Increasing Spirituality Through Yoga As We Age

Carol Hahn, MSN, RN, RYT, CPT
Wellness and Fitness Nurse
Objectives

After attending this presentation, the participant will be able to:

- Discuss 3 of the 8 limbs or paths of yoga
- Describe and practice healthy breathing
- Demonstrate 4 simple yoga movements/poses
- Participate in a short meditation practice
Why Start Yoga?

People often start yoga for the physical benefits, but after practicing, often realize other aspects, including spirituality.
Benefits of Yoga

- Inner Peace – Meditative aspects of yoga help many reach deeper, more spiritual and more satisfying place in lives
  - Yoga Alliance  https://www.yogaalliance.org/

- Most initiate yoga practice for exercise and stress relief, but spirituality becomes primary reason for maintaining practice

Spiritual aspect of yoga leads to transcendence of self and sense of connectedness to all mankind

What is Yoga?

- Mind-body practice
- Yoga means “to yoke” - uniting mind, body, and spirit
- Main purpose of yoga - Still the mind
- Poses were first begun to make the body strong enough to sit for hours in meditation
Change

Change is inevitable, continuous, and unavoidable.

Everything changes.

We may not always be in control of situations around us, but we are in control of our reaction towards them.

Yoga practice often parallels life.

Transformation happens through conscious presence in the moment.
8 Limbs of Yoga

We will focus on 3:

- Pranayama or Breathing
- Asanas or Poses
- Dhyana or Meditation

Yoga is holistic practice that unites our body, mind, breathe, and connects us to spiritual aspect of our lives.
Breathing

• Synonymous with living. Life force - prana
• Supplies needed oxygen to cells - gets rid of waste products
• Happens automatically for every moment of life. Without it, everything stops
• Breathing can be a bad habit that requires change. Take a few minutes and assess your current breathing style:
  • Is your breathing shallow?
  • Do you breathe erratically (not harmonious)?
  • Do you easily get out of breath?
  • Is your breathing labored at times?
  • Do you breathe too fast?
Breathing

- Yogic breathing is usually done through the nose – both during inhalation and exhalation. This:
  - slows down the breath (2 small openings instead of 1 big one)
  - Air is filtered and warmed in nasal passages
  - Stimulates an energy center near your sinuses

- Let’s practice some breathing . . .
Poses

- Poses were originally done to allow the yogis to sit for long periods of time while they meditated
- Intended to make the body strong enough to support the spiritual aspirations
- Designed to put pressure on the glandular systems of the body - increasing its efficiency and total health
- Let’s practice some poses...
Meditation

- Mental process involving focused attention, or calm awareness – also called Mindfulness
- Many forms or styles
- 2 basic approaches:
  - Meditation with a specific focus
  - Objectless meditation
Kirtan Kirya

- Type of meditation from the Kindalini yoga tradition
- Has been practiced for thousands of years
- Sometimes called singing exercise - involves singing sounds along with repetitive finger movements, or mudras
- The meditation can be adapted to several lengths, but practicing it for just 12 minutes a day has been shown to be beneficial
Mantra

Utilizes primal sounds – practiced for greater attention, concentration, focus, improved short term memory, and better mood. Designed to be uplifting:

- Saa - birth or infinity
- Taa - life
- Naa - death or transformation
- Maa - rebirth
Mantra (cont.)

12 Minutes Per Day:

- 2 minutes out loud
- 2 minutes in a whisper
- 4 minutes silently
- 2 minutes in a whisper
- 2 minutes out loud

Now let’s practice . . .

- Alzheimer’s Research and Prevention Foundation
  http://www.alzheimersprevention.org/
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Questions?

Contact:

Carol Hahn, MSN, RN, RYT, CPT
Wellness and Fitness Nurse
CarolHahnRN@earthlink.net