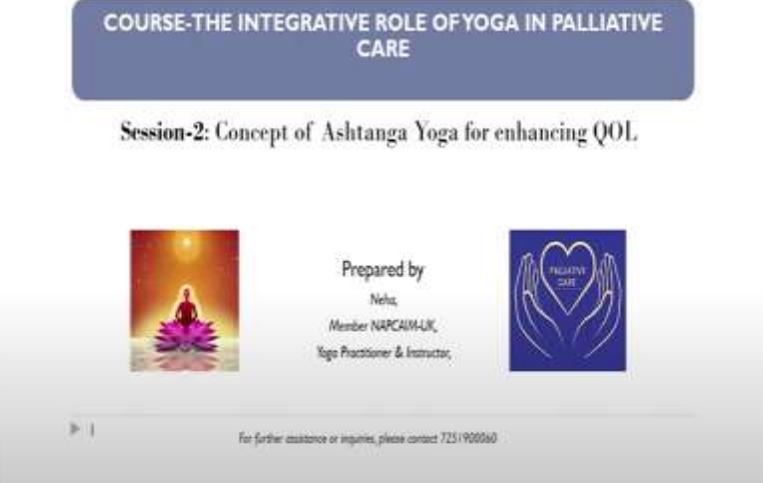


Certificate in Integrative Palliative Care – 3
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Week-03
Lecture 21: Concept of Ashtang Yoga for Enhancing QOL

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COURSE-THE INTEGRATIVE ROLE OF YOGA IN PALLIATIVE CARE

Session-2: Concept of Ashtanga Yoga for enhancing QOL.



Prepared by
Neha,
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In this session, we'll go deeper into the concept of Ashtang Yoga. Under the umbrella of Raja Yoga lies the Ashtang Yoga of Sage Patanjali, which forms the foundation of all yogic knowledge. Let's explore Ashtang Yoga in depth to understand how its components can be applied practically, theoretically, logically and spiritually to enhance our quality of life and create a more meaningful existence.

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The Concept of Ashtanga Yoga for Enhancing Quality of Life

Ashtanga Yoga lays the foundation for integrating yoga with health, enhancing quality of life, and supporting palliative care. Understanding its principles will help us move forward in effectively applying yoga practices to these vital areas.

The concept of Ashtanga Yoga under the umbrella term 'Raja Yoga' was introduced by Patanjali who is an enigmatic figure from centuries past whose name stands out as a guiding light. Patanjali's contributions to yoga are legendary, casting a profound influence on its philosophy, principles and practices.

2 For further assistance or inquiries, please contact 725190066

As outlined above, Ashtanga Yoga serves as the foundation for integrating with health, enhancing quality of life and supporting palliative care. Understanding its principles will help us move forward in effectively applying yoga practices to these vital areas. In the vast realm of yoga where ancient wisdom intertwines with modern practices, one name stands out as a guiding light, Patanjali.

An enigmatic figure from centuries past, Patanjali's contributions to yoga are legendary, casting a profound influence on its philosophy, principles and practices.

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Who was Patanjali?

- Patanjali was an ancient Indian sage and philosopher who is widely regarded as the author of the "Yoga Sutras", a crucial foundational text of classical yoga philosophy. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are a collection of aphorisms that outline the principles and practices of yoga, including its ethical guidelines, meditation techniques, and spiritual goals.
- Maharshi Patanjali's Yoga Sutras *provide a systematic framework for understanding the mind, body, and spirit and offer guidance on how to attain self-realization and liberation (known as "samadhi") through the practice of yoga.*
- Patanjali's work had inspired the development of various schools of yoga and had a significant impact on the philosophy and spiritual practices of India. His teachings continue to be widely studied and revered by yogis and scholars around the world.

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PATANJALI YOG SUTRA
MIND BODY SOUL
॥ पतंजलि योगसूत्र ॥

Let's understand who was Patanjali. Patanjali was an ancient Indian sage and philosopher who is widely regarded as the author of the Yoga Sutras which is a crucial foundational text of classical yoga philosophy. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are a collection of aphorisms that outline the principles and practices of yoga including its ethical guidelines, meditation techniques and spiritual goals.

Maharshi Patanjali's Yoga Sutras became one of the most important texts in studying and practicing yoga. They provide a systematic framework for understanding the mind, body and spirit and offer guidance on how to attain self-realization and liberation known as Samadhi through the practice of yoga. Patanjali's work had a profound influence on the development of various schools of yoga and had a significant impact on the philosophy and spiritual practices of India. His teachings continue to be widely studied and revered by yogis and scholars around the world.

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The Concept of Ashtanga Yoga by Patanjali



Ashtanga is a comprehensive framework for the practice and realization of yoga.

It serves as a roadmap for personal and spiritual development. Documented in the Yoga Sutras, a foundational text of yoga philosophy, Patanjali outlines a path that integrates ethical, physical, and meditative practices. This approach not only emphasizes the cultivation of physical strength and flexibility but also the development of mental clarity and emotional stability.

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What does the concept of Ashtanga Yoga say? Let's understand.

The concept of Ashtanga Yoga as elucidated by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras refers to eight limbs of yoga. Ashtanga literally translates to eight limbs in Sanskrit and it provides a comprehensive framework for the practice and realization of yoga. It serves as a road map for personal and spiritual development. Documented in the Yoga Sutras, a foundational text of Yoga philosophy, Patanjali outlines a path that integrates ethical, physical and meditative practices. This approach not only emphasizes the cultivation of physical strength and flexibility, but also the development of mental clarity and emotional stability.

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The primary aim of Ashtanga Yoga is to achieve self-realization and spiritual liberation (moksha). This is accomplished by aligning the body, mind, and spirit through disciplined practices. The eight limbs offer a progressive path that leads practitioners from ethical living to deep states of meditation and ultimate bliss. The eight limbs of ashtanga yoga are:

1. FIRST LIMB OF YOGA—Yamas (Ethical Guidelines)

The Yamas are the first of the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga which serve as ethical guidelines that govern our behavior towards others and form the foundation for a meaningful and harmonious life. The five Yamas are:

The five Yamas are

- 1. Ahimsa (Non-violence)**
Definition: Practicing non-violence in thought, word, and action toward all living beings.
Application: Cultivating compassion and kindness, avoiding harm to oneself and others, and fostering a peaceful mindset.
- 2. Satya (Truthfulness)**
Definition: Commitment to truthfulness in all aspects of life.
Application: Speaking and acting honestly while considering the impact of one's words. This involves aligning thoughts, words, and actions with one's true self.
- 3. Asteya (Non-stealing)**
Definition: Respecting the belongings and rights of others, avoiding theft or taking what is not freely given.
Application: This extends beyond material possessions to include time, ideas, and energy. It encourages integrity and gratitude for what one has.
- 4. Brahmacharya (Moderation or Celibacy)**
Definition: Practicing moderation in all things, particularly in sensory indulgence.
Application: This principle emphasizes self-control and mindfulness in relationships and encourages a balanced lifestyle that supports spiritual growth.
- 5. Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)**
Definition: Letting go of greed and attachment to material possessions.
Application: Encouraging a mindset of surrender and acceptance, this Yama fosters generosity and a focus on spiritual rather than material wealth.

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The primary aim of Ashtanga Yoga is to achieve self-realization and spiritual liberation, known as Moksha. This is accomplished by aligning the body, mind and spirit through disciplined practices. The eight limbs offer a progressive path that leads practitioners from ethical living to deep states of meditation and ultimate bliss. These eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga are Yamas which are ethical guidelines. The Yamas are the first of the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga which serve as ethical guidelines that govern our behaviour towards others and form the foundation for a meaningful and harmonious lives.

The Yamas are five in number. First of the Yama is Ahimsa which is non-violence. So practicing non-violence in thought, word and action towards all living beings is known as Ahimsa. How can you cultivate it? So cultivate compassion and kindness avoiding harm to oneself and others and fostering a peaceful mindset. The second Yama is Satya or truthfulness which is commitment to truthfulness in all aspects of life either in speech, thoughts, words or action.

Third Yama is Asteya or non-stealing. So respecting the belongings and rights of others, avoiding theft or taking what is not freely given is Asteya. The fourth Yama is Brahmacharya or moderation or celibacy. Practicing moderation in all things particularly in sensory indulgence means Brahmacharya. This principle emphasizes self-control and mindfulness in relationships and encourages a balanced lifestyle that supports spiritual growth.

The last Yama is a Parigraha or non-possessiveness, which means letting go of greed and attachment to material possessions. Encouraging our mindset of contentment and acceptance, this Yama fosters generosity and a focus on spiritual rather than the material wealth. Practicing these restraints helps cultivate a harmonious and ethical approach to life.

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Second limb of Yoga- NIYAMA

2. Niyamas (Observances): The Niyamas are the second limb of Ashtanga Yoga in the Yoga Sutra. They consist of personal observances that focus on self-discipline and spiritual growth, guiding practitioners toward a deeper understanding of themselves. The five Niyamas are:

1. Saucha (Purity): Maintaining cleanliness of body, mind, and environment.	Application: This includes physical cleanliness through hygiene and a healthy diet, as well as mental purity by avoiding negative thoughts and emotions. Creating a harmonious environment also contributes to spiritual growth.
2. Santosha (Contentment): Finding contentment and acceptance with what one has.	Application: This principle encourages gratitude and a positive mindset, regardless of external circumstances. Practicing Santosha helps cultivate inner peace and happiness.
3. Tapas (Austerity): Self-discipline and commitment to personal growth.	Application: Tapas involves making sacrifices for the sake of spiritual development, such as adhering to a consistent yoga practice or engaging in mindful living. It fosters resilience and inner strength.
4. Swadhyaya (Self-study): The practice of self-reflection and study of sacred texts.	Application: Engaging in self-inquiry and exploring spiritual literature helps deepen understanding of oneself and the nature of reality. This may include studying texts like the Bhagavad Gita or the Yoga Sutra.
5. Ishvara Pranidhana (Surrender to a Higher Power): Surrendering one's ego and recognizing a higher spiritual reality.	Application: This involves letting go of attachment to outcomes and trusting in a higher purpose. It encourages a sense of humility and openness to divine guidance.

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Next we come to the second limb of yoga which is known as Niyama or observances. The Niyamas are the second limb that is outlined by Patanjali in the Yogasutras.

These consist of personal observances that focus on self-discipline and spiritual growth, guiding practitioners toward a deeper understanding of themselves. The five Niyamas are Saucha or purity which means maintaining cleanliness of body, mind and environment. This includes not just the physical cleanliness through hygiene and a healthy diet, but also mental purity by avoiding negative thoughts and emotions. Creating a harmonious environment also contributes to spiritual health. The second niyama is santosha or contentment, finding contentment and acceptance with what one has.

This principle encourages gratitude and a positive mindset, regardless of external circumstances. Practicing santosh helps cultivate inner peace and happiness. Third niyam is tapas or austerity, which is self-discipline and commitment to personal growth. Tapas involves making sacrifices for the sake of spiritual development such as adhering to a consistent yoga practice or engaging in mindful living. It fosters resilience and inner strength.

Fourth niyam is Swadhyaya or self-study. The practice of self-reflection and study of

sacred texts. Engaging in self-enquiry and exploring spiritual literature helps deepen understanding of oneself and the nature of reality. This may include studying texts like Bhagavad Gita or the Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Fifth niyama is Ishwar Pranidhana which is surrender to the higher power.

Surrendering one's ego and recognizing a higher spiritual reality is Ishvara Pranidhana. This involves letting go of attachment to outcomes and trusting in a higher purpose. It encourages a sense of humility and openness to divine guidance. Niyamas foster self-awareness, self-improvement and a deeper connection with the divine. So how could you include Yama and Niyama in practice? Let's talk about this.

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Including Yama & Niyama in practice

Yamas

Initially, focus on one yama and one niyama. Follow both diligently. Review your progress daily and avoid feeling guilty if you slip. In the beginning, the practice may be challenging as it disrupts old patterns and conditioning. However, you will experience significant satisfaction and a boost in self-esteem as you recognize and embrace your group and positive changes.

Niyamas

Understanding, awareness, persistent effort, and self-analysis are the four cornerstones of success in any spiritual practice. If you encounter setbacks, don't lose heart. Keep moving forward with renewed enthusiasm and determination.

Ahimsa Aparigraha Dharmacharya Santosa

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To start practicing, you can begin by focusing on one Yama and one Niyama, committing to follow them diligently. Review your progress daily and avoid feeling guilty if you slip up. Initially, the practice may be challenging as it disrupts old patterns and conditioning. However, you will experience significant satisfaction and a boost in self-esteem as you recognize and embrace your group and positive changes. Understanding, awareness, persistent effort and self-analysis are the four cornerstones of success in any spiritual practice.

If you encounter setbacks, don't lose heart. Keep moving forward with renewed enthusiasm and determination.

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Third limb of Yoga- ASANA

"Sthirasukhamasanam" i.e. That posture which is steady and comfortable is Asana

स्थिरसुखमासनम्

sthira	sukham	asanam
steady stable motionless	comfortable sue filled	posture

- Asanas are the physical postures that help settle the body for meditation. It ensures that the body is fit and healthy, free from diseases and restlessness. It is important for the physical self to be healthy as it prepares us to dive within and explore the inner self. Equilibrium at the physical level enables balance at the mental, intellectual and ultimately spiritual level.
- Patanjali highlighted the significance of achieving a steady and comfortable posture, which prepares the body for meditation, enhances overall physical health, and promotes balance and flexibility.
- Practicing Asanas involve gentle stretching and pressing of the muscles, which helps maintain their tone—crucial for effective muscle contraction.

(श्लोकः)
Sthira Sukham Asanam
Every asana should be steady, easy and peaceful.

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Next, we move on to the third limb of yoga which is asana. You must have heard a lot about it.

Let's talk deeper today. So, sthira-sukham-asanam that is the posture which is steady and comfortable is asana. This aphorism is used in Patanjali's yoga sutra as outlined by Maharshi Patanjali. So what are asanas? They are the physical postures that help settle the body for meditation. It ensures that the body is fit and healthy, free from diseases and restlessness. It is important for the physical self to be healthy as it prepares us to dive within and explore the inner self.

Equilibrium at the physical level enables balance at the mental, intellectual and ultimately spiritual level. Patanjali highlighted the significance of achieving a steady and comfortable posture which prepares the body for meditation, enhances overall physical health and promotes balance and flexibility. Practicing asanas involve gentle stretching and pressing of the muscles which helps maintain their tone crucial for effective muscle contraction. The pressure exerted during these postures compresses blood vessels facilitating the expulsion of venous blood that contain lactic acid. As lactic acid levels decrease, muscle contraction becomes more efficient.

Each asana is tailored to individual capacity allowing for gradual muscle strengthening without exhaustion. This approach not only enhances muscle tone but also boosts overall vitality.

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Key benefits of Asana

- 1. Improved Flexibility:** Regular practice of asanas gradually increases flexibility in the muscles and joints, reducing stiffness and improving overall mobility.
- 2. Enhanced Strength:** Many asanas build strength in various muscle groups, promoting better posture and stability. This can lead to improved performance in daily activities and other physical exercises.
- 3. Better Balance:** Asanas often require balance and coordination, helping to enhance awareness of body position and overall stability.
- 4. Stress Reduction:** Practicing yoga asanas encourages relaxation and mindfulness, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels. This can lead to improved mental clarity and emotional resilience.
- 5. Increased Blood Circulation:** The physical movements involved in asanas promote better blood circulation, which can enhance oxygen delivery to tissues and help remove toxins from the body.
- 6. Enhanced Respiratory Function:** Many asanas encourage deep, mindful breathing, which can improve lung capacity and respiratory efficiency, leading to better overall health.
- 7. Pain Relief:** Regular practice can help alleviate chronic pain, such as back pain or joint discomfort, by improving muscle tone, flexibility, and overall body awareness.
- 8. Boosted Immunity:** The combination of physical movement, stress reduction, and improved circulation can enhance the immune system, making the body more resilient to illness.
- 9. Emotional Balance:** Asanas can help balance emotions by fostering a sense of inner peace and stability. This emotional regulation can lead to improved mood and well-being.
- 10. Mind-Body Connection:** Practicing asanas cultivates greater awareness of the body and its sensations, enhancing the mind-body connection. This can lead to a deeper understanding of one's physical and emotional states.

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What are the benefits of asana? So number one is improved flexibility as the regular practice of asanas gradually increases flexibility in the muscles and joints, reducing stiffness and improving overall mobility. Second is enhanced strength as many asanas build strength in various muscle groups, promoting better posture and stability. This can lead to improved performance in daily activities and other physical exercises.

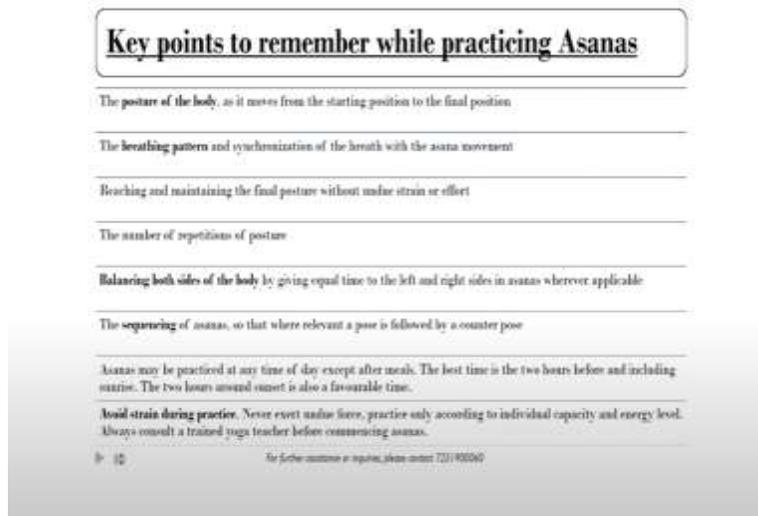
Asanas often require balance and coordination, helping to enhance awareness of body position and overall stability. It also helps in reducing stress as practicing yoga asanas encourages relaxation and mindfulness, helping to reduce stress and anxiety levels. This can lead to improved mental clarity and emotional resilience. There are more benefits of asanas.

Let's look at it. It helps increase blood circulation which can enhance oxygen delivery to tissues and help remove toxins from the body. Many asanas encourage deep mindful breathing which can improve lung capacity and respiratory efficiency leading to better overall health. It also helps in pain relief as regular practice can help alleviate chronic pain such as back pain or joint discomfort by improving muscle tone, flexibility and overall body awareness. Another benefit of yogasana is boosting of immunity. As we all know that the combination of physical movement, stress reduction and improved circulation enhances the immune system, making the body more resilient to illness.

It also helps balancing the emotional part of a human being. It also helps connecting the mind and body part as practicing asanas cultivates greater awareness of the body and its

sensations enhancing the mind-body connection. This can lead to a deeper understanding of one's physical and emotional states.

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While practicing asanas, there are key points to remember. First is the posture of the body as it moves from the starting position to the final position.

Then comes the breathing pattern which is very important and one needs to synchronize the breath with the movement of the asana. Then reaching and maintaining the final posture without undue strain or effort. The number of repetitions of postures which will give you therapeutic effects. Balancing both sides of the body by giving equal time to the left and right sides in asanas wherever applicable. Then the sequencing of asanas is very important so that where relevant a pose is followed by a counter pose.

Asanas may be practiced at any time of the day except after meals. So avoid practicing it after the meals. The best time is the two hours before and including sunrise. The two hours around sunset is also of favourability. And one most important thing is avoid strain during practice.

Never exert undue force. Practice only according to individual capacity and energy level. Always consult a trained yoga teacher before commencing asana.

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Fourth limb of Yoga- PRANAYAMA

Prana means life force. Breathing techniques that promote our life force are pranayamas. It is derived from the Sanskrit root words "prana" and "ayama". Prana refers to the pranic energy or subtle force pervading the cosmos. Ayam means extension or expansion, So pranayama actually means expansion or extension of pranic energy in the whole body so that all the bodily functions are operational. The subtle pranic energies are activated and regulated by manipulating the breathing pattern, thus also taking into consideration the needs of oxygen for the body.

There are two types of respiration: External & Internal. The process of inhaling air from the atmosphere to the lungs is external respiration, and the process of oxygen & carbon dioxide transportation from the lungs to the cells and vice-versa is known as internal respiration. The entire process is very delicately managed via constant feedback & communication between the body tissues & Respiratory and other centers in the brain.

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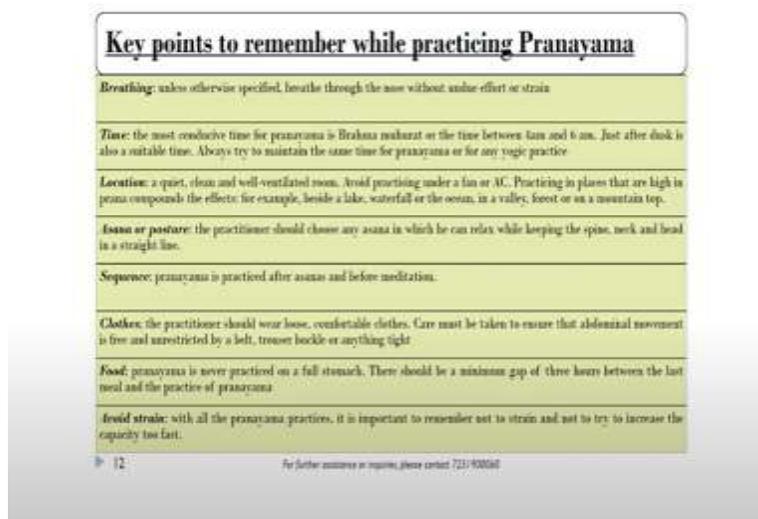


The fourth limb of yoga is Pranayama. Prana means life force. Breathing techniques that promote our life force are pranayamas.

It is derived from the Sanskrit root words prana and ayam. Prana refers to the pranic energy or subtle force pervading both the cosmos and the human system. Ayam means extension or expansion. So pranayama actually means expansion or extension of pranic energy in the whole body so that all the activities are carried out optimally. The subtle pranic energies are activated and regulated by manipulating the breathing pattern thus also taking into consideration the needs of oxygen for the body.

The process of respiration provides us with the oxygen which is separated from air and selectively absorbed into the blood in which it is transported all over the body tissues right down to the cellular or subcellular levels. There are two types of respiration, external and internal. The process of inhaling air from the atmosphere to the lungs is external respiration and the process of oxygen and carbon dioxide transportation from the lungs to the cells and vice versa is known as the internal respiration. The entire process is very delicately managed via constant feedback and communication between the body tissues and respiratory and other centers in the brain.

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There are, however, key points to remember while practicing pranayama.

First is breathing. Unless otherwise specified, breathe through the nose without undue effort or strain. Let there be no noise unless specified. Then, the time is very important. The most conducive time for pranayama is Brahma muhurt or the time between 4 am and 6 am. Just after dusk is also suitable time you can practice at that time also.

Also, always try to remember the same time for pranayama or any yogic practice as it will give you more benefits. Location is very important so select a quiet clean and well ventilated room avoid practicing under a fan or ac practicing in places that are high in prana compounds the effects. For example, besides a lake, waterfall or the ocean, in a valley, forest or on a mountain top. The practitioner should choose any asana, be it Siddhasana, be it Sukhasana, in which he can relax while keeping the spine, neck and head in a straight line. The sequence in pranayama practice is very important.

It should be practiced right after the asanas or before meditation. The practitioner should wear loose comfortable clothes. Care must be given to ensure that abdominal movement is free and unrestricted by a belt, trouser buckle or anything tight. Then take care of the food as pranayama is never practiced on a full stomach. There should be a minimum gap of 3 hours between the last meal and the practice of pranayama.

And last but not the least is avoiding the strain. With all the pranayama practices, it should be important to remember not to strain and not to try to increase the capacity too fast.

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FIFTH LIMB OF YOGA-PRATYAHARA

Withdrawal of the senses from external distractions and stimuli is **pratyahara**. By turning the attention inward from sensory input, one can gain greater control over the mind and cultivate inner awareness.

Pratyahara acts as a **bridge** between the external and internal aspects of practice, facilitating a deeper connection with one's inner self.

The term is derived from two Sanskrit words: "Prati," meaning "against" or "away," and "Ahaara," meaning "food" or "intake." In this context, it refers to the process of withdrawing the senses from external stimuli and redirecting them inward. This practice allows individuals to transcend the distractions of the external world, paving the way for deeper meditation and self-awareness.

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This was all about pranayama. Now we'll move on next to the fifth limb of yoga, which is pratyahara. This is a very important limb. So pratyahara involves withdrawing the senses from external distractions and stimuli.

By turning the attention inward and disengaging from sensory input, one can gain greater control over the mind and cultivate inner awareness. Pratyahara often referred to as the withdrawal of the senses is a fundamental concept in the yogic tradition and serves as the fifth limb of Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga. Pratyahara acts as a bridge between the external and internal aspects of practice facilitating a deeper connection with oneself. The term Pratyahara is derived from two Sanskrit words Prati meaning against or away and Ahaar meaning food or intake. In this context, it refers to the process of withdrawing the senses from external stimuli and redirecting them inward.

This practice allows individuals to transcend the distractions from the external world, paving the way for deeper meditation and self-awareness.

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The Importance of Pratyahara

- Mental Clarity:** Pratyahara helps cultivate mental clarity. By training the mind to focus inward, practitioners can better manage stress and anxiety, leading to a calmer mental state.
- Preparation for Meditation:** Pratyahara serves as a preparatory step for Dhyana (meditation). By withdrawing the senses, practitioners create an internal environment conducive to deep meditation, allowing for a more profound connection with the self.
- Heightened Self-Awareness:** This practice supports greater awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations. By observing these inner experiences without attachment or judgment, individuals can cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves.
- Detachment from External Influences:** In today's fast-paced world, we often become overly influenced by external stimuli. Pratyahara encourages detachment, helping individuals recognize that true fulfillment comes from within rather than from external sources.

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Why should Pratyahara be practiced? Let's take a look. It provides mental clarity. In a world filled with distractions, be it noise, social media or even internal thoughts, Pratyahara helps cultivate mental clarity. By training the mind to focus inward, practitioners can better manage stress and anxiety, leading to a calmer mental state.

It also prepares the mind for meditation as pratyahara serves as a preparatory step for dhyana or meditation. By withdrawing the senses, practitioners create an internal environment conducive to deep meditation, allowing for a more profound connection with the self. Pratyahara helps in heightened self-awareness, this practice fosters greater awareness of one's thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations. By observing these inner experiences without attachment or judgment, individuals can cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves. In today's fast-paced world, we often become overly influenced by external stimuli.

Pratyahara encourages detachment, helping individuals recognize that true fulfillment comes from within rather than from the external sources.

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Techniques of practicing Pratyahara

- ▶ **Breath Awareness:** Focusing on the breath can help draw attention inward. As practitioners breathe deeply and mindfully, they can begin to reduce the influence of external distractions.
- ▶ **Sensory Reduction:** Engaging in practices that limit sensory input—such as meditation in a quiet environment or closing the eyes—can aid in the withdrawal of the senses.
- ▶ **Visualization:** Guided imagery or visualization techniques can be effective in redirecting focus. Practitioners can visualize a peaceful place or a calming object, helping to foster an inner sense of tranquility.
- ▶ **Mindfulness Practices:** Incorporating mindfulness into daily activities allows individuals to become aware of their sensory experiences without becoming overly attached to them. This can include mindful eating, walking, or simply being present in the moment.

15 For further assistance or response, please contact 7211902042

The slide features a title box at the top, a list of four techniques with bullet points, and a small video feed of a woman in the bottom right corner. At the bottom left, there is a slide number '15' and a contact number '7211902042'.

How can you practice Pratyahara? So here's a look by becoming aware of the breath. So focusing on the breath can help draw attention inward as practitioners breathe deeply and mindfully, they can begin to reduce the influence of external distractions. Engaging in practices that limit sensory input such as meditation in a quiet environment or closing the eyes can aid in the withdrawal of the senses. Visualization is another technique through which you can practice or incorporate pratyahara in your daily life wherein guided imagery or visualization techniques can be effective in redirecting focus.

Practitioners can visualize a peaceful place or a calming object, helping to foster an inner sense of tranquility. There are many mindful practices which can be incorporated into daily activities, allows individuals to become aware of their sensory experiences without becoming overly attached to them. This can include mindful eating, walking or simply being present in the moment.

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Sixth limb of Yoga- DHARANA

Dharana is the sixth limb of Ashtanga Yoga which refers to the practice of concentration, where the practitioner focuses the mind on a single point or object. This stage is crucial for preparing the mind for deeper meditation (Dhyana) that follows.

This is a vital practice of directing the mind towards a singular point of focus. Derived from the Sanskrit root "dhar," which means "to hold" or "to maintain," Dharana is a precursor to deeper meditative states, facilitating a profound connection with the self and the surrounding universe.

Definition and Meaning

Dharana refers to the practice of concentration, wherein the practitioner trains the mind to focus on a single object, thought, or concept for an extended period. This can be an external object, such as a candle flame, a mantra, or an internal focus, such as the breath or a visualization. The purpose is to cultivate a deep state of mental focus that prepares the individual for meditation (Dhyana).

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Moving on to the sixth limb of Ashtanga Yoga which is Dharana. Dharana is the sixth limb as described by Patanjali in the Yuga Sutras.

It refers to the practice of concentration where the practitioner focuses the mind on a single point or object. This stage is crucial for preparing the mind for deeper meditation that follows. It is a vital practice that focuses on concentration and the ability to direct the mind towards a single point of focus, derived from the Sanskrit root dhar, which means to hold or to maintain. Dharana is a precursor to deeper meditative states facilitating a profound connection with the self and the surrounding universe. During the practice of dharana, a practitioner trains the mind to focus on a single object, thought or concept for an extended period.

This can be an external object such as a candle flame, a mantra or an internal focus such as the breath or a visualization. The purpose is to cultivate a deep state of mental focus that prepares the individual for meditation where true healing lies.

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Techniques for Practicing Dharana

- Single-Point Focus:** Choose an object to focus on—this could be a candle flame, a flower, or a specific point in the room. Maintain your gaze on this object while bringing your mind back to it whenever it wanders.
- Mantra Repetition:** Using a mantra—either silently or aloud—can be an effective way to practice Dharana. The rhythmic repetition helps anchor the mind and reduces distractions.
- Breath Awareness:** Concentrating on the breath is a simple yet powerful technique. Focus on the sensations of inhalation and exhalation, allowing other thoughts to fade away.
- Visualization:** Visualizing a specific image or scene can aid concentration. This could be an image of tranquility, such as a serene landscape, or a symbolic representation of a personal intention.
- Guided Meditation:** Listening to guided meditations that emphasize concentration can also help cultivate Dharana. These sessions often provide a structure that assists in maintaining focus.

Conclusion: Dharana is an essential practice that cultivates concentration and mental clarity, serving as a stepping stone toward deeper meditation. By developing the ability to focus the mind, practitioners can enhance their overall well-being, reduce stress, and foster a greater connection to their inner selves. In a world filled with distractions, the practice of Dharana empowers individuals to cultivate mental discipline, leading to a more centered and fulfilling life.

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Practicing dharana disciplines the mind and this disciplining of mind is important and crucial for both personal and professional growth. It also lays the foundation for meditation as a step leading to Dhyana.

Dharana lays the groundwork for deeper meditative practices. Without the ability to concentrate, achieving a meditative state becomes significantly more challenging. Focused concentration allows practitioners to gain clarity and insight into their thoughts and emotions. This heightened awareness can lead to personal transformation and greater self-understanding. Practicing dharana also helps reducing the stress as by channeling attention to a single point, practitioners can create a sense of calm and stability amidst external chaos. There are various ways through which you can inculcate dharna in your day-to-day practice.

You can focus on a single point. For that, choose an object to focus on. This could be a candle flame, a flower or a specific point in the room. Maintain your gaze on this point while bringing your mind back to it whenever it wanders. Then there is another technique of mantra repetition which comes under the practice of dharana. So using a mantra either silently or mentally or aloud in speech can be an effective way to practice dharana.

The rhythmic repetition helps anchor the mind and reduces distractions. Awareness on the breath is another practice yet a very powerful technique. Focus on the sensations of inhalation and exhalation allowing other thoughts to fade away. Then you can also visualize a specific image or scene that can aid concentration. This could be an image of tranquility such as a serene landscape or a symbolic representation of personal intention.

You can also listen to guided meditations that emphasize concentration, which helps cultivate dharana.

These sessions often provide a structure that assists in maintaining focus. So, we can conclude that dharana is an essential practice that cultivates concentration and mental clarity, serving as a stepping stone towards deeper meditations. By developing the ability to focus the mind, practitioners can enhance their overall well-being, reduce stress and foster a greater connection to their inner selves. In a world filled with distractions, the practice of Dharana empowers individuals to cultivate mental discipline, leading to a more centered and fulfilling life.

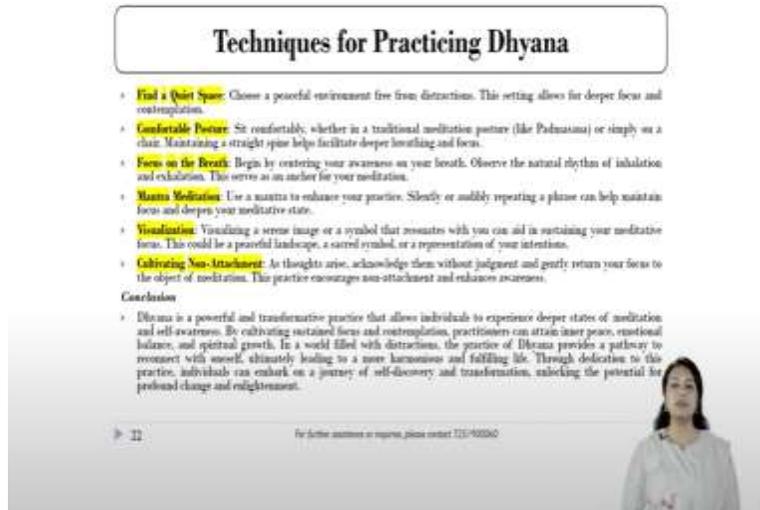
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The slide features a title box at the top: "Seventh limb of Yoga- DHYANA". Below it are two text boxes. The left box states: "Dhyana is the state of meditation. Through continuous and uninterrupted focus, the practitioner enters a state of deep absorption, transcending the ordinary fluctuations of the mind." The right box states: "This practice goes beyond mere concentration (Dharana) and allows practitioners to experience a deeper connection with themselves and the universe. Derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhyai,' meaning 'to contemplate' or 'to meditate,' Dhyana is essential for achieving inner peace and spiritual awakening." At the bottom right, a woman is visible, and at the bottom center, there is a small navigation bar with a play button icon, the number "35", and the text "For further assistance or queries, please contact 111-4000000".

Now we'll understand the seventh limb of yoga, which is Dhyana. Dhyana is the state of meditation or sustained contemplation. Through continuous and uninterrupted focus, the practitioner enters a state of deep absorption, transcending the ordinary fluctuations of the mind. Dhyana represents a profound state of meditation characterized by focused awareness and deep contemplation. This practice goes beyond mere concentration or dharana and allows practitioners to experience a deeper connection with themselves and the universe.

Derived from the Sanskrit root Dhyana meaning to contemplate or to meditate. Dhyana is essential for achieving inner peace and spiritual awakening.

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Techniques for Practicing Dhyana

- **Find a Quiet Space:** Choose a peaceful environment free from distractions. This setting allows for deeper focus and contemplation.
- **Comfortable Posture:** Sit comfortably, whether in a traditional meditation posture (like Padmasana) or simply on a chair. Maintaining a straight spine helps facilitate deeper breathing and focus.
- **Focus on the Breath:** Begin by centering your awareness on your breath. Observe the natural rhythm of inhalation and exhalation. This serves as an anchor for your meditation.
- **Mantra Meditation:** Use a mantra to enhance your practice. Silently or audibly repeating a phrase can help maintain focus and deepen your meditative state.
- **Visualization:** Visualizing a serene image or a symbol that resonates with you can aid in sustaining your meditative focus. This could be a peaceful landscape, a sacred symbol, or a representation of your intentions.
- **Cultivating Non-Attachment:** As thoughts arise, acknowledge them without judgment and gently return your focus to the object of meditation. This practice encourages non-attachment and enhances awareness.

Conclusion

- Dhyana is a powerful and transformative practice that allows individuals to experience deeper states of meditation and self-awareness. By cultivating sustained focus and contemplation, practitioners can attain inner peace, emotional balance, and spiritual growth. In a world filled with distractions, the practice of Dhyana provides a pathway to reconnect with oneself, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and fulfilling life. Through dedication to this practice, individuals can embark on a journey of self-discovery and transformation, unlocking the potential for profound change and enlightenment.

▶ 22 For further assistance or inquiries, please contact 022-XXXXXX

Here's an in-depth exploration of Dhyana. Please take a few prerequisites while practicing Dhyana. First is finding a quiet space. The selection of a peaceful environment which is free from distractions is very important as this setting allows for deeper focus and contemplation.

Next is comfortable posture. Sit comfortably where in a traditional meditation posture. Sit comfortably whether in a traditional meditation posture like Padmasana or lotus pose or simply on a chair wherever you are comfortable. Maintaining a straight spine helps facilitate deeper breathing and focus. Then during the practice of Dhyana, begin by centering your awareness on your breath.

Observe the natural rhythm of inhalation and exhalation. This serves as an anchor for your meditation. While dhyana, you can use a mantra to enhance your practice. Silently or audibly repeating a phrase can help maintain focus and deepen your meditative state. You can also visualize a serene image or a symbol that resonates with you can aid in sustaining your meditative focus. This could be a peaceful landscape, a sacred symbol or a representation of your own intentions.

And as thoughts arise, acknowledging them without judgment and gently return your focus to the object of meditation. This practice encourages non-attachment and enhances awareness. So precisely, Dhyana is a powerful and transformative practice that allows individuals to experience deeper states of meditation and self-awareness. By cultivating sustained focus and contemplation, practitioners can attain inner peace, emotional balance and spiritual growth. In a world filled with distractions, the practice of Dhyana

provides a pathway to reconnect with oneself, ultimately leading to a more harmonious and fulfilling life.

Through dedication to this practice, individuals can embark on a journey of self-discovery and transformation, unlocking the potential for profound change and enlightenment.

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Eighth limb of Yoga- SAMADHI

Samadhi is often translated as "absorption" or "enlightenment." Samadhi is a state of profound absorptive contemplation of the Absolute that is undisturbed by desire, anger, or any other ego-generated thought or emotion. It is a state of joyful calm in which one maintains one's full mental alertness and activity.

Definition and Meaning

In its essence, Samadhi is a state where the distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation, and the object of meditation dissolves. It is characterized by an experience of oneness and deep inner peace, where the mind becomes fully absorbed in the object of focus, resulting in a heightened state of awareness and clarity.

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Now we'll try to understand the eighth limb of yoga, which is known as Samadhi, which is the aim of yoga. So Samadhi represents the pinnacle of yogic practice and spiritual attainment. Often translated as absorption or enlightenment. Samadhi signifies a profound state of consciousness where the practitioner experiences unity with the object of meditation, transcending the limitations of the ego and individual self.

This commentary will explore the nature, significance, stages and implications of Samadhi. In its essence, Samadhi is a state where the distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation and the object of meditation dissolves. It is characterized by an experience of oneness and deep inner peace where the mind becomes fully absorbed in the object of focus resulting in a heightened awareness and clarity.

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Importance of Samadhi

- Spiritual Liberation:** Samadhi is considered a crucial step towards spiritual liberation (moksha). It allows practitioners to transcend the cycle of birth and rebirth (samsara), moving towards a state of ultimate freedom and enlightenment.
- Unity with the Universe:** In Samadhi, individuals experience a profound sense of connection with all living beings and the universe. This realization fosters compassion, empathy, and a sense of belonging.
- Transformation of Consciousness:** Achieving Samadhi transforms one's consciousness. The ego-based identity diminishes, leading to a clearer understanding of the self beyond personal narratives, desires, and fears.
- Enhanced Perception:** Samadhi allows for a heightened perception of reality. Practitioners often report insights and clarity about life, relationships, and the nature of existence that were previously obscured.
- Ultimate Peace:** The state of Samadhi is marked by deep tranquility and bliss, often described as the highest form of happiness. This inner peace remains stable even amidst external challenges.

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Samadhi is considered a crucial step towards spiritual liberation, which is called as Moksha. It allows practitioners to transcend the cycle of birth and rebirth, Samsara, moving towards the state of ultimate freedom and enlightenment.

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And ultimately, the state of Samadhi is marked by deep tranquility and bliss, often described as the highest form of happiness. This inner peace remains stable even amidst external challenges.

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Stages of Samadhi

Samadhi is often described in several stages or levels, each representing a deeper layer of realization:

- ▶ **Savikalpa Samadhi:** This is the initial stage of Samadhi where the practitioner maintains awareness of the object of meditation while still experiencing some duality. There is a sense of bliss, but thoughts and awareness of the self may still arise. In this state, the mind is still somewhat active, and the practitioner may have fleeting insights.
- ▶ **Nirvikalpa Samadhi:** This is a deeper state where the sense of duality and the distinction between subject and object dissolve. The practitioner experiences a profound sense of oneness with the universe, characterized by pure consciousness and bliss without any thoughts or distractions. This state is often described as "thoughtless awareness," where the individual transcends the mind altogether.
- ▶ **Samprajnata Samadhi:** In this state, the practitioner maintains a certain level of cognition and awareness, but the focus is on understanding the nature of reality. Insights about the self and the universe become clear, and the practitioner begins to see beyond illusion (Maya).
- ▶ **Asamprajnata Samadhi:** This is the final stage of Samadhi, where the individual experiences complete absorption in the divine or universal consciousness. There is no sense of individual identity, and the practitioner rests in a state of blissful awareness.

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There are a few stages of Samadhi before becoming completely one with the universe. So, the first is cervical Samadhi. This is the initial stage of Samadhi where the practitioner maintains awareness of the object of meditation while still experiencing some duality.

There is a sense of bliss but thoughts and awareness of the self may still arise. In this state, the mind is still somewhat active and the practitioner may have fleeting insights. Then comes the higher level of Samadhi which is Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is the deeper state where the sense of duality and the distinction between subject and object dissolve. The practitioner experiences a profound sense of oneness with the universe characterized by pure consciousness and bliss without any thoughts or distractions. This state is often described as thoughtless awareness where the individual transcends the mind altogether.

Then after Savikalpa Samadhi and Nirvikalpa Samadhi comes the Samprajnata Samadhi. In this state, the practitioner maintains a certain level of cognition and awareness. But the focus is on understanding the nature of reality. Insights about the self and the universe becomes clear and the practitioner begins to see beyond illusion, maya. The last stage of Samadhi is a Asamprajnata Samadhi. This is the final stage where the individual experiences complete absorption in the divine or universal consciousness.

There is no sense of individual identity and the practitioner rests in a state of blissful awareness.

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The Impact of Samadhi on Daily Life

Achieving Samadhi can have profound implications for one's daily life:

- **Improved Relationships:** The experience of unity fosters greater compassion and understanding towards others, leading to healthier and more meaningful relationships.
- **Enhanced Creativity and Insight:** The clarity gained through Samadhi often translates into improved problem-solving abilities and creativity in various aspects of life.
- **Increased Resilience:** With a deeper sense of inner peace, practitioners may find themselves better equipped to handle stress and adversity, approaching challenges with calmness and equanimity.
- **Commitment to Service:** Many who experience Samadhi feel a calling to serve others and contribute positively to society, reflecting their expanded sense of interconnectedness.

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Achieving Samadhi can have profound implications for one's daily life, such as improved relationships, enhanced creativity and insight, increased resilience and commitment to service. Many who experience Samadhi feel a calling to serve others and contribute positively to society, reflecting their expanded sense of interconnectedness.

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In Summary

Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga offers a comprehensive framework for personal growth and self-realization through its eight limbs. Each limb—Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi—interconnects to create a holistic approach to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. By emphasizing ethical conduct, physical discipline, breath control, and meditation, Ashtanga Yoga encourages practitioners to cultivate a balanced and fulfilling life.

As we integrate these principles into our lives, we not only improve our individual well-being but also contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious society. Ultimately, the practice of Ashtanga Yoga serves as a pathway to personal transformation and enlightenment, guiding us toward a deeper connection with ourselves and the universe.

27 For further assistance or inquiries, please contact 7211400062

So here's the gist of today's session. Patanjali's Ashtag Yoga offers a comprehensive framework for personal growth and self-realization through its eight limbs.

Each limb, yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi

interconnects to create a holistic approach to physical, mental and spiritual well-being by emphasizing ethical conduct, physical discipline, breath control and meditation. Ashtanga Yoga encourages practitioners to cultivate a balanced and fulfilling life. As we integrate these principles into our lives, we not only improve our individual well-being, but also contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious society. Ultimately, the practice of Ashtanga Yoga serves as a pathway to personal transformation and enlightenment, guiding us toward a deeper connection with ourselves and the universe. Thank you.