

# Practical Applications of Viniyoga in the Home, Hospice and Palliative Care Settings

Roger A. Kravitz PT, CYT

“The practice of yoga is essentially a practice of self-examination.”

- Desikachar

# Introduction to Yoga

- Yoga can refer to a state of balance
- Yoga can refer to the practices used as tools to balance imbalances
- Yoga can refer to a particular path

# A (Very) Brief History of Yoga in America

- Swami Vivekananda's 1893 visit
- Lineage teacher's of Krishnamacharya

“Everyone can do yoga, but not  
everyone can do every kind of yoga”  
- Kraftsow

# The Lineage of Sri Krishnamacharya

- Nathamuni (9<sup>th</sup> century):  
ancient lineage link to Krishnamacharya
- Sri Krishnamacharya
- Pattabis Jois: Ashtanga Yoga
- B.K.S. Iyengar: Iyengar Yoga
- T.K.V. Desikachar: Viniyoga
- Gary Kraftsow: American Viniyoga Institute

# Viniyoga Methodology – Part I

- Individualizing yoga practice by age and stage

-Nathamuni

- Sunrise
- Mid-day
- Sunset

# Sunrise

- Youthful stage of life
- Growth, development, discipline
- Emphasis on strong asana practice

# Mid-day

- Middle of life
- Stability, Productivity
- Emphasis on pranayama practice

# Sunset

- End of life
- Reflect on life lived
- Emphasis on meditation

# Viniyoga Methodology – Part II

- Individualizing yoga practice by orientation:
  - Prevention
  - Therapy
  - Transformation

- The American Viniyoga Institute uses the term Viniyoga to refer to an approach to yoga that adapts the various means and methods of practice to the unique condition, needs and interests of each individual – giving each practitioner the tools to individualize and actualize the process of self-discovery and personal transformation.

# Philosophical Overview of Yoga

- The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- 196 aphorisms on “how to practice yoga”
- Hatha Yoga’s Eight Limbs

# Hatha Yoga's Eight Limbs

- Yamas = right attitudes, moral codes
- Niyamas = personal disciplines
- Asanas = postures, physical mastery of the body
- Pranayama = techniques to master breath
- Pratyahara = sense withdrawal
- Dharana = concentration
- Dhyana = level of meditation
- Samadhi = highest level of meditation

# Yamas

- Ahimsa = Consideration, Non-harming
- Satya = Truthfulness, Right communication
- Asteya = Non-stealing
- Bramacharya = Moderation
- Aparigraha = Non-greediness

# Niyamas

- Saucha = Healthy habits
- Samtosha = Contentment
- Tapas = Discipline, determination, practice
- Svadhyaya = Self-study
- Ishvarapranidhana = Focusing on the spirit of the action rather than the outcome

# Asanas

- Key ideas:
  - Asanas are viewed as **TOOLS** to understanding the body
  - Every movement is initiated by **BREATH**
  - Emphasizes **FUNCTION** over form
  - Logical **SEQUENCING** of asanas
  - Primary intention of movement occurs at the **SPINE**

# Biomechanics of Breathing

- Major muscles of respiration
  - Affect on inhale and exhale
- The four parts to the breath
  - Inhale, hold after inhale (retention)
  - Exhale, hold after exhale (suspension)
- Biomechanics of breath and movement
  - Expand the body on inhale
  - Close the body on exhale

# Movement on Inhale and Exhale

- Expanding asanas on inhale:
  - Axial extension postures, Backbends
  - Pelvis remains stabilized by abdominals
  - Space between sternum and navel increases
- Closing asanas on exhale:
  - Forward bends, Twists, Lateral Bends
  - Gently contract abdominals (core muscles) so navel moves inward towards spine
  - Pelvis is stabilized

**ALLOW THE BREATH TO INITIATE  
MOVEMENT**

# Pranayama Techniques

- The Three Part Yogic Breath
- Ujjayi
- Nadi Sodhana

“When the breath wanders, the mind is also unsteady, but when the breath is still, so is the mind...”

- Hatha Yoga Pradipika

# Progressive Levels of Meditation

- Pratyahara

- Dharana

- Dhyana

- Samadhi

# Potential Benefits of Yoga

- Tones/strengthens muscles
- Improves neuromuscular control
- Increases lung capacity and improved breathing
- Maintains functioning and health of body systems
- Relaxes body and mind, reducing stress and anxiety

# Potential Benefits of Yoga

- Boosts metabolism, lymphatic circulation, hormonal circulation
- Improves memory and ability to follow directions
- Balances chemicals in the body
- Increases body awareness
- Improves flexibility

# Potential Benefits of Yoga

- Improves concentration, focus and attention
- Improves balance, coordination, agility
- Improves sleep patterns
- Enhances digestion
- Increases lung capacity and improved breathing
- Alleviates pain

# Resources

## ■ Websites:

- American Viniyoga Institute
  - [www.viniyoga.com](http://www.viniyoga.com)

## ■ Books:

- Yoga for Wellness by Gary Kraftsow
- Yoga for Transformation by Gary Kraftsow
- The Heart of Yoga by T.K.V. Desikachar
- Health, Healing and Beyond by T.K.V. Desikachar

# Resources

## DVD's by Gary Kraftsow:

- Viniyoga Therapy for the Upper Back, Neck and Shoulders
- Viniyoga Therapy for the Low Back, Sacrum and Hips
- Viniyoga Therapy for Anxiety
- Viniyoga Therapy for Depression

# References

- Innes KE, Vincern HK. The Influence of Yoga-Based Programs on Risk Profiles in Adults with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Systematic Review. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med* (4):469-86.
- Innes KE, Vincent HK, Taylor AG. Chronic Stress and Insulin Resistance-Related Indices of Cardiovascular Disease Risk, Part 2: a Potential for Mind-Body Therapies. *Altern Ther Health Med*. 2007 Nov-Dec; 13(6):15.
- Nagarathna R, Nagendra HR. Yoga for bronchial asthma: a controlled study. *Br Med J*. 1985 Oct 19;291(6502):1077-9.
- Nagendra HR, Nagarathna R. An integrated approach of yoga therapy for bronchial asthma: a 3-54-month prospective study. *J Asthma*. 1986;23(3):123-37.
- Singh V, Wisniewski A, Britton J, Tattersfield A. Effect of yoga breathing exercises (pranayama) on airway reactivity in subjects with asthma. *Lancet*. 1990 Jun 9;335(8702):1381-3.
- Tandon MK. Adjunct treatment with yoga in chronic severe airways obstruction. *Thorax*. 1978 Aug; 33(4):514-7.
- Pomidori L, Campigotto F, Amatya TM, Bernard L, Cogo A. Efficacy and tolerability of yoga breathing in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a pilot study. *J Cardiopulm Rehabil Prev*. 2009 Mar-Apr;29(2):133-7.

# References

- Monro R E, Power J, Nagarathna R, Dandona P 1992 Yoga Therapy for NIDDM. *Complementary Medical Research* 6: 66-88.
- Jain SC, Uppal A, Bhatnagar SO, Talukdar B. A study of response pattern of non insulin dependent diabetics to yoga therapy. *Diabetes Res Clin Pract.* 1993 Jan; 19(1):69-74.
- Raub, J. (2002. Vol. 8, No. 6 pp. 797-812), Psychophysiologic Effects of Hatha Yoga on Musculoskeletal and Cardiopulmonary Function: A Literature Review.” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.*
- Bulani, R. (2005, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 267-274. “A Brief but Comprehensive Lifestyle Education Program Based on Yoga Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease and Diabetes Mellitus.” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.*
- Kristal, A. (2005. Vol, 11, No. 4; Health Module, p.28). “Yoga Practice is Associated with Attenuated Weight Gain in Healthy, Middle-Aged Men and Women.” *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine.*
- Arias, A (2006, Vol. 12, No. 8, pp. 817-832). “Systematic Review of the Efficacy of Meditation Techniques as Treatments for Medical Illness.” *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.*
- Donesky-Cuenco D, Nguyen HQ, Paul S, Carrieri-Kohlman V. Yoga therapy decreases dyspnea-related distress and pulmonary disease and improves functional performance in people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a pilot study. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2009 Mar;15(3):225-34.