

SPORTS REHABILITATION THROUGH AYURVEDA AND YOGA

YOGA AND AYURVEDA THERAPY

Yoga and Ayurveda programs counterbalance the negative effects of sports. Today highly trained children in sports and athletics can experience physical problems in later life. This happens because many sports coaches and instructors rarely pause to consider what they might be doing to a youngster's body when they encourage him or her to concentrate on breaking records or winning more matches. Young gymnasts, for instance, spend most of their childhood practicing, in order to reach an international standard by the age of 14 or 15. The constant practice demanded by today's high standards means that their bodies will have become permanently deformed by the time they reach early adolescence. The same happens to promising tennis players, swimmers, track and field athletes, dancers, and athletes from many other sports. As most such activities require the body to be twisted into unnatural positions, sometimes for hours on end, it is not surprising that in time, all joints and muscles will be out of alignment. If, for example, one damages a knee, it will inevitably affect other joints. This is because everything in the body is interconnected and nothing works in isolation.

Studies on sports and exercise have shown that physical exercise, performed in a balanced, recreational way, can help to reduce stress levels in the brain. It does this mainly by encouraging the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, which enable us to overcome stress.

Muscle tears, hip diseases, achilles tendon pain, torn hamstrings, are all conditions resulting from overuse of a very small group of muscles. In later life, these injuries can lead to rheumatism, arthritis, gout, and the need for hip replacement operations. Far from making people fit, modern, competitive sports programs tend to "unfit" them for later years.

Pressure, expectations, and getting excited about winning in competitive sports, causes increased stress and leads to hyperventilation (breathing in quick, chest-heaving pants). This kind of shallow breathing takes place in the upper part of the chest only and the balance of carbon dioxide and oxygen is disturbed (far too much carbon dioxide is expelled from the body). When the CO₂ concentration is too low, blood vessels in the brain contract and the circulatory flow is reduced. Symptoms of this condition are: sudden changes of behavior; nervousness; inability to concentrate; headaches; tiredness. When hyperventilation becomes the habitual way of breathing, in time, every organ in the body is affected, and can cause a variety of symptoms as: hyper-sensitive nerve endings, as well as abnormal sensitivity to noise, petrol fumes, perfume, wool, pollen, house dust, or certain foods. The classic sign of hyperventilation is sensation of pins and needles, especially in the hands and feet.

The cure for the problem of hyperventilation is to learn a proper yogic breathing technique (ujjayi breathing). Exercises recommended by Yoga and Ayurvedic can release pent-up emotions and stresses which have led to the problem of chronic hyperventilation.

By applying principles of Yoga and Ayurveda to sports, one will enjoy athletic activities throughout one's life, stays healthy and fit, and also achieves better results in competitions.

YOGACHARYA JADRANKO MIKLEC