
UNIT 5 YOGA AND HEALTH

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have already studied about different philosophies of Yoga and their role in well-being of man, role of meditation, role of Yoga to live in peace and harmony with one's surroundings and use of Yoga in different contexts. In this unit, we shall be focussing on role of Yoga in positive health. We shall be discussing the meaning of positive health, causes of ill health and stress management through Yoga and Yogic dietary considerations.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the importance of yoga in day-to-day life;
- describe the ancient yogic perspective on mind for good health;
- explain the developmental mechanism of diseases as per yogic perspective;
- explain the potential causes of health problems;
- appreciate yogic principles for a lifestyle leading to good health;
- appreciate the role of yoga to deal with various types of stressors in life; and
- plan the diet with yogic consideration.

5.3 NEED OF YOGA FOR POSITIVE HEALTH

Yoga is not only meant for physical or mental exercises. As stated earlier, it is a philosophy – *a way of living life*. According to Patanjali, the main cause of all our pain and sorrow is *Avidya* (Ignorance) – lack of awareness. This is the ignorance for awareness and importance of living the life in an ideal manner. Knowingly or unknowingly our lifestyle has become bad and we are facing various kinds of health issues. And these issues are not restricted to *physical* (high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, obesity etc.) only. Rather, these consist of *mental issues* (such as anxiety, stress, depression, lack of confidence etc.) and *social issues* (such as crime, homicide, rape etc.) as well. Health of individuals have a direct relation with the health of a society and ultimately the health of the nation. But our health is directly related to our way of living, so the root cause of the entire problem is our lifestyle, our beliefs, our values and these can be termed as our *life philosophy*.

Check Your Progress 1

As per Patanjali’s understanding, lack of awareness towards lifestyle is the root cause of all the problems we encounter in our lifespan. Write the lifestyle factor and problem caused by it below:

LIFESTYLE FACTOR	PROBLEM
e.g 1. bad eating habits	Obesity
2.
3.
4.
5.

Yoga which usually people consider for spiritual purpose, now has been accepted as a science of health. Practising yoga does not imply prevention and treatment of diseases but leads one to achieve positive health. Yoga helps in positive health because:

- it can help in prevention of diseases by strengthening the immune system of our body;
- yogic practices have curative value for various diseases as well;
- it is a medium to bring harmony between mind and body;
- yogic exercises are helpful in regulation of mental modification that helps in keeping a control on hyperactive state of mind;
- it further helps in emotion regulation;
- it has been scientifically proven that yogic practices can effectively manage the psychiatric and neurological disorders.;
- yogic practices reduce anxiety, insecurity and improve overall mental health;
- scientific facts are also available for positive effect of yogic exercises (*Dhyana*) on calmness, concentration, focus and relaxation of mind;
- shatkriyas/shatkarmas in yoga is an exercise of cleaning organs and systems of the body by removing the toxins that may have harmful effect;

- yogasanas are also useful as corrective measure for certain postural deformities such as sclerosis, lordosis, stoop neck, knock knee etc.; and
- yogasanas also help to improve flexibility of the muscles.

Ashtanga Yoga was enunciated by Patanjali as a way to control the mental modifications but as a matter of fact it is a way to healthy living also which leads to holistic approach of the health. The *Ashtanga Yoga* is actually a stepwise procedure leading to self-realisation. The first two steps form the basic principles of yoga. These steps are:

1. **Yama** – Self restrained. This consists of :
 - *Ahimsa* (practice of non-violence)
 - *Satya* (practice of truthfulness)
 - *Asteya* (practice of non-stealing)
 - *Brahmacharya* (practice of continence)
 - *Aparigraha* (practice of non-acquisitiveness)
2. **Niyama** – Personal code of conduct
 - *Shaucha* (practice of cleanliness)
 - *Santosha* (practice of contentment)
 - *Swadhyaya* (practice of study of self)
 - *Tapa* (practice of penance)
 - *Ishwarapranidhana* (practice of surrender to supreme power)
3. **Asana**
4. **Pranayama**
5. **Pratyahara**
6. **Dharana**
7. **Dhyana**
8. **Samadhi**

Check Your Progress 2

The importance of *Ashtanga Yoga* for good health has been depicted in various literatures. The *Ashtanga Yoga* is actually a stepwise procedure leading to self-realisation. Discuss.

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5.4 ROLE OF MIND IN POSITIVE HEALTH AS PER ANCIENT YOGIC LITERATURE

To initiate this topic one question needs to be explored first – what is mind? There was a time when psychology was considered as ‘the study of mind’. But later on this definition was discarded as scientists did not find any existence of mind. Some people use mind synonymously with brain. However, these two are entirely different from each other.

In yoga, mind is considered as ‘*Antarmann or chitta*’. Yoga has been defined differently by different scriptures. Patanjali’s yoga sutra states yoga as:

‘Yogashchittavritti nirodhah’

which refers to complete control of mental modifications. Here, the word ‘*chitta*’ refers to mind in totality which is composed of *manas* (mind), *budhhi* (intellect) and *ahamkara* (ego). *Vritti* refers to change or movements or modification and *nirodhah* means restriction or control. Bhagavad Gita defines Yoga as ‘*Samatvam yoga uchyate*’ which means ‘equanimity of mind’. According to Bhagavad Gita, yoga is the state of equanimity in which a person remains unaffected by different situations such as success and failure, ragas and dveshas in life. This equanimity of mind makes the person free from the imbalances of mind and helps to make him/her stable and relaxed. Mahopanishad defines yoga as ‘*Manah prashamanopayah yogah ityabhidhiyate*’ that refers to ‘control of the mind’.

Here, in all these scriptures the existence of mind is not only proved but has been given utmost importance and entire Yoga practice revolves around the word ‘Mind’. All these ancient texts reveal that controlling the mind is the key to good health.

We, even have heard some quote illuminating the importance of mind such as ‘*duniya ko kisne vash me kiya, jisne apne mann to vash me kiya*’ or ‘*mann ke haare haar hai, mann ke jite jeet*’. The ‘*mann*’ or ‘*antarmann*’ or ‘mind’ is the core issue of our life. Yogic practices bring about harmony among the body, mind and soul. And the ultimate aim of Yoga is self-realisation through which a person is able to secure best to himself and to the society.

Check Your Progress 3

Share any experience of your life where you won/lost something but you got the intuition for the same before witnessing the outcome

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5.5 CONCEPT OF HEALTH, HEALING AND DISEASE: YOGIC PERSPECTIVE

The most commonly used definition of Health is the definition given by WHO which goes like “*the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*”. The state of physical well-being is characterised by optimal functioning of the body as a whole through co-ordination among different systems and their components. Mental well-being is a state of psychological and emotional health characterised by better understanding, positive self-concept, positive relationship with self and others, rational behaviour, quick perception, logical analysis, foresightedness, reasoning, correct and quick decision making, good memory etc. The state of social well-being is considered by concern and care of others in the society where thinking, emotions and actions are oriented towards well-being of all and not the self alone. Spiritual health is related to an understanding, exploration and actualisation of the self. In the state of spiritual well-being one is free from worldly phenomena like money, property, pleasure and pain, relations etc. and remains unaffected by any situation.

As far as Yogic approach is concerned, health is considered to be integration, harmony and balance among body, mind and soul. Yogic philosophy says that a human body is made up of three parts:

- Physical
- Astral
- Causal

These three parts are further sub-classified in to five layers also known as ‘*Panch Koshas*’. These are:

- *Annamaya kosha* – the physical sheath
- *Manomaya kosha* – the mental sheath
- *Pranamaya kosha* – the vital sheath
- *Vijnanamaya kosha* – the intellectual or wisdom sheath
- *Anandamaya kosha* – the blissful sheath

In order to obtain the state of complete health, all three parts need to be free from any ailment. The causal body is taken as the innermost body of a person. It is the source of physical and astral bodies.

The *annamaya kosha* (the food sheath) which is very first in classification is the part of Physical body. It says that our body is whatever food we eat. The food reaches to every cell to provide energy and ultimately become our body.

The second is *manomaya kosha* (the mental sheath) is exactly like the software of a computer whereas the *annamaya kosha* is the hardware. It is the medium of communicating experiences and sensations of the external world to the intellectual sheath.

The annamaya kosha and manomaya kosha cannot work until they have the life in the body which is provided by the third sheath known as *pranamaya kosha* (the energy or vital sheath). The vital sheath is composed of five pranas (life-energies) that have distinct functions in the working of the physical body. These five vital pranas/airs (vayus) are conjoined with the five subtle organs of action (speech, hands, legs, organs of evacuation and procreation) which have their gross counterparts in the physical body.

Then next is *vijnanamaya kosha* (the intellectual or wisdom sheath) is the reflection of radiance of soul consciousness. It comprises mind, intellect and the ego with the five organs of perception and is responsible for all the judgmental actions.

The innermost layer or sheath of all the koshas is the anandamaya kosha which is the reflection of blissfulness of the soul. It is the cause of both the subtle and gross bodies and is the result of harmony of all other sheaths.

As per the yogic perspective, a disease has been defined as the imbalance in the lower sheath that has been described above. According to the Yoga Philosophy, the disturbance occurs in *manomaya kosha* (mental body) as a result of interaction in the world. This is called *Adhi*. This further leads to disturbance in *pranamaya kosha* (vital body) and ultimately end up with manifesting itself in *annamaya kosha* (physical body).

Let us now discuss the developmental description of diseases. These diseases have been explained in following stages:

- ***Psychic phase or adhi***

This is the phase of mental trauma or excessive mental & emotional disturbance. As per the ancient view, any mishappening, whether physical or mental, is the result of past mental activities. The excessive mental disturbance further leads to residual anxiety, stress, depression etc. that are the bad emotions (as per emotional guidance system). All this occurs in the *manomaya kasha*.

- ***Psycho-somatic phase***

The disturbance in mental and emotional system due to bad experiences in life affects the internal functioning of body. The outcomes include hypertension, tachycardia, increased respiratory rate etc. This stage of disease is related to *pranamaya kosha*.

- ***Somatic phase***

The affected internal functioning puts extra work on body's systems that disturbs the organ efficiency adversely. This effect on system also affects the pranic flow in the body which is the *annamaya kosha*.

- ***Organic phase or vyadhi***

The residual effect of disturbance in the target organ soon starts manifesting its symptoms on physical body or *annamaya kosha* which is the indicator of developed disease. Examples of diseases include coronary heart problem, asthma, thyroidism etc.

5.6 POTENTIAL CAUSES OF ILL HEALTH

Avidya (ignorance) is considered to be the root cause of all diseases. In fact, yogic philosophy says, this is the cause of all the problems in our life. *Avidya* causes the disease firstly in the causal body and then it gives rise to the disease in the mind and the body. The disease of the mind is called *adhi* whereas, the disease of the body is called *vyadhi*. *Avidya* causes psychic or mental diseases in the form of conflicts, frustrations, greed, egotism and other impurities. This causes reactions at physiological level which are manifested in the form of physical diseases.

Avidya leads to *kleshas*, which affects the mind. This disturbance leads to various mental diseases (*adhi*). This affects smooth flow of *prana* in the *nadis*. The blockage in the pranic flow causes imbalances in the body and all physiological systems get affected. The malfunctioning of these bodily systems gets reflected in the form of physical diseases (*vyadhi*). Therefore, according to Yogic philosophy, *adhi* and *vyadhi* can be treated by the methods which can help in removing ignorance (*avidya*) and cure causal and astral bodies.

The *ashtang yoga* (Patanjali's yoga sutra) represents the system of lifestyle that consists of eight limb or steps which are successive in order. Practice of this system right from the beginning of life keeps us healthy and disease free. Indeed, the *ashtang yoga* is the method to achieve success in control of mental modifications which when not controlled leads to unhealthy life.

5.7 YOGIC PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY LIVING

Lifestyle of a person is decided by the environment, surroundings, family, culture, eating habits, education, financial condition and day-to-day activities. A person is considered to be healthy when he is completely satisfied, has growth potential, joy of living and developing harmony among all layers of life (*annamaya kosha*, *pranamaya kosha*, *manomaya kosha*, *vijnanmaya kosha* and *anandmaya kosha*). Healthy living means how one lives, works, enjoys, and spends his/her time more constructively, happily and positively or deals with situations of life in a manner which does not interfere with normal functions of life.

Though, the concept of healthy living has been described in various texts like *Vedas*, *Upanishadas*, *Yoga Sutra*, *Hatha Yoga etc.* Ashtanga yoga of Patanjali described in Yoga Sutra provides solid techniques to attain holistic health – physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual. The *Ashtanga Yoga* is divided into eight steps or limbs in which first five steps – *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara* – are the part of *Bahiranga Yoga*; and last three limbs – *dharana*, *dhyana* and *Samadhi* – are the part of *Antaranga Yoga*.

All the texts explaining the yogic principles for healthy living are stressing on almost the same principles. Goal decides how the yoga will be practiced. These principles are often considered as *pillars of yoga* which are applicable even today. The yogic principles of healthy living have been categorised as:

5.7.1 Ahara (Food)

It is related to one's eating habits. In yogic practice, the ideal food is called 'mitahara' which refers to proper quality, proper quantity and proper mental set-up. It has been described in *Hatha yoga pradipika* as:

Susnigdamadhuraaharashchathurthansha vivarjitah

Bhujyate shivasamprityai mitaharah su uchyate

Mitahara is defined as agreeable and sweet food leaving one fourth of the stomach free and eaten as an offering to please *Shiva* (God)

This *shloka* explains that the stomach should never be completely filled with food. Rather, the one fourth part of stomach should be kept empty and that part of food should be offered to the lord *Shiva*. Food should be taken with a sense of *dharma* (duty), *jnana* (knowledge) and *vairagya* (detachment).

According to Yogic scriptures, there are three types of foods that we eat, which are explained below:

- **Sattavic:** This food is easily digestible. This is naturally grown, easy to digest and gives energy. The *sattavic* food includes milk, milk products such as curd, cheese etc. fruits, dried fruits, vegetables of the season, cereals, sprouts, pulses, honey, jaggery, sugarcane, natural and unprocessed sugar and oil.
- **Rajasic:** The food is essential for physically active people and is heavy to digest.
- **Tamasic:** These are nerve stimulating. They are usually unnatural in state. Stale, frozen, canned foods; bakery products of refined flour such as cake, pastries; chocolates, soft drinks, tea, coffee, wines and liquor, tobacco etc. fall under this category. This type of food disturbs the balance of nerves.

One should always eat for survival and for that purpose three-fourth stomach part filled with food is sufficient. Over eating leads to over burdening the digestive system and ultimately decreases its working efficiency. Besides, locally grown (natively) food should be eaten.

Yogic approach puts emphasis on how and when to eat. One should never drink water with food. A person should never eat when agitated, disturbed, stressed or worried. This is the reason why yoga puts stress on proper mental set-up for food intake. The timings for taking meals also should be fixed as far as possible. It can be four times a day with a gap of four hours between two meals. The timings can be adjusted depending upon the need and requirement of the person.

5.7.2 Vihara (Recreation)

It refers to such activities that are joyful, relaxing and creative in nature. These are the recreational activities one involves in spare time. This principle of healthy living gives immense importance to such activities. These may include painting, dancing, pottery, drawing, singing, gardening or playing. The activity should be based on the interest of the individual. Then only a person can enjoy it fully.

A person should be encouraged to perform creative activities like drawing, painting, singing or any other activity which would help in regulating and controlling the emotions in the long-run. A person must learn the art of conscious relaxation and should discipline himself/herself.

The relaxation includes sleep also. Sleep is a conscious relaxation. Mind should be calm and quiet for a good sleep.

5.7.3 *Achara* (Conduct)

These include the right habits, right attitude and behaviour with oneself and others. The yogic life style expects that a person would develop good habits and exercise self-discipline and self control in his life. It has been seen that most of the times external difficulties are caused by the inappropriate action in life and can be fixed only with his good conduct.

Yama and *niyama* are the systematic procedures that can improve one's personal and social conduct. This principle says that an individual need to be disciplined to self and the society to lead a happy life. This procedure makes a person well-organised. Once these two parts of *Ashtanga yoga* are internalised, a person can lead a happy life.

5.7.4 *Vichara* (Thinking)

In this principle, emphasis is laid on the importance of thinking. We have heard a lot about the value of positive thinking. As per yogic practices, our way of thinking is very important in achieving happiness in our lives. Our thoughts are very powerful. As per the law of attraction, whatever is happening in present with us is because we have thought about it, consciously or subconsciously, in past. And whatever we are thinking now, will decide our future. Everything happens with us, whether good or bad, is because of our mental set of attitude. We create our own world, good or bad, by means of our own thought process. In order to lead a happy life, one's thoughts should be disciplined, proper and channelised in the right direction. For this, things should be seen in the right perspective and integrated accordingly. A right perspective brings clarity and positivity in thoughts which brings optimism and courage to face the problems and the individual thus does not get unreasonably frightened and disturbed.

Yogic exercises help in controlling the *vrittis* (modification of thoughts) of the mind and thereby giving positive direction to the negative thoughts. The seventh limb of *Ashtanga yoga* which is *Dhyana*, when practiced, helps in control of mental aspects of life.

5.7.5 *Vyavahara* (Behaviour)

Vyavahara is considered as our conduct towards others. Yoga, in various texts, has prescribed how to behave with others. In this context, *Karma yoga* (of the Bhagavad Gita) and *Kriyayoga* (of Maharishi Patanjali) are very relevant. The Bhagavad Gita propounds that actions must be performed with a series of detachment and duty. Patanjali emphasises on *tapa*, *swadhyaya* and *ishwarpranidhana*. There should be regularity and detachment while doing the things in day-to-day life.

The person's behaviour or practical life or action is the result of his internal thoughts. The person should make friends with happy people;

behave compassionately with sad or unhappy people; be happy with the virtuous people and show indifference towards the evil persons.

Check Your Progress 4

On the basis of above prescribed yogic principles for healthy living, answer the following questions:

1. Will the yogic principles for healthy living be applicable on an average individual?

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2. How would you prescribe or implement these principles in the life of an average individual?

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3. In your opinion, how do these principles benefit an average individual?

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5.8 STRESS MANAGEMENT THROUGH YOGA AND YOGIC DIETARY CONSIDERATION

5.8.1 Stress and Its Management

Stress is the *demand of effort required for an activity or event*. It is a kind of load put on or taken by an individual against certain events. The stress can be *physical or mental*. It is called physical stress when physical activity is done. And when mental activity is done, it is called mental stress. However, stress is considered to be bad for our health. Indeed, if certain task is to be carried out then its optimal level is required. Stress starts creating problems when it reaches out of required limit and lasts for a long time.

Though, the technological advancement is at its peak these days, unfortunately, they have affected the mental peace and health of the individual. The urban life is more stressful in comparison to rural area. High competitiveness, unfavourable environment, polluted atmosphere, bad eating habits, intolerance among people are some of the contributing factors for such stressful environment.

Acharya Shri Ram Sharma has classified stress into three types:

- *Physical stress*

It refers to the muscular tension due to physical work. Excessive workload keeps the muscles tense and lack of rest leads to injury to muscles such as strain. Even, physical work beyond capacity may immediately harm our body.

- *Mental stress*

Excessive mental activity may lead to certain mental stress. These activities may include academic study, restless office work etc.

- *Emotional stress*

Disturbance in relationship with family members and in society causes inappropriate emotional reactions. A constant disturbance in the relationship creates a stressful environment which ultimately leads to various diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, thyroid hyperactivity/hypoactivity etc.

'*Yogaschittavrittinirodhah*'. The *shloka* given by Maharishi Patanjali in his first ever organised and systematic Yoga Practice text '*Yoga Sutra*' gives very first preference to our mind. The mind should be free from any kind of mental modification. For this purpose, Patanjali had prescribed the '*Ashtanga Yoga*' which has eight limbs or parts to eradicate all our pain and sorrow. '*Pranayama, Pratyahaar, Dharna and Dhyana*' are specifically structured for mental cleanliness and calmness. Some of the activities that are prescribed for stress management are as follows:

- *Shatkarma*

This yogic practice includes the procedure for purification of the body. There are *six* different techniques for body cleansing. These are:

Neti – Nasal wash

Dhauti – Cleaning of the digestive tract

Nauli – Intestinal cleansing

Basti – cleaning of colon

Kapalabhati - Skull polishing

Trataka – method of meditation that involve staring at a particular point.

- *Asanas*

'*Sthir sukham asanma*' means ability to sit in a position for extended period with ease. There are various kinds of asanas. Some are performed seated, some standing and even some lying. All the asanas are done with a purpose such as *Bhujangasana* is performed to remove back pain and strengthen the spine, *Vajrasana* is executed to improve the ability of digestive system. Meditative exercises can only be performed when asanas have been practiced properly.

- *Pranayama*

Pranayama refers to control of breath. Prana means breath and ayama means restrain or control. Practising *pranayama* brings our mental

activity under control and thereby master our body and mind complex in a complete way. For example: it is often suggested to count up to ten and take deep breath in between whenever you feel angry. In a matter of moment, you feel calm and controlled and there will be a clear change in your mental state. There are various kinds of *pranayama* techniques. Some of these are:

Deep yogic breathing

Intercostal breathing

Clavicular breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing

Shunyaka

Puraka

Kumbhaka

Rechaka

Anuloma-viloma

5.8.2 Yogic Dietary Consideration

In the first yogic principle of healthy living '*Ahara*', it was described that the right mental set to prepare and eat food is of utmost importance. Our digestive system gets affected by our emotions. Therefore, emotions like fear, anger, stress etc. have disturbing effects on the digestive system which ultimately decrease its efficiency to utilise the food eaten.

The *Sattvic diet*, gives due importance to vegetarian food because of the principle of non-injury. It has also been proved that low-protein, non-flesh diet provides more endurance.

Unlike the modern concept of diet that talks about nutritive value of diet such as: Carbohydrate – 60%, Fat – 20%, Protein – 20%. The composition of yogic meal is as follows:

30% - Grains (wheat, rice, corn, barley, oats)

20% - Dairy Products (milk, curd, cheese)

25% Vegetable and Roots (lady finger, spinach, bitter gourd, eggplant, parval, roots etc.

2% - Fruits & Honey

5% - Nuts

18% - others (pulses, oils & Fats)

We need to remember some points for yogic diet consideration:

- The food should be taken with calm and quiet mind and in slow and attentive manner.
- Purely vegetarian food should be taken to maintain the efficiency of the digestive system.

- The food should be chewed properly before swallowing.
- Water should be avoided one hour before and after the meal.
- Milk can be the substitute of water.
- The stomach should be filled half with solid food and one fourth with water. Remaining one fourth should be kept empty. The empty space is left for the air which is also considered important for food.

Check Your Progress 5

Keeping in mind the above dietary considerations, prepare a diet plan for an average individual.

Breakfast	Evening
Mid-morning	Dinner
Lunch	Before sleep

5.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed importance of health and role of ancient yogic understanding to acquire healthful living. The pragmatic approach of ancient yogic practices for better health has also been proven by modern scientific evidence. These procedures help one to eradicate all misfortunes whether it is related to physical, mental or social aspects of our life. The guiding principles of yogic practices and related activities are the concrete ways to overcome all the problems of day-to-day life.

5.10 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

1. Write your perceptions about your concentration level, mental calmness, cognitive abilities and stress level of your life. Thereafter, start meditation for the duration of minimum three months and again write your experiences at completion of every month of training.

2. As per yogic perception, the development of diseases begins with excessive mental and emotional disturbances. Is any close friend or relative suffering from any disease? Discuss with them and find out about their past life and find out any mishappening that may have led to a mental trauma. Also try to find out if there is any correlation between the disease and that bad event.
3. It is always desirable to join an organised yoga course in order to acquire and experience the benefits of yogic practices and learn to teach others as well.

5.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- Bad eating habits - obesity
- Uncleanliness - various skin problems
- Lying - bad relationship with others
- Physical inactivity - lack of strength, vulnerable to injuries
- Bad living conditions - various health problems such as malaria, dengue etc.

Check Your Progress 2

Every part of Ashtang Yoga has a purpose of establishing us as a better human being and when followed by all, it leads to a better world. It is a step wise procedure that leads one to his ultimate goal of life. The first part is *Yama*. In this part we learn how to restrict ourselves from various social evils such as violence, lying, stealing, incontinence and non-acquisitiveness. The second part is *Niyama* in which we learn the personal conduct such as practice of cleanliness, contentment, study of self, penance and surrender to supreme power. This part is followed by *Asanas*. Practising asanas increases one's strength, stability, flexibility and also corrects the posture. Thereafter comes *Pranayama*. Here one learns to practice controlling own breathing. Then comes *Pratyahara*, which is the process of withdrawing senses from external sensation. Doing so, an individual learns to control his senses. Following that, the sixth limb of Ashtang yoga comes which refers to the introspective focus on a particular inner state other than senses. *Dharana* is the state that can be called refinement in *Pratyahara*. Then comes the seventh limb, known as *Dhyana*. It is integrally related to the sixth stage of Patanjali's yoga sutra. It is the process of constant and focused thought on a particular object which is uninterrupted by other thoughts. *Samadhi* is the last limb of Patanjali's yoga sutra which refers to oneness among meditator, process and thought. This state enables the person to get absorbed completely in the process of contemplation that a person is not aware of own identity. It is the highest state of meditation.

Check Your Progress 3

The answer to this question will be subjective based on the feelings/experiences of the individual.

Check Your Progress 4

Answer 1

Yes, because these principles are based on the regular activities of an individual.

Answer 2

These yogic principles are confined to activities such as the food we eat, the activities we perform, our conduct, our thinking aspect and our behaviour towards others. These principles can easily be implemented just by modifying the aforementioned activities. The best way is to implement or start practising Ashtang Yoga as it includes all these principles.

Answer 3

The yogic principles for healthful living are beneficial for all whether it belongs to physical, mental or social aspects of health. Its benefits are as follows:

Ahara (food): This refers to the kind of food we eat. According to this principle, food has been categorised into three categories: sattavic, rajasic and tamasic. Where sattavic food are natural and are obtained directly from nature and are beneficial for human digestive system, tamasic food are considered bad. Nowadays, these include: packed food, processed food, wine and liquor, tobacco etc. This principle also reveals the amount and time of eating. One should eat food that keeps his stomach's one fourth part empty as it increases the efficiency of digestion.

Vihara (Recreation): these activities are performed by a person in his/her leisure time. These activities should be joyful, relaxing, creative and productive in nature. The activities can be of any type. e.g. dancing, singing, painting etc. But it should be of personal interest. Such productive activities rejuvenate a person and clear off tiredness and negative emotions.

Achara (Conduct): the good conduct includes right habits, right attitude and right approach towards life. It is usually seen that most of our external problems are caused by our own inappropriate actions. Practising Yama and Niyama (part of Ashtang yoga) promote self-discipline that is a pre-requisite for a good conduct.

Vichara (Thinking): this principle emphasises on the positive thinking as our thoughts are considered to be very powerful. Negative thinking can destroy the life of a person whereas a positive mental set up brings optimism, peace and courage to face difficult situations appropriately.

Vyavahara (Thinking): this is a process of dealing with others. The appropriate approach in dealing with others leads one to a peaceful life. In order to attain the same, a person must perform his duties with regularity and detachment.

Check Your Progress 5

The diet plan of a sedentary person with normal body weight.

Breakfast:	1 cup of milk	1 katori curd
	1 bowl of daliya	½ plate of salad
	2 chapati/2 stuffed prantha	Evening: 1 fruit (any)
	1 katori daal	Dinner:- ½ chapati/ ½ plate rice
	1 handful of dried fruits	1 katori sabzi (any seasonal)
Mid-Morning:	1 fruit (any)	
	1 handful of sprouts	1 katori daal
Lunch:	2-4 chapati/1 plate rice	1 katori curd
	1 katori sabzi (any seasonal)	½ plate salad
	1 katori daal	Before sleep: 1 cup of milk

5.12 REFERENCES

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