

Doctor Yogi: The Clinical Applications of Yoga (Part 1 of 2)

Hari S.S. Khalsa, the founder of kundalini chiropractic, began practicing and teaching yoga in 1981. In 1990, he attended Life Chiropractic College - West, graduating with a citation in clinical excellence in 1993. Since then, he has been practicing chiropractic and applied kundalini yoga therapies.

D.D. Palmer suggests the connection between chiropractic and yoga in his *Laws of Life*:

"Want to let the innate contact you? The sincere yogi would make an excellent chiropractor for getting sick well if he had knowledge and ability to correct the intermediary adjustment to restore power of internal innate, to perfect greater understanding." - Palmer's *Laws of Life*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 22-23.

Chiropractic Patients and Yoga Students

Of those who practice yoga, 95 percent are likely to utilize complementary and alternative therapies, according to the results of a recent national survey. (Presented at the International Scientific Conference on Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine Research, Boston, Mass., April 12-14, 2002). Chiropractic and the practice of yoga are both growing, because of an increase in patients' participation in their own health care and their demand to be healthy in a natural way.

Recent studies indicate that in America more than 15 percent of the population has consulted a chiropractor. (Trends in alternative medicine use in the United States, 1990-1997, Eisenberg DM, et al., *JAMA* 1998;280:1569.) *JAMA* reported in 1997, and Roper revealed in 2000, that over 20 percent of Americans has either practiced or expressed interest in yoga. As the average age of the population increases, so will the demand for holistic health care services. The pressures of the times are upon us to deliver people to their own infinity. The chiropractic physicians of today are the teachers and leaders of tomorrow. We are not technicians; our impact must educate, inspire and uplift.

The Basic Philosophy of Chiropractic

The philosophy of chiropractic is described in a Web page from Life Chiropractic College - West (www.lifewest.edu/docs/about.html):

Chiropractic is a natural, preventative, and non-invasive form of health care, which is based on the principle that the body has the inherent ability to heal without the use of drugs or surgery. This fundamental approach to wellness mirrors a new and changing attitude toward health care in the United States and around the world.

Since an individual's health is either directly or indirectly controlled by the nervous system, interference within this system impairs normal function and lowers resistance to disease.

Through chiropractic adjustments, nervous system interference due to abnormalities in the musculoskeletal relationships of the vertebrae (called subluxations) can be corrected. This allows the nervous system to function properly, enabling the body to self-regulate and self-heal through its own natural recuperative powers.

The Basic Philosophy of Yoga

Yoga is a practical system of human development. Its goal is an experience of infinite innate consciousness within the physical form, allowing one to reach his or her full potential, live a happy life, and excel in one's excellence.

Human is really "hue-man": "light person." Yoga is a development of the "being," not a system of doing. The Sanskrit word *yoga* is translated as, "yoke, union, a joining together." Yoga is an ancient system of synchronized actions designed to unite you with you.

Each individual is complete, autonomous and whole. The whole range of experiences contained in the universe is present and available to the yogi. Yoga is an inside journey; an adventure in consciousness. We each have a yogi inside us; a happy, natural, subluxation-free human being; a person of radiant light and infinite happiness. We are born to be most excellent radiant souls, beaming a radiant light.

The body has an ability to heal itself and can be self-regulating. Yoga teaches that the body is the vehicle for the primary self (soul, atma, spirit, infinite, and innate: true self). That which is not the mind and not the body is the soul or spirit. The life force or vital force is an expression of this primary self.

The first expression of the soul is through the psyche, which designs and constructs our spiritual architecture and the way we contextualize our life. The psyche directs the mental waves, which manifest themselves in physical patterns through the nervous system.

Bioelectrical energy flows through channels in the body referred to by yogis as *nadis*, which include the nervous system and meridians.

Yoga puts you in command of your domain. The skill of directive action is practiced to develop the self-command center. The classic analogy is of the chariot: the horse and the driver. The chariot is the body; a vehicle for experience. The horse is the pull; the mind; and it brings the body along. The rider is you; the essence; the soul. The self directs the mind, and the body follows the mind.

The traditions of yoga are thousands of years old. There is a clear connection between the lineage, philosophy and application of yoga and that of chiropractic.

The basic philosophy of innate intelligence directly parallels the yoga concept of infinite consciousness. Yogi Swami Vivekananda traveled throughout the Midwest extensively, drawing the attention of fellow scientists such as Nicholas Tesla and others. It is possible that Drs. D.D. Palmer and A.T. Still both encountered Swami Vivekananda in the American Midwest in the early 1900s.

Kundalini Is the Currency of Yoga

The goal of all forms of yoga is the circulation of *kundalini* - the coiled energy stored in the spine that circulates through nerve plexuses called *chakras* or *naadies*. Kundalini is pure innate intelligence; the total potential energy of the human. It is the vital force: the infinite organizational force that spins every electron and supports every aspect of life. With practice, we can direct it to heal, communicate and create. Kundalini is the energy that prevails throughout the universe.

What Is Yoga?

Yoga means union: a yoking; a connection between you (personal) and YOU (infinite innate). The techniques of yoga free restrictions in the natural flow of your true nature. Yoga eases resistances in all aspects of life. Each yoga action is a microcosm of life.

In chiropractic vernacular, when we are free of subluxation, we are able to express the greatest human potential, mentally, physically and spiritually. The liberated human existence is possible. Free from restriction, we can live with happiness, harmony and gratefulness. The philosophy of yoga directly parallels the values and principles of chiropractic. Yoga is a natural system of techniques utilizing the breath, mental focus, and physical movements and postures to create an experience designed to increase awareness and remove any restrictions or contractions in the fluidity of the nervous system and the psyche. Restrictions and conflicts in consciousness manifest in the spine as subluxations.

What Is Kundalini Yoga?

Kundalini yoga is an adventure in consciousness; a systematic approach utilizing all the limbs of yoga in a synchronized manner to create a symphony of infinite innate experience. In 1969, Yogi Bhasan, PhD, came to America and for the first time, openly delivered the teachings of kundalini yoga to the Western world. Since then, he has taught the science of kundalini yoga and humanology to thousands. Included in his instruction are several ancient yoga massage techniques specifically appropriate for chiropractors. (Dr. Wahe Guru Singh Khalsa details several of these techniques in the book *Healing Hands*.)

Kundalini yoga is unique because it utilizes all of the limbs and facets of yoga, creating a complete, transformative experience.

Brain Chemistry and Healing

D.D. Palmer emphasized the three pillars of health: structural, mental/emotional and chemical. These ancient techniques of yoga and food therapies are at the center of what has become known as mind-body medicine. This mind-body connection is discussed in Dr. Candace Pert's book, *The Molecules of Emotion* (Simon and Schuster, 1999). She illustrates how meditation affects brain chemistry, and how brain chemistry affects every organ system. Dr. Pert has identified receptor sites for brain chemicals like serotonin in the digestive and immune systems.

The tradition of yoga addresses brain chemistry by preparing the individual's internal chemistry to receive clear or undistorted knowledge. Often, a preparatory diet and other specific lifestyle enhancements are recommended before the practice of yoga even begins. This is designed to allow a person to perceive the teachings and experiences with clarity, rather than distortion.

According to recent research at the National Institute of Health, yoga and related relaxation techniques appear to have a positive effect on the body's ability to heal and stay healthy. Recent studies show that patients with insomnia, depression and stress-related conditions are positively affected with the use of yoga therapies. (Yoga treatment in psychological insomnia, Koch U, et al. *J Sleep Res*;7(Suppl 2):137, 1998.)

Yoga in Chiropractic Practice

The basic chiropractic concept, "The force that made the body can heal the body," is similar to the ancient yoga principle that the creator and the creation are one. We are spiritual beings, here to have a human experience, not humans searching for a spiritual experience. Our spirit, in

chiropractic terms, is referred to as innate intelligence.

Both yoga and chiropractic look to the mind, full of preconceptions and beliefs, as the essential cause of human suffering. By nature the soul is happy, content and in harmony. It is our mind that creates expectations, conditions and contractions, which are expressed as fear in our lives and manifest as physical contractions. The subluxation complex is this manifestation of the contraction of a human psyche. Chiropractors remove interference between the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system by removing subluxation or blocks in the spine. The goal of a yoga practice is to annihilate the restrictions of consciousness that manifest as mental patterns and restrictions in the physical structure.

Yoga practitioners approach their yoga practice with the same deep reverence chiropractors utilize in adjusting patients. The practice of yoga utilizes two distinct aspects: *Bakti* and *Shakti*. *Bakti* is pure devotion. It is the attitude with which one approaches a personal practice. This is applied in the chiropractic practice as a sense of sacred duty toward the patient. *Shakti* is pure power. It is the voltage and amperage within the individual. It is the autonomous self and the infinite spirit combined to create a person of light: hue-man. This is applied in the chiropractic practice as the knowledge and magnetism the chiropractor brings to the patient's awareness through his own excellence and integrity.

Yoga and chiropractic are sciences of applied consciousness, both utilizing awareness to see the universe without separation. It is the destiny of chiropractors to remove subluxation; it is the destiny of yogis to liberate themselves from the reactions and tendencies that restrict consciousness; and it is the destiny of a teacher to guide others to their freedom and happiness. Kundalini yoga therapies and the chiropractic adjustment create a complementary, complete, holistic health care system and can be integrated to serve the needs of all your patients.

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