



Role of Yoga in Healthy Living of a Sportsperson

Anurag

Assistant Prof. of Physical Edu.

DAV College, Sadhaura

Distt. Yamunanagar (Haryana)

Abstract: What comes to your mind when you think of Yoga? Most of the people think of those tough postures to be as Yoga. But Yoga is even greater science. It is not just for a healthy body but for a healthy mind too. Yoga is the surest way of complete health. Yoga has its roots in ancient India. Yoga is core theme of Indian philosophy. Yoga has started gaining popularity in last few decades as people have started realizing that a healthy daily routine lays the foundation of a healthy lifestyle and it can be achieved only through Yoga. Since, sports is becoming popular nowadays, experts have started looking for a relationship of a sportsperson with Yoga. Yoga can cause a lot of positive change in the attitude, personality and outlook of a sportsperson. It can prevent and heal the diseases. It can teach a sportsperson how to be disciplined.

Keywords: Yoga, Philosophy, Attitude, Personality, Discipline, Life Style.

Introduction: A person with healthy life style becomes much better in health, mentally as well as physically as compared to others. There are many other benefits of Yoga to a sportsperson:

- **Increased flexibility:** When a sportsperson does Yoga regularly he acts upon certain joints in his body, which were otherwise blocked. In this way it makes him more flexible.
- **Relaxes mind:** Scientific studies have shown that doing Yoga needs patience and performing those postures and doing Dhyana (meditation) leads to calming effect on mind and gives a sensation on relaxation.
- **Toning of muscles:** Muscles that have become flaccid, rigid, weak and slothy are stimulated separately to shed excess flab and flaccidity.



These are just some of the benefits mentioned. There are many more benefits to a sportsperson who does Yoga regularly.

Research Methodology: The present research paper is based on the secondary sources of data collection. Most of the study material has been taken from the reference books and official websites. The research is exploratory in nature. To pace the study, the researcher has also used some observational facts.

Research Objectives: This paper aims at the following objectives:

- To point out the importance of Yoga in making the life style of a sportsperson healthy.
- To identify some hurdles in the way of healthy life of a sportsperson.
- To highlight the scientific aspects of Yoga.

Characteristics of Healthy Living: We can identify the healthy life of a sportsperson as under:

- Disease free life.
- Achieving coordination between mind, body and soul.

- Control over emotional state.
- Developed sense of awareness.
- Practical approach towards life.
- Can easily adapt to the surroundings.
- Attractive personality.
- Hatred and jealous free mind.
- Co-operative behavior and attitude.

Hurdles to Healthy Life Style of a Sportsperson:

There was a time when man used to live in lap of nature and his life style was more natural. Man lived a healthy and contented life. But with advancement of science and technology we have changed our way of living and one can easily adapt some bad habits. We have become dependent on machines for doing our work, we consume products which can affect our health and there are many more things that can impact our mental health as well. A sportsperson is also not immune to all this. Here are some factors mentioned that cause threat to healthy lifestyle of a sportsperson:

- **Uncontrolled food habits:** There are people who don't realize the limit when their stomachs get filled. They keep on eating and gain fats. It affects the performance of a



sportsperson. They should stick to his diet plan.

- **Drugs, liquor consumption and smoking:** It usually happens that when a person is in his teens he is more attracted to start consuming liquor and doing drugs and smoking as he thinks it makes him cool. But it gradually becomes a lust and it becomes difficult for him to give up these habits. A sportsperson should be aware of these toxic things and should avoid consuming them and should give up them if he is used to them as it affects his performance.
- **Frustration, disappointment and negative energy:** Everyone is different and everyone has some likes and dislikes. Some people feel very frustrated when they get what they dislike or they don't get what they like. It is very common in sports that one can lose some day and win another day. But it should not affect a sportsperson negatively as it will make him frustrated and he will not be able to practice well for his next competition and will become negative about his career in sports.

- **Stress:** The world has become a very competitive stage. Sports have also become very competitive. A sportsperson has lots of pressure on him to perform well, especially at international level. He takes on too much of stress which becomes a barrier to healthy lifestyle.

How can Yoga help a sportsperson to lead a healthy life style?

Yoga is very deep science and involves lots of components which carry lots of mysteries of healthy living within it. Yoga is a science for healthy living, there is significance of *Yama, Niyam, Asana, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. Below is their description and how they help a sportsperson in healthy living:

- **Yama:** this component includes various subcomponents in it. They are, *Aparigraha, Brahmacharya, Asteya, Satya* and *Ashima*. Through this first step of *Ashtanga* Yoga a sportsperson can turn more ideal life in his day to day life. With this he can discharge his duties towards his physical as well as social commitments in an orderly way.

- **Niyama:** *Tapa, Santosh, Shauch, Swadhyaya* and *Ishwarpranidhan* are the major components included under this. It makes a sportsperson more orderly and disciplined. This makes the sportsperson to overcome deformities of his personal senses by reformation of personal actions.
- **Asanas:** One should commit for the practice of *Yoga Asanas* only when he has attained perfections in *Asanas* over the guidelines of *Yama* and *Niyam* as yoga practice will be ineffective without it. For various *Yogasanas* body is flexed for a specific posture regularly at a given time for a given purpose. It helps a sportsperson by exerting special effect on different body joints, muscles, heart, digestive system, endocrine glands, lungs, and nervous system. It helps a sportsperson to revive those muscles and organs that had been otherwise ignored in this busy lifestyle. Therefore, it promotes a healthy living for a sportsperson.
- **Pranayama:** It is considered to be highly sophisticated procedure of

Yoga, when a sportsperson can achieve a total control over the vital force that governs the proper functioning of body's life processes. It helps to tone up respiratory system and cardiovascular system. Also it makes the immune system stronger which is very important for a healthy living.

- **Pratyahar:** This is that component of Yoga that drive the body's consciousness inwardly and diverts the focus towards positive and pleasant auspicious feeling. This helps a sportsperson to achieve a higher quality of life.
- **Dharna:** Dharna itself means to focus on a solitary point through flow of thought and the purpose of it is to achieve the spiritual excellence. The continued state of this is called Dhyana, which is called as the final objective of Yoga Practice for healthy living.
- **Meditation:** A sportsperson should not only be physically fit but also should be mentally fit. Meditation plays a very important part in the life of a sportsperson by giving him mental peace and improving his



thinking abilities. New nerve-currents, new vibrations, new avenues, new grooves, new cells, new channels are formed. Our whole nervous system gets rejuvenated. Real peace and *Ananda* (bliss) manifest only when *Sankalpas* get extinguished. When you fix the mind on the supreme energy for five minutes, *Sattva Guna* is infused into the mind. It fades away all kinds of *Vasanas*.

- **Samadhi:** it is provided to the super normal healthy person.

Scientific Aspects of Meditation:

Among all the components of Yoga, one of the toughest and most important components is meditation. Dhyana or the state of meditation is obtained when the mind is trained to concentrate on an outer or inner object, long enough for all distractions to fade away and all the thoughts are directed in a single direction without any interference by getting distracted towards a definite object. Meditation helps one to eliminate all inner conflicts and gives mental stability. It is important for a sportsperson to practice meditation regularly because it completely purifies

the mind and soul. It awakens the inner consciousness and one gets a sense of completeness. It makes our thoughts to penetrate to those corners of our personality which we could not realize otherwise.

Though the subject of meditation involves complex processes but the most common and traditional one is concentrating one's attention on an object of personal value or a universal symbol.

For example a person who practices Hindu religion would prefer to choose one of the divine figures he is familiar with: Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu, Lord Krishna, Goddess Kali or some other divine incarnation. He may also choose the sacred syllable "Om" considered a symbol of the absolute in the Hindu religion.

A Buddhist may choose statues of Buddha, the lotus or the wheel (*mandala*) as the subjects of meditation. A Christian will choose the image of Christ on the cross. In short we can say that every person can choose their subject of meditation according to their interests.



Meditation depends on three main physiological factors:

- **Posture:** The posture should be firm and comfortable while doing the meditation. Here firm posture means that one should be aware of his position and can hold himself. Posture should be comfortable because if one is not comfortable in the way he is doing the meditation he will be constantly distracted.
- **Spine and head should be straight:** One should keep the head and spine straight during meditation because it avoids pressure on the abdominal organs. There is also another reason for this, the nerves in the coccyx and sacrum receive more copious blood supply, which helps to rejuvenate them.
- During meditation postures, expenditure of muscular energy decreases, the movement of the heart and lungs is slowed down. At this moment, there is very less production of carbonic gas, breathing becomes light, one can barely feel it. Under all of

these circumstances one is protected from all kind of distractions caused by physical movements.

A sportsperson should regularly practice meditation as it most effective method to cope with stress and strain in this modern world. It does not require any kind of medicines and one can learn is at very less expenditure. Also, medical studies have shown that when Yogi, during meditation was observed, he was able to reduce his oxygen consumption considerable below his basic oxygen requirements. Carbon dioxide output was also reduced. It can greatly help a sportsperson to increase their stamina and to perform well on high altitudes.

Conclusion: Scientific studies have also proved that Yoga can play a great role in improving the lifestyle of a sportsperson as it can prevent him against diseases or can also help him to fight those diseases. Yoga teaches a sportsperson to be more disciplined and more organized. Yoga can teach him to have self control and can help him to control his thoughts as well as emotions. It gives him strengths to fight against all the odds in life, to fight against stress and strain . It is only through yoga



that one can have self realization and can have practical approach towards life. To sum up we can say that Yoga can play a huge role in making the lifestyle of a sportsperson better.

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