the state of distress. So here rehabilitation has taken place but there is no rejuvenation. Person is already motivated to learn and understand and bring awareness as he is free from his stress, physically and mentally, therefore with knowledge and understanding, the person will come back to his normal self, maintain it and run his life with more discipline. Thus, he is also being responsible to pass this corrective knowledge to next generation.

How are we going to achieve the state of meditation in physical distress? Can we sit in one position for hours without getting distracted by pain? Daily work at office and household work is also one kind of meditation. There is various dictionary meaning for the word meditation, but we will mainly consider two which will be pertinent to this article 1) the practice of thinking deeply in silence in order to make your mind calm. 2) Serious thoughts on a particular subject that somebody writes down or speaks. This is the most important part we should understand. Meditation is not just sitting down without thoughts and leaves all our responsibilities aside. Meditation is doing our work with complete passion, concentration, complete awareness, with creativity at the fullest, which means with union of body and mind [9]. In meditation one should not consider only the mind part, but we must look at the body posture in which we are meditating in. For e.g.: Just like how we sit for meditation in Padmasana, Sidhasana and cross leg position in meditation class, For e.g. An IT profession is working on

the laptop for 12 hours in an office, we have to see in which position she/he is sitting, what is the shape of the chair, at what level is his laptop kept, is it eye level or at shoulder level, is his foot touching the floor completely, how far is his screen from his eyes? This all defines whether the person is at comfortable position or distress to meditate, which is his work. If the person is at distress, then achieving daily targets and future goals seems to be difficult. And when one is sitting in a right posture with complete comfort for hours together, he/she can achieve his goals with complete peace and happiness, which is then pass on to all his social settings.

In this materialistic world, where very few have option to follow the path of complete mediation and sanyasi, majority of us have responsibilities, must support our families who are dependent on them. Therefore, it is important for every individual to learn yoga and meditation in their work settings. Leaving everything, responsibilities, work and family, and meditating is easy but finding one's peace and happiness which is the main goal of our soul through work along with carrying all the responsibilities with complete happiness and satisfaction is what is most important to teach everyone in this generation. If one learns meditation in this fashion, things will be easier and more achievable. How do we have knowledge of postural correction? To summarize according to the ashtanga yoga philosophy, we must understand our attitude towards our work, environment and home and attitude towards ourselves, how it is affecting our body and mind (Yama and Niyama). And then with yoga abhyas (Practice) that is different yoga asanas we should improve our postures (under teachers' guidance). Any change in our body or deformity happens after years of indiscipline life. Therefore, correction is also going to

take time. Knowledge and understanding can bring gradual improvement in posture thus resulting in healthy body and mind which leads to positive attitude towards life, more creativity, and success at work, happiness and peace. In the next article we will understand the flow from normal to deformity and how to come back with help of muscular skeleton knowledge.

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