

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Asanas as the Intervention for Managing Self and Career
Lecture - 68
Yogasananas to Integrate Body and Emotions

[FL]. Welcome to the 15th session of this course of Yog and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life. In this session we are going to discuss Asanas, Asanas as the Intervention for Managing Self and Career.

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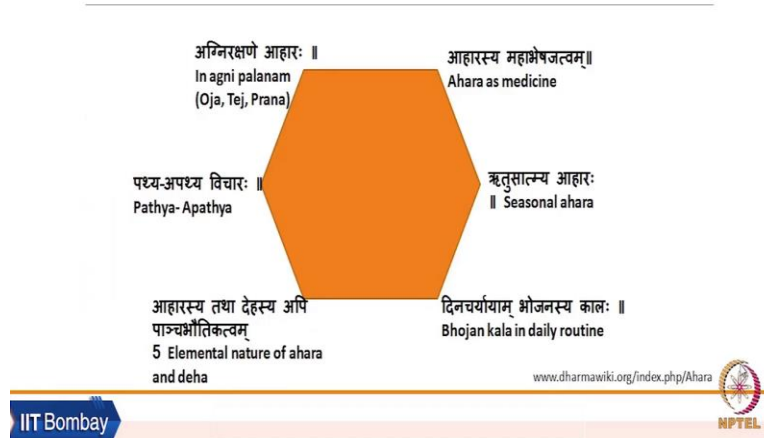
Quick Recap: **Interventions for Managing Self and Career**

Annamaya Kosh	Pranamaya Kosh	Manomaya Kosh	Vijnanmaya Kosh	Anandmaya Kosh
Ahar (Food)	Pranayam	Yama, Niyam	Purpose	Dhyan
Asanas		Chittaprasad	Karm Yoga	Samadhi
		Managing negative emotion like Fearfulness, Anxiety, Dependence, Sentimentality	Dharna	
		Pratyahaar	Dhyan	

You might recall in the last session we discussed about this framework of intervention yog and positive psychology we are looking at from the perspective of self development. And for the self development we are going to discuss some interventions. These interventions are identified with respect to the different layers of self as described in the notion of panchakoshas. So, in the annamaya koshas we are going to discuss two interventions ahar and asanas.

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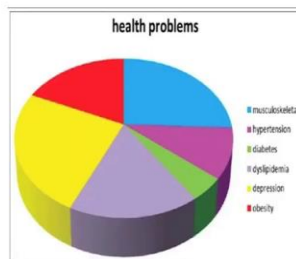
Quick Recap: Qualities of Right Food



You may also recall that in the last session, we discussed about qualities of food and how food can be a major intervention for our well being which in turn result in managing ourself and our career better. So, we discussed about the qualities of food and how a different prakrutis are apt for different types of food etcetera.

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Health Problems at Workplace



Around 56% had musculoskeletal symptoms. 22% had newly diagnosed hypertension, 10% had diabetes, 36% had dyslipidemia, 54% had depression, anxiety and insomnia, 40% had obesity. Musculoskeletal symptoms included cervical and lumbar strain with or without disc disease, polyarthralgia, and muscle spasm and heel pain.

- Back pain is still the leading cause of sickness absence, job-related stress has an impact on productivity and work ability has been demonstrated to have a significant predictive value for disability and early retirement.
- Back pain and job-related stress are inter-related, and both have an independent and possibly synergy effect on work ability.
- Consequently, workplace health promotion interventions to reduce the impact of back pain and stress perception on work ability should target both physical and psychological dimensions

In this session we are going to talk about asanas. Before we discuss about asanas, let us look at what is the health situation at workplace. So, there are two studies from these two research papers we are going to look at. First paper of Padma and her colleagues it talks about the health problem and the types of health problem prevailing in Indian work force.

And it says that around 56 percent of the people they surveyed across India had new musculoskeletal symptoms, around 56 percent of the total people surveyed in India they had musculoskeletal systems. So, some ailments related to muscles and skeletal system. 22 percent had newly diagnosed hypertension, 10 percent has diabetes, 36 percent had dyslipidemia, 54 percent had depression some sign of depression anxiety and insomnia and 40 percent had obesity.

Musculoskeletal symptoms included cervical and lumbar strains with or without disc disease, polyarthralgia and the muscle spasm and the heel pain. In another study it is found that back pain is still the leading cause of sickness absence, job related stress has an impact on productivity and work ability. That has been demonstrated to have the significant predictive value for disability and early retirement.

Back pain and job related stress are interrelated. And both have an independent and possibly negative synergistic effect on work ability. Consequently, workplace health promotion interventions to reduce the impact of back pain and stress perception on workability should target both physical and psychological dimensions. We can see that the problems related to health are majorly about musculoskeletal systems and that has a that has a clear connection with the sitting posture or in general postures we have at workplace.

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Remind the Definition of Mind

"The human mind is a relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information".

Siegel, D. J. (2010). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. Bantam.



That is why asanas are very important to address this problem. However, we must remind ourself definition of mind. We discussed in the previous session the definition of mind given by Siegel and colleague says that human mind is relational embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information.

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Remind What is Human Self

Mind /Body Sheath (Kosha)	Translation	Correlation to Siegel's (2010) Definition of Mind
<i>Anna-maya-kosa</i>	The lowest and grossest mind/body sheath made of food	".....embodied process....."
<i>Prana-maya-kosa</i>	sheath of subtle energy	".....regulates the flow of energy....."
<i>Mano-maya-kosa</i>	sheath of sensory mentation	".....and information....."
<i>Vijnana-maya</i>	Sheath of higher mentation (<i>buddhi</i> , intuition)	"relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information"
<i>Anand-maya-kosa</i>	the highest and subtlest mind/body sheath made of bliss	n/a



You might also recall that we looked at the different components of this definition of mind and we juxtapose that with the five koshas of the human self. So, mind is embodied process it regulates the flow of energy and that is related to gross body and energy relate aspect is related to the sheath of the subtle energy. So, asanas have to be looked at not just physical intervention, asanas have as much impact on mind as our thoughts can have impact on our overall experience of life and as much they are reflections of mind.

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At the outset for this session, I wish to acknowledge these two masters Dr. Stephen Parker for his book Clearing The Path and Dr. David Frawley for his book Yoga and Ayurveda.

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Asanas as Intervention for Managing Self and Career



- Reduction in aches, sudden pains and heart palpitations.
- Reduction in internal friction. Systematic turns, bends and stretches lubricate the system.
- Feeling of energy, Slow breathing tunes the body and regain the inner rhythms.
- Better sleep, sounder and more efficient.

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Asanas in nutshell reduce the aches, sudden pains and heart palpitation. It reduces the internal friction of the subsystems and subsystem within our body. Systematic turns bands and stretches which are part of asanas, they lubricate the system and make it flexible.

Regular practice of asanas enhances the feeling of energy, it slow down the breathing rate, it tunes the body and regain the inner rhyme. This also results in better sleep which is sounder and more efficient. In fact, the very first studies of impact of yog actually looked at the impact of yogasanas on quality of sleep.

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Impact of Yogasanas



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Asanas help keep the body supple and strong while energizing the mind and boosting self confidence. So, you can see that asanas are performed at physical level, they are most evident at physical level, but they also have great impact on the quality of the mind and quality of our day to day experience. Doing asanas on a regular basis has been shown to enhance brain wave coherence and improve functions such as memory and intelligence.

It lowers the stress related hormones in the body and it increases both mental and physical performance. Asanas also contribute to emotional stability, how it contributes? It contributes to emotional stability by increasing the amount of neurotransmitters such as serotonin in the body which is known to induce good mood and sense of happiness. Not surprisingly asanas are great intervention for positive psychology.

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Bodywork and Emotions



- Body is a physical structure within which your habits dwell and are lived out.
- Standing posture: solid, balanced, aligned, relaxed so that there is no fatigue? Or do you lock your knees in tension?
- Do you sink your chest downward so that your shoulders seem to carry the weight of the world throwing your lower back out of alignment and causing your head to droop forward and the muscles in the neck to become tight enough to give you headache?

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To understand this in more detail, we need to look at the connection of body physicality, emotions, quality of mind and how it is connected to our day to day general experience of life. We need to understand that body is a physical structure within which our habits dwell and lived out. This is the beautiful explanation given by Professor Stephen Parker.

So, we can look at our posture. So, asanas are posture not only for few moments, asanas are posture for life. So, just reflect on our posture. For example, standing posture, when we are standing is it solid, balanced, aligned, relaxed so that there is no fatigue or we have tendency to lock our knees in tension.

While standing do I sink my chest downward so that our shoulder seem to carry the weight of the world throwing your lower back out of alignment and causing your head to droop forward and muscles in the neck to become tight enough to give you headache. That is what Stephen Parker ask in this chapter on asanas. So, asanas have to be looked at general posture of life as well.

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Bodywork and Emotions



- Many forms of bodywork try to create awareness of this kind of body armour and help to learn new habits.
- You learn to dwell (vasanas) in the body in a different way.
- **Asana should be looked at in this way. It is about exploring in a very deep way the flesh fabric of our lives.**
- We use the central skill of Yoga, the application of mindful awareness, to conduct this exploration.
- Yogasanas can help us to integrate every aspect of our nervous system, including our emotional experience, sensation, cognition, motivation and samskara.

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Why it is important, why posture is important, why we need to look at body postures so closely and how they are deeply connected to our experience of well being which in turn result in managing self and with which in turn has impact on managing our career? So, many forms of bodywork actually try to create awareness of this kind of body armour and help to learn new habits.

We learn to dwell or we indulge into different thoughts and those liking and dislikings are called vasanas in the yogic literature, that likes and dislike is reflected in the body in different ways. So, asana should be looked at as a way of exploring the very deep aspect of the self also dwelling in the flesh and fabric of our lives.

So, we use central skill of yog the application of mindful awareness to conduct the exploration. Yogasanas can help us to integrate every aspect of our nervous system including our emotional experience, sensation, cognition, motivation and samskar. The deep rooted pattern of thoughts which result into pattern of behavior, which result into pattern of situation we keep finding around ourselves in our day to day life.

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Yoga and Exercise



- The component of asanas in Yoga parallels the physiological aspect consisting of bending, stretching, strengthening, and holding specific positions.
- Yoga renders health benefits that are similar to that of exercise.
- In addition, Yoga practice is also driven by the goal to experience the calmness of mind by performing physical postures, breath regulation, and directed meditation (Bock et al., 2012)

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It is useful to quickly compare yoga and particularly asanas with the exercise the physical exercise. The component of asana in the yoga is parallel to the physiological aspect of consisting bending, stretching, strengthening and holding a specific position. So, to that extent asanas are similar to exercise. However, yoga and asanas themselves they render health benefit that are similar to exercise but also go beyond it.

So, yoga practice are actually driven by goal of experiencing the calmness of mind by performing the physical posture, that is done with the breath regulation. And that requires a meditative state that requires full attention to the activity, full attention to the moment we are doing.

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Yoga vs Exercise: A Comparison

	YOGA	EXERCISE
METACOGNITION	Metacognition denotes an aspect that makes Yoga different from various forms of exercise.	Paying attention to bodily or mental states is not an integral element of exercise
ENERGY	Yoga practice facilitates energy conservation with economical utilization of energy for mental and physical benefits	Exercise causes energy utilization to support the body for physical exertions and its metabolic needs.
OXIDATIVE STRESS	Meditation practice induces uniform changes in biomarkers and behavior. Improved cognitive performance, and decreased oxidative stress (Tolahunase et al., 2017)	Exercise leads to erratic changes in biomarkers and causes oxidative stress.

So, if we have a quick comparison of the yoga and particularly yogasanas and exercise, we can compare these two things on the metacognition aspect, energy aspect and oxidative stress aspect. Yoga is a metacognition that denotes an aspect that makes yoga different from various forms of exercise. What is metacognition? Metacognition of knowing the process of knowing.

Yoga practice aimed at building our metacognition because of the mindfulness nature of the practice of asanas, because of the need to observe ourselves while performing asanas it enhances our metacognitive ability. Exercise generally does not have that requirement. Paying attention is not a very important aspect in the exercise and that is why you must have seen that people keep listening to music or keep talking and it is very much allowed in the regime of performing any exercises. Second aspect is energy.

So, yoga practice actually facilitates the energy conservation. That it does by economical utilization of energy for mental and physical benefits. In the exercise we cause the energy utilization to support the body for physical exertion and its metabolic needs. So, in the exercise we utilize energy and the aim is to enhance the physical exertion. Third aspect is oxidative stress.

Because asanas have this meditative element into it meditation practice induces the uniform change in the biomarkers. And that in turn results into uniform change in the behavior. And that in turn is

reflected in the improved cognitive performance and decreased oxidative stress; whereas, exercise lead to erratic changes in the biomarker because it does not have the meditative element in it.