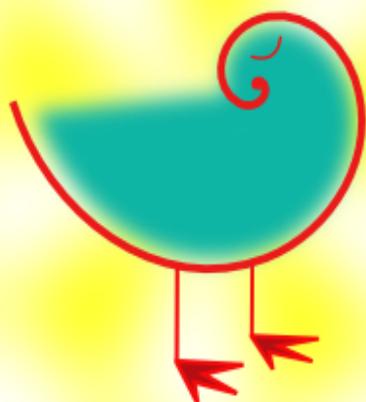


Your Peace Diet



Using Yoga Principles
to reduce stress
and anxiety

Lakshmi Gosyne

Your Peace Diet:

Using Yoga Principles to reduce stress
and anxiety

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Chapter One

Yoga Principles

What are Yoga Principles?

A long time ago in ancient India, yoga was a means of attaining enlightenment. It encompassed the five “types” of yoga that we have classified today. If you were successful you would eventually be able to become truly enlightened and a master of your body, mind and spirit.

The most popular forms of yoga in the western world are all types of “hatha yoga” or yoga involving the body.

The ancient yogic system believed that your left half of your body had a main energy meridian or nadi called Ida or “tha” meaning moon. Your right half of your body had a similar nadi called Pingala or “ha”. So in “hatha” yoga you were balancing these dual energy forms in your body itself.

Today, physical well-being and the effects yoga has on the body is what is most people think of as yoga. Bikram, Vinyasa or Iyengar are actually different versions of physical yoga. Many styles, such as Ashtanga , however, are based in Raja yoga and includes meditation, chanting and breathing. Others just see yoga as an exercise and a good way of maintaining your fitness.

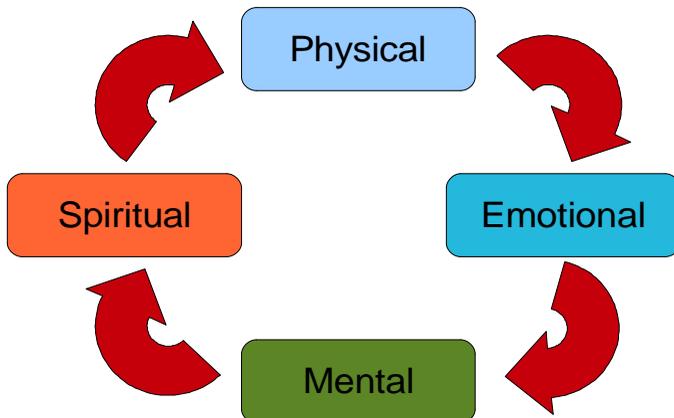
However, yoga is a systematic way of moving your body and mind towards more and more subtle forms of consciousness. These other levels are not a hierarchy but interact with each other. There are four main systems that interact to form your full self. These are Physical (also called Gross Body), Emotional, Mental (both make up the subtle body) and finally your subconscious and spirit which make up your spiritual body.

The Physical level: this includes your physical environment, and your body

The Emotional level: this is your reaction to events and thoughts

The Mental level: this is where your ideas and thoughts originate

The Spiritual level: this is the seer, observer and your true self



Yoga starts with the physical level and takes you into the emotional, mental and then spiritual level. This is why in traditional yoga, you start disciplining your body first through yoga poses. Each pose has a mantra to say and specific breathing techniques. Flowing from one pose to another and saying the various mantras helps to calm your emotions, control your breath and finally your thoughts. Controlling your thoughts gives way to “no thought” or as Buddhists say “no mind”. Within this level you experience bliss and oneness with the universe. Of course this in turn can directly and immediately affect your body and your physical world.

The book is the tool, you are the Guru

In this book, we will look at helping you reduce stress in the same way. I will recommend simple yoga poses for you to practice to help you reduce stress, recommendations on what you eat and clearing the physical to create sacred spaces through Vaastu and finally looking at your life to find your stressors. This may give you immediate relief, but we aren't interested in only reducing the symptoms. If we can go deeper into the root of your anxiety and stress we would be able to create longer lasting change.

Keeping that in mind, we will focus on the emotional impact that anxiety and stress has on your life and what you can do to help with your emotions.

Thirdly, we will go into your thoughts, the triggers that cause your negative mental feedback and how to use your thoughts to help you reclaim your life in a positive way.

Finally, we will touch upon your spirit, what you can do to nurture it and how to use your spirit to support your physical practices.

Although this book uses yoga and Indian philosophies, there has been a lot of research on stress and scientifically proven ways to reduce stress and anxiety.

This book does not have all the answers. You do. This book, accompanying workbook and guided meditations are only tools that you will use to manage your anxiety and stress. This means that you are the expert on what triggers your stress and what can work for you.

I called this book Your Peace Diet because I will be giving you a “menu” of tools and insights that you can use in any combination that is best for you. The one catch? You must use these tools everyday. Less stress means a longer and happier life!

Okay, let's look at what stress is and how yoga principles can help stop it in its tracks.

Chapter Two

Applying Yoga Principles to Stress and Anxiety

If you're like me, you may not even remember that you're stressed, but you feel the effects of it. Your muscles start feeling sore and your neck and shoulders feel tense, sometimes you may have trouble sleeping or maybe you lose your temper easily. Maybe you have Irritable Bowel Syndrome or can't concentrate or remember things the way you used to. I feel tired constantly when I'm stressed. So exactly what is stress? Why do we have stress and how do we get rid of it?

Stress is your friend, or it was before modern living

Stress is “pressure”. When you put stress on an object you're applying pressure. With your body that's exactly what happens. Believe it or not, stress is our friend. We can't get rid of stress as it is part of our survival instinct but, there are ways to manage and reduce stress.

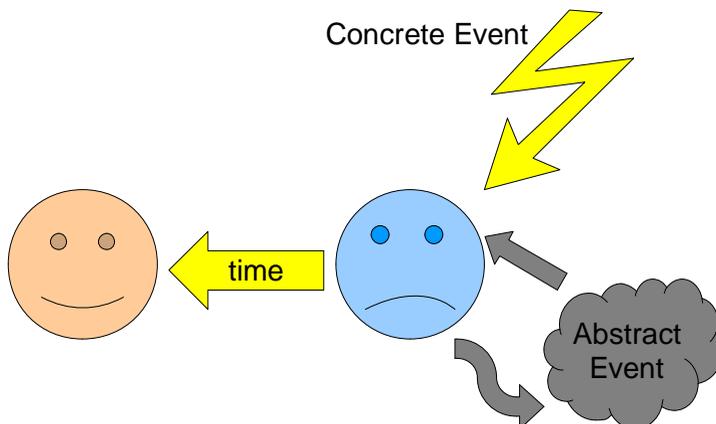
Back in our hunter and gatherer days, when something was not right such as a movement in the bush, your body would become highly alert. Ready for flight or fight. We would be ready to kill or flee and then when we found out that it was just our friend, Paul, our stress would disappear. Stress is also good in current situations. If a car

honks the horn, you move. Fast. Stress allows your body to react faster to danger and without much thought.

Both those situations are similar because there is a concrete or physical cause to the stress, so once you remove the stressor, your stress eventually returns to a normal level. This of course depends on how stressful the event was.

The problem with stress today is that the stressors do not get resolved or removed.

What you find everyday in your environment and the thoughts and emotions that occur are mostly from **abstract** dangers such as not making enough money, losing your job, having your partner leave you or your friends hurt you. This



turns into a feedback loop which you play and replay constantly like music in the back of your mind. You don't remove or relieve the stress. Instead you are constantly putting your body and mind under pressure.

How stress affects your life, health and happiness

Here are some typical physical reactions to the fight and flight response:

- increase heart and breathing rate
- change in blood flow (constriction or dilation) in many parts of the body
- release of glucose into your muscles
- constriction of your saliva and tear ducts
- your bladder relaxes
- hearing loss
- tunnel vision
- quicker reflexes
- shaking
- release of adrenaline

The trouble is that our body needs a rest from these responses. Symptoms of chronic stress affect every part of your body. Constantly being in this state can cause:

- depression
- irritable bowel syndrome
- heart palpitations
- shortness of breath

- feelings of being “weak” or tired
- nausea, abdominal pain and other digestive issues
- headaches
- insomnia
- depression
- gingivitis
- backaches
- intense mood swings
- loss of concentration
- increased confusion
- hypertension
- hemorrhoids
- suicidal thoughts

Are you experiencing any of these symptoms?

Measuring what causes your stress

Although the lists above state what typical symptoms are with the stress response as well as chronic stress, you need to measure what your stressors are. What causes you to experience these symptoms?

I feel my stress level increase while I drive and when walking through a crowded mall. I'm happy waiting in line. Others may find the opposite. So how do we test our stress?

If you have the workbook, you can use the stress test to see what triggers a stress response in you. Otherwise, you need to collect data. First imagine

yourself in common stressful situations and think back to if it caused any stress symptoms. If you are willing, you can put yourself in certain non-threatening situations or go through your day and observe what causes your stress response.

Stressors can be broken down into five main categories:

- Environmental (loud noises, bright lights, crowds)
- Daily stress events (waiting in traffic or in line, losing your keys or glasses)
- Workplace (deadlines, annoying co-workers)
- Life Changes (Divorce, Marriage, Baby, Bereavement)
- Bureaucratic stress (taxes, minor legal issues, etc.)

Unhealthy Responses to Stress

I will congratulate you for being interested in forming healthy responses to stress. Many people feel the effects of stress and choose unhealthy responses. These are things like overeating, lack of exercise, binge drinking, smoking, consuming too much caffeine and overspending. If you have any of these habits, you are using an unhealthy habit to cope with your stress. Now let's get started on healthy ways to cope with stress and anxiety.