

YOGA FOR EATING DISORDERS

**300-HOUR
YOGA THERAPIST TRAINING
WITH KAREN CLAFFEY**

**HEAVEN ON EARTH YOGA INSTITUTE
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YOGA FOR EATING DISORDERS

WHAT IS EATING DISORDERS

Eating Disorders are a group of conditions characterized by abnormal eating habits that may involve either insufficient or excessive food intake to the detriment of an individual's physical and emotional well being.

Eating Disorders affect dominantly females, but some males are also affected especially in a profession which weight and body image plays an important role, such as models and jockeys.

THERE ARE THREE MAJOR TYPES OF EATING DISORDERS

- (1) Anorexia Nervosa
- (2) Bulimia Nervosa
- (3) Compulsive Overeating or Binge Eating

DESCRIPTIONS - ANOREXIA NERVOSA

Anorexia Nervosa is a condition, usually affecting females but also males as well. It is characterized, most commonly, by a refusal to eat normally. It is recognized as a psychological condition that people suffering from Anorexia Nervosa have a morbid fear of gaining weight, fat, and calories. They see themselves as fat or chubby even if they are already significantly thinner than the majority population. Their eating habits are such that significant weight loss occurs. It is an obsession with being slim.

Anorexia is sometimes accompanied by extreme physical activity, and often by depression or low self-esteem. People suffering from Anorexia are also prone to bulimic tendencies, such as laxative and diuretics abuse, and any attempt to purge the body of food.

SIGN AND SYMPTOM

Behavioral Signs:

- Fear of weight gain
- Believe they are fat, or overweight
- Deny food even when they are hungry
- Deny that they are hungry
- Believe they do not need food; they already have enough
- Cut their food into very small pieces
- Constantly over exercising
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Have a low self-esteem
- Isolate themselves from their friends and families
- Abnormal growth of body hair
- Obsessive about certain little things
- Severely restricting food intake or fasting
- Ritualistic food behaviors such as counting bites, cutting food into tiny bites, playing with their food on the plate or preparing food for others and refusing to eat it
- Excessive exercising to lose weight

- Extreme fear of becoming fat
- Dressing in baggy or layered clothing to hide weight loss
- Mood swings
- Feeling of inadequacy about his/her abilities
- Feelings of self-worth determined by what is or isn't eaten

Physical Dangers:

- Significant weight loss due to self starvation
- Loss of menstrual period in women and girls
- Constantly feeling cold
- Loss of hair on their heads
- Abdominal pain
- Constipation
- Frequent dizziness and light headedness
- Fatigue
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Anemia
- Dehydration
- Internal organs may get too small
- Low pulse
- Kidney Troubles or failure
- Heart Arrhythmia- leading to possible heart failure
- Osteoporosis
- Drying of the skin

DESCRIPTION – BULIMIA NERVOSA

Bulimia is almost like a combination of compulsive overeating and anorexia. Along with Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa is the most common form of eating disorders. People suffering from Bulimia usually consumes large amounts of food within short period of time, and then compensate the binge eating through a variety a ways to purge food consumption with self-induced vomiting, excessive exercise, over-use or constant use of diet pills, laxatives, or fasting.

Food Binging is very common because the body is often starved of food and of course the sufferer believes eating is okay so long as he or she can get rid of it afterwards. During a full blown Bulimic behavior, a person often stuffs her food down uncontrollably without even chewing it or tasting it, until they are interrupted by another person, fall asleep, or their stomach hurts from over-extension. Their stomach is full but they cannot stop eating.

SIGN AND SYMPTOM

Behavioral Signs:

- Stuff the stomach with food and then vomit
- Go to the bathroom immediately after eating
- Worries about weight
- Controls weight by dieting puking, over exercising, and abuse of laxatives (50 to 100 tablets at a time), diuretics, or emetics
- Eating habits change
- Feels out of control with weight

- Mood swings
- Eat foods with high calories
- Swelling cheeks
- Weight Change
- Feels bad about themselves
- Always talks about food, weight and how to lose it
- Overeats then vomits
- Hiding food and you hide while eating
- Constantly make trips to the bathroom
- Strict about dieting and exercise to undo the bingeing

Physical, Psychological and Emotional Signs:

- Mood swings: depression, self hate etc.
- Use eating and puking as a way to relieve stress
- Feels uncontrollable with food
- Weight change or little or no weight gain even though they eat a lot
- Chronic sore throat
- Canker soars

Physical Dangers:

- Electrolyte imbalance
- Not enough potassium
- Irregular heartbeat
- Teeth fall apart and turn yellow
- Tears in esophagus and gastric ruptures
- Menstrual irregularities
- Bursting blood vessels in the eyes
- Constipation and or bloating
- Fatigue
- Kidney problem
- Heart Failure
- Seizures
- You can have an "insulin dump" which can lead to hypoglycemia

DESCRIPTION - COMPULSIVE OVERATING, or BINGE EATING

Compulsive Overeating, or Binge Eating, is most commonly characterized by impulsive and excessive eating. Binge eaters do not try to compensate for their over-eating with purging like someone who is bulimic. Instead, feelings of shame often cause repeated episodes.

Compulsive overeating is the excessive consumption of food, often thousands of calories at short period of time. The sufferers often attempt to fill a void in his or her life by "filling the soul" with food. Bingeing is used as a release or response to negative thought, frustration, hurt, or anger. For this reason Binge Eating is sometimes called "Comfort Eating"

Signs and Symptoms:

- The Morning after a binge a person may experience symptoms like a hang-over which can get so extreme that the person cannot function normally
- Eat a lot without being hungry
- Eating Quickly
- Discomfort after eating
- Eating alone because of embarrassment
- Feeling guilty and depressed after eating
- Rigid dieting and diet backlash
- Stopping activities because of embarrassment of size
- Preoccupation with weight, eating, and dieting
- Success and Failure attributed to weight

Physical Dangers:

- Weight changes
- Over weight
- Mobility problems
- Diabetes
- Hypertension, High blood pressure or always tense
- Heart problems

Behavioral Signs:

- Either planning to go on a diet, on a diet or has just broken one most of the time
- Talking about bingeing
- Describing foods as "good" or "bad"
- Hiding or eating alone
- Gaining weight but eating little in front of others
- Avoid social events

Psychological and Emotional Signs:

- Mood swings
- Denying "negative feelings"
- Using food to cope with stress
- Blaming other problems on weight
- Feeling out of control with food
- Feelings of self-worth determined by weight and what is or is not eaten
- Weight gain is not explainable by medical conditions

CAUSES OF EATING DISORDERS

It was not too long ago that eating disorders were merely thought to be purely the result of mental conditions. As a matter of fact, eating disorders can be triggered by a multitude of factors including those of physical, psychological, behavioral, social, or biological nature.

I had suffered from Bulimia for over 30 years, then became Anorexic between 2002 and 2003, followed by a full blown downward spiral of Bulimia. I felt ashamed and kept it secret for all those years. It was not until recently during conversation with my students that I realized most women are affected by this horrible disease.

Eating disorders can be triggered by various factors, including the followings:

- a. Genetics – According to recent studies involving family and twin, heredity is responsible for about fifty percent of the risk of developing Anorexia Nervosa, whereas environment is equally responsible for the other half.
- b. Severe Life Stress – severe life stress involving family members or close friends frequently occur in the year before a person develops an eating disorder
- c. Childhood Trauma – childhood trauma and preoccupation by family members on the importance of weight and appearance may also contribute. If mom, dad, or a sibling is constantly dieting and obsessing about her or his weight, it can cause a young girl to begin obsessing about her own weight. If talk in the house is continually focused around eating and weight, it stands to reason that a young girl will begin to continually talk about eating and weight too.
- d. Cultural Factors – the culture of some countries emphasize thinness as part of the ideal appearance of women in general. Girls of various ages often have an unhealthy or inaccurate opinion about their bodies.
- e. Media Influence – many advertisement or articles in the entertainment business tend to inundate us with images of the “super-thin” super models, movie stars, television stars, or rock stars in magazine and television coverage. As a consequence, we often have an unhealthy or inaccurate opinion about our bodies, leading us to pressure about needing to be thin. Thus it increases the likelihood of being anorexic, bulimic, and binge eating. People who are perfectionists are most often linked to “a relentless pursuit of the thin ideal”.

Individuals suffering from eating disorders are likely to also suffer from low self-esteem, and they have an overwhelming need for control. Being thin defines their sense of self worth. People suffering from eating disorders often feel ashamed of their bodies, and ashamed of themselves as a person.

To cure this disease, we must go deep into our sense of belief, self-worth, and up-root the negative thoughts in our brain.

COMMON MEDICAL TREATMENT

Eating disorders are serious conditions that cause both physical and emotional damage. While people with eating disorders usually try to hide the problem, there are warning signs you can watch for. Early treatment makes recovery easier, so talk to your friend or family member if you are worried. You cannot force your friend or family member with an eating disorder to change their behaviors or beliefs, but you can make a difference by showing that you care, offering your support, and encouraging them to seek professional help.

Eating disorders involve extreme disturbances in eating behaviors, such as following rigid diets, gorging on food in secret, throwing up after meals, obsessively counting calories, etc. Eating disorders are more than just unhealthy dietary habits. They involve distorted and self-critical attitudes about weight, food, and body image. It is these negative thoughts and feelings that fuel our damaging behaviors.

People with eating disorders use food to deal with stressful situation and uncomfortable or painful emotions. Some would restrict their food intake to feel being in control. Overeating temporarily soothes

sadness, anger, or loneliness, whereas purging is used to combat feelings of helplessness and self-loathing. Over time, people with eating disorders lose the ability to see themselves objectively. There obsession over food and weight come to dominate everything else in life. For many years when I was suffering from Bulimia, I believed it was okay to throw up. I would not care what and how much I stuffed into my mouth, as I thought I could purge them out and rid the calories completely.

Little did I know at the time that purging was very harmful to my body, and I actually could not get rid of the calories I consumed.

If you notice the warning signs of an eating disorder in a friend or family member, you may be hesitant to say anything out of fear that you may say the wrong thing, or you may alienate the person. Although it is undeniably very difficult to bring up such a delicate topic, do not let these worries keep you from voicing your valid concerns. Eating disorders will only get worse without treatment, and the physical and emotional damage can be very severe.

When approaching your loved one about an eating disorder, it is important to communicate your concerns in a loving and non-confrontational way. Pick a time when you can speak to the person in private, then explain why you are concerned. Avoid critical or accusatory statements, as this will only bring out resistance and denial. Instead, focus on the specific behaviors that worry you.

Do not give up if your friend or family member shuts you out at first or reacts in anger or denial. Eating disorder is their way of dealing with painful emotions. It may take some time before they are willing to admit they have a problem. Lecturing them, feeling frustrated, or giving them ultimatums will not help the situation. It would only make it worse. Instead, make it clear that you love them, you care their health, and you are there to help. The most important thing you can do is to encourage treatment. The longer an eating disorder remains undiagnosed and untreated, the harder it is on the body and the more difficult it is to overcome.

During medical intervention, a doctor will usually assess their symptoms, provide an accurate diagnosis, and screen for medical problems that might be involved. The doctor will also determine whether there are any co-existing conditions that require treatment, such as depression, substance abuse, or an anxiety disorder.

There are many treatment options for eating disorders. The right approach for each individual depends on his or her specific symptoms, issues, and strengths, as well as the severity of the disorder. To be most effective, treatment for an eating disorder must address both the physical and psychological aspects of the problem. The goal is to treat any medical or nutritional needs, promote a healthy relationship with food, and offer them constructive methods to cope with life and its challenges.

Quite often, a combination of therapy, nutritional counseling, and group support works best. In some cases, residential treatment or hospitalization may be necessary.

- **Psychotherapy** – Individual and group therapy can help patients explore the issues underlying the eating disorder, improve self-esteem, and learn healthy ways of responding to stress and emotional pain. Family therapy is effective in dealing with the impact the eating disorder has on the entire family.
- **Nutritional counseling** – Dieticians or nutritionists are often involved in the treatment of eating disorders. They can help patients design meal plans, set dietary goals, and achieve a healthy weight. Nutritional counseling may also involve education about basic nutrition and the health consequences of eating disorders. Like me before I learned the knowledge, most disordered eaters

especially those who suffered from Bulimia thought that throwing up is good, as they can rid the calories they do not want. Most people do not realize that this can be life threatening, or they can get seriously ill as a consequence.

- **Support groups** – Attending an eating disorder support group can help patients feel less alone or ashamed. Run by peers rather than professionals, support groups provide a safe environment to share experiences, advice, encouragement, and coping strategies.
- **Residential treatment** -- Residential or hospital-based care may be required when there are severe physical or behavioral problems, such as a resistance to treatment, dangerously malnourished, severely depressed or suicidal, suffering from medical complications, continuing significant weight loss, or getting worse despite treatment.

YOGA REMEDY FOR EATING DISORDERS

How Can Yoga Help With Eating Disorders

Yoga is an ancient Indian body of knowledge that dates back more than five thousand years ago. The word "Yoga" came from the Sanskrit word "yuj" which means "to unite or integrate." Yoga then was about the union of a person's own consciousness and the universal consciousness.

Ancient Yogis had a belief that in order for a human being to be in harmony with himself and his environment, he has to integrate the body, the mind, and the spirit. For these three to be integrated, emotion, action, and intelligence must be in balance. The Yogis formulated a way to achieve and maintain this balance and it is done through postures, breathing, and meditation - the three main Yoga structures.

In Yoga, we treat our body with care and respect for it is our primary instrument and growth. Yoga practice improves circulation, stimulates the abdominal organs, and puts pressure on the glandular system of the body, which can generally result to better health.

Breathing techniques were developed based on the concept that breath is the source of life. In a yoga practice, we gain breathing control as we slowly increase our breathing. By focusing on our breathing, we prepare our minds for the next step; Meditation.

There is a general misconception that in Meditation, your mind has to go blank. In Meditation, we bring the activities of our mind into focus resulting in a 'quiet' mind. By combining physical poses with breathing techniques yoga practice develops awareness of our body. Yoga helps us focus and relieves us from our everyday stress.

There are several branches of yoga according to Patanjali's Yoga Sultra (the foundational text of Yoga). Among them, Hatha Yoga, or Yoga in Action, is perhaps the path of Yoga we are most familiar with, since this is the most popular branch of Yoga in the West. This branch of Yoga uses physical poses or Asana, Breathing Techniques or Pranayama, and Meditation or Dhyana to achieve better health, as well as spirituality. There are many styles within this path – Ashtanga, Forrest, Anusara, Iyengar, Integral, , Kripalu, and Jiva Mukti to name a few.

As with many conditions, eating disorders can better be dealt with through a calm and focused mind. Depression and low self esteem are problems often associated with eating disorders, and Yoga can help with both.

Many people already know that Yoga can reduce depression and help restoring a state of balance and well being in the individual. There are different yoga practices which encourage heightened levels of self esteem, and promote a positive view of our own body. These are crucial factors with eating disorders, as yoga can significantly increase recuperation and healing. Through the elimination of self judgment, yoga establishes a strong connection between mind and body. This, of course, is the natural state of wellness. By re-establishing this strong connection, mind and body will work in harmony to repair the damage.

Yoga is more than just a popular workout program full of flexible young women in attractive yoga outfits. It is also an effective therapy for healing the mind and the body. Yoga is a powerful tool that can bring about both physiological and psychological benefits in our life.

Physiological Benefits of Yoga

Regular yoga practice will increase the overall fitness level of our body, and improve our immune system. This is very helpful in coping with Anorexia, as it will help sufferers experience higher energy levels, and increase level of bone density.

There is certainly nothing new about the practice of yoga. It has been practiced by people all over the world for many years. Yoga can improve everything from flexibility to mental concentration, making it a great choice for a number of different reasons.

Yoga enhances muscle flexibility. Through the stretching involved in different postures, the lactic acid which causes tension and stiffening and accumulates in the muscles is released, reducing post-workout pain and increasing relaxation. Aside from flexibility, yoga also enhances strength. There are several different types of yoga that focus on developing muscle tone, including Ashtanga Yoga and Power Yoga. People who practice these styles regularly will usually see a noticeable increase in strength and muscle endurance.

Yoga also leads to pain reduction. As the muscles of the body are strengthened through yoga, you'll feel less joint pain and back pain. People who practice yoga regularly experience less pain associated with aging than those who live sedentary lives.

Yoga improves breath capacity and lung function through breathing exercises. In Pranayama practice, you will learn to control your breath response in stressful situations, tone your lung muscles and clear your nasal passages.

Yoga can help you to lose weight. People who practice yoga on a regular basis tend to lose more weight than people who don't, not by burning extra calories, but because of increased mental awareness. Yoga helps people become more aware of their bodies, helping them to better determine whether they are really full or if they're actually hungry

Psychological Benefits of Yoga

It is obvious that yoga helps us relax and calm down our mind. People practicing yoga on a regular basis generally report a decrease in their feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression.

Since yoga involves meditation, people who practice yoga will enhance their concentration and attention spans. Self-control is also improved through the practice of yoga. Experienced yogis are able to control feelings of aggression better and to handle every situation calmly.

Yoga helps improve and promote a healthier perception of body image among women in particular. Yoga also helps people accept themselves and increase their level of self-awareness. Through self-acceptance, yoga practitioners are able to improve their comfort level in social interactions with others

Yoga eases stress and makes a person worry less, resulting in enhanced memory skills and the ability to learn and retain new information. Women who practice yoga feel more satisfied with themselves than women who don't. Studies have shown that women who practice yoga regularly report fewer incidences of eating disorders

Yoga can be an effective tool to restore the imbalances in both the body and the mind that occur with eating disorders. Yoga has a profound ability to balance the emotions and has been shown to help relieve depression, anger and anxiety and to promote equanimity: a calm, clear focused mind. Yoga can also promote self-esteem and a positive body image, which play primary roles in eating disorders, through the cultivation of non-judgment, confidence, self-acceptance, openness and inner strength.

YOGA POSES (ASANAS) FOR EATING DISORDERS

Eating Disorders and Chakra Balancing

Imbalance of the first chakra is said to cause weight problem and eating disorders. Eating disorders are viewed as a dysfunction of the first chakra in the yogic energetic system. Excessive first chakra energy can cause a person to become sluggish, heavy, and obese, whereas lack of it can cause frequent fear, lack of discipline, restless, underweight, aloof, and dissociate from the body.

Poses that target the area of the base of the spine are useful to balance the first chakra, such as: staff pose, bound angle pose, pigeon and locust pose. Grounding postures such as Warrior One, Warrior Two, Mountain, Goddess, Standing squat, Child, and Prayer Squat can be used to bring a strong connection between our body and the earth to bring more strength and courage. Balancing and grounding poses are particularly useful to bring calmness to our mind.

If the contributing factor to the eating disorder is depression as a result of having lack of confidence, being socially withdrawn, driven, or over driven, imbalance of the third chakra is believed to be the cause. Excess of third chakra energy causes blaming and aggressive behavior, whereas the lack of such causes low self-esteem, condemning, passive, and fearful mind. Back bending poses will be beneficial for energizing, toning and heart opening qualities. If anxiety is a primary contributing factor, forward bends can be useful for the calming and nurturing aspects, and thus reduce the negative effects caused by the disease. Regular yoga practice can help rebuild physical strength, energy and bone density that is damaged and lost with Anorexia.

If being depressed for loneliness and resentment is the cause of eating disorders, the fourth chakra also plays a role. Excess of the fourth chakra energy causes jealousy, possessiveness, overly loving, and smothering, whereas the lack of it makes you feel lonely, isolated, bitter, critical, judgmental, resentful, and lack of empathy. The demon of the fourth chakra (heart chakra) is grief, and grief is caused by rejection, betrayal, and loss. To balance the fourth chakra, heart opening poses such as standing mudra, cobra, locust, and fish pose are helpful.

In many treatment facilities across in North America, gentle and meditative yoga courses have become a staple. Many yoga studios offer workshops tailored to those battling eating disorders, addiction and low self-esteem. Yoga gives patients tools to meet their life challenges more effectively, and instead of turning food or to an addictive process like starving, they have a healthy alternative. Yoga helps patients to assuage their anxiety that led to their eating disorder, or simply to learn to accept their bodies.

Yoga instructors have long believed that yoga can increase body satisfaction by switching the focus from what the body looks like to what it can achieve. Yoga encourages people to be aware and forgiving of their physical limits. When eating disorder patients become more attuned to their bodies, they are more likely to treat them with the respect they deserve.

Yoga increases our ability to reduce self-objectification, or their tendency to base self-worth on appearance. Yoga fosters a greater mind-body connection, an awareness of physical sensation in our body, and a greater ability to respond to those sensations appropriately.”

However, eating disorder patients should be discerning about the kind of yoga they choose to pursue. They should avoid yoga style which structures heavily on aerobic movement, as it may trigger some of the obsessive compulsive behaviors associated with the disease, and the patients end up with another addiction to yoga practice for the very wrong reason. The kind of yoga that would work best would be either a more gentle style, something focused on breath work, relaxation and meditation, or balancing poses which allows us to focus on our breath and calming our mind.

Experts also admit that finding the right kind of yoga instructor is vital to the recovery process. Yoga teachers should avoid making the class too competitive. Many people with anorexia or bulimia are perfectionists, and frustration over incorrect posture could deter many from yoga before they have given it a chance. It is best to should emphasize yoga’s forgiving nature, and focus on poses that allow them to explore their physical and psychological boundaries while holding their own space.

Bulimic patients need poses that emphasize containment, while anorexic patients can benefit from poses that emphasize opening up and being flexible.”

Yoga is rich with symbolism, and teaching someone to be more flexible and open-minded about poses in class can often make it easier for them to embrace those same attitudes in life. Yoga helps remove the patients away from a very adversarial relationship with their bodies. It helps them recognize how their body and mind work together.

First Chakra Balancing

The Root Chakra is red in color, located at the base of the spine. This chakra processes our sense of survival and our connection with nature and the earth.

Stimulating the first chakra can help us feel more grounded. It also helps us feel stronger, build our self-confidence, and respect our own body.

The first chakra, the root chakra, connects to the structural strength of our bodies, our connection to the earth, and the energy of manifestation within us. Physiologically, our bones, muscles, legs, feet, and reproductive organs are connected to this energy. Standing balance poses, and poses which open the pelvic area stimulate the first chakra.

- **Sun Salutations A and B** - Between three to five rounds of Sun Salutation A and Sun Salutation B helps stimulate all the chakra, especially the First Chakra. It is an excellent way to warm up the body. It is most important to focus on linking movement and breathing in a slow and mindful way.
- **Mountain Pose** – A great grounding pose. Work on bringing the weight evenly onto all four corners of both feet, letting the feet and calves root down into the earth, engage the quadriceps

and drawing them upward, rotating both thighs inward to widen the sit bones, and tucking the tailbone in between the sit bones.

- **Goddess Pose** - A great grounding pose to balance the First Chakra. Stand in wide-leg stance, with feet turned out to both sides, squat deeply with thighs parallel to the earth and elbows bent at shoulder height with palms facing forward. This pose helps open up the hips and chest while strengthening and toning the lower body. It also helps stimulate the reproductive, respiratory and cardiovascular systems. If breathing deeply and mindfully, this can be a fierce pose that defies vulnerability and builds inner strength.
- **Prayer Squat** - A great balancing pose to open the hips, improve balance, memory and concentration, and allows us a feeling of being grounded. Squat as deeply as possible with feet slightly wider than hip width apart or about the width of a yoga mat. Turn feet out to both sides to about 45 degrees and align with the knees. Bring palms together in front of the heart center in Anjali Mudra, point tailbone directly at the earth, lengthen the spine and reach the crown of your head towards the sky, and hug elbows and inner thighs towards each others to gently open the pelvis.
- **Warrior One** - Warrior one pose promotes confidence and self esteem. This pose stretches our upper body our lungs. It strengthens our legs, hips, ankles and knees, and also our arms and shoulders as our reach our arms towards the ceiling.
- **Warrior Two** - A dynamic powerful grounding posture with many benefits. It requires stamina, and demands a lot of effort. It aids digestion, tones up the nerve and nervous system, helps muscles relating to the lungs and thus helps respiration, and opens the heart with chest opening, thus affects the mood positively and improves concentration.
- **Triangle** - A grounding and therapeutic posture which helps stimulate function of our abdominal organs, relieve stress, improve digestion and constipation, alleviate back pain and symptoms of menopause, anxiety, infertility, neck pain, and sciatica.
- **Tree Pose** - A great pose to improve sense of balance, reinforce our confidence, develop nervous balance, and improve concentration and focus.
- **Child's Pose** - A great resting posture which opens the sacral area and calms the energy stimulated by the previous standing sequence. It is important to rest when transitioning in your practice so both the mind and body feel restored, focused, and grounded.
- **Bound Angle Pose, or Butterfly Pose** - An energizing pose that relieves anxiety and depression. In this pose, the soles of the feet come together in front of the pelvis. Bind the hands around the feet and pull the feet and pelvis as close to each other as possible. This pose stimulates the nerve plexus in the coccyx area as well as the sacrum.
- **Lotus Pose** - The "King" of all seated poses. An excellent seated posture for rooting the first chakra to the earth while centering the mind in breathing or meditation. Lotus Pose helps relax our nervous system, decrease muscular tension, reduce blood pressure, tone coccygeal and sacral nerves, stimulate digestive process, relax our body, calm our mind, and increase four stability and steadiness.
- **Bridge Pose** - The Bridge Pose helps stimulate the first chakra. Holding this posture also strengthens the muscles in your abdomen and thighs. It is a great pose for reducing stress and

promoting relaxation. It helps ease symptoms of depression and stress, relieve dysmenorrhea and symptoms of menopause

- **Eagle Pose** – A great balancing pose which helps enhancing our powers of concentration, sense of balance, and grace of our body. It strengthens and stretches our calves, thighs, hips, shoulders, and upper back.
- **Staff Pose** – This grounding pose is sometimes called the father of all seated postures, being the base of all seated poses. It is performed by sitting with the legs outstretched in front of our body, with heels resting on the floor and the back in a straight vertical position, and the sit-bone rooted down to the earth, thus providing a grounding effect. It helps improving all body posture, calm the brain cells, and create awareness of our entire body
- **Chair Pose** – A powerful standing pose that helps strengthen our calves and thighs. Its anatomical focus is largely on the thighs with great therapeutic applications for the feet being solidly grounded onto the earth.
- **Head to Knee Pose** – Another great grounding pose to calm the mind and emotions, stimulate the nervous, reproductive, endocrine and urinary systems. This pose also aids digestion, makes back bone and back muscles flexible, and has beneficial effect on sciatic nerve.

Third Chakra Balancing

The third chakra energy is reflected in our desire to create, to imagine, and to manifest our desires in the physical world. If this energy is too strong, a person may become single-minded and obsessive, bossy and egotistical, and may have difficulty relaxing or letting go. Those who are weak in this energy may lack motivation, will power, self-confidence, and creativity.

In the Hatha yoga system, poses and movement which stimulate the solar plexus and build heat within the body stimulate the third chakra. Sun Salutations are best for warming the body, whereas Warrior poses and Back Bending poses with vigorous breathing stimulate the solar plexus. Balancing postures such as the Eagle and the Crow engage the abdominal muscles and direct energy to the center of this chakra.

Counter balancing postures such as forward folds and relaxing inversions such as the Plow Pose calm the energy of the third chakra and quiet mental activity.

The Poses (Third Chakra)

- **Boat (Navasana)** – A great pose to relieve stress and improve digestion. It helps provide a sense of full body balance, develop focus and concentration, and improve balance, coordination, and self-esteem.
- **Plank** – A core strengthening pose which helps elongate our body, lengthen our neck, and promote a neutral body position. It helps us developing stronger arms, wrists, spine, quadriceps, and abdominals, thus allows us a better sense of confidence, higher self-esteem, and better self-image.
- **Locust** – A great pose to strengthen our low back and abdominal area, and helps develop a natural curve on the low back. It is also very beneficial for releasing premenstrual tension and toning the legs, buttocks. In order to bring concentration and focus, it is important to focus on our breath

and work on stretching forward through the crown of the head, the back, and through to the tops of the toes

- **Bow** – It is believed that practicing this pose regularly helps enable mental stimulation, ensure energy and vitality, and build confidence and self-esteem. It also helps strengthen the abdomen and expand the chest to help relieve respiratory problems. It gives a very good stretch to the front of the body, the thighs, ankles, abdomen and groins, as well as to the chest, the throat and hip flexors.
- **Chair Pose** – The Chair Pose helps develop core strength, strengthen the quads, protect the knee joint by building stability, build heat in the body, open shoulders and chest, and improve breathing. It helps open the rib cage and chest, enable the lungs to have added space to breathe as well as opening the spaces between the intercostals for additional lung potential. Practicing the Chair Pose regularly can help increasing confidence and self-esteem, combat fear and sluggishness.
- **Agni Sara** – Agni Sara combines the elements of pranayama and asana. It targets the abdominal organs and the centers of chakra responsible for regulating and carrying out the instinctive life of the body, with deep contractions of the abdomen and pelvic floor. The practice of agni sara is to garner the scattered instinctive energies of life and harness them for the inward journey. Ultimately it facilitates spiritual growth and transformation.

Not only does Agni Sara affect our physical health, but it also affects our vitality and emotional life. “Agni”, means fire, the elemental quality responsible for digestion, discrimination, and transformation, and “sara”, means essence. Agni, is the presiding element of the navel center, where the pranic energy links our body and mind.

Agni Sara provides us with immense physical benefits. It strengthens our pelvic floor and abdominal wall, thus supporting the proper placement of organs in the abdomen. It tones, activates, and cleanses the digestive and eliminative systems. Agni Sara also improves circulation to the organs of the abdomen, including the reproductive organs.

In Agni Sara, we contract the lower abdominal wall and the pelvic floor. The contractions of the lower abdominal wall in Agni Sara massage the bladder, while contractions of the pelvic floor strengthen muscles used to regulate the stream of urine. The movement in the abdominal wall stimulates healthy functioning of the immune system by pressing the lymphatic fluids upward from the abdomen.

In addition to its physical benefits, Agni Sara helps translate our emotion with less stress and anxiety in the face of life challenges. Regular practice increases our capacity to manage emotional distress and prompts a sense of enthusiasm and spiritual confidence. Agni Sara prevents the downward spiral of any physical, mental and emotional energy, and maintains vigor in our life. It helps create a strong upward movement of energy and a parallel inward movement of attention, thus offering us with more physical strength, more vigorous energy, which in turn manifests in a balanced and steady mind.

To practice Agni Sara, stand with feet 1-2 feet apart, bend knees, and place your hands on your thighs above your knees, and straighten your arms to support your back. Tuck chin into the notch where the base of neck meet top of chest. Inhale, and spread ribs as wide as possible, and exhale, forcibly empty all air out of lungs. Hold your breath, pull belly and abdominals back toward your spine into your Uddiyana, feeling the pull from the abdominals to the anus, perineum, and genitals. Without breathing, relax belly completely, letting it hang out so it is completely round,

and pull belly back into Uddiyana and relax belly out as many time as possible. When you finish, relax belly and proceed with another inhalation. Start with 2 rounds slow, followed by 2 rounds fast.

- **Child's** - Child's Pose is great in relieving stress, anxiety, tension and fatigue. It is extremely calming and can help clear our mind from needless worry and disturbing thoughts. It helps us to focus, and is particularly helpful in combating stress and other stress related disorders such as panic attacks or anxiety attacks.

Fourth Chakra Balancing

The fourth chakra, also called the heart chakra, is located at the heart, the center of the chest. Its color is green, its function is love, and its element is air. The glands associated with the heart chakra is the thymus and the other body parts are the lungs, heart, arms, and hands

The fourth chakra is the center of our moral existence. The fourth chakra energy causes the lungs to expand and contract and to move oxygen throughout the body. This force also drives us to grow and to heal. It is the place where unconditional love is centered. Unconditional Love is a creative and powerful energy that may guide and help us through the most difficult times.

The challenge of the fourth chakra is to open ourselves up to the nonjudgmental and unattached vibration of universal love. This center works with our higher spiritual power, our own heart and the hearts of others, and the pulse that unites us with the universe. It represents the qualities of air in the personality. It deals with issues of the soul.

In the Hatha Yoga system, Camel Pose is excellent for opening the heart chakra. Other poses such as Cobra, and Fish are also helpful in opening the fourth chakra energy.

The Poses (Fourth Chakra)

- **Camel** - A great heart opening pose which also stretches our hip flexors, tones our abdomen and pelvic organs, stretches our torso and throat, and strengthens our shoulders and hip joints and reduce fat around our thighs. Practicing this pose regularly helps loosen up our vertebrae, make our spine flexible by improving the tone of the muscles and nerves attached to the spine, stimulate the endocrine glands. It stretches our ankles, thighs, groins, abdomen, chest and the throat, helps strengthen the muscles of our back and legs, and reduces menstrual discomfort and alleviates respiratory conditions. More importantly, Camel Pose broadens our chest and expands our lungs, tones our larynx, heart and neck muscles, and improves our digestive and reproductive systems. A valuable pose to open our heart chakra.
- **Bow** – Bow Pose is also very beneficial to balance the fourth chakra. It is executed by raising both halves of the body simultaneously, using the feet to pull our hands and arms up and back to form a curve. This movement tones our back muscles, increase the elasticity of our spine, and improve our posture. By balancing the weight of our body on the abdomen, it helps reducing our abdominal fat, and provides a powerful massage for our internal organs. Bow Pose is a great heart opening pose which increase our strength and counteracts depression.
- **Cobra** – This pose gives us a very good stretch to our shoulders, chest, arms, and abdominal muscles while strengthening our spine and firming up our buttocks. It also helps stimulate our abdominal organs and thereby improves our digestion. Regular practice is very beneficial to cope with stress and depression.

- **Fish Pose** - The Fish Pose is performed by lying down on our back and giving a backward stretch to the cervical, thoracic and lumbar regions of the spine and expanding our chest fully by pressing the crown of the head on the ground. Fish Pose is believed to be the destroyer of all diseases, as our blood circulation is increased, our back muscles are strengthened, the capacity of our lung is increased and our breathing becomes easier. This pose helps opening our heart center more fully and thus balancing the fourth chakra.
- **Standing Yoga Mudra** – The Standing Yoga Mudra Pose is performed in a standing forward bending position with feet hip-width apart and arms behind our back, fingers interlaced. While reaching the crown of our head towards the earth and bringing our shoulders away from the ears, we bring our hands and arms away from our back as far forward as comfortable. This pose physically opens our shoulders and stretches our upper back and legs to open up the emotional connection between our heart and mind.
- **Wheel** – The Wheel Pose is perhaps the most popular pose for heart opening. It is challenging but yet accessible to most yoga practitioners. The benefits are immense, even by attempting it without successful completion of the full pose. It helps restore the strength and suppleness of our arms, shoulders, and upper back, as well as stimulating our cardiovascular, glandular, and nervous system. The Wheel Pose has an overall tonic effect for our entire body. It is helpful in regulating our hormonal secretions and digestive and respiratory system, and most important of all balancing our heart chakra.
- **Bridge** – Not only is the Bridge Pose helps stimulate the first chakra, it is also beneficial to open up our heart chakra. Holding this posture helps promoting self-love, reduce stress and tension.
- **Full One-Legged King Pigeon** – A great pose to open our shoulders and chest, and build our body's resistance against asthma. It also stretches our thighs, groin, chest and abdomen, and stimulates our abdominal organs for better secretion. This full pose is performed by bending the back knee while on One-Legged Pigeon Pose, reach both arms above the shoulders and hold the foot or the ankle with both palms until we can bring the sole to touch the back of our head. This pose has many beneficial effects on the entire body. It helps us stretch and tone our chest, ribcage, and hip joints. It helps improve the functioning of our nervous system, the metabolic functions of our body, and also balancing our fourth chakra.

When practicing yoga postures, the use of Pratyahara (inner focus) is vitally important. The exterior alignment should be de-emphasized and the focus should be drawn deeply inwards to experience and explore the feeling and sensations that arise in the poses. By withdrawing attention from the external environment and by focusing inwards on the breath and sensations, the mind can be stilled and the awareness of the body increases. With this awareness and focus it is possible to move deeper into the practice of yoga and increases the ability for one to move through any limitations, fears and expectations.

Other Relevant Yoga Poses

Inversions – stimulate circulatory and digestive system. Create sense of awareness, alertness, and presence and are also emotionally balancing.

Restorative poses – deal with the emotional and energetic body as the physical body is not distracted by external sensations. It is said that 10 minutes in a well-held restorative posture is equivalent to an hour of sleep for the human body in terms of cellular regeneration and rest for the nervous system

OTHER REMEDIES

MEDITATION

An active and well targeted meditation practice is very effective in helping reduce our negative and harmful thoughts and feelings.. Practicing yoga poses works best when external factors are shut out, and concentration is allowed to focus on our inner self. Giving special attention to breathing and inner sensations will transport us to a state of greater awareness and calmness. This new state will allow us to go on further to explore new concepts, and hopefully pursue new goals that may have been impossible before.

Eating disorders are an extreme form of desire: a spiritual craving expressed through the body. Its recovery includes an abandonment of food and weight obsessions, a firm resolve to never again starve, binge, and purge, and no longer feeling cut off from oneself and other. Overcoming bulimia involves coming to terms with the core sense of shame associated with needing and wanting, recognizing and listening to bodily sensations, and learning to tolerate emotional distress.

As our mental state has an important role in eating disorders, .the practice of meditation is very beneficial to cultivate a sense of control over life's events and to reduce obsessive thoughts. A general meditation practice will be beneficial, but using an active and targeted meditation would be more effective, such as **Mindfulness Meditation, Grounding Meditation, Root Chakra Meditation.**

- **Mindfulness Meditation**

Mindfulness Meditation involves focusing our mind at the present moment only without judging ourself. It helps reduce stress and tension, and boost immune system. Mindfulness Meditation can be practiced at anywhere, doing whatever we are already doing, such as walking, exercising, moving, cooking, or even brushing your teeth.

Mindfulness Meditation is a wonderful tool to help disordered eaters heal from various troubling thoughts, including the followings:

- (1) Low self-esteem
- (2) Confusion
- (3) Frustration
- (4) Guilt
- (5) Self-critical
- (6) Self-mutilation
- (7) Agitation
- (8) Depression
- (9) Anxiety
- (10) Scattering thoughts
- (11) Uptight
- (12) Over sensitive
- (13) Anger
- (14) Mood-swing
- (15) Self pity
- (16) Negative thoughts

When we are aware of the present, accept it, embrace it to be part of me, without judgment, expectation, or attachment, we learn to directly or indirectly deal with being powerless. When we do not expect to change anything, we can process different information in a different way.

Simply incorporate Mindfulness Meditation into our life style, and begin with between 2-5 minutes a day. Find an activity you would like to dedicate to the practice, stay being present, listen to the sound, and aware of all kinds of feeling, hearing, and smelling. Whenever any thought comes up, notice it, acknowledge it, and come back to our practice.

- **Grounding Meditation**

In the modern day society, we have become so wrapped up in our lives that our attention is often drawn to events that happened in the past and what may happen in the future, but forget to pay attention to the little details around us at the very present moment. These details can truly affect our welling being and enrich our daily experiences.

Grounding Meditation is very effective if you have the following symptoms:

- (1) Scattered thoughts
- (2) Flighty or frazzled emotionally
- (3) Disorganized
- (4) Loss of focus and concentration
- (5) Feelings of overwhelmed
- (6) Loss interests in things around you

One way to bring ourselves back to the present is to ground ourselves, to be completely in our body and aware of all kinds of sensations mentally, emotionally, and physically. There are many ways we can meditate by grounding including **Hugging Medication**, and **Visualization Meditation**.

After a Grounding Meditation session, you will feel refreshed, solid, strong, focused, and confident. Grounding meditation techniques are often the foundation for many other more complex relaxation methods, but used on their own, grounding meditation techniques can be a great tool for everyday life.

(1) Hugging Meditation

You can practice Hugging Meditation with a friend, your family member, a child, or a tree. Hug mindfully, concentrate, and feel the connection. If you choose to hug a tree, find a quiet place away from the public, with least interruption as possible, and a nice looking tree you feel comfortable to wrap your arms around. To practice, first bow to each other, or to the tree you are going to hug, and recognize each other's presence.

First, open your arms and begin hugging the tree or hugging each other. Then, take three deep conscious breaths to stay in the present moment, and loosen your muscles. With the first breath, become aware that you are present in this very moment and feel happy. With the second breath, become aware that the other person or the tree is present in this moment and feel happy as well. With the third breath, become aware that you are here together, at this very moment right now on this Earth.

When we hug, our hearts connect and we know that we are not separate beings. Hugging with mindfulness and concentration can bring reconciliation, healing, understanding, and much happiness in our life. Feel deeply grateful and happy for togetherness.

(2) Visualization Meditation

You can practice Visualization Meditation standing or sitting on a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Begin by breathing into your muscles, bones and organs until you are feeling calm and quiet. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet as you imagine roots growing out from them and extending slowly through the floor and into the earth. Watch them move deeper and deeper, down into the earth, and down into the center of the core.

Breathe in deeply, and allow your body to feel heavier and heavier. Let go all the tension, stress, and any negative emotions and energies out of your system. Let them sink deeply through the soles of your feet, down into the earth, until you are completely relaxed.

Completely relax and let go all the negative thoughts, emotion and energy. Imagine a ball of healing earth energy gathering at the end of your roots, and see it moving through your roots towards your feet. Allow as much time as you need in order to visualize this ball of energy reaching the soles of your feet. Feel it, and let it travel up through your limbs and into your abdomen.

Pause for a moment, and take time to get used to this energy and observe its physical, emotional and mental effects on you. Explore the texture of this energy, and the colors that may accompany it. Immerse yourself in this feeling, and visualize this ball of energy expanding slowly to every corner of your body, until you are completely enveloped by it, like a huge bubble.

Let this ball of energy continue to grow until it reaches about three to four feet from your physical body. Soak in the healing energies, acknowledge you are safe and in control of your environment, and stay here for as long as you need.

To come out, slowly wiggle your toes, and rock your feet side to side and back and forth gently, until you can easily lift your feet up. Imagine those roots you planted slowly removed from your feet. Gently bring the rest of your body back to the present by wiggling and stretching them, and feel the gratitude of sharing the healing energies with the Mother Earth.

(3) First Chakra Meditation

The First Chakra Meditation activates the first chakra center and is strongly grounding to the mind and emotions.

First Chakra meditation can be performed by sitting in a chair, or on the floor in a comfortable position or cross-legged position. Sit up tall with a long spine, shoulders relaxed and the chest open. Rest the hands on your knees with palms facing the sky. Relax your face, jaw, and belly. Let your tongue rest on the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth, and allow your eyes to lightly close.

Breathe slowly, smoothly and deeply in and out through your nose, deeply into your low belly, and all the way down to your perineum, to the very base of your spine, the seat of your first chakra. When you breathe in, bring your awareness to your first chakra, between the tip of the tailbone and the bottom of your pubic bone. When you breathe out, relax all the muscles in your toes, your feet and your legs.

Continue to take a few more slow deep breaths and notice any sensations in your body. Focus on your connecting point to the earth, relax down through your body, and continue to send your attention deep into the center of the earth. Envision there are magnetic lines of force coming from the core of the Earth and connecting with your own root center. Allow this force to arise within you from below.

Imagine a sensation of power surging from the deep center of the earth into this root. Focus on this magnetic and powerful energy at the bottom of your spine as power increases, and image the energy collects and builds up there with each breath. Continue to relax, and sense the feelings in the coccyx, perineum, anus, and deep inside your pelvic cavity, the foundation of your body. Sensing your root center, breathe as if the earth's energy is coming directly into you from below. Allow the energy to build, like a growing, magnetic force, and feel the weight of your attachment to the earth.

Stay here as long as you feel comfortable. Bring awareness to your pelvic area, your legs, and your feet. Feel the density of your bone, your core, the support structure of your body. Feel the minerals taken up from the earth and deposit them inside you.

To come out, gently open your eyes and gaze softly in front. Bring your palms together in front of your heart center, and bow to the beautiful teacher inside you. Take a moment or two before moving on with the rest of your day.

PRANAYAMA – YOGIC BREATHING

The word “Pranayama” is derived from two Sanskrit words; “Prana” means “life force”, and “Ayama” means “control”. Pranayama includes sets of breathing exercises that help regulate our breathing system, and the functioning of various organs of our body. These exercises help us build a focused and healthy mind and spirit, and provide us with tremendous physical and mental health benefits as listed as follows:

- Improve functioning of the digestive system and the gastro intestinal tract, thus help controlling eating disorders and regulate hunger properly.
- Improve foot absorption.
- Reduce infections in the gastro intestinal tract and the stomach
- Cure diabetes and other diseases like hernia, piles etc.
- Purify our blood
- Cleanse all toxins and infections
- Regulate blood pressure and keep our heart healthy
- Release blockage in the arteries
- Cleanse and tone the nervous system
- Improve functioning of kidneys
- Heal skin infections and other infections in the body
- Cure mental disorders, such as stress, depression, and anxiety
- Cure physical disorders, such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Epilepsy, Functional Disorders etc.
- Cure diseases, such as lung infections, TB, etc.
- Improve our immune system
- Calm, ground, and nurture our body and mind
- Balance energy in our body during the recovery stage of diseases

Regulated breathing in a yoga practice can change the emotional state of a person. Practicing pranayama helps us grounded and melts away our anger, hatred, annoyance and resentment. The intensity of the outbursts and the frequency of irritation will gradually diminish, and infusing a sense of harmony and peace in our mind.

Incorporate at least 3 to 10 minutes Pranayama exercise during a yoga practice aiming for Eating Disorders, depending on the length of therapy session. If you practice Pranayama on its own, a minimum of 20 minutes a day will be very beneficial to experience its wonderful benefits.

If you are exposed to a stressful situation, such as before a presentation or prior to a meeting with a difficult and exasperating colleague, it is a good idea to practice five minutes of the Pranayama technique

If you are overwhelmed by a hectic busy schedule in your daily life, simply take 10 minutes off whenever you need, and practicing 10 minutes of Pranayama during the middle of the day. It helps release pent up emotions and negative emotion.

TYPE OF PRANAYAMA TECHNIQUE

There are many kinds of Pranayama technique in yoga practice. Among there, the followings are very useful in coping with Eating Disorders:

- Uddiyana
- Sivananda Breath
- Alternate Nostril Breathing
- Skull Shining (Kapalabhati)
- Humming Bee (Brahmari)

- **Uddiyana**

Uddiyana can be performed sitting or standing up. Inhale through your nose, and then exhale all the air out of your lungs forcibly and tuck the chin in while leaning forward slightly and bracing yourself on the knees or in front of the knees. Hold your breath, and pull the abdominals up and back toward the spine to create as much concavity under your ribs as possible. Hold for as long as you feel comfortable. To finish, slowly release the abdominals, and then inhale again without gasping. Repeat three to five more times.

- **Sivananda Breath**

The operative word for Sivananda Pranayama is comfortable. Use Ujjayi breathing to inhale for as long as comfortable, pause, hold the breath, exhale for as long as it is comfortable, and pause, using no seals or locks. The Sivananda Breath is a relaxing sweet pranayama. It is particularly good for exploring the edges of comfortableness.

- **Alternate Nostril Breathing**

Most people are chronically clogged on one side. Alternate breathing integrates both sides. When one nostril is clearer than the other, this is an indicator of what side of the brain is more active. The nostrils and the sides of the brain are crossed-wired so when your right nostril is more open, your left brain is more engaged. Alternate breathing helps us balance and integrate both sides of your brain.

Begin with the thumb and ring finger on the nostrils while tucking the index and middle fingers in towards the palm. Press your thumb on the nose flap of the right side and inhale through your left nostril, hold the breath by pressing both thumb and right finger onto both sides, and then press on your left side and releasing the right side to exhale through your right nostril. This is half of the circle. To complete the second half, repeat by inhaling your right nostril, and all the way back to your left.

There are a few different ways to do alternate breathing. A second variation would be inhaling through the left, hold, and exhaling through the right only.

Another variation would be inhaling through the left side for a length of time, and then inhaling through the right side for another equal length of time.

The breath count ratio is usually 1-4-2, inhale for 1 - hold for 4 -and exhale for 2. We can also keep a ratio of 10-10-10.

- **Skull Shining (Kapalabhati)**

Kapalabhati is a highly energizing abdominal breathing exercise. “Kapal” in Sanskrit means “Forehead”, and “Bhati” means “Shining”. Practicing Kapalabhati on regular basis can bring you shining face and inner radiance.

Sit in a comfortable crossed log position, lengthen your back and bring the crown of your head towards the sky, hands on your knee, face relaxed. Avoid using Ujjayi breathing during this exercise.

Take a deep inhale and exhale, then inhale and do a short, sharp, fast exhale repeatedly while contracting your abdominal muscles. During the repeated short, sharp and fast exhalation, you will not exhale all the air out, but just a little bit each time which comes out almost involuntary.

Start by doing about 20 pumping breaths for one round, then take a deep inhale, and continue another or more rounds of 20 pumping breaths. When you finish, take a deep inhale, hold the breath for as long as it is comfortable, and then exhale.

Kapalabhati cleanses our lungs and our entire respiratory system, the blood is purified and our body gets an increased supply of oxygen. With regular practice, it can calm the mind and improve digestion.

- **Humming Bee (Brahmari)**

The Humming Bee Breath or Bhramari is an excellent and highly effective Pranayama technique that relieves anger and helps us reconnect with ourselves. It can be used to relax our nervous system, and to “buzz free” stuck or clogged energy.

Sit in a comfortable position, relax your body and mind, and focus on your breath. Keep your spine elongate, your neck long. Bring your hands to your knees, or use your thumbs to close your ears and with the remaining fingers cover your eyes.

Inhale, with your lips closed, and exhale, making a sound like a buzzing bee, pursing your lips closed. Feel the vibration from your body, and use different tones to send the buzz into different chakras. Use lower tones for lower body chakra, and bring the tone up higher to affect chakras in the upper body.

Do at least 5 rounds. After the exercise, you will notice that the “bee” easily brings calmness to your body, your breath, and your mind. You will also find that your body is more relaxed, your breath is smoother, slower, and your mind is free from chatter. Humming Bee Breath brings peacefulness, calmness, and clarity into your daily life.

Ayurveda Dosha Therapy

Ayurveda is an ancient system of natural healing that has its origins in the Vedic culture of India. Ayurveda is a science of life and knowledge. It offers a body of wisdom designed to help us stay vital while realizing our full human potential, and provides us with guidelines on ideal daily and seasonal routines, diet, behavior and the proper use of our senses.

Ayurveda recognizes human beings are part of nature. It describes three fundamental energies that govern our inner and outer environments. They are movement or air (Vata), transformation or Fire (Pitta), and structure or Earth (Kapha). These primary forces are responsible for the characteristics of our mind and body, and each of us has a unique proportion of these three forces that shapes our nature.

If Vata is dominant in our system, we tend to be thin, light, enthusiastic, energetic, and changeable. If Pitta is dominant, we tend to be intense, intelligent, and goal-oriented and we have a strong appetite for life. If Kapha is dominant, we tend to be easy-going, methodical, and nurturing. Most people have one or two dominating elements, while some of us have all three.

No matter what kind of dosha dominating our body, it needs to be balanced. When Vata person is balanced, he is lively and creative. If you have too much Vata, you may be predisposed to anxiety, insomnia, dry skin, constipation, and difficulty focusing. When Pitta person is functioning in a balanced manner, he is warm, friendly, disciplined, a good leader, and a good speaker. When Pitta is too excess, a person tends to be compulsive and irritable and may suffer from indigestion or an inflammatory condition. When Kapha is balanced, a person is sweet, supportive, and stable but when Kapha is out of balance, a person may experience sluggishness, weight gain, and sinus congestion.

The goal of Ayurveda Therapy is to identify the patient's ideal state of balance, determine where they are out of balance, and offer interventions using diet, exercises, yoga asanas, herbs, aromatherapy, massage treatments, music, and meditation to reestablish balance.

Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a deep relaxation for our body and mind. Stress and toxins accumulate in our body in this fast-paced modern society. If left untreated, the psychological distress can result in illness and disease. Yoga Nidra helps us relax and create harmony in our body and mind.

Practicing Yoga Nidra allows you to channel your drive effectively. It enhances your motivation in ideas, thoughts, and action, and helps you create solutions to longstanding situations that cause problems and challenges in your life. It frees us from worry, stress, and anxiety, and helps us create a positive change and stillness in our lives in many different ways.

The definition of Yoga Nidra is a state of "deep sleep" we can reach while still awake. It is a state when we know what is going on, but have removed ourselves mentally. We will become so relaxed that we can completely open our mind and free from the usual stresses of everyday living.

Benefits of Yoga Nidra

- **Stress Release** - Yoga Nidra is typically done lying down, with muscles relaxed, thus allows us to release accumulated muscular tensions and let our mind be peaceful while our body is physically still and at rest.
- **Improve Concentration** – In Yoga Nidra practice, we are typically drawn to focus our awareness and emotions inside our body one part after another, like scanning our body parts. By doing so in a deeply relaxed state, our mind is put in a high degree of concentration without effort.
- **Reduce Anxiety** - During intense periods of stress the body adopts a 'fight or flight mechanism' and the sympathetic nervous system becomes activated. In Yoga Nidra, the parasympathetic responses are increased which induces complete physical, emotional and mental relaxation.

During the practice of deep relaxation, the person may observe the root causes of their tendency to become tense, they may then be able to cope better with the demands of the stressor.

- **Cure Insomnia** -People with sleep problems may also experience headaches, irritability, tension and depression. Stress and anxiety are common factors for sleep deprivation. Daily practice of Yoga Nidra allows us to fall asleep faster and lead to a deeper and more restful sleep.
- **Eliminate Phobias** - Yoga Nidra shifts the emphasis from the external to the internal. With regular practice, it provides us with relaxation skills and the potential for self reflection to access our subconscious mind. When we experience phobias, we may understand our phobia rationally but cannot overcome the fears. With Yoga Nidra, we may visualize the feared experience safely and use the relaxation techniques to release the fear.
- **Correct Psychological Imbalances** – Yoga Nidra is an excellent tool for complete relaxation. Mental, emotional and physical imbalances can be corrected simply by relaxing the body in a guided manner.

Although many translate Yoga Nidra as yogic sleep, it is more appropriate to translate it as "yogic rest", because we remain completely conscious as the physical body sleeps, in other words, we reach a deep sleep that can be reached while we are awake. With consistent practice, we can explore the boundaries between each of the four states of consciousness:

- (1) **Physical Consciousness:** present during daily activities
- (2) **Dream Consciousness:** present during astral experience or in waking mental activities
- (3) **Sleep Consciousness:** Consciousness during deep sleep without dreams
- (4) **Pure Consciousness:** *Turiya*, the fourth state, beyond the three others, eternal, infinite and without modification

In Yoga Nidra, you can study the modifications from one state to another. You may develop willpower and determination. Vigilance and observation allows us to study the thoughts arising from the subconscious. We can recall our habits, look at them, examine them, and even select and reject them as needed.

THE YOGA NIDRA TECHNIQUE

Practice the following Yoga Nidra technique can be useful in coping with Eating Disorders. It helps bringing our awareness to the body and mind.

- Lie down on your back with a pillow placed comfortably under your neck and upper back.
 - Relax each part of the physical body in a continuous wave, progressing upwards from the toes to the crown of the head, or vice versa. Relax your mouth and tongue completely.
 - Practice *Matrieka Pranayama* for twenty repetitions.
- (1) Inhale very slowly and deeply, counting as you go
 - (2) At the end of the inhalation, begin slowly and deeply exhaling to the same count, for example inhale 10 and exhale for 10, counting as you go

(3) At the end of your exhalation, continue to inhale

(4) Repeat for a total of 20 breaths.

You can keep track of your counting by counting beads, or counting on your fingers. If so, relax your counting hand again after the breathing exercise is complete.

After repetition of 20 breaths, you can relax your hands, then visualize an ocean wave approaching and covering you as you inhale and then receding from you as you exhale. Continue for 10 to 15 respirations

You should feel completely relaxed up to this moment. Now, focus your consciousness in your Sternum, your Heart *Chakra*. Focus on your inhalation and exhalation breaths, but avoid falling asleep. The breathing should be smooth and harmonious, without interruptions and pauses between inhalation and exhalation.

If you find yourself at the threshold of sleep, stop and try again another time. Roll over on your side, or otherwise consciously disassociate yourself from the practice before falling asleep.

Healing affirmations and self-inquiries made while in the state of *Yoga Nidra* can be impregnated into our mind without resistance. It is an excellent opportunity to examine and dismiss our bad habits.

CONCLUSION

As with many medical conditions, it is important to be aware of the eating disorders, and show a constant and strong desire to defeat it. If we adopt yoga practice in our life at an early state of the disease, we have a higher chance to be aware of the problem, thus allowing a positive contribution to an early cure. Although yoga techniques are more usually used in the recuperative stages of the illness, it can work best in the prevention stage, when the negative effects are still low and easier to overcome.

Recovery from an eating disorder used to be seen solely by weight restoration and cessation of disordered eating. This approach is not enough nowadays as it provides only a superficial level of the experience of recovery.

In a yoga practice, we are seeking to calm our mind and reduce our desires. We do this to access that part of ourselves that is real. According to the basic principle of yoga, pain comes from the inability to separate true self from the illusory self. Practicing yoga with a firm emphasis on its foundations appears to be very useful in recovery from eating disorders than merely just focusing on stopping the disordered eating behavior.

Very often, women who recover from eating disorders believe that spirituality plays an important role in their healing and recovery. Spiritual practices promote physical and emotional healing beyond the realm of eating disorders. Overcoming an eating disorder requires attention to the whole human being in all its mental, emotional, physical, social and spiritual richness. Treating eating disorders and their recovery requires a focus on the whole person, with particular attention to spiritual dimension. Recovery is an ongoing process of restoration and discovery.

One of the most crucial aspects of reintegration is reestablishing the connection between mind and body. The disconnection of the two is at the heart of eating disorders, which works like a drug to numb emotions, leaving us void of pain. When we suffer from this horrible disease, we tend to control ourselves so much that the thought of letting our bodies take over can be completely overwhelming. Yoga helps provide us a healthy way to get rid of negative emotions and foster self-love.

Yoga has the benefit of being non-aerobic. It gets the blood flowing, calms patients considerably, and yet doesn't result in the counterproductive effect of weight loss. Patients who go to yoga classes are less compelled to exercise to the extreme. Overcoming the need to numb life and relearning emotional closeness and awareness are two of the most significant obstacles to healing for these patients.

Yoga is highly therapeutic and relatively nonthreatening. It is the ideal therapy in treating and recovering from eating disorders. It is a gentle reawakening of the mind and a soft embrace of the body. Yoga helps us get back into the land of healthy living.