

# THE EXCELLENCE PORTAL

Volume 1

Your Gateway to Knowledge

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**TAKING CHARGE OF THE  
WELLNESS OF MENTAL  
HEALTH**

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Om Sai Ram

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## FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Dear Residents,

Welcome to the first issue of *The Excellence Portal* on Health and Wellness for All! We are thrilled to bring you a collection of articles, tips, and insights designed to help you live your healthiest and happiest life.

Our community is a vibrant tapestry of individuals committed to wellness in mind, body, and spirit. In this edition, we delve into topics that matter most to you—from maintaining mental health and finding balance in our fast-paced world to exploring nutritious recipes and effective fitness routines. Our goal is to provide you with the tools and inspiration to enhance your well-being every day.

We believe wellness is a journey, not a destination. Each small step you take towards a healthier lifestyle contributes to a stronger, more connected community. We invite you to share your stories, successes, and challenges with us. Together, we can create a supportive environment where everyone thrives.

Your feedback and suggestions are welcome. You can write to us at [info@authors-point.com](mailto:info@authors-point.com).

Thank you for being a part of our wellness community. Here's to your health and happiness!

Raaj Verma  
Author's Point, The Excellence Portal



# TAKING CHARGE OF THE WELLNESS OF **MENTAL HEALTH**

Gurrit Kaur Sethi, *Founder miindmymiind.com*



Back in the 90s, a leading Kolkata-based Ayurvedic brand brought out a supplement for stress in women. The launch became a talking point as the idea of women undergoing stress was (mostly) never given any thought.

But the fact remains that it is an undeniable reality and is gaining more and more attention.

For most of us in our daily lives' words like 'anxiety', 'stress', 'depression', 'insomnia', have become common currency! What does this tell

us about ourselves? Well, let me tell you what this says about us – We have forgotten how to live our lives!

### **Does this resonate?**

Let me ask a few more questions – When was the last relaxed 24 hours you spent without a worry? How long was the last stretch of time before you reached for your smartphone to check what was going on, on one of your social media handles? When was the last night when you slept without

a drop-down list of to-dos to wake up to the next morning? When was the last idle course of a meal filled with laughter and joy, enjoyed with family and friends?

### **Unhealthy Building Blocks**

We are constantly urged to be diligent with the work to be done; to hold career and financial growth to be our top priority; to be punctual —and deal with time mindfully etc.

These habits are all good— but only

when tempered with the right spirit. In our formulated agendas we, however, tend to forget to include scheduled 'me time' breaks. And, and if they are, there are other tasks that get filled in those gaps— because it is 'free' time.

In the charter of to-dos for career and financial growth, we forget to list personal growth, oftentimes as not. Even when we take time out for a vacation the reality of 'relaxation' is missing. That's because we are rarely ever taught to relax, to play, or to cultivate a hobby (let alone hobbies) to enjoy regularly even when we become adults – All these get taken over by the other priorities. When we go for holidays, we carry our work along most of the time!

### A Fermenting Ground for Mental Health Issues

Have we ever wondered what the impact of all this is? Have we thought of the reasons for the increasing number of mental and general health issues? The truth is that yes, we do think about cardiac / bone etc health issues, but barely ever speak of mental health issues.

About 200 million people are estimated to be living with poor mental health in India today. Currently approximately 7.5% people suffer from mental health conditions in our country and the numbers are expected to rise to 20% in the near future.

The pooled prevalence of mental disorders in patients with chronic physical diseases was 36.6%. And there are studies that state a much higher number with Cleveland Clinic reporting that one third of patients suffering chronic diseases also suffered mental health conditions.

A study from the NHS concludes that around 40% of people with depression and anxiety disorders also have a long-term condition (LTC) such as cardiovascular disease, Chronic obstructive pulmonary and other diseases.

Chronic medical conditions and mental illness, contribute to each

other and are bi-directional in nature for each other, pointing to a big need to understand the risks that poor health carries – both physical and mental health.

The larger concern here is the stigma associated with poor mental health.

While there is a growing awareness, it is too slow and too little! Especially, when you look at the growth curve of the illnesses, and, at the other statistics of social vices that reflect the expressions of suppression – suicides, road rage, gender violence, domestic violence, geriatric violence etc.

### Nipping it in the Bud

While mental health issues can start at any age, studies suggest that 50% of mental illness begins by age 14 and 3/4 begins by age 24.

Having founded a mental health platform [miindmymiind.com](http://miindmymiind.com), I can tell you that daily we receive numerous queries from teenagers to young adults, seeking help. The sad part is that they say that their parents refuse to recognise their problems, and are thus unable to get help they really need.

Most times the illness gets its due recognition only when it has already taken roots, and sadly, had these been caught at the early stages, things would have been much better.

Kamin Bedi, Counselling & Child Psychologist and Life Coach from Noida, emphasises that mental health is as important as physical health, if not more. We are forgetting the basic elements of life, of hard work, consistency and sincerity. 'Be Humble' is a trend, not a reality. We tend to focus more on others than our self. LEARN TO LOVE YOUR-SELF - be sure of yourself, live the life skills and they shall make you strong, successful and happy!

We have two questions that face us here:

1. How do we recognize the symptoms early enough?
2. How do we avoid these in the first place?

The answer to the first isn't easy! While the above statistic does state what it does, however, mental health concerns can actually show up at any age. And the reasons and the symptoms could be really very varied!

### Mental Health Red Flags

Common misconceptions surrounding mental health, symptoms and signs to watch for, reasons behind such disorders, how can such disorders affect personal and professional life., how to manage, role of family and friends in such situations Key things to watch out for could be rapid changes in eating or sleeping habits, severe mood swings, emotions that may seem dramatic etc. So, the next time you find someone acting 'weird' – just give it a pause and look out for any telling signs. A supportive hand, voice and touch can actually do wonders to help them recognise the problems themselves first and then propel them to seek professional help. And if there is no underlying concern, you would earn a friend anyways!

THE LARGER CONCERN HERE IS THE STIGMA ASSOCIATED WITH POOR MENTAL HEALTH. WHILE THERE IS A GROWING AWARENESS, IT IS TOO SLOW AND TOO LITTLE!



### Confidence Building

We need to allow kids to take challenges according to their age and responsibilities to build their confidence, states Shilpa Shukla, Counselling Psychologist from Kanpur. However, what do we do? When they are overloaded with expectations of the parents / family lineage etc, the child's own inner reality often gets overlooked!

These concerns do manifest eventually through the years in forms of various physical or mental health concerns. Common examples are migraines or stress headaches, stomach related issues. Sometimes these can develop into severe developmental challenges. Furthermore, in adulthood, we need to develop the ability to adapt to the change and see setbacks as temporary problems rather than insuperable obstacles.

### Walk the Talk

Mental well-being is a combination of psychological, social and emotional well-being. 'Talk therapy' is known to do wonders when problems are apprehended at an early stage. Also known as psychotherapy, this is done one-on-one with licensed psychologists, through numerous

HAVE WE THOUGHT OF THE REASONS FOR THE INCREASING NUMBER OF MENTAL AND GENERAL HEALTH ISSUES? THE TRUTH IS THAT YES, WE DO THINK ABOUT CARDIAC / BONE ETC HEALTH ISSUES, BUT BARELY EVER SPEAK OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES.

sessions. This treatment aims to help a person identify and then attempt to slowly change troubling emotions, thoughts and behaviours over a series of sessions.

There are various types of talk therapies that can help with different issues. Psychology also has sub-specialists depending on problems to be addressed. Child psychology largely deals with developmental concerns and

adolescent issues. There are issue-based specialisations even within child psychology.

A clinical psychologist may want to assess issues / disorders / developmental concerns by using psycho-diagnostics assessments which are question and answer-based testing tools to help determine the problems and the intensity of it.

The commonest examples of these are intelligence tests, career assessments, stress and anxiety tests. There are hundreds of such tools that have been developed by psychologists after many trial runs. These are done either in a psychologist's office or are also available online.

When the severity of the problems impacts a person biologically, they will require a clinical assessment by a psychiatrist and medication support. Clinical treatment along with talk therapy can deliver great results! However, prevention and early detection is always the best bet!

### Shoring Up Mental Resilience with Self-Love

This brings us to the second question and the answer is very simple – to build mental resilience. But this simple aspect demands a lot of thought and





## WE NEED TO SERIOUSLY START INVESTING IN SELF-DEVELOPMENT – DURING THE FOUNDATION YEARS OF THE CHILD, AS WELL AS THROUGHOUT ADULTHOOD.

then action—and on several fronts. The most important action this demand is, encouraging self-care – loving one self, trusting oneself, believing in oneself, learning the art of assertion and emotion management, and then finally— learning coping mechanisms of dealing with anxiety, stress and depression.

Most of these should have been taught in school or at home during our foundation building years. However, a lot is left wanting. No one teaches us how to manage emotions or build self-esteem and confidence. And while these can become the core of our various problems, because the art of dealing with our challenges lies in this

core, these also become topics that one simply cannot talk about with anyone. How do we detangle ourselves from the concerns and outputs of our emotional bodies? Well, the answer is that we need to seriously start investing in self-development – during the foundation years of the child, as well as throughout adulthood.

Given the complexities of modern-day life, the VUCA world, it is important to give ourselves the chance to heal when we are suffering, as well as learn coping skills and learn how to be better versions of ourselves. This can happen only when we de-stigmatise mental health!

It is important for us to understand that acceptance and awareness of negative emotions are important resilient techniques that make our life meaningful, says Ms Ashwini Nerlikar, Pune-based Counselling Psychologist. Children should also be encouraged to cope with change by learning, unlearning and exploring the world and developing and thriving.

### Changing a Mind-Set

Self-awareness is the first step one can take to become resilient. Only when we are aware is when we can understand what we need to change and how. Anjana Baliga, Life Coach, Ghaziabad, further adds that both adults and children need to come out of their

comfort zones and stop procrastinating in whatever they do. This requires a certain kind of mindset, a dynamic personality, habit changing attitudes to set a tone to our inner reality.

Take a Pause for a Holistic Wellbeing Our wellbeing drives how we live, and what we live for. There is a reason why someone enjoys being a doctor and someone else enjoys working in the finance sector. Also, there are reasons deep rooted within us that make us an artist or pick hobbies like sports or reading.

I would urge everyone to take a psychological wellbeing test and check you psychological well-being score: <https://www.miindmymiind.com/well-being-scale/>

Well-being encompasses all aspects of our lives – physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, vocational, financial and environmental. Each of these has a deep impact on how we live and thrive. And each one of these is driven by us and our strengths. Ensuring a focus on each of these areas is very important to be able to lead a balanced and fulfilling life. And fulfilment goes hand in hand with meaningful living.

Balance is the key. As someone sensible said – All work and no play make Jack a dull boy, stands so true even in the current context!

A disbalanced work life pattern hampers productivity. A socially active person is much more motivated and connected to those around in the personal as well as professional circle. However, someone hooked to the extremities of social pretentiousness can very easily succumb to major issues as we have seen in the case of many celebrities!

Rajesh Satonkar, a Lobo Therapist from Aurangabad, emphasises that to be mentally resilient, you must have meaning or purpose in life. And this meaningful mind can overcome any hurdles to achieve his goal in life. Meaning of life may be different for every individual irrespective of age but meaningful is about being resilient.

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EXPERIENCES

# MENTAL MATTERS —A STEP TOWARDS CHANGE

Simran Taneja



We all experience both good and bad days, and then there are some days when we feel that something is not right and things are not falling into place. We have got something constantly going on in our minds and everything just feels too much. It is difficult to formulate words and even talk about our internal silent battles, which we are constantly fighting

on our own because we were never taught to talk about and appreciate our mental health.

I did not realize the importance of mental health until I found myself taking therapy. Honestly, it was not an easy step. Despite my background in the mental health field, I've found it challenging to discuss my decision to attend therapy with my family.

While I recognize the importance of normalizing conversations around seeking help for mental health, expressing this aspect of my life has proven to be a complex task.

Before I took therapy, I was just one in the crowd who normalized keeping everything inside me and wanting to be one of the tough ones who don't get affected by their emotions. Therapy



changed my view on this common belief that toughness means hiding feelings. It showed me that it's okay to express emotions and that being open about what I feel actually makes me stronger. In overcoming various hurdles that hindered my willingness to seek help—such as societal stigma, personal pride, and misconceptions about vulnerability—the pivotal initial step involved acknowledging and accepting that I needed professional help.

### Going The Therapy Route

It has become a truly life-changing experience, guiding me to understand and navigate my emotions in ways I hadn't before. Through therapy, I've discovered the profound ability to embrace both my rational and emotional sides as integral parts of who I am. This newfound self-awareness and acceptance have been instrumental in reshaping my perspective and enhancing my overall well-being.

Only when we allow ourselves to improve, will things begin to improve. I feel that ignorance has been the biggest barrier for seeking help for my mental health. Living in a collectivist society I realized that there are many young individuals like me who feel nervous and unsure about getting help for multiple reasons. Maybe they don't feel comfortable talking about their thoughts and feelings or maybe they think that the situation isn't bad enough and they do not want to burden others.

### Confusion Compounded by Social Mores

In Indian society people are religiously and culturally bound and they have formed a perception that people seeking help for mental health are merely wasting their money or they are faking their problems to seek attention. Individuals often wonder whether people will ever understand that they are going through something.

This hesitancy is deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of our Indian society.

Reflecting on my own experiences growing up, I recognize the impact of cultural teachings on our perception of seeking help.

Amidst the challenges of seeking mental health support in our collectivist society, another layer surfaces in certain parts of India where individuals grappling with mental health issues are often perceived through a lens of possession or demonic influence. This unique perspective leads many to turn to spiritual counsellors, folk doctors, or family elders instead of seeking appropriate medical help.

In this context, religion plays a significant role, as deeply held beliefs contribute to the stigma surrounding mental health. The lack of knowledge and research about mental illness further compounds the issue, dissuading individuals from pursuing psychological treatment or therapy.

This multifaceted landscape underscores the complexities that individuals face when navigating cultural beliefs and seeking essential mental health care.

### The Family Conundrum

As children we have always been taught that help is always at home and we should not discuss our problems outside our home—and if we do, then it is not appreciated. Even if we try discussing our thoughts and expressing our actual feelings—there is resistance to accepting our problem; instead, the solution is that it is all in our head and we should be focusing on studies.

Furthermore, the strong tradition of reliance on each other within Indian families discourages individuals from seeking counselling. Even later, when we become adults, parents and elder family members are usually regarded as guides and counsellors to their children and other young family members. Seeking help outside the family is frequently interpreted as a sign of parental inadequacies or insecurity.

### Social Stigma And The Self-Proclaimed Counselor

Another significant hurdle in seeking mental health support is the pervasive barrier of stigma. People stigmatizing other people are not even aware that it is a stigma that they are spreading because they don't even realize they are saying something inappropriate. It seems that in India everyone is a self-proclaimed counselor as they are always ready to give advice to people.

In my experience there was a huge difference in forming my opinion before and after taking therapy. Therapy gave a new perspective to my thinking and helped me look into my problems through a different lens. I have heard people saying that you look normal and it doesn't seem that you have any disorder.

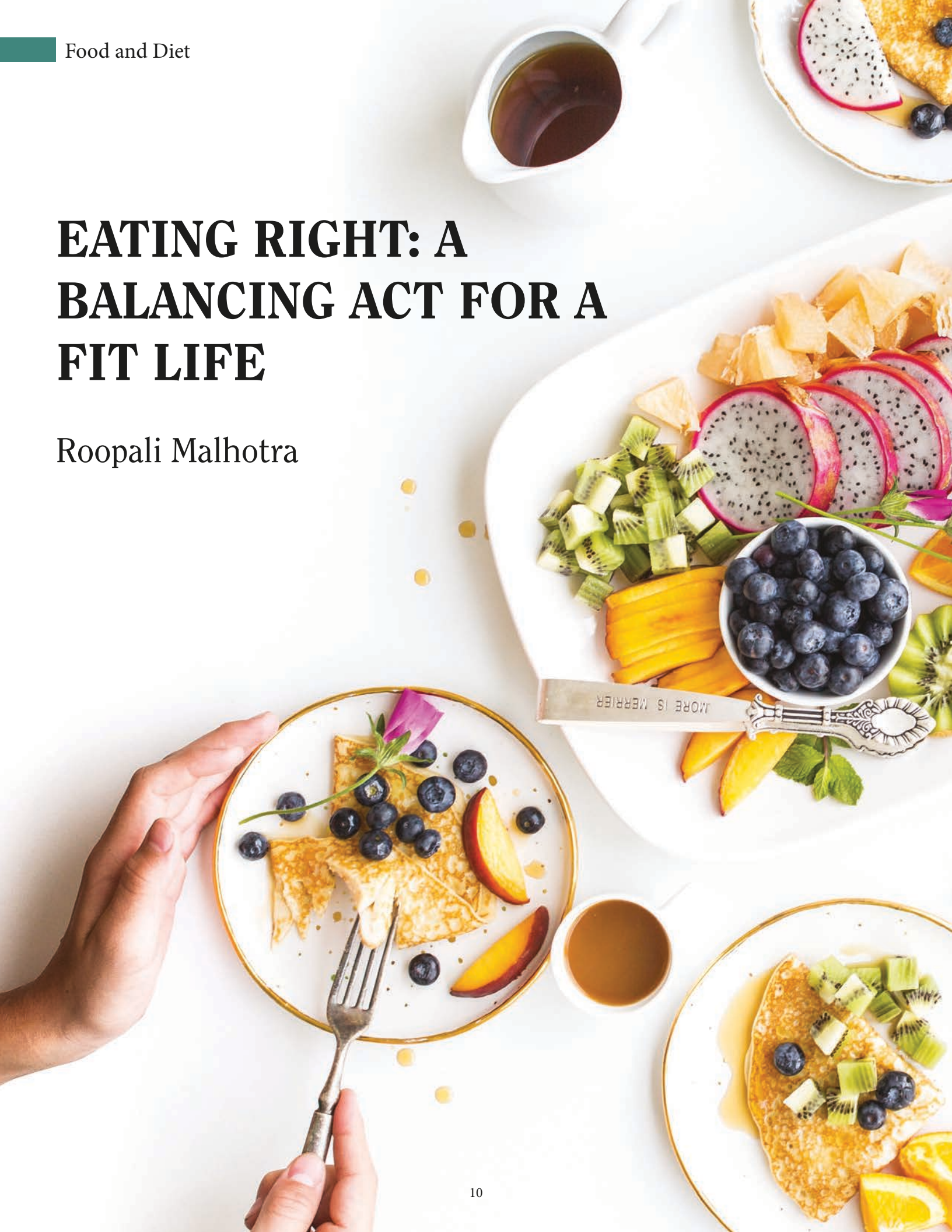
People think that therapy is only for people who have severe mental disorders. There is a lack of awareness that anyone and everyone can go to a counselor and seek help for any form of mental health.

#### Dismantling Old Building Blocks

In the realm of mental health, it's not uncommon to encounter various roadblocks that hinder us from seeking the support we require. Surprisingly, rather than tackling these hurdles head-on, we often find ourselves embracing them. I belong to a generation that talks a lot about the importance of mental health. But it's worth asking ourselves: Are we really open to seeking professional help? The big question is whether young people in our country feel comfortable reaching out to mental health professionals. Only if the answer is yes, can we hope to make talking about mental health a normal and regular thing in our society. Let's think about how committed we really are to making mental well-being a priority for everyone.

# EATING RIGHT: A BALANCING ACT FOR A FIT LIFE

Roopali Malhotra







The obsession with diet fads in itself is not a healthy way to feel good about yourself.

Still the struggle in you — of dietary questions such as what to eat? When to eat? How much to eat? Which meal should be taken when? And the list goes on and on. Why not make things simpler by, instead of going to extremes opt for, sensibly, a balanced diet?

### What is a balanced diet?

We all tend to misinterpret the concept of what a balanced diet is. A balanced diet is not a crash diet or another means of dieting. In layman's language, a balanced diet is a diet that consists of all the major food groups i.e. milk and its products, pulses, cereals, meat products, fruits and vegetables, sugar, and fat.

**A BALANCED DIET IS A WELL-PLANNED DIET THAT COMPRISES OF ALL THE REQUIRED MACRO AND MICRO NUTRIENTS IN A DESIRED AMOUNT.**

Now, having a balanced meal does not give you the privilege to have as much of these food groups as you want to at any point of time. It is very important to understand a balance of the meal's portion size, duration of consumption, and the combination of right food groups.

A balanced diet is a well-planned diet that comprises of all the required macro and micro nutrients in a desired amount. It ensures that our body is getting proper nourishment in the right amount.

You would be surprised to know that more than 90% of your health issues can be resolved if you start consuming a balanced diet! A balanced diet prevents the deficiencies of nutrients and help us in leading a healthy life ahead.



Back in the day American nutritionist Adele Davis' sound advice to: "eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper," found many takers.

### Breakfast - A Healthy Beginning

First and foremost, it is important to understand which food groups you should include in a particular meal. A common mistake we all do is to skip our breakfast. This is a serious health concern as breakfast is the most important meal of our day. It ensures that our body is active enough to work throughout the day.

Your breakfast must include one fruit, one milk product in any form, a good and healthy source of cereal such as oats, semolina, wheat, etc. On some days, you may also include eggs or pulses in your breakfast meal. One should remember that processed food and junk food is a big no-no for breakfast.

### Mid-Meal Hunger

You may take a mid-meal between your lunch and breakfast. You may include healthy beverages such as coconut water, buttermilk, lemon water or a handful of nuts such as almonds, walnuts, anjeer, etc.

### Lunching the right way

Lunch is another vital meal of the day. It should consist of any one type of salad with your regular food. Salad can be of any type. You can choose amongst chicken salad, egg salad, vegetable salad or any form of pulses or legume-rich salad. One good portion of salad is a must in your lunch, which you quite often do not take. Half of your afternoon meal hunger should be satisfied with a nice, healthy salad. Along with the salad portion, you can have chapattis, a cooked vegetable or some rice with curry.

That said, sometimes you can substitute your afternoon portion with foods such as khichdi, vegetable dalia, besan cheela, moong dal cheela, baked vegetables, stuffed chapati, vegetable

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idli among other foods that are healthy. Don't forget to include salad to this meal as a major portion.

### Evening munching

Evenings are that in-between time when you want to munch on junk. In the evening then, rather than taking a tea or coffee break, one should take a fruit break! You may take any one fruit at this time. Fruits are a very important part of our meals as they provide us with a good deal of micro-nutrients which we do not get from our regular food.

### Dinner all the way

Dinner is the one meal that no one understands. The biggest food blunder that we make is that we make our dinner the heaviest meal of our day. Dinner should be the lightest of all meals. It is the last meal of the day as we go to sleep after consuming it. This doesn't give our body enough time to absorb the food and utilize it.

Thus, dinners ought to be very light and should be high in fiber. One should also ensure that the amount of carbohydrate and protein should be minimal at dinner time. It can include some different varieties of soups with a portion of stir-fried vegetables, grilled chicken, some cooked vegetables, raw salads, scrambled eggs, etc.

A few careful changes in your diet can help you lead a longer and healthier life. A balanced diet structure will ensure a smarter and happier you!

Follow the old adage: 'Eat your breakfast, share your lunch with a friend, and give your dinner to your enemy' and see how things turn around for you!

Eat well and stay healthy, folks!



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# THE BEST SUPERFOODS: ANTIOXIDANT RICH FOODS

We all have studied about antioxidants in our science class during school time, but do you know how beneficial it is for you? Let's go back in time and understand what antioxidants are and how they are beneficial.

What are Antioxidants?

The definition states that "antioxidant is a substance that inhibits oxidation, especially one used to counteract the deterioration of stored food products." But let's ponder over its practical benefits because who remembers its theoretical definition, right?

Some of the well-known antioxidants include enzymes and other substances, such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta carotene, which are capable of counteracting the damaging effects of oxidation. Antioxidants benefit the body by neutralizing and removing the free radicals from the bloodstream. Increasing one's antioxidant intake is essential for optimum health, especially in today's polluted world. How will it benefit you?

Boosting your antioxidant intake can help provide added protection for the body against:

- Heart problems
- Eye problems
- Memory problems
- Mood disorders
- Immune system problems
- Reduces the risk of diseases like cancer
- Protects the food from deteriorating
- Slows the rate of age related eye diseases

Antioxidant rich food items that should be consumed



- **Plant-based foods** are the best sources. These include fruits, vegetables and their juices, whole-grain products, nuts, seeds, herbs and spices, and even cocoa.
- **Dark chocolate**- Lucky for chocolate lovers, dark chocolate is nutritious. It has more cocoa than regular chocolate, as well as more minerals and antioxidants.
- **Berries**- Blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries and cranberries are among the top fruit sources of antioxidants.
- **Red cabbage**- Red cabbage has an impressive nutrient profile. Also known as purple cabbage, it is rich in vitamins C, K and A, and has a high antioxidant content
- **Fruits**- Apples (with peel) are good sources of antioxidants. So are other fruits, such as grapes and most citrus fruits. Eat more stone fruits (peaches, nectarines, apricots, cherries, plums and



prunes) and tropical fruits (banana, dates, mango and guava). Even pomegranate and olives contribute.

- **Vegetables**- Artichokes, kale and bell peppers top the list of vegetables high in antioxidants. Other options include asparagus, beets, broccoli, red cabbage and tomatoes.
- **Sweet potato**- Sweet potatoes are good sources of antioxidants.
- **Go nuts**- Walnuts, pistachios,

pecans, hazelnuts and almonds are some of the top nuts for antioxidant content.

- **Beverages**- Toast your health with antioxidant-rich fruit juices, such as pomegranate juice, or a glass of red wine. Even coffee and tea have antioxidants.
- **Greenfit, Green tea**- While we are talking about beverages, how can we forget about green tea? Green tea is an excellent source of antioxidants. When you consume your cup of green tea you get 20% of the antioxidants, when you reuse the same tea leaves for the second cup, you'll get 60% of the more antioxidants from the green tea leaves. And when you reuse it for the third time you'll get the rest of the antioxidants. Worried how you can use the same tea bag thrice? We are here for you!! Order our Greenfit green tea and you'll get the answer to your problem!



# RAGI UPMA

## Ingredients :

- 1 teaspoon jeera
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds 2 teaspoons chana daal
- 2 teaspoons urad daal handful of curry leaves 1/4 teaspoon hing
- 1 green chili
- 1 chopped onion salt as per taste
- 1 cup ragi soaked in water for 1/2 n hour 2-3 tablespoons Rawa
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice garnish with coriander leaves

## Recipe :

In a pressure cooker add 1 teaspoon oil, add jeera, mustard seeds, urad Dal, channa Dal, and roast them for 3-4 minutes.

Now add red chili, chopped onion, hing, and curry leaves, and salt.

Now add 2-3 tablespoons rawa and 1 cup ragi (soaked in water for an hour) Mix it well. Add 4 cups water, and give it 3-4 whistles

And it's ready!





# STIR FRIED TOFU



## **Ingredients :**

- 200gms tofu
- sliced red bell peppers 1 sliced onion
- sliced green capsicum 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon balsamic vinegar, or white vengar salt as per taste
- 1/2 tsp pepper

## **Recipe:**

In a pan, add 1 teaspoon of oil.

Sauté the sliced onions, red bell pepper, and sliced green capsicum. Add salt and pepper to it.

Now add the tofu to it. Add soya sauce and vinegar to it. Let it cook on medium flame for 5-7 minutes.

And have it fresh and hot!

# TOMATO AND BELL PEPPER SOUP

## Ingredients :

- 2 For 1 Bowl of Soup, you need 2 tomatoes
- 1/2 Red Bell Pepper Handful of Spinach leaves Salt as per taste
- ½ teaspoon Oregano
- ¼ teaspoon black Pepper powder

## Recipe:

Pressure cook the tomatoes, bell pepper and spinach with 2 mugs of water. Wait for 2 whistles

Next, blend them all and pass through a strainer. Add salt, pepper and oregano and give a boil

Pour it in a soup bowl and it's ready to be served hot and fresh!





# CULTIVATING GRATITUDE- THE SECRET TO **UNLOCKING THE GATEWAY TO HAPPINESS**

Prof. (Dr.) Shanti Talwar  
*Sr. Consultant Paediatric Surgeon(Emeritus), Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi*

“Imagine that you are going to see your doctor because you have low energy and are depressed. After a thorough evaluation, she prescribes a pill that, according to research, can boost your energy, improve your mood, generate optimism, increase your well-being, help you bounce back from setbacks faster, enhance your self-esteem, make you kinder, improve your social connections, decrease your risk of alcoholism, help you sleep better, expedite recovery from illness, decrease the risk of infections and even increase your earnings. The pill has no known side effects. Even better, you can get it for free, with no co-payment. Will you take it? If you answered yes, its secret name is a daily practice of gratitude.”



*“You should be thankful for everything at all times. Realize that all power to think, speak and act comes from God, and that He is with you now, guiding and inspiring you”*  
– Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

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Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow.

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“We put forth our hands to receive God gifts of life, sun and food and all other things He bestows on us. But even as we receive them, we are unmindful of the Giver. If you have lovingly given presents to someone and then find out that he never thinks of you, how hurt you would feel! God feels that way, too – Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

Gratitude enhances spirituality— You are blessed when you are content with just who you are – no more, no less. That is the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought”. (Mathew 5:5 the message). This is a contemporary translation of the well-known Bible verse “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mathew 5:5 ESV).

Gratitude connects you to that blessing. To be born a human is a privilege. A healthy body and healthy mind are privileges. Loved ones, friends, a job – all of these are true privileges. When you feel grateful, you nurture humility, fully engage with your experience and find greater meaning in the daily gifts of life. Research shows gratitude and spiritual growth thus go together, with gratitude enhancing spirituality and spiritual growth making gratitude easier.

Every day should be a day of

thanksgiving for the gifts of life— sunshine, water, and the luscious fruits and greens that are indirect gifts of the Great Giver. God makes us work so that we may deserve to receive his gifts. The All-Sufficient One does not need our thanks, however heartfelt, but when we are grateful to Him our attention is concentrated, for our highest benefit,

WHEN YOU FEEL  
GRATEFUL, YOU  
NURTURE HUMILITY,  
FULLY ENGAGE WITH  
YOUR EXPERIENCE  
AND FIND GREATER  
MEANING IN THE  
DAILY GIFTS OF LIFE.

upon the Great Source of all supply. – Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda

“A sage once sat for years in intense meditation. Impressed by his austerity, an angel visited him. The angel had both good and bad news. Although the sage's efforts were praised, he was allowed only two days in heaven. Disappointed, the sage asked why his practice was unparalleled, the angel said, but the sage had to share the rewards with many. The sage disagreed; he believed he had practice unassisted. The angel then asked, “Did you ever thank the rock you sat on, the air you breathed, the trees that fed you, the soil that nourished the trees or the rain that nourished the soil? “The list was endless. The sage realized his mistake. For the next year, he thanked Mother Nature every day. His debt was eventually repaid.”



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# आध्यात्मिकता क्या है?



आज के समय में मनुष्य अपने जीवन में सुख शान्ति प्राप्त करने के लिए हर संभव प्रयास कर रहा है। भौतिक सुख-साधन को प्राथमिकता देने के पश्चात वो ज़िन्दगी की होड़ में खुद को झोंकते हुए किसी सीमा तक इसे प्राप्त करने में सफल भी होता है लेकिन शान्ति उससे कोशों दूर नज़र आती है। इसका मुख्य कारण संतोष का नितांत अभाव है। उद्वेलित और भयभीत मन हमेशा किसी न किसी खोज में जुटा रहता है। वहीं समाज का निर्धन वर्ग अपने जीवन यापन के संसाधन जुटाने में लगा रहता है लेकिन उसमें भी अब अतिरिक्त की चाहत बढ़ती दिखाई देती है। उसे किसी प्रकार की ज्ञान साधना या आध्यात्मिक विचार का न तो कोई ज्ञान है, न ही उसकी ओर कोई जिज्ञासा, इसलिए यह उसके लिए आकर्षण का केंद्र नहीं है। एक तथ्य उसे अवश्य समझ में आ जाता है कि यही मेरी नियति है। पर जो समूह है वह ज्ञान और आध्यात्म की चेतना से अपने जीवन में सुख सुविधा समृद्धि के साथ साथ शांति और संतोष भी प्राप्त करने का प्रयास भी करने को अग्रसर होते हैं। जीवन में आवश्यक वस्तुओं को प्राप्त करने के पश्चात वो पुनः अपनी अगली आकांक्षाओं की पूर्ति में संलग्न हो जाता है। कहने का भाव यह कि जिसके पास संसाधन जुटाने की चिंता अब नहीं, वो अपने आगे के जीवन, अपने भविष्य को लेकर चिंतित होने लगता है। चिंता में तो सब हैं। बस, चिंताएं भिन्न हैं। पेट भर जाने के बाद, आज के युग में, मनुष्य इस जीवन से अलग एक जीवन के विषय में सोचना आरम्भ कर देता है। अपनी देह से परे, वो और बातों को जानने का प्रयास करता है। यह संसार, जो प्रत्यक्ष दृष्टिगोचर है, उसके परे वो देखने का प्रयास जो दिखाई नहीं देता लेकिन उसे विश्वास है कि ऐसी एक दुनिया है जिसे जानने की आवश्यकता है, जिसका हमारे

जीवन मात्र के साथ एक अटूट, अदृश्य बंधन है, जो अदृश्य है। इस नश्वर संसार के भौतिक संसाधन की प्राप्ति के पश्चात भी जब सुख-शान्ति प्राप्त नहीं होती, उसके उँगलियों के बीच से रेत की तरह फिसलती दिखाई देती है, तब उसे ऐसा महसूस होता अहि कि उसे कोई ऐसा मार्गदर्शक मिले, जो उसके समक्ष सुख और शान्ति का मार्ग प्रशस्त करे। वह ज्ञानी, सिद्ध जन और ईश्वर में असीम आस्था रखने वालों के संपर्क में आता है। ऐसे लोग इस लोक की नहीं, परलोक की बातें करते हैं। जो इस नश्वर शरीर की नहीं, शाश्वत आत्मा की बात करते हैं जो अजर-अमर है। आत्मा को परमात्मा का अंश बताते हैं। इसका प्रमाण देते हुए ज्ञानी अपने पास आये व्यक्ति से प्रश्न करता है कि बताओ यह हाथ किसके हैं। व्यक्ति उत्तर देता है कि मेरे हैं। वह पुनः प्रश्न पूछते हैं कि यह शरीर किसका है जिसका जवाब में व्यक्ति कहता है कि शरीर मेरा है। अब ज्ञानी कहते हैं कि यह शरीर मेरा है, अर्थात् शरीर और मेरा यह दोनों अलग वस्तुएं हैं। शरीर साक्षात् दिखाई दे जाता है लेकिन मेरा कौन है? वे यह समझाने का प्रयत्न करते हैं कि

यह जो मेरा है, यही आत्मा है, जिसका अभिप्राय यह हुआ कि इस शरीर पर इस मेरा रूपी आत्मा का नियंत्रण है। और अगर आत्मा है तो इसका नियंत्रण भी किसी के हाथ होगा, इसका संचालन कोई कर रहा होगा। इसे वे परमात्मा या ईश्वर का नाम देते हैं।

## आध्यात्मिकता क्या है? स्वयं को

जानकार, परमात्मा को पहचानने का क्रमबद्ध प्रयास है और इसे ही हम आध्यात्म कहते हैं। अपनी आत्मा का अध्ययन, अपने परमात्मा का अध्ययन आध्यात्मिकता कहलाती है। सांसारिक

वस्तुओं से, जो क्षणिक हैं, विनाशी हैं, अपना राग हटाना, और इस राग को, जो शाश्वत है, सदैव रहने वाली है, जो अजन्मा, अनंत है, उसे आत्मा अथवा परमात्मा में रमाना। इस प्रकार उसे एक अलग दिशा मिलेगी, जो उसके लिए अपरिचित है, इसलिए नयी है। वो उस दिशा में आगे बढ़ने लगता है। उसे नया अनुभव होता है। यह सत्य है कि हर नयी वस्तु में आकर्षण होता है। वह ईश्वर से सम्बन्ध स्थापित करने की चेष्टा करता है। इसके अनेक राह हैं जो उसे ज्ञानी और सिद्धजन बताते हैं। कोई ज्ञान के माध्यम से सम्बन्ध स्थापित करने की बात करता है, कोई योग के द्वारा, कोई ध्यान द्वारा तो कोई भक्ति द्वारा। इसे हम इस प्रकार समझने का प्रयास करते हैं कि यद्यपि हमें ज्ञात है कि ईश्वर की सत्ता है, उसे कदापि नकारा नहीं जा सकता, जिस प्रकार प्रधानमंत्री को जानते हैं, उनके दर्शन भी हमें होते हैं, उससे हमारा कुछ सम्बन्ध भी है लेकिन फिर यहाँ यह प्रश्न उठना स्वाभाविक है कि क्या प्रधानमंत्री हमें जानते हैं? ऐसी ही, कुछ सीमा तक ईश्वर के साथ भी है। ईश्वर हमें कैसे जाने? कहा जाता है कि ईश्वर तो हर प्राणी के हृदय में वास करते हैं परन्तु फिर भी, हमारा उनसे संपर्क कैसे नहीं हो पाता? ईश्वर बहुत दूर भी है तो बहुत समीप भी है। सम्बन्ध कैसे स्थापित हो? आइये समझने का प्रयास करते हैं। हम भोजन करते समय ईश्वर का ध्यान कर भोजन करते हैं, ईश्वर हमारे समीप है लेकिन जैसे ही हमारा ध्यान ईश्वर से हटकर भोजन के स्वाद पर चला गया, ईश्वर पुनः दूर हो गया। ईश्वर की माला फेरते हुए अगर ध्यान ईश्वर पर रमा हुआ है, तब हमारा सम्बन्ध ईश्वर से जुड़ा हुआ है और अगर ध्यान माला की मनका पर आ गया, समझिये ईश्वर से सम्बन्ध टूट गया। आज के युग में, जो कलियुग कहलाता है, ईश्वर से सम्बन्ध स्थापित करना बहुत सुविधाजनक हो गया है। सतयुग में ईश्वर की प्राप्ति ध्यान द्वारा होती थी, त्रेता युग में ईश्वर की प्राप्ति यज्ञ द्वारा होती थी, द्वापर युग में ईश्वर की प्राप्ति पूजन द्वारा और कलियुग में, मात्र उसका नाम लेकर ही उसे प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जब तक मनुष्य के जीवन में प्रेम का उदय न हो, इस प्रेम का उदय होने पर आनंद की प्राप्ति न होनी शुरू हो जाए, फिर ईश्वर से प्रेम होने पर संबंध स्थापित न हो जाए, मनुष्य की आध्यात्मिक यात्रा कैसे शुरू होगी?

– Ram gungaan karne waala  
Satish Kumar Gupta  
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# HACK YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Sugandha Dewan

Did you know that according to Economic Times, in India around 60 to 70 million people are affected by common and severe mental health disorders? This is largely due to the taboo around mental health in India.

Some key contributing factors to the stigmatization include cultural notions

around mental health, the idea of what is “normal” and what is not, expressing vulnerability is looked at as a sign of weakness, as well as sharing can be subjected to a lot of judgment. These are major drivers for delays in seeking treatment and oftentimes as not result in social exclusion and isolation for

those who fall prey to these conditions.

Now more than ever it's a major imperative to understand what exactly mental health is and why it's become such a critical talking point in society?

The negative aspects of mental health in various forms have been prevalent for ages; even today they are



matters of deep concern in society, given the frantic pace of everyday life as we experience it now. In fact, there's a burgeoning awareness of the overall well-being of an individual, not just mental health as an isolated concern.

As observed by the WHO "Mental health is an integral part of health; it is more than the absence of mental illnesses. It is the foundation for well-being and effective functioning of individuals. It includes mental well-being, prevention of mental disorders, treatment and rehabilitation."

Mental health refers to a condition of well-being that allows individuals to manage life's challenges, recognize their capabilities, learn effectively, perform well at work, and contribute positively to their communities. It is an essential aspect of overall health and wellness, supporting our capacity to make decisions, foster relationships, and influence our environment. Mental health is a fundamental human right, pivotal to personal growth, community cohesion, and socio-economic progress.

Talking about mental health also puts the spotlight on the confusion of the difference between mental health and mental illness, since it's wrongly used interchangeably.

As described by Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, British Columbia, while mental health encompasses a spectrum of positive and negative states, mental illness specifically impairs a person's ability to function effectively over an extended period. Unlike feelings of sadness or stress due to challenging circumstances, mental illness involves persistent distress and a sense of losing control over one's life. It can profoundly influence our self-perception, our perception of the world, and our interactions with others.

It's crucial to understand that having a mental illness doesn't preclude the possibility of achieving good mental health. Similar to managing other health conditions, individuals with

mental illness can experience difficult periods but also periods of improved or stable mental well-being. Prioritizing mental health care is essential for everyone, regardless of their specific mental health challenges.

### But how do we know that we are struggling?

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) describes some of the common signs of mental health challenges could be:

Significant alterations in sleep patterns or eating habits, or a decline in personal grooming, sudden or extreme shifts in emotions, feelings of depression, or increased irritability, recent isolation from

MENTAL HEALTH REFERS TO A CONDITION OF WELL-BEING THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO MANAGE LIFE'S CHALLENGES, RECOGNIZE THEIR CAPABILITIES, LEARN EFFECTIVELY, PERFORM WELL AT WORK, AND CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO THEIR COMMUNITIES.

social activities and loss of interest in previously enjoyed hobbies, noticeable deterioration in performance at school, work, or in social settings, such as quitting sports, academic struggles, or difficulty with routine tasks, challenges with concentration, memory, logical thinking, or speech that are difficult to account for or explain.

It is necessary to note the above mentioned is not an exhaustive list of signs as well as that all of this need not be present in exact description, you don't have to wait for all signs and symptoms to show up before reaching out for support.

It is also important to remember that all these signs can look different for different people and necessarily will not have the same cause. Each individual is different and they perceive life differently. The cause and effect can vary person to person.

You can reach out for help even when you notice the surfacing of some of the early signs, in the mildest form. Understanding your needs before they become a concern is more beneficial. Mental health also functions on the premise of 'Prevention is better than cure', hence taking care of your mental health is pivotal in your overall well-being.

Here are some handy hacks that could help you take care of your mental health:

### Hacks

#### 1. Journaling:

Maintaining a regular journal make things easier to remember, when your thoughts or feelings when you are anxious or under any form of stress can be recorded on the paper or screen, during or at the end of the day.

Just like you have your To-Do Lists, or Tasks for the day on your notepad at work, journaling can be something that you inculcate on a day-to-day basis. Sometimes it can be difficult to start, or even to maintain it regularly—but that's okay.

Everybody can have their own small way of journaling or keeping a record of their thoughts. Journaling has its benefits in reducing anxiety, having a structure and words to your experiences; it also helps in opening up to yourself and eventually to others as well. Journaling is an assisted tool that comes handy during or after stressful experiences.





## **2. Know yourself better:**

The idea of self-awareness is not as widely talked about and neither are the advantages attached to it.

In order to improve your mental health, increasing self-awareness plays a key role. It helps in clearer thinking and better decision making. It can also enhance existing interpersonal relationships, increase confidence and deal with stressors more efficiently.

For e.g., a person who knows why they often feel anxious before an important presentation at work would probably have a list of coping skills to refer to, to counter that feeling when it arises. This is in contrast to a person who doesn't know why presentations at work make him/her anxious and what can they do about it—or even what could help them get through the presentation well.

This analysis of what, why and

how can help you cope with stressful situations in a healthier way.

## **3. Include humour in everyday life:**

Humour plays a significant role in helping navigate your life on a daily basis. It is one of the medicines that is an immunity booster for a happier life.

Incorporating humour into your everyday routine can result in a range of advantages. Studies indicate that it increases energy, enhances cognitive function, strengthens the immune system, reduces stress levels, and uplifts mood.

You can watch Comedy TV shows, Movies, Short clips on the internet, read comic books, go for live stand-up comedy, and in fact sometimes just sit with your near and dear ones and have a series of sharing jokes or even sharing funny memories or experiences from your day-to-day life.

## **4. Seek professional help:**

Just as you would reach out to a physician for fever, cough and cold, you can also reach out to a psychologist for support and learning better ways to cope. Reaching out to a mental health practitioner can help you in manoeuvring your stressors in a more effective way.

Mental health practitioners, i.e Counselling Psychologist, Psychotherapists, Clinical Psychologist and Psychiatrists are your go-to support systems.

The key difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist is that a psychiatrist can prescribe you medications if the need arises, whereas a psychologist can help you with 'talk therapy'. Both act as facilitators in this journey of dealing with your mental health. They are professionals who maintain utmost confidentiality and

are present as a support while you discover yourself and learn to cope.

#### **5. Express your emotions:**

Emotions are an intrinsic part of your life. Every emotion indicates something and that is what you and your body can tell best for yourself.

Each experience can bring different kinds of emotions and it can be interpreted differently for different people. No one experience is “supposed” to be felt in the same way by everyone. There might be a tendency to accept and celebrate all “socially acceptable” positive emotions like happiness, pride, joy while discarding the emotions that can be challenging to deal with and are commonly described as negative emotions for example, fear, anger, helplessness.

Here is the surprise. Both are emotions that exist in their natural form and have a purpose. It is important to understand that emotions exist for a reason. They should be allowed to have a space in your life. For instance, fear might indicate that there is an unknown territory somewhere and you are not prepared for it. Recognizing and dealing with that fear can help you overcome the uncertainty and also prepare you for the next time.

As a practice, you can download a feeling chart and name and describe at least five feelings you had during the day. This will also help you enhance your emotional vocabulary.

#### **6. Be your best friend:**

The process of trusting yourself is almost like an act of self-care. Sometimes, the advice we end up giving others is not very easily applied to ourselves. We are great friends to others maybe but when it comes to being a friend to ourselves, we often ponder and doubt ourselves. Self-doubt can easily show up and it's okay to have questions about your abilities.

The hack is in knowing that you also have strengths that have helped you deal with experiences so far. And

all that self-awareness of strengths required was a pinch of confidence and trust in yourself. What's critical is knowing, and even more importantly believing, that you can handle and deal with whatever you choose or whatever comes your way.

Our environs may not always be helpful in showing one's own strengths, but that does not mean one doesn't have any. Human beings are built for survival and each survival brings to the fore some strengths and weaknesses. Utilizing both for your empowerment is an important hack for taking care of your mental health. Talking to yourself like your best friend would, might help you see yourself differently.

#### **7. Take care of your physical health:**

When we talk about health, it's about our mental and physical health. They are important for each other to co-exist for one's overall well-being.

Focusing on your physical health includes, eating a balanced diet with a diversity of nutrients, daily movement activities, Yoga, taking a 20 min walk, mindfulness activities like box breathing and meditation can help you ground yourself and stay connected to yourself in the present.

Staying in the present, however, can be easier said than done for a few people. It is not just a conscious effort but also can be a trigger because it can bring up difficult emotions. While addressing these difficult emotions is equally necessary, you can also seek professional help in order to deal with those difficult emotions to ground yourself better.

#### **8. Build new hobbies/ enhance old ones:**

With every new phone upgrade and social media entering our lives like never before, hobbies may have taken a back seat.

Hobbies are a great way to take care of your mental health. That's because when you involve yourself in activities you enjoy, it requires you to be in the

present moment. It doesn't mean that you have to, or can ignore the feelings you were having while struggling; it simply gives you a break from the same loop of thoughts, perhaps giving way to a new perspective or lets you deal with the situation in a more relaxed state of mind.

You can jog down the memory lane and remind yourself of your favourite hobbies. It could be a combination of outdoor and indoor hobbies as well as hobbies that involve people and the ones that can be done solo. This way you have a bunch of activities you can rely on when having a hard time.

If you don't have any particular hobbies, you can try building new ones. It's never too late to try something new.

#### **9. Build a social support network:**

Social connections throughout life can have a positive impact in your life. Building positive social relations can elevate your mood significantly. Social connections play a vital role at each stage of life. They help reduce feelings of loneliness and stress; they can also serve a space to express difficult emotions.

Support groups are a great example of such social connections. It can be your friends, neighbours, relatives, a common group you enjoy your hobby with or volunteering within the community for a cause close to your heart.

A support group brings together individuals dealing with similar challenges to discuss their concerns. By sharing their experiences, members provide mutual support, encouragement, and comfort to one another.

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# THE ALTERNATIVE HEALING TOUCH

Ranee Sahaney



Human ailments, rising out of the burgeoning concerns of stress, unmanageable lifestyles, pollution, climate change, environmental detriment, are no longer assuaged by going the traditional allopathic route. There is a growing trend that, in recognition of the nutritional, physiological, physical, and mind-body techniques involved in these non-traditional therapies, many in the medical field are not hesitating to combine these as remedial options alongside conventional approaches.

Health is no longer about just ridding oneself of diseases; rather there's a growing awareness of nipping things in the bud by finding healthier, saner ways to manage external influences on one's body, mind and spirit.

Alternative therapies, such as Ayurveda, meditation, hypnotherapy, acupuncture, and yoga etc, for a better, healthier life continue to gather momentum as is reflected in the growing number of wellness centres and retreats scattered across India.

From yoga and meditation to naturopathy, from Biofeedback to hypnosis, from acupuncture to acupressure, from Tai chi to herbal medicine, there are a plethora of alternative medical modalities now available, as opposed to allopathic options, to address our individual needs.

Alternative therapies can either be used alongside conventional medicine or instead of it. The term is often used interchangeably with "complementary medicine." In medical



spaces, the practice is referred to as Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM).

Shearing away the confusion which prevails around the concept of traditional ‘alternative’ medical practices, let’s take a quick look at what distinguishes them from Allopathic medicine often referred to as Western medicine/ evidence-based medicine/ conventional medicine/ mainstream medicine.

The core difference between the two is that Allopathic practices are disease-centric and rely on symptom-specific treatment, as opposed to alternative therapies which have a whole-body or holistic approach. This involves stimulating the body’s own ability to heal via energy alignment, herbal supplementation, and other balancing techniques.

#### **Traditional alternative medicine**

Think, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, acupuncture, and Chinese/ Oriental medicine, mainstream therapies practiced worldwide for centuries.

#### **Manipulative And Body-Based Practice**

Touch healing is a tried and tested practice from the earliest days of medical care. Body techniques are combined with those of the mind. Think Meditation, Yoga, Biofeedback,

Hypnosis, chiropractic and osteopathic medicine, Tai Chi and Reflexology.

**Energy therapies** These involve the belief that energies in and around the body (biofields) directly affect a person’s health. Think Acupuncture Electromagnetic therapy, Reiki, Qigong, Tai chi.

**Biologically- based practices** Many dietary and herbal approaches attempt to balance the body’s nutritional well-being. Think herbal medicine, dietary supplements, nutrition/diet.

#### **Ayurveda**

Ayurveda or the “the science of life” has been an intrinsic part of Indian wellness traditions from ancient times. The ecosystem of the Ayurveda is rooted in the core belief of health through the balance of mind, body, and spirit. It’s inspired by the thought that a unique combination of 5 universal elements makes up each individual: space, air, fire, water, and earth. These elements comprise three energies or doshas—Vata dosha, Pitta dosha, and Kapha dosha. When any of the doshas is out of sync the patient is vulnerable to illness

As each individual is believed to have a unique combination of these energies, each with its properties and controls, treatment for any ailment

does not rely on the theory ‘One size fits all’. In a bid to heal the patient, treatment is aimed at returning the balance of the doshas, with each case being treated individually...

#### **Naturopathy**

This ancient healing therapy focuses on prevention and treatment of disease through a healthy lifestyle, treatment of the whole person and using the body’s own healing abilities. It aims to find the cause of the disease rather than just treating symptoms. It involves natural and non-invasive ingredients and techniques, such as herbs, exercise therapy, dietary changes, and massage. It also offers a combination of therapies such as Physical Therapies (such as heat or cold therapy, ultrasonography, and massage) Mind-Body Therapies, Exercise Therapy, Hydrotherapy (agitated warm water or cold-water applications) and Nutritional supplementation, often through infusion.

#### **Homeopathy**

While aiming to restore the flow of the body’s innate life force it provides treatments based on a person’s unique characteristics, including lifestyle as well as symptoms and general health. To stimulate the body’s capacity to heal itself it offers remedies used in derived from naturally occurring substances, such as plant and animal extracts and minerals.

#### **Yoga**

An ancient body-mind wellness tradition like the Chinese Tai Chi, Yoga, which is rooted in India’s spiritual and religious beliefs, involves exercises that improve the state of both the mind and the body. These spiritual and physical practices are designed to increase self-awareness. Yoga asanas help improve balance, flexibility, and circulation. Pranayam focuses on breathing and Samyama propagates meditation. Yoga can also help with low-back pain and neck pain, anxiety or





PRANAYAM FOCUSES ON BREATHING AND SAMYAMA PROPAGATES MEDITATION. YOGA CAN ALSO HELP WITH LOW-BACK PAIN AND NECK PAIN, ANXIETY OR DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFICULT LIFE SITUATIONS.

depressive symptoms associated with difficult life situations, stop smoking, and quality of life for people with chronic diseases. New avatars of yoga have emerged including Hatha Yoga, Yinyasa Yoga, Laughter Yoga and many more...

#### **Mindfulness**

This meditation technique teaches you how to focus on what's happening in the present moment in a non-judgemental way. The idea is to skill-up on improving self-awareness and learning how to better handle difficult thoughts and feelings.

#### **Acupuncture**

An important therapeutic regimen in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) this Oriental tradition has historically been used to address many ailments including allergies, headaches, chronic

pain, depression, even infertility. The Chinese practitioners of acupuncture aim to balance qi or chi — the energy that flows through meridians or channels in our bodies, which when disrupted or blocked causes illnesses. To bring back the harmony between the yin and yang, very thin needles are inserted into specific points along these meridians, then activated through mild electrical pulses to help stimulate the energy flow in the central nervous system. Acupuncture may help chronic pains like low-back pain, neck pain, and osteoarthritis/ knee pain. It can also help reduce the frequency of tension headaches and prevent migraine headaches.

#### **Moxibustion**

The therapy, which is linked to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since about 500 BCE, is a manipulative



and body-based practice. It involves burning dried moxa herb (a mug wort or artemisia) just above but sometimes even directly on the skin over acupuncture points. The herbal leaves may come in the form of incense sticks or cones. It has shown efficacy in issues such as joint pain, indigestion., organ prolapse., gastrointestinal issues., menstrual cramps. and infertility. In China it is quite often used alongside acupuncture.

### Reflexology

This massage therapy involves work on the musculoskeletal and nervous systems of the body. Manual pressure is applied to specific areas of the palm, foot, or ear which are said to correspond to different organs or body systems. The pressure in these parts helps unblock the energy responsible for pain or symptoms in that particular body part.



### Reiki

Originating in Japan is a type of energy medicine for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. The predominant form of Reiki practiced worldwide today, also known as Usui reiki, was created by Dr. Mikao Usui in the early 20th century. This energy healing practice involves the practitioner manipulating the life force energy through the hands in order to activate healing in the body of the patient. Practitioners are of the belief that it works through the transfer of universal energy from their palms to the patient. The practitioner will move their hands around your body. They



## THE PREDOMINANT FORM OF REIKI PRACTICED WORLDWIDE TODAY, ALSO KNOWN AS USUI REIKI, WAS CREATED BY DR. MIKAO USUI IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

may touch you lightly or have their hands just above your body. The belief is that the practitioner can stimulate your body's natural healing abilities. Reiki is used for depression, anxiety and other problems linked to chronic pain or illness.

### Hypnotherapy

Patients serious about ridding their habit of smoking or losing weight are known to have benefited from hypnotherapy. It has also proven its efficacy in cancer patients by helping reduce stress and improving the quality of life. It also helps in coping with phobias, sleep disorders, substance use disorders, depression stress, anger, compulsions in obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) etc.

### Biofeedback

Special machines are used to monitor the measure of unconscious or involuntary bodily processes, such as heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, and skin temperature or

muscle contractions. This information then gets translated into audio, visual, or tactile signals, providing the therapist the data to help the patient learn how to control these signals through certain relaxation techniques and mental exercises. It is useful in helping the patient learn to relax painful muscles, alter the state of mind, manage, chronic pain, anxiety, incontinence etc.



### Aromatherapy

The sensory aspect of healing is addressed through the popular practice of aromatherapy which promotes a sense of well-being through essential oils that are extracted from specific plants with healing properties. These highly concentrated extracts from the roots, leaves, seeds, or blossoms of plants can help promote healing. A patient can inhale the fragrance of these oils, apply them on their skin, or get massaged using them. Its efficacy has been reflected in reducing stress, alleviating pain etc. On inhalation the fragrance molecules travel from the olfactory nerves directly to the brain and especially impact the amygdala, the emotional centre of the brain. Possible benefits include reducing anxiety and improving sleep quality. It's also combined with other treatments, such as massage therapy.

As the demand for sustainable forms of healing practices continues to grow worldwide, chances of a brighter, healthier future for the wellness industry gives us fresh hope for alternative therapies to lead the way...

# INDIA'S TOP ALTERNATIVE HEALING CENTRES

## **Bihar School of Yoga**

P.O. Ganga Darshan, Fort Munger, Bihar 811201  
Ph: +91 9162 783904 / +91 9835 892831

## **Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh**

Near, Main Market Road, Ram Jhula, Swarg Ashram, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand 249304  
Ph: (0135) 2434301, 2434302

## **Shivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram,**

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## **The Art of Living International Centre**

21st KM, Udayapura Post, Kanakapura Rd, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560082  
Ph: 080672 62626

## **Ramamani Iyenagar Memorial Yoga Institute**

Hare Krishna Mandir Rd, Model Colony, Shivajinagar, Pune, Maharashtra 411016  
Ph: 020 2565 6134

## **Vipassana International Academy**

MHX6+22G, Dhamma Giri Rd, Dhammagiri International Academy, Igatpuri, Maharashtra 422403  
Ph: 02553 244 086

## **Tushita Meditation Centre**

McLeod Ganj, Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh 176219  
Ph: 089881 60988

## **Auroville Foundation**

No: 46, Marwadi Street, Kurchikuppam, Pondicherry – 605012.  
Ph: 0413 2222007.

## **Krishna Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Shala**

#235, 8th Cross, 3rd Stage  
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Karnataka, India  
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E: [info@Kpjayshala.com](mailto:info@Kpjayshala.com)

## **Ananda in the Himalayas**

The Palace Estate, Narendra Nagar, Uttarakhand 249175  
Ph: 01378 227 901; +91-80-69750000  
E: [reservations@anandaspa.com](mailto:reservations@anandaspa.com).

## **Ashiyana: Yoga And Spa Village**

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E: [info@vyasa.org](mailto:info@vyasa.org)

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## **Prana - Centre for Integrative Medicine**

No. 1, Club Vita, Park Drive, Golf Course Road, DLF Phase 5,  
Sector 54, Gurugram, Haryana  
Ph: 088005 55532



# EMBRACING A NEW PARADIGM OF WELLNESS THROUGH THE NO TOUCH, NO DRUG THERAPY

Shailja R Sachdeva



As we lean more and more towards non-invasive wellness options, we should be looking to experts who have set out to master such healing practices

As a Certified Energy Healer and Trainer, and a proud member of Feed the Soul Trust, Shailja R Sachdeva has for over a decade now dedicated herself to the art and science of energy healing, alongside nurturing individuals through meditation, breathing techniques, and holistic practices.

The mission of the Delhi based Feed the Soul Trust, which has brought together a group of meditators and healers continuously working towards

the Divine idea of ‘bringing Heaven on Earth’, is to heal physical and psychosomatic ailments through the innovative No Touch, No Drug Therapy.

‘Heaven’ as defined by Feed the Soul Trust is ‘Balance’— Balance In Nature; Balance On Earth; Balance In Mankind; Balance In Self; Balance In Society; Balance Everywhere...

## Redefining Healing

This therapy has redefined perspectives on health and wellness with its unique approach. The essence of the No Touch, No Drug Therapy, members of Feed the Soul Trust are of the firm belief in the innate healing potential

within each individual. The No Touch, No Drug Therapy harnesses this potential by utilising energy healing principles to restore balance and vitality without pharmaceutical intervention or physical manipulation.

Through focused intention and specialised techniques, we facilitate the body’s natural healing processes, addressing both physical ailments and emotional imbalances with equal dedication.

## A Journey of Transformation

This journey with the No Touch, No Drug Therapy exemplifies a transformative shift towards holistic healing. As they continue to pioneer

innovative approaches at Feed the Soul Trust, they invite individuals to embrace their innate capacity for healing and embark on a journey towards comprehensive well-being.

This unique approach has yielded remarkable results across a spectrum of health challenges:

**Physical Healing:** From chronic pain management to autoimmune disorders, this therapy has provided relief where conventional methods fall short. By targeting energetic blockages and restoring flow, individuals experience profound physical improvements and enhanced quality of life.

**Psychosomatic Wellness:** Beyond

physical symptoms, the therapy addresses psychosomatic conditions such as anxiety, depression, and stress-related disorders. By promoting emotional release and restoring energetic harmony, clients report a newfound sense of peace, resilience, and mental clarity.

### **Integrating Meditation and Breathing Techniques:**

Central to this holistic approach are components such as Planetary Peace Meditation, Rhythmic Yogic Breathing and Letting Go Therapy which serve as the key tools for nurturing mind-body-spirit alignment.

These practices not only enhance the

efficacy of these healing sessions but also empower individuals to cultivate self-awareness, reduce stress, and foster sustainable well-being.

### **Empowering Families through Parent Coaching**

As a Certified Parent Coach, Shailja R Sachdeva is privileged to guide families in integrating holistic practices into their daily lives.

From cultivating mindful parenting techniques to facilitating healing within family dynamics, the aim is to empower parents and children alike with tools for emotional intelligence, communication, and mutual support.

### **Feed the Soul Trust**

With its Vision for 'community wellness beyond individual healing', Feed the Soul Trust is committed to advancing community wellness through education and outreach. By demystifying energy healing and promoting holistic lifestyles, its members envision a future where health is holistic, accessible, and empowering for all.

The transformative impact of the No Touch, No Drug Therapy in healing physical and emotional ailments is also marked by its seamless integration with meditation, breathing techniques, and holistic parenting practices.

The thrust on sustainable healing practices is also well aligned to the global movement towards the growth and development of humankind at its physical, etheric, emotional and mental level, ultimately impacting not just individual, but universal consciousness.

Contributed by Shailja R Sachdeva  
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# THE EMPOWERING SPIRIT OF YOGA

Shraddha Umrao,  
*MSc Yoga Therapy*



In today's frantic world, stress has become a ubiquitous part of daily life. The relentless demands of work, family responsibilities, and social commitments can leave one feeling overwhelmed and exhausted.

Yoga, dredged out from ancient India's wellness traditions, is even more relevant today given its holistic and practical approach to health and well-being. If its integration of physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation is used correctly it serves as an immensely powerful tool to combat stress and restore balance

## Yoga in Combative Mode

Unlike other forms of exercise that focus solely on specific muscle groups, Yoga offers a full-body workout that enhances overall fitness and well-being. As it addresses all the components of one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, it helps

create a balanced and integrated lifestyle—very much the need of the hour in contemporary times.

The beauty of it is that Yoga can be practiced by anyone, regardless of age, fitness level, or experience. With countless styles and modifications available, yoga fits seamlessly into any routine, making it an ideal stress management tool for busy people.

**Stress Buster:** One of the primary reasons people turn to yoga is its effectiveness in reducing stress. The combination of physical postures, breath control, and meditation helps calm the mind and relax the body, providing immediate relief.

Numerous studies have shown that Yoga can improve cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure and reducing the risk of heart disease. It also boosts respiratory function, increases lung capacity, and enhances

oxygen circulation in the body. It also boosts the immune system. These health benefits contribute to a greater sense of well-being, reducing the overall impact of stress on the body.

**Flexibility and Strength:** Yoga postures, or asanas, stretch and tone the muscles, improving flexibility and strength. Regular practice can help alleviate muscle stiffness and joint pain, making the body more agile and resilient. This physical flexibility also translates to mental flexibility, helping individuals adapt to changing circumstances more easily.

**Posture and Alignment:** In an era where sedentary lifestyles are common, poor posture is a matter of rising concern as it can lead to serious ailments. Yoga emphasizes proper alignment and posture, helping to correct imbalances caused by

prolonged sitting and computer work. This not only prevents musculoskeletal problems but also enhances overall body awareness.

## Mental and Emotional Benefits of Yoga

Beyond the physical advantages, yoga offers profound mental and emotional benefits. The practice encourages mindfulness and self-awareness, which are essential for managing stress and maintaining mental health.

**Stress Reduction:** Yoga is renowned for its stress-relieving properties. The practice of deep breathing (pranayama) and mindful movement activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing the production of cortisol, the stress hormone. Regular practice helps in lowering anxiety levels, leading to a calmer and more balanced state of mind.

**Mental Clarity:** Yoga enhances concentration and mental clarity. Yoga encourages mindfulness, helping practitioners stay present and focused. By focusing on the breath and the present moment, practitioners learn to quiet the mind and eliminate distractions. This mental discipline can improve productivity and decision-making skills in daily life, making it easier to navigate stressful situations.

**Emotional Balance:** Emotions are often stored in the body, leading to physical tension and discomfort. Yoga helps release these emotions, promoting emotional balance and resilience. The practice encourages self-compassion and acceptance, fostering a positive outlook on life. This emotional equilibrium is particularly beneficial in managing the ups and downs of modern life.

## Practical Yoga Techniques for Stress Relief

Incorporating yoga into a busy urban lifestyle can seem challenging, but even a few minutes of practice each day can make a significant difference. Here are some practical yoga techniques that can help reduce stress and promote relaxation:

**Morning Routine:** Starting the day with a short yoga session can set a positive tone for the rest of the day. Simple stretches and breathing exercises can awaken the body and mind, preparing you to face daily challenges with a calm demeanor.

- **Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskar):** A sequence of poses that warms up the body, increases blood flow, and energizes the mind.
- **Cat-Cow Pose (Marjaryasana-Bitilasana):** A gentle flow between two poses that warms the body and brings flexibility to the spine.
- **Mountain Pose (Tadasana):** A grounding pose that improves posture and balance.
- **Evening Wind-Down:** Ending the day with a relaxing yoga routine can help release the accumulated stress of the day. Gentle poses combined with deep breathing can promote relaxation and improve sleep quality.
- **Child's Pose (Balasana):** A restorative pose that calms the mind and relieves tension in the body.
- **Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani):** A restorative pose that promotes relaxation and reduces swelling in the legs.
- **Reclining Bound Angle Pose (Supta Baddha Konasana):** A restorative pose that opens the hips and reduces stress.

## Additional Asanas for Stress Relief

Here are some more yoga poses specifically aimed at alleviating stress and promoting relaxation:

**Bridge Pose (Setu Bandhasana):** This pose stretches the chest, neck, and spine while calming the brain and reducing anxiety. It also strengthens the back muscles and improves circulation of the blood.

**Corpse Pose (Savasana):** Often practiced at the end of a yoga session, this pose promotes total relaxation of the body and mind. It helps lower blood pressure, calm the nervous system, and relieve mild depression.

**Tree Pose (Vrikshasana):** This balancing pose strengthens the legs and core while improving concentration and mental focus. It helps ground and center the mind, making it an excellent pose for relieving stress.

**Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana):** This pose stretches the entire body, relieves tension, and rejuvenates the mind. It also increases blood flow to the brain, which can help alleviate stress and mild depression.

**Extended Triangle Pose (Utthita Trikonasana):** This pose stretches and strengthens the entire body, improves digestion, and reduces stress. It also helps relieve symptoms of anxiety and fatigue.

**Happy Baby Pose (Ananda Balasana):** This pose gently stretches the inner groin and back, calming the mind and reducing fatigue. It also helps relieve stress and tension in the lower back.



## Shrugging Off Stress and Work Productivity

**Office Yoga:** Incorporating yoga into the workday can mitigate the effects of prolonged sitting and reduce stress. Desk stretches, seated twists, and deep breathing exercises can be done during breaks to rejuvenate the mind and body.

- **Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottasana):** A calming pose that stretches the back and helps relieve stress.
- **Eagle Arms (Garudasana Arms):** A pose that stretches the shoulders and upper back, perfect for relieving tension from long hours at the desk.
- **Chair Pose (Utkatasana):** A pose that strengthens the legs and core while also improving focus and concentration.

Incorporating stress-relieving asanas into your daily routine can significantly enhance productivity and effectiveness during working hours. Here's how:

**Increased Focus:** Poses like Tree Pose (Vrikshasana) and Eagle Arms (Garudasana Arms) improve concentration and mental clarity. Practicing these poses regularly can help you stay focused and attentive during work, reducing the likelihood of

distractions.

**Enhanced Energy Levels:** Dynamic sequences like Sun Salutations (Surya Namaskar) boost energy levels and combat fatigue. Starting your day with these sequences can make you feel more invigorated and ready to tackle your tasks with enthusiasm.

**Better Posture:** Poses that emphasize proper alignment, such as Mountain Pose (Tadasana) and Bridge Pose (Setu Bandhasana), help improve posture. Good posture reduces physical discomfort and enhances breathing efficiency, allowing for better oxygen flow to the brain, which can improve cognitive function.

**Stress Management:** Incorporating calming poses like Child's Pose (Balasana) and Legs-Up-the-Wall Pose (Viparita Karani) into your routine helps manage stress levels. Lower stress levels lead to a clearer mind, enabling better decision-making and problem-solving abilities.

**Improved Mood:** Yoga poses that promote relaxation and emotional balance, such as Corpse Pose (Savasana) and Happy Baby Pose (Ananda Balasana), can enhance your mood. A positive mindset contributes to a more harmonious work environment and better interpersonal relationships.





## Real-Life Success Stories

Hearing from individuals who have successfully integrated yoga into their lives can be inspiring and motivating. Here are a few real-life success stories that highlight the transformative power of yoga:

### Case Study 1:

**The Busy Executive:** An executive in a high-pressure job found herself constantly stressed and fatigued. She started incorporating a 20-minute yoga routine into her mornings and noticed significant improvements in her energy levels and stress management. Over time, she experienced enhanced focus and productivity at work, as well as a more positive outlook on life.

### Case Study 2:

**The Working Parent:** A working parent struggled to balance career and family responsibilities. By attending

evening yoga classes twice a week, they learned techniques to manage stress and prioritize self-care. This practice not only improved their physical health but also strengthened their emotional resilience, enabling them to better handle the demands of both work and family life.

### Case Study 3:

**The Retiree:** After retiring, an individual sought ways to stay active and engaged. They joined a local yoga studio and quickly became a regular practitioner. Yoga provided a sense of community and purpose, as well as physical benefits such as improved flexibility and reduced joint pain. The retiree found joy and fulfillment in their new routine, enhancing their overall quality of life.



## Relax- Refuel- Reinvent Yourself

Embracing this ancient practice can lead to a calmer, more balanced, and ultimately more fulfilling life.

Whether through community groups or personalized sessions, luxurious retreats, or simple daily routines, Yoga is pitched perfectly to help you manage stress and enhance the overall quality of life.

So, roll out your mat, take a deep breath, and embark on the journey to stress less and live more.



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