

Work - Life Balance and Yoga

After a surge of interest during the consciousness-conscious '60s, yoga began to fall out of favor. Exercisers apparently lost patience with the activity, which offers slow but steady results, and turned to the fast pace and quick shape-up of aerobics. Now yoga is back-less mystical than in the past, less reminiscent of gurus in pretzel positions, and more attractive than ever to people who are interested in working out rather than working toward some spiritual goal.

Once you step out of the metaphysical atmosphere, yoga is a great stretch and flexibility program. Yoga is increasingly being used by those who are having a trouble in balancing their work and personal life. A stressful working environment and a hectic schedule has a telling impact on the personal lives of the modern day executives and so they are turning to yoga to bring about a peace of their mind and to adopt a perfect work-life balance.

Also, many disgruntled runners, weight trainers and aerobic dancers complain that instead of reducing the stress in their lives, their exercise regimes add more.

People rush to work out every day at lunch, force themselves to keep up and then rushed back to work. Surely, it does something good for them, but it is just another pressure. Yoga is less competitive, less stressful, and above all gives a wonderful feeling of being.

Indeed, the healing aspect of yoga is a key to its renewed popularity. The strained knees, aching backs and neck pains generated by the push for fitness and the stress of making it in a competitive world have inspired a packaged set of a book and audio cassettes. Some orthopedic surgeons, chiropractors and neurologists are now referring patients to specific yogis during treatment.

Growing interest in the mind-body connection is fueling a major comeback of the ancient practice, boosted by research suggesting it can reduce stress and blood pressure, improve work performance, even slow effects of aging.

Several techniques are now being taught in mainstream hospitals and businesses; books about them are brisk sellers and discussion groups have sprung up on the Internet.

Even the Army is interested - it has asked the National Academy of Sciences to study meditation and other new age techniques that might enhance soldiers' performance.

Details differ, but a common theme is relaxing the body while keeping the mind

alert and focused - on an object, sound, breath or body movement. If the mind wanders - and it always does - you gently bring it back and start again

Stress-related problems account for 60percent to 90percent of U.S. doctor visits, and mind-body approaches often are more effective, and cost-effective, than drugs or surgery. For example, 34percent of infertile patients get pregnant within six months, 70percent of insomniacs become regular sleepers and doctor visits for pain are reduced 36percent.