

MANAGING WORK STRESS THROUGH YOGA TECHNIQUE

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Abstract:

The word 'stress' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". A condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual. Stress is an inseparable part of human life. It occurs when we depart away from the point of homeostasis or equilibrium. It is a mental imbalance resulting from the dominance of sympathetic activities and suppression of parasympathetic activities. Extreme stress conditions, psychologists say, are detrimental to human health but in moderation stress is normal and, in many cases, proves useful. Today, with the rapid diversification of human activity, we come face to face with numerous causes of stress and the symptoms of anxiety and depression. The most powerful source of stress is our own mind and yoga helps to make our mind steady and stable. Maintaining harmony is yoga. And yoga is a co-coordinating factor.

- ✓ Maintaining harmony between body and soul
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between mind and soul
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between self and society
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between self and nature

Physical exercise, Meditation, Pranayama and Introspection makes the harmony between Body, Mind, Soul, Society and Nature. So the Body and mind function will become effective. Yoga is only a scientific and holistic approach for the management of stress to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in present complex global scenario.

Introduction:

The word 'stress' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". A condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual. Stress is an inseparable part of human life. It occurs when we depart away from the point of homeostasis or equilibrium. It is a mental imbalance resulting from the dominance of sympathetic activities and suppression of parasympathetic activities. Extreme stress conditions, psychologists say, are detrimental to human health but in moderation stress is normal and, in many cases, proves useful. Today, with the rapid diversification of human activity, we come face to face with numerous causes of stress and the symptoms of anxiety and depression. Today we are living in the age of industrialization, urbanization and globalization in which the revolution in the area of information and technology made our life smooth and offer us ample opportunities on one side and overloaded us with pressure, anxiety, conflict, depression and stress on the other side. The individuals who are employed in any organization or institution have to suffer from work stress in addition to other social and environmental stress. In the modern age we too have the most dreadful socio-medical disease like stress, which is spreading like wild fire across the world. Stress in itself is always harmful and no one has ever been benefitted from it. The people of early times too suffer from the problems of stress but its intensity, duration, complexity, universality and vulnerability was less as compared present society.

Causes of Stress:

- ✓ **Competitive World:** The modern world is facing a lot of economic competition. Each country is vying with one another to establish their supremacy by spending enormous amount of man power and money power. In turn individuals are also facing a lot of challenges in life. Starting from admission in educational institutions and getting employment one has to face very stiff competition.
- ✓ **Lack of Control:** Feeling as control over work or job duties is the biggest cause of job stress. People who feel like they have no control at work are most likely to get stress-related illnesses.
- ✓ **Increased Responsibility:** Taking on extra duties in job is stressful. We can get more stressed if we have too much work to do and we can't say no to new tasks.
- ✓ **Job Satisfaction and Performance:** If job isn't meaningful, we may find it stressful. Feeling insecure about job performance is a major source of stress for many people.

- ✓ **Uncertainty about Work Roles:** Being unsure about duties, how job might be changing, or the goals of department or company can lead to stress. If report to more than one boss, juggling the demands of different managers can also be stressful.
- ✓ **Poor Communication:** Tension on the job often comes from poor communication. Being unable to talk about our needs, concerns, and frustrations can create stress.
- ✓ **Lack of Support:** Lack of support from our boss or coworkers makes it harder to solve other problems at work that are causing stress for us.
- ✓ **Poor Working Conditions:** Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions, such as crowding, noise can cause stress.
- ✓ **Technical Problems:** If the internet is down or the production line has broken a belt. The level of stress is quickly boosted. Technical problems and not knowing how to fix them can cause numerous office headaches as people get angry over issues out of their control.
- ✓ **Interpersonal Relationships:** A lack of supportive relationships with supervisors and co-workers can increase job stress. This may play out in power struggles between workers and management, discrimination or sexual harassment in the workplace.

Signs and Symptoms of Stress:

There are many different signs and symptoms that can indicate when someone is having difficulty coping with the amount of stress they are experiencing:

- ✓ **Physical:** headaches, grinding teeth, clenched jaws, chest pain, shortness of breath, pounding heart, high blood pressure, muscle aches, indigestion, constipation or diarrhea, increased perspiration, fatigue, insomnia, frequent illness.
- ✓ **Psychosocial:** anxiety, irritability, sadness, defensiveness, anger, mood swings, hypersensitivity, apathy, depression, slowed thinking or racing thoughts; feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, or of being trapped, lower motivation.
- ✓ **Cognitive:** decreased attention, narrowing of perception, forgetfulness, less effective thinking, less problem solving, reduced ability to learn; easily distracted.
- ✓ **Behavioural:** overeating or loss of appetite, impatience, quickness to argue, procrastination, increased use of alcohol or drugs, increased smoking, withdrawal or isolation from others, neglect of responsibility, poor job performance, poor personal hygiene, change in religious practices, change in close family relationships.

Stress Effects on Health and Performance:

Stress is proven beyond doubt to make people ill, and evidence is increasing as to number of ailments and diseases caused by stress. Stress is now known to contribute to heart disease; it causes hypertension and high blood pressure, and impairs the immune system. Stress is also linked to strokes, IBS (Irritable bowel syndrome), ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriage during pregnancy, allergies, alopecia and even premature tooth loss.

Various US studies have demonstrated that removing stress improves specific aspects of health: stress management was shown to be capable of reducing the risk of heart attack by up to 75% in people with heart disease; stress management techniques, along with methods for coping with anger, contributed to a reduction of high blood pressure, and; for chronic tension headache sufferers it was found that stress management techniques increased the effectiveness of prescribed drugs, and after six months actually equaled the effectiveness of anti-depressants. The clear implication for these ailments is that stress makes them worse.

Stress significantly reduces brain functions such as memory, concentration, and learning, all of which are central to effective performance at work. Certain Tests have shown up to 50% loss of performance in cognitive tests performed by stress sufferers. Some health effects caused by stress are reversible and the body and mind reverts to normal when the stress is relieved. Other health effects caused by stress are so serious that they are irreversible, and at worse are terminal.

Stress is said by some to be a good thing, for themselves or others, that it promotes excitement and positive feelings. If these are the effects then it's not stress as defined here. It's the excitement and stimulus derived (by one who wants these feelings and can handle them from working hard in a controlled and manageable way towards an achievable and realistic aim, which for sure can be very exciting, but it isn't stress. Stress is bad for people and organizations. It's a threat and a health risk, and it needs to be recognized and dealt with, not dismissed as something good, or welcomed as a badge of machismo you might as well stick pins in your eyes.

Managing Work Stress through Yoga:

Yoga – A Concept:

Yoga was originated in India. Yoga is a system to make a man “a real man” to enjoy the life happily, peacefully and blissfully. The purpose of the life of man is very great and noble. It is to develop the consciousness to the fullness. Yoga is to make the method of living in unison with the purpose of life.

Yoga may mean: Unison; combination; sublimation; merging; attainment of the eternal bliss become oneness. Yoga enhances the intelligence, empowers the mind and makes the life pleasant. Yoga is a part of Indian Culture and Religion. Yoga is essentially an art of understanding all about the soul and to realize the self.

The first teacher of yoga was Hiranya Kharba. Pathanjali compiled all his teachings and evolved systematically the sutras of yoga. Pathanjali was the one who paved the way for Yoga in the true sense. He lived in 2nd century BC. He wrote Pathanjali Yoga Sutra with eight stages. It was also named as Attanga yoga.

- ✓ Iyamam (Good behavior)
- ✓ Niyamam (Routines – Methods)
- ✓ Yoga Asanam (State of being)
- ✓ Pranayamam (Breath Control)
- ✓ Prathiyaharam (Detached state of mind)
- ✓ Tharanam (Steadfastness)
- ✓ Dhyanam (Meditation) and
- ✓ Samadhi (Unison with God)

Yoga – A Present Perspective:

From time immemorial, Yoga has been flourishing. In this modern Era Yoga has become inevitable to every individual. In this modern world, which is more than a jungle, it still becomes imperative for everyone who is mentally and physically haunted, to practice Yoga to lead a stress free life. The olden concept restricted the reach of Yoga only to few men. But now it is gender free, and no restrictions.

Manavalakkalai Yoga:

It was experimented, experienced and explained by Vethathri Maharishi. Stress can motivate to get the promotion at work, or run the last mile of a marathon. But if you don't get a handle on your stress and it becomes long term, it can seriously interfere with your job, family life, and health.

The most powerful source of stress is our own mind and yoga helps to make our mind steady and stable. Maintaining harmony is yoga. And yoga is a co-coordinating factor. Yoga shows four great ways to maintain harmony.

- ✓ Maintaining harmony between body and soul
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between mind and soul
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between self and society
- ✓ Maintaining harmony between self and nature

To make the body and the soul maintain harmony, it is necessary to do physical exercises regularly. To maintain harmony between the soul and mind it is necessary to concentrate our mind on the soul and introspect through penance empowering the mind. To preserve harmony between oneself and the society it is essential to introspect; to follow ethically standardized life styles; showering friendship and contributing to the course of social welfare. To maintain harmony between oneself and the nature it is necessary to do meditation.

Simplified Physical Exercise for Physical Health:

In this modern world everyone is literally 'running' for everything, may not find time to learn and practice these Yogas and Asanas. Vethathri Maharshi has simplified the Yoga and Asanas for anybody to follow and find time to do without compromising the effectiveness of Asanas.

Body parts should all have movements. In this modern world based on one profession a few part of body are used more often than the others. They don't have occasions to use other parts of body. They need to do exercise regularly to balance the body functions. A simplified exercise can keep the body active. More than that blood circulation and air circulation will function normally. Exercises done in the morning will keep the man active throughout the day.

Simplified physical exercise contains 9 types of exercises. They are:

- ✓ Exercises for hands and arms
- ✓ Leg exercises
- ✓ Breathing exercises
- ✓ Eye exercises
- ✓ Kapalapathy
- ✓ Maharasanam
- ✓ Masage
- ✓ Accupressure
- ✓ Relaxation

Pranayama:

Oxygen is very vital for the functioning of each cell. The respiratory system separates the oxygen and rejects the waste. We can live without food and water for few days but not even minutes without air.

Pranayama is breathing exercise. It regulates the intake of the air, holding it and releasing it. Pranyama make the eyes and face bright. Mind function becomes effective.

Kayakalpam:

Kayakalpa is not a medicine. It is an exercise. It provides longevity of life, maintaining youthfulness, disease free healthy life. Siddhas who found out the ways achieving these goals wrote everything in the firm of poems which were not understood by many. Hence kayakalpa was mystery all these days. But Vethathri Maharishi searched and researched to make kayakalpa easier & popular.

Meditation:

The mind has to be brought under awareness its functioning has to come under our control. Why am I here? What am I doing? Where am I going? Is the mode of journey suited to the purpose? If I do such and such an action, what will be the result? – We put these questions to ourselves and train the mind along the right path. This practice is meditation.

Peace of mind is an invaluable commodity, for without it, life loses all charm and becomes burdensome. If we feel restlessness or stress, what does it mean?

- ✓ It indicates gap between expectation and achievement
- ✓ It indicates gap between imagination and reality

When there is a conflict of opinion between yourself and others, tension would arise in your mind. What should you do then? It is up to your intelligence to find a way to come close to their opinion or you can get away from their contact or contact in particular work. That is the way. You cannot expect others to come to your opinion or even close to your opinion and be submissive to you. Peace of mind is possible only through meditation.

Wherever there is a gap let us bridge it. For this, awareness and will-power are necessary. My meditation let us develop awareness and will-power and get enlightened and perfection so that we may stand firm despite the stresses and strains.

Introspection:

Introspection is self correction. “Go deep into yourself, analyze the bad deeds, which were the results or emotions, get rid of those emotional imprints and refurbish your mind.” This is called introspection training in Yoga. Introspective analysis is an effort to holy-wash of the mind.

“Undoubting, who the mind of men can scan,

As deity regard that gifted man”. (Verse 702)

When practicing this self analytical inward looking yoga the blemishes of yesterday disappear before they make any impact in the mind. So like cleaning the utensils, cleaning the body and cleaning the mind also should become a routine.

There are five practices in the introspection

Analysis of Thoughts:

When a thought gets processed we should try to find out the ‘why’ of the ‘thought’ and the results. If a person is able to judge his ‘thought’ and their effects he will be able to proceed with the thought or stop it at the start.

Moralisation of Desires:

Needs become desires. Essential desires need to be fulfilled. Through moralizing character a person can achieve contentedness. Number of desires gets reduced. Mind becomes relaxed. Happiness prevails.

Neutralisation of Anger:

Anger is a great destructive force at all levels. It spoils the peace and happiness. Anger is inborn. It cannot be totally eradicated but can be neutralized through the practice.

Eradication of Worries:

Worries are due to frustration. Identify the worries and categorize them. By continuously doing this practice worries will disappear. Mind feels light and happiness prevails.

Analyzing ‘Who I am’ – Self Realization:

Who am I? Where did I come from? Where to go? To answer these entire questions “Self analysis” is the best answer.

Conclusion:

Yoga is nothing but a psychic practice linking the mind with or merging the mind with the Nature. By such practice man becomes moral conscious and duty conscious so that he will be a better citizen spreading happiness and peace to one and all in his society. It helps everyone to live in cooperation with others. In this modern age, Yoga is the best method to understand the realities of life and to follow the best system and best method of life. Thus make life successful, harmonious and happy. Yoga makes a man remain conscious about the effect of every action. When one realizes all these he can easily get rid of STRESS.

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