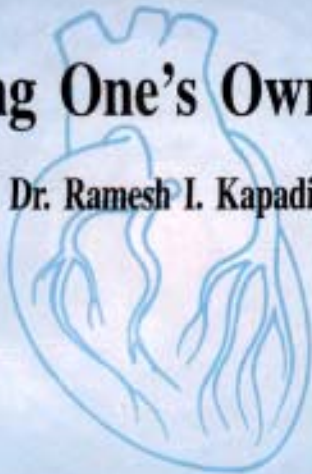


Spinning One's Own Health

Dr. Ramesh I. Kapadia



Spinning One's Won Health

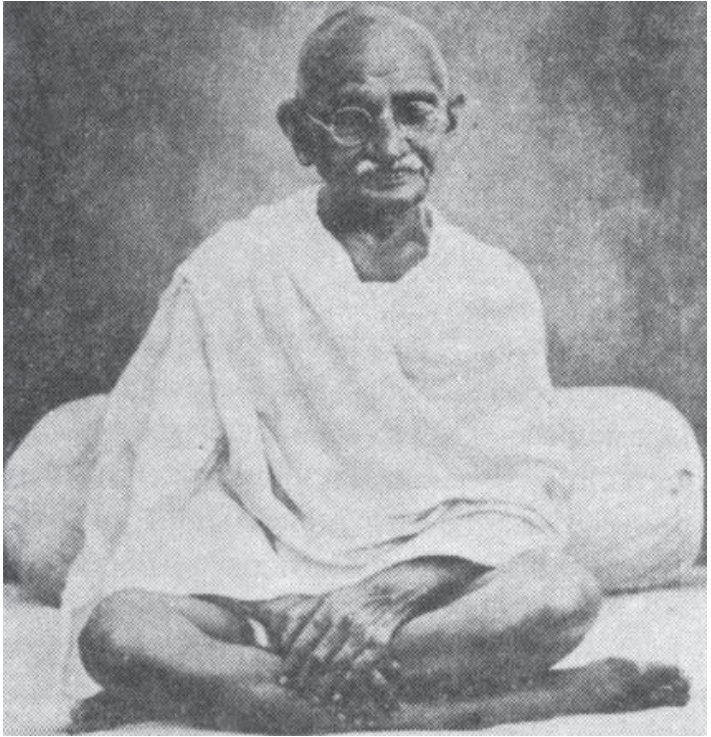
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CONTENTS

Letter to Reader	7
The Title	9
Charak and Hippocrates	12
One-Minute Meditation	14
Present Moment	17
Abdominal Brain	19
Creation of Health	22
Science of Meditation	26
Hostility and Heart	35
Feedbak	44
The Paper published in the Proceeding of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh	53
How can the program be started in various places?	64
Code of Conduct for UHP	65
Universal Healing Program	66
Stretching and Relalaxation	70
Epilogue	87



What would one not do for this body, the temple of the soul? We are born in this world to discharge our indebtedness to it. From that angle of vision man ought to be a guardian of the body. He should so nurse it that it can be put to the fullest use in the cause of service.

- Mahatma Gandhi





Dear Reader,

Your response to our previous four publications inspires me to share further with you my thoughts on the very simple, inexpensive and yet highly effective therapy that has evolved during the seven years of experience with the Universal Healing Program for the prevention and treatment of coronary heart disease.

To quote Dr. Larry Dossey, a seminal thinker of the USA on mind-body-medicine, “Here is a therapy which has brought together a physical, mental and spiritual approach into a literal cure for coronary heart disease, one of humankind’s major afflictions.” The solution to any problem howsoever complex, to be of everlasting value, has to be simple, inexpensive and affordable to everyone. I feel very happy to observe that the Universal Healing Program eminently fills the bill.

Modern science has increasingly recognised the role of an individual’s mind, social behaviour and spiritual strength in the prevention and treatment of all diseases the flesh is heir to.

In this recognition modern medicine honours the wisdom of the seer-physicians of the East as well as the West. The Universal Healing Program, over seven years, has yielded rich experience and rare insight in this regard. Our earlier four publications have documented the cumulative experience. In this book, we intend to further

explain how the participants in the program create health while performing the simple techniques of stretching and relaxation, abdominal breathing and meditation.

Yours sincerely,

(Ramesh I. Kapadia)

THE TITLE

It will be apparent that the title of this book was to be the *Creation of Health*. During my conversation about the UHP with John Rice, an eminent attorney of the USA formerly with the UNO, the idea of creation of health had cropped up. When I informed him that my new book on UHP was going to be on the creation of health, he wrote back reflecting at length on all my earlier four books saying, “I have continued to read your books which are excellent and engaging. ... There is the relationship between creating one’s health and creating one’s life.... I still like the title, *Spinning One’s Own Health*.... I am sure that came to my mind out of my deep respect for Gandhi’s contribution to all of us.”

The words, ‘Spinning One’s Own Health’ conjured up in my mind a vision of a UHP participant spinning his own health through modest exercise, *shavasana* and meditation, a wholesome vegetarian diet, rich in complex carbohydrates — low in fat, and sharing the feeling in group discussion.

Gandhi has figured in the UHP unwittingly from the very start. I met Dr. Larry Dossey when he visited India in 1988 on invitation by Gandhi Peace Foundation to deliver a talk on ‘Medicine and Non-violence’. Our program was launched on October 2, 1991. It is being

conducted in a prayer hall of a Gandhian institute. The first anniversary of the program was celebrated at Gandhi Ashram, Sabarmati, Ahmedabad. All our books have been published by Navajivan Publishing House established by Mahatma Gandhi. Again, in January 1998 the Young Men's Gandhian Association conferred on me the prestigious award for *Tabibi Seva* (medical services) at a function held at Gujarat Vidyapith founded by Mahatma Gandhi. Dr. Larry Dossey in his foreword to the *Primer of Universal Healing* writes: "It is entirely appropriate that the celebration will be on the premises of Gandhi Ashram, Sabarmati, because this therapy epitomizes the non-violent attitude through which Gandhi helped change the world." In his message in 1994 he says, "The Universal Healing approach to treating heart disease is inherently non-violent and gentle by nature. It emphasizes changes in behaviour and the cultivation of certain states of awareness, many of which were advocated by Gandhiji himself. This noninvasive, nonsurgical approach has been proved not only to stop the advance of heart disease but actually reverse it." In another message on the fifth anniversary of UHP he writes: "I often wonder what Gandhiji would think about modern medicine as we near the third millennium. Although he might not approve of the high-tech or 'big science' approach to healthcare, I am certain, he would be immensely proud that a project such as the Universal Healing Program has grown roots in the soil of his beloved India. He would recognize at once the

value of the nonviolent, nonintrusive, and gentle approach which your program emphasizes.

“I know of no other program which captures so authentically the essence of healing - the harmony of body, mind and spirit. While the program wisely honours the spirit, it does not reject the physical. In medicine, we need the insights of the intellect and the fruits of technology, and the best spiritual wisdom as well.”

It is again a happy coincidence that this book entitled, *Spinning One's Own Health* is being published on Gandhi Jayanti Day during the fiftieth year of Indian Independence.

CHARAK AND HIPPOCRATES

Charak, the sage physician of ancient India, about 5000 years ago, enunciated in immortal two lines the necessary attributes of man to remain healthy. He said:

नित्यं हिताहारविहारसेवी, समीक्ष्यकारी विषयेष्वसक्तः ।
दाता समः सत्यपरः क्षमावान् आप्तोपसेवी च भवत्यरोगः ॥
(चरकसंहिता)

“He alone can remain healthy who takes regulated diet and exercise, who deliberates all his actions, who controls his sensual pleasures, who is generous, just, truthful and forgiving and who can get along with his kinsmen.”

To begin with, one should take a balanced diet and do regularly moderate exercise. This is simple and universally accepted. However, Charak observed, one should deliberate all one’s actions, that means, one does every act with utmost care not to offend others and at the same time be honest to oneself. He further says, one should control one’s sensual pleasures. This is sound common sense. But in the second line he says that the person, in order to be healthy, must be generous. This condition for being healthy is outside the pale of the conventional medicine. Charak does not stop here. He

adds, an individual should be just to be healthy. He should have a clear perception of what is right and what is wrong. Further more the person should be honest and above all, in order to be healthy, must be forgiving and be able to get along with his kinsmen. In his final analysis Charak emphasises the spiritual qualities of a man to nurture health.

Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, says that the healing power is inherent in the body. When disease occurs, the body makes every effort to regain ease, that is health. A good doctor strengthens this innate healing power. Hippocrates also observes that the doctor, while treating his patient, should remember his first duty, *Primum Non Nocere*. In other words, he may not always be able to help the patient, but his prime concern ought to be that he does no harm to the patient. He puts a great accent on the doctor-patient relationship. He was amongst the first thinkers who thought that the mind and the body are one. He stated that the mind is not confined merely to the brain; it is present in every cell of the body.

These ideas of the two great ancient physicians who were also seers, are now proved to be valid in the modern scientific laboratories.

ONE-MINUTE MEDITATION

We breathe all the time. In fact, breath is our life. Yet normally we need not be aware that we are breathing. However, if we cultivate the habit to be aware of our breathing for just one minute every 90 minutes of our waking hours, we would be in the control of a very powerful tool to manage our stress in day-to-day living

The technique is simple. We assume a comfortable position: whatever is feasible in that particular circumstance. Then, without changing the character of breathing or controlling it in any way, just begin to observe it entering the nostrils during inspiration (inhalation) and coming out from the nostrils during expiration (exhalation). The idea is to observe the breathing as it is occurring in its natural way. While we observe breathing, thoughts may come but one need not make frantic efforts to stop the thoughts but only make a gentle effort (mark the word 'gentle') to keep our awareness on the process of breathing. We watch that breathing for about 4 or 5 breaths going into and coming out of the nostrils. Then for next 8 to 10 breaths we mentally say either 'I' when we breathe in and 'AM' when we breathe out - or 'SO' when the breath goes in and 'HUM' when the breath comes out. One need not utter the

words. They are mentally said as the breath goes in and when the breath comes out. At the end of 8 to 10 such breaths, one comes out of this one-minute meditation. With practice, it takes only one minute because on an average we breathe 14 to 16 times a minute. By doing this very simple exercise in the most natural, relaxed way one feels at peace with oneself.

By observing this practice of one-minute meditation at every one-and-a-half to two hours during the day one begins to understand the nature of one's breathing. When the mind is at peace, breathing is quiet and abdominal, that is when the breath goes in, the tummy rises a little and when the breath comes out, the tummy falls. This is natural abdominal breathing. When the mind is disturbed, then either the individual holds the breath or breathing becomes rapid, shallow and thoracic; that is the upper part of the chest moves rapidly. The character of breathing is the mirror of the state of mind. With practice, during stress when the breathing is rapid and thoracic, one can willingly change the character of breathing to the abdominal. This quietens the mind. This is known as the muscle-to-mind control of the stress.

Key Ideas

1. During the relaxation exercises, the adrenaline dominant chemistry of the restless mind is replaced by the endorphin dominant chemistry of love and connectedness of peaceful mind.

2. **Meditation is a restful, alert state of the mind-body.** It is a scientific tool prescribed by doctors rather than a sacred ritual.

3. You can meditate in one moment, in one minute or in five minutes increment. That 'I do not have time to meditate' is a lame excuse.

4. **By stretching and lengthening the muscles very slowly, stressful impulses to the brain are reduced. Longer the muscle fibre, less the impulse traffic to the brain. This is the rationale for yogic stretching and relaxation.**

PRESENT MOMENT

The present moment demands a chapter of its own because of its importance in the creation of health. We have arrived at this conclusion after experiencing the calming and healthful effects of meditation in all our participants of UHP.

As a species, we are obsessed with the future. But life, economics and the weather resist most of our efforts to control them.

Life is not last year, or ten minutes from now; it is *Now*, this very moment. The past is unalterable, the future beyond our control. All we have is *Now*, and all we can work with is our present attitude and behaviour. How we act right now is what we are right now. When one fully lives in each moment one opens oneself to beauties that might otherwise escape one entirely.

The surest way to bring on a negative mood is to deny the present, whether by dwelling in the past or by fantasizing about the future. The more fully we can bring all ourselves to each moment, the more our capacity is available for living.

The present moment is to be accepted, as it is the result of myriad of forces that have occurred in the past. The quality of the next moment to be born is largely dependent upon thoughts, words and actions in the present moment.

Thoughts come first. If you speak differently from what you think, the following moment will be the result of your thoughts, not your words, and the action will have to reflect your words; otherwise howsoever good your words may be, the next moment will be according to your action and not your words. You have to walk your talk. These thoughts are the outcome of the results seen in hundreds of coronary heart patients who have followed the Universal Healing Program for more than five years.

As explained in the chapter : ‘One Minute Meditation’ the quality of the present moment can be ascertained with the awareness of the quality of breathing during that moment. With practice of meditation, one can easily know the state of one’s mind. With the consistent effort, one can alter the thought and state of mind by abdominal breathing.

Key Ideas

1. The thoughts and the actions in the present moment are to a large extent determinants of our fate.
2. The stretching and relaxation exercise done with awareness on the stretching and relaxation process unites the mind and body in the present moment. That is yoga, that is meditation.

I will look to the moment, and miraculously, the future will take care of itself.

ABDOMINAL BRAIN

The ancient Indian and Chinese texts are full of references to *chakras* in our body. These *chakras* were considered to be the seat of mental, physical and spiritual health of the individual. Lately, a *chakra*, just behind and slightly above the navel called 'solar plexus', has aroused a new interest in the field of conventional medicine. The activity of the solar plexus is assumed to be always lifeward. That is, it promotes total health in the individual. Moreover, the solar plexus is incessantly active throughout human existence. It does not rest at all. However, the conventional brain located in the head has its influence on the solar plexus - also called 'abdominal brain'. When the brain in the head (also known as conscious mind) is full of negative thoughts, the lifeward activity of the abdominal brain is hampered.

Abdominal breathing, shavasana and meditation are now proved to be perfect tools to quieten the agitated brain. The one-minute meditation empowers the individual to recognise the state of his mind (activity in the head brain) and the practice of abdominal breathing helps to calm the mind. During meditation, when one experiences the peace of mind, one can then make positive suggestions and visualize positive imageries and thus send positive signals to the abdominal brain. In our program, we

recommend that while retiring to bed before sleep, one may start observing one's breath i.e. start doing one-minute meditation in the lying position and say rhythmically 'SO' during inhalation and 'HUM' during exhalation. While remaining in that state of meditation for another three to four minutes one may visualise positive imageries for health or for success in any field of life. These imageries will enhance lifeward activity of the abdominal brain. Of course, all the positive imageries concerning the individual or his kith and kin must be in harmony with the laws of life. All the thoughts, ideas and beliefs must operate in harmony with the innate life principles present in all of us.

The similar five to seven minute meditation is recommended while waking up in the morning. The positive suggestions to the abdominal brain done at this time will also bring about favourable outcome from the stressful situations.

Points to Ponder

1. Your abdominal brain is the builder of your body (mind, body and spirit) and is on the job 24 hours a day. Negative thinking interferes with its life giving patterns.

2. During meditation prior to sleep and on waking up in the morning, you can charge your abdominal brain with the task of evolving an answer to any problem.

3. Watch your thoughts. Every thought sends a signal to your abdominal brain and is brought into your world as a reality.

4. You can remake yourself by giving a new blueprint to your abdominal brain.

5. The tendency of your abdominal brain is always lifeward. Your job is with your conscious mind.

6. Feed your abdominal brain with the premises which are true. It always reproduces according to your habitual mental pattern.

7. Remember a very interesting fact that you build a new body every eleven months. So you have a power to change your body by changing your thoughts and keeping them changed.

8. The thoughts of jealousy, fear, worry and anxiety tear down and destroy your nerves and glands, bringing about mental and physical illness of all kinds.

9. Affirm the good and experience the joy of living.

CREATION OF HEALTH

The creation of health is almost synonymous with the creation of connectedness. And connection is yoga. The word yoga originates from the root word *yuj*, meaning to connect. We have clearly seen while observing the health parameters of the participants of the UHP, that the sense of connectedness promotes health and the sense of separation aggravates illness. The mind is the seat of connection or separation. Modern medicine talks about the mind and the body as one entity. They are inseparable. One affects the other.

While conducting this program with the coronary heart patients since October 1991 through participation of more than 7,000 patients until now, we have learnt some very basic simple ways to create health. This phrase, creation of health, came to me while I was sharing my experience with an attorney in the USA. He was at one time on the staff of the United Nations. During his career as an attorney, he dealt with conflicts in a conventional win-and-lose way. But on reflection he thought that it was not a win-and-lose game but rather a lose-lose game. So he retired from the conventional practice as an attorney and decided to find a way out of the conflict which would be a win-win game, and he established a 'win-win' institute in Phoenix, Arizona in the USA. This attorney when he

read the books on Universal Healing, listened to audio cassette and saw the performances of the participants on the video cassette, observed, “Doctor, why do your participants, with such complex problem as coronary heart disease, feel so well while engaged in the program? I think, they are creating health while performing the relaxation techniques.” The phrase ‘creation of health’ at once gave me a clear picture of what sets free the participants from the fear and anxiety of coronary heart disease, and transforms them into individuals with indomitable inner strength, sparkling with joy and confidence in themselves. Without doubt, this simple technique of stretching and relaxation exercise followed by deep relaxation (shavasana) and meditation has brought about this transformation.

One great lesson that we have learnt is that a sense of separation aggravates the problem while a sense of connectedness creates health. The signs of separation are increased irritability, lack of concentration, easy fatiguability, lack of energy, insomnia, diminished immunity and heart rate variability (HRV, explained in detail elsewhere) erratic and diminished - all due to the increased secretion of catecholamines and corticosteroids resulting in sympathetic over-activity and imbalance in ‘Yin and Yang’. The signs of connectedness are the feeling of calm and energy, increased immunity, HRV increased and harmonious, and increased vagal tone - all due to the increased secretion of endorphins and opiates in the blood. All connection, whether horizontal, that is with the world

at large or vertical, that is with the higher power, creates health.

It is difficult to calm the agitated mind. It is our common experience that when we are angry, the feeling of anger often lingers for hours. On the other hand, an encounter with spirit can colour our world for many hours. During this time, nothing disturbs the calm and peace of our mind. What is this spirit? It would have been difficult for me to define it but for our experience in the UHP. The simple stretching and relaxation exercises followed by deep relaxation (shavasana) and meditation help the individual to experience this spirit which is the life force of everything that exists. In words of our participants, when their whole body from toes to head is relaxed and they are one with their breath, “A great peace enfolds us. We feel whole, safe, secured and loved in these moments of bliss.” The regular practice of this discipline everyday with the help of our audio cassette empowers them to face the challenge of day to day living with great equanimity. It is amazing how they lose the fear of death and feel confident in themselves. The level of hostility diminishes and altruism and compassion flourish.

Four major studies done to examine the progress of coronary heart disease clearly show that small maintenance dose of betablocker brings about an appreciable reduction in the incidence of heart attack. Betablockers reduce the sympathetic overactivity and bring about healthful changes. Betablockers in a small dose are usually safe. However, they are not without some

side effects like the lack of drive and even impotence in some patients. Shavasana, abdominal breathing and meditation bring about the salutary effect of diminishing harmful sympathetic activity without any side effects. Furthermore it increases the inner strength of the individual to be able to make necessary life-style changes like giving up tobacco, alcohol and diet rich in fat and animal proteins.

Key Ideas

1. Balance between parasympathetic system and sympathetic system, described as Yin and Yang in Chinese philosophy, between heart-centered and mind-centered living, right brain and left brain, is the key to the creation of health.

2. The evidence of peace, calm and bliss is the signature of connection and hence lifeward.

3. Connection is also experienced while watching the sunrise, sunset or in places of worship and in the presence of saints, or simply while playing with children.

4. Slow abdominal breathing is the evidence of connection. Rapid, shallow, thoracic breathing is indicative of stress due to the thoughts of separation.

5. Regular practice of meditation, even for five minutes, three times a day, is a sure way to develop the feeling of connectedness.

6. Creative visualization is an essential part of meditation.

7. The whole universe is a saga of connection.

SCIENCE OF MEDITATION

Prescription For The Present Day Ills

The last two decades of a fascinating century have witnessed an unprecedented change in many of our values, systems and customs. This change invites a challenge to look at one's inner self and external situation and balance these two distinct and yet interrelated worlds. **The balance between the inner and the outer worlds – the spiritual and the physical – is the only valid response to the demands of life in the present times for the survival of human race. The practice of meditation helps to overcome the worry and stress of modern life and obtain a state of calm that at once refreshes the mind and relaxes the body, and thus achieves a balance between the spiritual and the physical.**

The word "Meditation" is derived from the Latin word 'Meditari', which means to heal. Meditation heals the whole man – body, mind and soul.

Why Meditation ?

The human mind keeps on constantly churning thoughts. It is always engaged in thinking of the past or of the future. It seldom remains in the present. It is estimated that an average person remains in the present hardly for an hour and a half during 16 hours of his waking period.

This wandering state of mind causes stress, which alters the immune response and causes many stress-related diseases.

The greatest limitation comes from our perception that we are merely individuals limited in space and time. Man sees himself as a separate entity. This is an illusion, even if a stubborn one, and creates isolation. The feeling that the other person is separate from you is the root cause of hostility, self-centeredness and cynicism. In fact, we are also eternal – limitless in time and space – without a beginning or an end. When the individual experiences his real identity, he feels connected with the rest of the world, wisdom dawns on him, and his capacity becomes unlimited. Meditation has the potential to enable the individual to experience his real identity. But meditation is even more than this.

What is Meditation ?

Remember an activity in which you were totally engrossed. In such a state, you did not realise how the time passed. Even when several hours passed you felt as if hardly a few minutes had elapsed. It is a wonderful experience. Your vision widens. Your time-sense expands. Such a condition is called "Meditation".

Meditation is simply bringing our total awareness on one point or object. It may be our breath, a rhythmic sound or any other activity. There is nothing esoteric about meditation. It is easy and can be performed by anyone. In order to meditate, one need not empty or control one's mind.

Meditation brings our awareness on the process of what is happening in the present rather than on the goal. When we think of the goal, generally fear and worry accompany. But when the awareness is kept on the process, there is no fear or worry, and the process becomes more effective.

- Awareness of each moment is meditation.
- Meditation gives an experience of eternity of time.

Science of Meditation

The human body has developed some self-regulatory mechanisms for its survival. In case of fear, the sympathetic nervous system is activated which prepares the individual either to fight or run away from the fear (flight). As the danger disappears the parasympathetic nervous system comes into action. This calms down the individual. Meditation activates the parasympathetic nervous system which makes secretion of hormones like adrenaline, noradrenaline and corticosteroid normal. As a result, the heartrate, blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol become normal. Blood becomes thin and the arteries dilate. The formation of lactic acid is also reduced which results in retardation of the aging process. Endorphins and neuropeptides are secreted from the brain. This brings peace and joy. Thus **all the degenerative processes of the body are retarded and regenerative processes get accelerated.** Moreover recent research has shown that meditation increases the heart rate variability.

Heartrate variability (HRV)

The heartrate is the number of times the heart beats in a minute. Normally the heart rate is between 60 to 80 beats per minute. Even though the heart appears to beat regularly, the time interval between the consecutive heart beats is always changing. The change is very minute, measured in milliseconds and hence cannot be appreciated in a routine clinical examination or even on ECG. This beat to beat time variation in milliseconds is called HRV. HRV is a subject of frontline research. Very advanced computers can detect the change in time intervals between beats one and two, two and three, three and four, and so on. Our emotions and feelings affect HRV. The negative emotions like anger, frustration, envy, anxiety, fear, guilt, sadness, etc. reduce HRV. In a normal person, HRV is rhythmic with a value of more than 50 milliseconds on an average between beats.

It is found that the patients with HRV of less than 50 milliseconds have 5.3 times higher chance of sudden death amongst those recovering from heart attack. This is due to the dampening of parasympathetic pathways. Meditation, by increasing parasympathetic tone, brings about the increase in HRV which is beneficial to health. HRV induces the corresponding changes in the cellular DNA and immune system also. Positive emotions like caring love and compassion increase HRV. A heart full of love for others is the best preventive against most degenerative diseases.

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation now-a-days has become a part of prescription in the treatment of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, insomnia, rheumatoid arthritis, peptic ulcer, certain skin diseases and even cancer. **With only three minutes of meditation oxygen consumption is reduced by 20% as against 8% reduction of oxygen consumption after six hours of sleep. The rate of increase of entropy (wear and tear) which is common to all living things also drops during meditation.**

Many industries use meditation to raise productivity and efficiency of their employees. Educational institutions have introduced meditation in the curriculum to increase concentration on the studies. It also makes students more disciplined and prepares them to meet the challenges of the present times.

Meditation can be extended to many other areas of life. One can even meditate while going about one's normal business. For example, if you bring your awareness on the process of eating, you will not overeat. That is why overweight people are advised to practise meditation. Even while you are walking, if you bring your awareness on the process of walking, the benefits are more than otherwise.

Meditation teaches the art of living efficiently and beneficially and developing a laser-like mind that can penetrate any problem. By an inner mastery, it is possible to control all outer events. The realization of soul-force brings forth the qualities of the soul – love, compassion

and freedom from fear. This conviction has grown from our experience with the Universal Healing Program which we have been conducting since October 2, 1991 at Ahmedabad. The program heals not only the coronary arteries but the individual as a whole; hence the name UHP.

Preparing for Meditation

We search for stated ways and methods of learning how to meditate, and to come at that meditative mood we disquiet our minds by I know not how many devices. We give ourselves a world of trouble and pursue a multitude of practices to attain a meditative state. And yet it is so simple. There is no need either of art or science; just as we are, we can sit down quite effortlessly to be one with our breath.

Select a quiet corner. However, with practice you will be able to do it anywhere and at any time. It can be done in the sitting position on the floor, in a chair, lying on your back or even in the standing position. Meditation becomes easy after progressive deep relaxation called shavasana. If there is no time for shavasana, one may take some few slow deep breaths or do abdominal breathing which will calm the mind. **Whenever you feel upset, a few slow deep breaths can break the stress cycle and calm you down. Even when you cannot control the situation, you can always control your breath and change your reactions to those circumstances.**

During meditation, normally keep the eyes closed to avoid distraction. It is equally important to keep the body still. However, the body tends to move in the beginning. Ignore it and continue meditation. If you still feel uncomfortable, you may move a little to assume a more comfortable posture. Meditation can also be done by becoming one with the rhythmic sound like *Om*. One may not meditate immediately after meals. During meditation blood flows towards the brain whereas blood is needed by the digestive system after the meal. Normally, one may meditate for 20 minutes in the morning and in the evening. The schedule should be free from stress. Meditation even for 2 to 3 minutes is also beneficial. More important is the regularity in practice of meditation rather than the length of time.

Technique of Meditation

There are several techniques of meditation. Here is one which we have found simple to adopt.

- Sit on the floor cross-legged. It is called *sukhasana*.
- Rest your hands on the knees with palms upwards and fingers half-bent in a relaxed position.
- Sit erect and still. However, avoid stiffness. Gently close the eyes.
- See with the closed eyes that there is no stress in any part of the body from toe to head.
- Do abdominal breathing to quieten the mind. Now bring your awareness to the process of breathing.

Experience cool air of the breath going in and warm air coming out of the nostrils. Be one with the process of breathing. Let not a single breath go in or out without your awareness.

- While breathing, you inhale not just air but also *Prana* – Life-Force and Light.

- Thoughts will come and go but you remain unconcerned. Keep your awareness on the process of breathing.

- **If your mind still wanders during meditation, gently bring it back to the breathing. Such efforts are part of meditation.** Continue meditating till you feel comfortable.

- Now gently open your eyes and slowly come out of meditation.

When is Meditation Successful ?

As soon as you bring your awareness to the process of breathing and become one with it, meditation begins. During meditation time-sense expands. One cannot realise how much time has elapsed. One experiences profound peace of mind. At this time slow alpha waves are produced in abundance from the frontal lobe of the brain.

Why Some Find Meditation Difficult ?

You cannot force yourself to meditate.

It becomes easy when done in an effortless way.

One tends to put off meditation in today's hectic life. In

fact, it is the right time to meditate as you are compensated by increased efficiency.

Some people distrust their technique of meditation and are in search of a better method. In fact, all the methods lead to effective meditation. Some think that if the correct method is not followed, it may cause harm. Such a fear is baseless. Meditation is one area where judgement or competition is right out of place. **Meditation does not have to be spectacular for it to have a positive effect on health. On a day to day practical basis it can be used simply to reduce stress and tension at work or at home and bring about a new level of calm and well-being.**

Cultivate the faculty of self-remembering, i.e., paying attention to the present moment instead of wandering the ephemeral worlds of past and future. Living in the present moment means greater biological efficiency, greater longevity, a lower rate of illness, better sleep and above all, greater creativity.

Gurdjieff
A Russian Mystic

HOSTILITY AND HEART

A Letter to Medical Fraternity

Dear Colleague,

I am happy to share with you my experience with the Universal Healing Program in the management of coronary heart disease as a complement to the conventional treatment by medications and interventions when necessary. It has come to light that the conventional treatment with routine advice on life-style changes alone does not always succeed in preventing the recurrence. The Pooling Project Data have shown that while only ten per cent of those with more than six risk factors eventually had a heart attack, sixty per cent of those who had heart attack did have only one or none of the conventional risk factors operating in them. In one report from the USA, out of 500 stented angioplastied patients, as many as 125 restenosed within six months. These stents were even genetically treated to prevent occlusion. The researchers thought the cause of restenosis was probably increased hostility score in these patients. They postulated how hostility per se can affect the endothelium of coronary arteries through chemical changes.

Research findings at Duke University Medical Center, N.C., USA also support the notion that **hostility plays a**

role in the pathogenesis of coronary atherosclerosis and point to the potential importance of interaction between hostility and other risk factors. Another study at McGill University, Montreal, Canada, also shows that hostility may predispose the coronary artery disease patients to a more adverse prognosis.

Hostility

Hostility, in a wider sense, includes intense intolerance, extremely irritable temper, aggressive behaviour, self-centeredness and cynicism. A sense of isolation breeds hostility and the hostility aggravates isolation. The hostile people are lonely. They go to parties, but cannot come out of their hostile shell to mix with others in a caring way. A hostile person ruminates in his own thoughts and is preoccupied with himself. Larry Sherwitz at the University of California, San Francisco, shows that the more a person thinks of the first person pronouns (I, me, mine, myself), the greater the risk for a heart attack. Your preoccupation with self makes you more hostile because you do not include others in your agenda.

Expressed anger is associated with increased secretion of adrenaline and noradrenaline (catecholamine-like chemicals). During caring-love, there is increased secretion of endorphins (opioids), phenylethylamine and oxytocin. The secretions are released throughout the body in a split second.

In March 1997 Dr. Mark Ketterer of Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan, USA and associates

reported their findings from a study of 144 men who had angiogram positive coronary heart disease. Spouses and intimate friends of these men observed that they were excessively prone to anger, although the men under study denied getting angry. The study suggests that **denial of anger is a stronger predictor of major cardiac events and death than traditional cardiovascular risk factors.**

Selfcenteredness, cynicism, hostility, hatred, jealousy, anger, frustration and vanity reduce the heart rate variability (HRV) -- the most important protective factor for long and happy life.

HRV

HRV is not cardiac arrhythmia or irregular heart beats; rather it is a variation in the sinus rhythm itself as it changes from beat to beat. This beat to beat time variation is in milliseconds and cannot be appreciated in a routine electrocardiogram. In a normal person the HRV is rhythmic with a value of more than 50 milliseconds on an average between beats. It can be captured only by advanced sensitive computers. Negative emotions like anger, frustration, envy, worry, etc. cause erratic and nonharmonious HRV. Positive emotions like caring-love, appreciation and compassion allow smooth, even and harmonious HRV. The disturbance in HRV is a sensitive index of mind and body malfunction. Erratic HRV puts extra wear and tear on blood vessels and heart. HRV has corresponding changes in cellular DNA and immune system also. Increased sympathetic activity with

dampening of parasympathetic pathways diminish heart rate variability and also make it erratic and nonharmonious. A Multicentre Post Infraction Research Group Study found that low HRV, less than 50 milliseconds, has 5.3 times higher chances of sudden death in the patients recovering from heart attack. The yogic disciplines such as abdominal breathing, shavasana and meditation admirably bring about a reduction in the sympathetic activity and have beneficial effects on heart rate variability.

Diaphragmatic breathing helps to clear fatigue. It enhances the lymphatic flow, strengthens the immune system, clears free radicals, and increases blood pH level. It also conserves energy by switching from the ergotrophic energy consuming sympathetic system to the tropotrophic energy conserving parasympathetic system. In management of acute stress, abdominal breathing gives relief as quick as sorbitrate in angina.

Heart Resonance Imaging is another technique to bring beneficial effect on Heart Rate Variability. With Heart Resonance Imaging, you replace the conditioned reflex of anger with the reflex of caring-love. This cannot be done as a statement, declaration, or pep talk. It has to be developed as a biological reflex. If you diligently practise over 24 hours, you will be able to develop the new reflex. If you stay with it everyday for a week, you will master the new reflex. You will enjoy the unconditional caring love state for the second time in your life - the first being

when you were a child. **The Heart Resonance Imaging steps are simple.** During meditation:

- Focus awareness on your anatomical heart.
- Experience caring-love towards a particular person.
- Stay anchored to your heart.
- Observe your breathing in your belly as you stay anchored to your heart.
- Repeat these drills until you are able to shift your centering from your mind to heart and to belly effortlessly.

Benefits of HRI (Heart Resonance Imaging)

- HRI balances your Yin-Yang cycles.
- Your heart heals as shown by heart rate variability.
- Your immune system becomes stronger.
- You resolve conflicts in your mind and you feel better.
- You feel less stressed and more energized.
- You develop biologically effective altruism. This is healing by your internal pharmacy. You upgrade your emotions from apathy to empathy and from anger to caring-love. HRI may be practised whenever one interacts with another person.

Moderate stretching and relaxation exercises followed by shavasana and meditation bring about the desired relaxation with all the helpful changes, viz. increased secretion of endorphins, decreased formation of lactic acid and reduction in secretion of noradrenalin and

adrenalin. Balance between parasympathetic and sympathetic or Yin and Yang (Chinese) or right and left brain will promote health. Yin and Yang in Chinese are used for female and male characteristics, and the right brain stands for intuitive instinct and left brain for hard logic. Briefly, in relaxation mode parasympathetic tone is more than sympathetic, Yin is greater than Yang, and the right brain is more active than the left. While in the stress mode the reverse occurs.

Universal Healing Program

During the last five and a half years more than 5000 patients have participated in our program. And many more have used our books and cassettes with advantage. About 150 - 200 coronary heart patients from all walks of life, in the age group of 30 - 70 years, both male and female in the ratio of 4:1, meet twice a week in the evening for one and a half hours for the program. **The 5-point program works in unison, each one supporting the others. The components of the program are : diet counselling, walking at moderate pace on a level ground for about 30 - 40 minutes daily, stretching and relaxation exercises leading to progressive deep relaxation - shavasana – meditation and visual imagery, and group discussion with emphasis on the sharing of feeling.** Our experience with this program corroborates the research findings of Dr. Dean Ornish and others in the USA. It has been observed that after attending only 10 to 12 sessions over a period of six weeks, a majority of the participants not only reports

reduction in the number of episodes of anginal pain but is also motivated to make life-style changes, such as, giving up smoking and alcohol, and choosing low fat vegetarian diet rich in complex carbohydrates. Within three months, their level of hostility also drops markedly. Most of them show improvement in the heart's ability to pump, that is, left ventricle ejection fraction shows appreciable increase in 2-D echo-studies. UHP has come to be so known as while it aims at healing coronary disease, it has also resulted in the healing of the individual as a whole.

Dr. Larry Dossey*, M.D., a most seminal thinker of USA on mind-body-medicine, in his message for the 6th anniversary of UHP, writes:

“There is a saying here -- “the cream rises” -- suggesting that the most valuable things become visible and endure with time. The Universal Healing Program has indeed risen to the top, and I am happy to offer my congratulations on your approaching sixth anniversary. Your approach has now been validated and replicated in medical institutions around the world. The Universal Healing Program is here to stay because of a simple reason: It works and is based on solid scientific principles.

* Dr. Larry Dossey, M.D. is former co-chair, Panel on Mind/Body Interventions, Office of Alternative Medicine, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA. & author : *Prayer is Good Medicine; Healing Words; Meaning & Medicine; Recovering the Soul; Space, Time & Medicine.*

Therefore, to your professional colleagues in India, I say this: This is the medicine of the future; become familiar with it and allow it to influence your work with those you serve.

“I want you to know, Ramesh, that in the past two years eleven major medical schools in the US have adopted courses devoted to ‘spirituality and clinical practice,’ and fifty percent of our medical schools have expressed interest in creating these programs. This is truly a historic development. Herein lies the future of medicine: combining our best science with eternal spiritual insights. This approach alone is healing; this approach alone will endure. Your program is lighting the path into the next century and is helping many acquire the wisdom we shall need to survive.”

Five thousand years ago, Charak the great Indian sage-physician, gave his prescription for health and well-being. He said, “He only can remain healthy who takes regulated diet and exercise, who deliberates all his actions, who controls his sensual pleasures, who is generous, just, truthful and forgiving and who can get along with his kinsmen”. This wisdom of the sage has today been amply verified by our own experience in the Universal Healing Program and by the detailed scientific investigations abroad, mainly in the USA.

Dear friends, the inescapable conclusion from our experience with UHP and the scientific investigations from the Western world is that successful treatment and containment of coronary heart disease require both

conventional allopathic treatment and strengthening of the spiritual qualities of man. **UHP has proved to be a powerful tool for in-depth stress management to increase spiritual strength (ISMSS).** Let us endeavour to practise the basic yogic disciplines of abdominal breathing, shavasana and meditation and recommend them to our patients in our regular prescription.

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FEEDBACK

□ This is a story of a 59-year old American businessman with no health problems at any time in his life. In fact he and his wife even did not have a family doctor. He planned a snow skiing trip to Colorado. He had a bout of common cold and dropped into a walk in medical clinic. The doctor did a customary check-up and asked him why his blood pressure was so high. It was 205/115. His response was that he did not know that it was high. He had no symptoms of high blood pressure. On 6th of December 1997 he checked in at the Cooper Aerobic Medical Centre in Dallas for a complete medical check-up. All the various tests that the doctor ran through were normal and good. He was a picture of good health except for his blood pressure which was unacceptably high. His doctor observed that he was a very healthy person with a very critical heart problem. He was averse to taking any medicine because of the fear of side effects he had read and heard about. The doctor, however, assured him that a new generation medicine was available which was very effective and had minimal side effects. It is a calcium channel blocker. The medicine was effective in lowering the blood pressure.

Several weeks later he picked up the *Dallas Morning News* and read the most frightening news he ever read.

The article said, "People on calcium channel blocker medication were having 60% increased chance of sudden death than people with high blood pressure taking no medicine." He stopped taking the medicine and sure enough, his blood pressure went up like a rocket. He related his dilemma to his friend who gave him four small books, an audio and video cassette - all introducing him to Universal Healing Program. Mr. Cecil, the American businessman started the program immediately. He writes, by stringently following the Universal Healing Program of Yogic exercise and meditation, within a few days, the meditation had profound effect on his overall well-being. He completely changed his diet, cutting out fatty food, eating mostly fresh fruits and vegetables, eliminating as much salt as possible, all soft drinks, alcohol, etc. He started walking 3 to 5 miles a day. He says, he has made major effort to remove all hostilities from his life each and every day. He and his family friends came into much closer personal relationship with him. Within 30 days of starting the universal healing program, his blood pressure was staying within the boundary of 140/90, and six months later, at this writing on June 30, 1998, he was very happy to report that he was then enjoying better than normal blood pressure for his age, around 130/80 and as low as 117/76, with no medication. Another great benefit from the program is that he lowered his resting heart rate from around 77 to 55. These ratings were constant as long as he was stress or irritation free. He still increases his pulse rate and blood pressure instantly by 15 to 20% by

sitting at his desk and doing mundane things like balancing his cheque book. He writes, "This program has eliminated a serious health risk and improved the overall quality of enjoyment and appreciation of my life and those people who are dear to me in many more ways than I have set forth herein. I am always grateful to my friend Mr. S. B. Naik who introduced me to the Universal Healing Program."

Vasanti Bhat a competent yoga teacher, settled in USA, teaches the universal healing program at the Indo-American Service Community Centre (IASC), San Jose, California, once a week for the last five years.

□ A lady, about 60-years of age, a retired reader in Hindi Department, Lucknow University, lives in United States with her children. She suffered from osteoarthritis of both knees. She was not willing to go for any major surgery but tried to get relief with pain killers and some physiotherapy and even yoga exercise. However, she continued to live a rather disabled existence. She was introduced to the universal healing program run by Vasanti Bhat at IASC. She writes as she went along with the UHP, she felt that she experienced a quicker relaxation in muscles than she had ever experienced from yoga earlier. The pain in her knees gradually lessened and she started feeling more energetic. One very welcome fallout of the program was that the craving for tasty and fatty food, which she previously had, also went down and she started losing weight. According to her she was not dieting very

strictly either. She was enjoying a variety of complex carbohydrate dishes as explained in the book on diet, Wealth of Food, Health of Heart. Now she rarely uses painkillers. She says, “I found universal healing technique very effective and scientific even though it is simple and easy doable. I do the program regularly. Even when I go out for a few days I take the audio cassette with me and do yoga exercise daily which, like the morning pooja, has become an integral part of my life. Incidentally, my husband has also been doing this program regularly and benefiting from it.”

□ A young businessman of 40 experienced a severe chest pain in Singapore. He was admitted to the ICCU. Angiography was done in emergency and was found to have 80% block in his left coronary artery. Angioplasty was done with a stent. Within only four months of angioplasty he experienced severe chest pain and angiography was repeated. It showed that his artery had again been obstructed and he was advised re-angioplasty. Before going for the intervention for the second time he consulted me with a view to finding an alternative. When I saw him, I found him overweight, his lipid profile was highly abnormal. His HDL was less than 30 and his total cholesterol was 240. The ratio of cholesterol and HDL was more than 8. He was advised to make life-style changes and follow the Universal Healing Program of *shavasana* and meditation. Within three months of following the program his angina almost disappeared.

After six months his cholesterol-HDL ratio dropped to 4. He started doing his business activities with the same energy as before. He became completely symptom-free. However, considering his young age his relatives and well wishers kept on persuading him to take another opinion. His two angiograms were reviewed at the world famous Cleveland Clinic, Ohio, USA. The reader will be happy to know that the Cleveland Clinic advised him to continue the medical treatment along with life-style changes and yoga relaxation techniques.

□ Mr Jitendra Pannalal Bhaw, aged 65, a Civil Engineer, was investigated with coronary angiography for the first time in July 1980 at Houston, USA. His left coronary was blocked 80%. No intervention was recommended and he was advised to continue medical treatment. He is with the Universal Healing Program ever since 1991. During the last four years he has undergone unusually severe stresses. He has two children - a son and a daughter. Three years ago his son suffered from jaundice and was admitted at Jaslok Hospital, Bombay for liver failure. He remained critically ill for nearly two months. Eventually he recovered from this serious illness; but this had subjected Mr. Bhaw to considerable stress.

In 1997 Bhaw experienced chest discomfort several times. Angiography was repeated at Bombay. The cardiologist who did angiography opined that during the last seventeen years there had been no deterioration in the condition of his coronary circulation and no intervention of

any kind was necessary. Unfortunately, six months ago Mr. Bhaw's young son-in-law was murdered. What a cruel blow!

Mr. Bhaw attends the program regularly. In his own words, "Doctor, how tragic is my situation! This program has come to my rescue; but for it I would have gone mad or succumbed to a heart attack. I am maintaining fairly good health. This is the magic of *shavasana*, meditation and abdominal breathing, which I practise regularly.

□ A renowned educationist, who once held a very responsible position, now active in various social activities, is familiar with our program for more than three years. He practises *shavasana* and meditation regularly. He was advised bypass surgery for his complaint of effort-angina. He decided to continue conservative treatment and joined the Universal Healing Program. After joining this program he is now symptom-free. In his own words, "Regular daily practice of *shavasana* and meditation for over three years has brought a refreshing change in my view of self, society and the Eternal Principle of Existence (.... call it Soul or whatever name one chooses). With *shavasana*, I begin to experience a gradual melting of my ego into Eternal Principle. At the end of *shavasana*, a blissful experience of peace and relaxation pervades the body, mind and total awareness. At this stage I feel total fitness in every part of myself. I begin to experience the spiritual oneness of self and others. That oneness envelopes the rest of meditation. I go through the most

blissful experience of being ‘nothing’, having merged with the Infinite. The Universal healing is a composite process of healing the body, mind and soul.”

□ Mr. Dinesh Panchal, now 38 years of age, had suffered from heart attack five years ago. His angiogram showed significant obstructions in his coronary arteries and he was advised bypass surgery.

When he consulted us to join the Universal Healing Program in 1993 he did have chest pain on moderate exertion, however his 2-D echo-cardiogram showed good left ventricular function. He said that he would continue medical treatment and take benefit of the program rather than go in for intervention. While joining the program he was overweight, his cholesterol was 270. After about eight months of joining the program his weight was normal. His total cholesterol dropped to 200 and HDL was 42. He became symptom-free.

During the last two years he had been to the Himalayas (a trip to Amarnath and another trip to Vaishnovdevi). He has mastered the technique of visualisation. In his own words, “During meditation I can visualise the blood flowing through my arteries and I can even feel my arteries getting cleaned of the deposits. I work for about 12 to 14 hours a day in my furniture business and feel very energetic all the day.” His wife also accompanies him for the program and is a great support to him.

□ Mr. Subodh M. Shah, aged 65, a businessman and also a social worker, had suffered from a heart attack in 1987. At one stage in 1991, he suffered from unstable angina and was advised angiography by me and, if necessary, surgical intervention. For some personal reasons he did not go for angiography and continued the intensive medical treatment, and requested me to allow him to join the program. At that time he also suffered from insomnia and used to take 20 to 30 cups of tea everyday. Within six months of joining our program he said, “Now I have natural sleep without any medications. My complaint of angina has become considerably less. I walk about 4 to 5 kms. a day without any chest pain. My cholesterol which was 300 has dropped to 180. I can do with 4 to 5 cups of tea instead of 25. Now I have practically no complaint. Recently I have started a new office for my business. I had been to Palitana (a place of pilgrimage) and climbed the mountain without any discomfort. Most important of all: I have become very very mild tempered; aggression is very much reduced and now I have learnt to accept things. There have been business as well as family stresses during the last three years which I have coped with great ease. I lost my younger brother two years ago and another younger brother is suffering from blood cancer. It is amazing how the simple technique of abdominal breathing takes away all the stresses as the sublingual sorbitrate takes away the chest pain.”

Consistent favourable effects of the program that we have noted are:

1. Loss of fear of sudden death
2. Decrease in the number of anginal episodes
3. Craving for fatty food, tobacco and alcohol goes down.
4. Gradual reduction in medication
5. Improvement in effort tolerance; increase in ejection fraction of left ventricle in 2-D echo-cardiogram.
6. Lipid profiles show favourable trends. Specially HDL (good cholesterol) goes up. This is an important finding because even lipid modifying medications do not appreciably increase HDL. Recently two very busy advocates who had abnormal lipid profile with less than 30 HDL showed remarkable increase in HDL up to 50 after doing the program regularly for more than six months.
7. Lastly, an important point to remember is that the program works like any other effective medicine to bring about lessening in sympathetic activity and thus bringing about all the attendant healthful changes including the control of blood pressure, reduction in heart rate, control in irregularity of heart beat and increase in HDL. But like medication, the program should be followed regularly.

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THE CONSERVATIVE MANAGEMENT OF
CORONARY HEART DISEASE

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Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) has occupied the centre of the stage in the medical arena for several decades, often affecting the apparently healthy in the prime of their life.

Believing that the disease of the coronary arteries is contributed to and aggravated by a lack of mental peace and disharmony of bodily and spiritual functions, we have sought to correct these deficiencies with a five-point bi-weekly programme, consisting of a low-fat vegetarian diet, modest exercise equal to walking on the level for 30 to 40 minutes, the stretching and relaxing of various muscle-groups leading to progressive deep relaxation by practising *shavasana* and meditation, and the provision of visual imagery and group discussion, with emphasis on the sharing of the feeling. An experienced yoga instructor teaches *shavasana* and meditation. A qualified dietitian

guides the participants and their spouses individually, taking into account the dietary habits of the family. The presence of the cardiologist at each session aims to inspire confidence in the participants. Illustrated talks are held at intervals of six weeks.

Over 5,000 patients have participated so far. Presently, between 150 and 200 CHD patients from all walks of life, in the age group of 30 to 70 years, male and female in the ratio of 4 to 1, meet Tuesdays and Fridays for the one and half hours programme from 5.30 to 7 p.m. Some of the participants attend a rehabilitation programme at a special centre (the L. R. Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre) which has ECG-monitored bicycles and a treadmill exercise device, dietary and psycho-social counselling and group discussions. Angiograms are done whenever indicated but also taking into account the ability of the patient to pay.

Social Background

Ahmedabad is a metropolitan city with a population of four million and has two medical schools. There is a government-run civil hospital, one of the largest general hospitals in Asia; the city corporation has three hospitals, each with more than 500 beds, and there are two major trust hospitals with facilities comparable to those in Bombay.

The patients in our programme are largely from the well-to-do middle class, the rich business community, company executives and government officers. Participants come from the various parts of the state over a distance of

500 km and some come from the neighbouring states and from Bombay. Participants from outlying areas attend the programme for one or two sessions, take an hour's personal coaching from our yoga teacher and guidance from our dietitian; they also get books, audio and video cassettes, and with these practise the programme at home.

The programme is conducted in a central sprawling campus with abundant greenery and a peaceful atmosphere. There is a prayer hall with a roof but with sides open to the trees. No fees are stipulated for the programme, but a nominal payment of Rs. 10 (less than 1/3 of a US dollar) is required towards expenses. Four books in Gujarati, the language of the state, and four in English have been published at a price affordable to every section of society. Audio and video cassettes are sold at cost price. The participants of the programme are not required to meet the consulting fees of the medical director prior to the admission to the programme. A majority of the participants are patients of other consultants in the city and consult the programme director in the clinic run by another charitable trust where a fee of Rs. 20 is charged. In this trust-clinic, known as the L. R. Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre, some of the participants go through a programme of gradually increasing exercise on a treadmill under the supervision of a physician; each session of 20 minutes is charged Rs. 20 by the Trust. Great care is taken that the participants to the programme attend their own physicians for follow-up. The programme is run under the auspices of the 'Universal Healing

Charitable Trust' of which the director is the managing trustee.

The aims of the Trust are to foster a holistic approach accommodating various disciplines, including the use of drugs, and without prejudice to the current methods of prevention and treatment :

- Mass awareness regarding coronary disease, and to dispel unnecessary fear of the disease.
- Research into the prevention of coronary disease and the treatment and rehabilitation of the patients.
- Simplification of the treatment of coronary heart disease with attention to cost effectiveness of interventions.

While conducting the programme the concepts of diet, exercise and the impact of comprehensive life-style changes have become clearer. Instead of emphasis on the total caloric value of the diet, patients are prescribed a limitation of the fat bound calories and an increase in the proportion of calories provided by complex carbohydrates derived from vegetarian diet.¹ We avoid intensive exercise which uses carbohydrates as fuel more than body fat, and during which the BMR decreases, further militating against weight loss. Comprehensive changes in life-style normally considered impracticable have become easier using this programme, with powerful motivation from the rapid improvement experienced. Electrocardiograms, 2D Echo tests, treadmill assessment, and lipid studies are analysed by the personal physicians of individual patients and carried out in different laboratories.

The technique of *shavasana* - relaxing the mind by relaxing the body - is simple, easy to perform and effective in bringing about mental peace and fortitude. Even very busy people can practise this yogic discipline for 10 to 15 minutes daily, and the busier and more stressed the individual, the greater the need for this. Breathing is central to all the three yogic disciplines : abdominal breathing, *shavasana* and meditation. Normally, our breathing is involuntary and reflects the state of our mind. When our mind is not at peace, breathing is rapid and shallow, when the mind is at peace, as during sleep, the breathing is slow, rhythmic and abdominal. When an effort is made to consciously breathe slowly, rhythmically and abdominally, the mind automatically becomes calm. During meditation, one becomes one with breath, one with 'life-force', and this brings about an experience of the 'soul-force' within oneself, which in turn brings forth the qualities of love, compassion and freedom from fear.

Our experience with this programme corroborates the findings of others.² After 10 to 12 sessions of the programme over a period of six weeks, a majority of the participants report benefit in the number of episodes of aninal pain, and also become motivated to make the necessary life-style changes, i.e. giving up smoking and alcohol and choosing the low-fat vegetarian diet, and within three months their increased peace of mind is evident.

We believe that a sense of isolation is the root cause of adverse behavioural changes often associated with CHD. Isolation is loneliness or alienation, a feeling that one is left all alone in important situations and in ones which have a special meaning for oneself. This isolation may be healed by *shavasana*, meditation and group support. Self-centredness, hostility and cynicism which have been described as ‘cardiac toxins’ are replaced by altruism, compassion and forgiveness.³ In this way the programme, which aims at treating the symptoms of coronary artery disease, also heals the individual as a whole; hence the term Universal Healing Programme. We are concerned with the effect of these attitude changes on the Heart Rate Variability (HRV).⁴ The HRV is not cardiac arrhythmia. Mathematically, HRV is the function of the heart rate around a mean value. In sinus rhythm, each beat is at a variable distance from the next beat; in other words, the time between beats 1 and 2 can differ from that between beats 2 and 3, 3 and 4 and so on. This beat to beat time variation is HRV. The variability can be small and erratic or large and balanced. The imbalance in HRV is a sensitive index of mind and body malfunction.^{5,6} Positive emotions like caring love, appreciation and compassion allow a smooth, even and harmonious HRV. Negative emotions like anger, frustration, worry, anxiety, fear, guilt and sadness cause erratic and non-harmonious HRV.⁷ In the normal state, the HRV is rhythmic, with a value of more than 50 milliseconds on average between beats. A Multicentre Post-Infarctions Research group study found

that low HRV, less than 50 milliseconds, is associated with a 5.3 times greater chance of sudden death, believed to be due to dampening of parasympathetic activity.⁸ The erratic HRV puts extra wear and tear on blood vessels and heart. The yogic disciplines bring about the dampening of the sympathetic pathways with a beneficial effect on HRV.

We have recently studied the feedback from the programme on 113 patients chosen at random. In almost all the participants the fear of death vanished and they had become compassionate, friendly and co-operative. All those who were originally advised to undergo bypass surgery (CABG) or angioplasty are now convinced that they do not need any such interventions. They are able to control minor episodes of angina with abdominal breathing and overcome sleeplessness with *shavasana* and meditation. Some observe that visualisation after meditation helps them to increase their capacity to work without angina. Their whole family have adopted the programme of eating without any feeling of deprivation. The spouses become confident that their husbands will continue to do well. Husbands report that situations which used to irritate them ,no longer do so. All but one of 25 patients advised to have bypass surgery three years before , no longer feel the need for intervention. Ten patients denied CABG because of diffuse coronary atherosclerosis, and other with the ejection fraction of the left ventricle reduced below 20 per cent, have improved remarkably and lead a normal life; ejection fractions have risen to 40 per cent.

The Exercise Programme

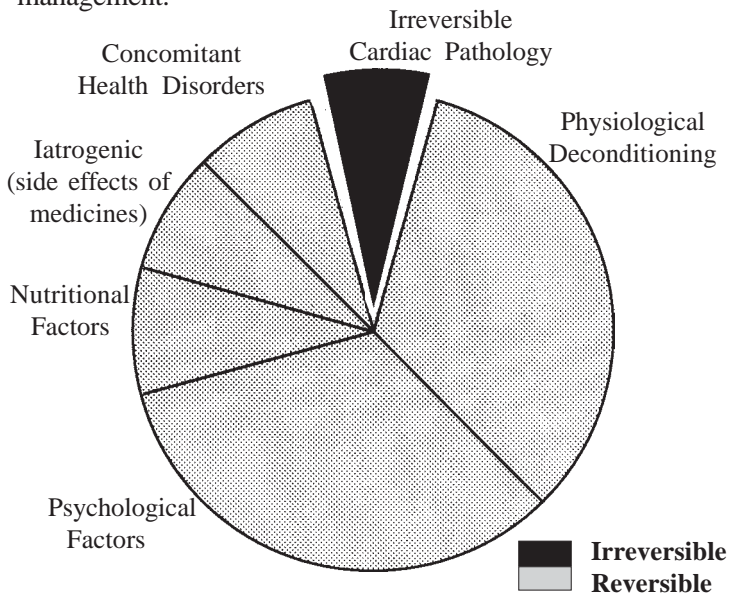
Patients are given ECG-monitored exercise of 25 minutes duration with 3 minute period of warning up and cooling down exercise, on alternate dates on a treadmill beginning at 60 per cent of the maximum heart rate achieved at on entry TMT and gradually increasing the intensity of exercise (by increasing the speed and/or elevation) as physical conditioning occurs. On average, patients do 40 sessions by which time they usually acquire optimum fitness and benefit from the rehabilitation programme. The exercise programme is supervised by experienced staff and cardiologists. Blood pressure and pulse rate are measured before, during and after the exercise. A graph of the patient's performance (workload in METs, pulse rate x systolic blood pressure, called a double product and conditioning index) is plotted to assess progress. The conditioning index is measured as

$$\frac{\text{Exercise workload}}{\text{Double product}} \times 100$$

The conditioning index has been accepted as a reliable and quantifiable indicator of tolerance achieved. It is a valuable aid in assessing the benefit achieved. A sample study of 25 patients in this rehabilitation programme showed that there was 228 per cent increase in conditioning index, 59 per cent increase in exercise performance in TMT after 40 exercise sessions, 40 per

cent decrease in coronary risk factor score and 50 per cent decrease in the need for medication.

The disability in most patients with coronary heart disease persists even after adequate medical and surgical management.



The pie diagram illustrates various factors that contribute to this disability. Approximately only 10 per cent disability is attributed to the irreversible cardiac tissue pathology. The remaining 90 per cent of the disability is due to various non-cardiac, more or less reversible factors. Therefore, a rehabilitation programme for patients with coronary heart disease must be

comprehensive so that it provides medical management, reduces its risk factors, reverses physiological deconditioning and provides psychological counselling.

The frontiers of medicine are advancing. Consciousness and the spiritual inner strength of the healer, i.e. the physician and the patient are seen to be of crucial importance. Scientific evidence of the value of the holistic approach is accumulating; we should perhaps pay some heed to it.

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Additional Reading

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Dossey L. Space time medicine, recovering the soul, beyond illness, meaning and medicine, healing words. New York : Bantam Books.

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HOW CAN THE PROGRAM BE STARTED IN VARIOUS PLACES?

We have received many enquiries from lay people as well as doctors regarding how to start this program in their neighbourhoods. We have worked out a code of conduct to start this program. The participants as well as the people who wish to conduct this program should read this code of conduct. They can start this program with the help of an audio cassette. The person trying to teach others will be required to have a firsthand knowledge of the program either by being present at Ahmedabad or buy our video cassette (second best). He demonstrates the whole program including *shavasana* and meditation to the participants with the help of the audio cassette and then all the participants can join him while the audio cassette is being played.

The program can be done at any time, in any dress and as many times as one feels like doing it. Once a day regularly is the minimum requirement. But some people may do it twice a day, morning and evening. It may not be done for at least one hour after meals.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE UNIVERSAL HEALING PROGRAM

1. The participant should continue to follow his doctor's treatment and advice even for surgical intervention when necessary. This program may be viewed essentially as a supportive therapy.

2. The program does not contradict or disrespect any other approach to healing.

3. Whatever benefit the participant derives from this program is due to the awakening of his inner healing power. Its entire credit goes to his effort.

4. One can awaken one's inner healing power through any other such program also.

5. There is nothing compulsive about any aspect of the program. One may not do any of the exercises that may not suit him. Even partial performance will yield good results. Importance of the program lies not so much in physical exercise as in relaxation.

6. The participant is advised to avoid any criticism of his doctor or treatment. The program is not limited to the sick alone. The healthy will also benefit. It has a potential to enable the participant to realize his real identity.

UNIVERSAL HEALING PROGRAM

The Participants of the program may read the following to derive adequate benefit from it.

Bring your awareness to the present moment as soon as the program begins. Follow the yoga teacher's instructions carefully. However, you may not perform any of the exercises which does not suit you.

Light Exercise

1. As you begin the exercise of stretching and relaxation, concentrate on those muscles which you stretch and relax. Stretch the muscles comfortably and then relax. Do not overstretch the muscles. Stretching should not cause pain.

2. Perform each exercise twice.

Shavasana

1. Lie down comfortably on your back. Keep a distance of 1 to 1.5 ft. between the feet. The feet are kept slanting towards the floor.

2. Arms are kept by the side of the body at an angle of about 15 degrees, palms facing the sky with fingers half bent. Gently close your eyes.

3. All parts of the body from toes to head are consecutively stretched and relaxed according to the yoga teacher's instructions.

4. Do not be disturbed if the mind wanders. It is natural. Keep your eyes gently closed. Do not pay attention to the thoughts. As many times the mind wanders to the thoughts, gently bring it back to the muscles being stretched. Concentrate on the activity you are asked to perform. The thoughts will automatically cease.

5. Once the whole body is relaxed, your total attention is shifted to the breathing process. Make no effort to breath. Observe the natural process of breathing. Make sure that not a single breath goes in or out of the nostrils without your knowledge. While observing the breath, that is Prana, the life-force, experience oneness with it. Thus in shavasana as the mind becomes quiet, all internal and external muscles of the body are relaxed. The muscles of the coronary arteries are also relaxed. The arteries dilate and the blood becomes thinner. The blood circulation improves. As the heart muscles receive adequate supply of blood, their contraction and relaxation become rythmic and efficient. Hence every cell of the body receives adequate supply of blood and one experiences a sense of well-being and bliss. Remain in this state for 2 to 3 minutes.

6. Take a deep breath. Slowly open your eyes. Make gentle movements of the arms and legs. Turn on a side and gradually sit up.

Meditation

Shavasana makes meditation easier. However it is not always necessary to perform *shavasana* before doing meditation. Meditation can be done any time during the day, preferably when the stomach is not full.

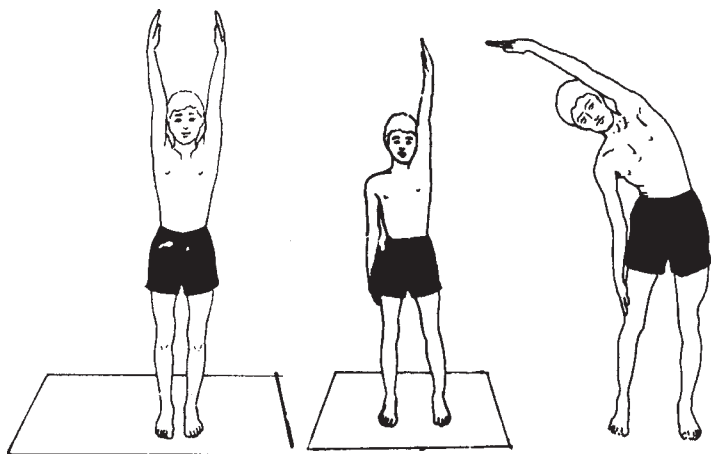
1. Sit with your legs crossed.
2. Bend your hands at the elbows and rest them on the knees with palm facing upwards.
3. Keep your spine and neck erect, however without any strain. Close your eyes gently. The body is relaxed and the mind is at peace following *shavasana*.
4. Do abdominal breathing for further quietening of the mind. Bring your attention to the navel. Draw the navel in and you will exhale air through the nose and then relax the navel and abdominal muscles; the abdomen will expand and you will inhale. Continue breathing in this manner with concentration on the navel. Let only abdominal muscles move. The chest should remain still as far as possible.
5. Now shift your attention from the abdomen to the nose. Observe natural breathing process as a witness. Do not make any special effort to breathe. Be one with '*prana*' (breath). When an individual's consciousness becomes one with the breath, meditation begins. The mind automatically quietens. At this stage, between 7 and 14 cycles per second, alpha waves are recorded from the individual's brain which indicate that the mind is at peace. In order to deepen this mental peace OM is chanted, chanting of M being longer than O. Repeat *OMkar* five

times. Remain tuned to the sound of OM for a couple of minutes. Finally repeat *OMkar* for the sixth time, gently open the eyes and come out of meditation.

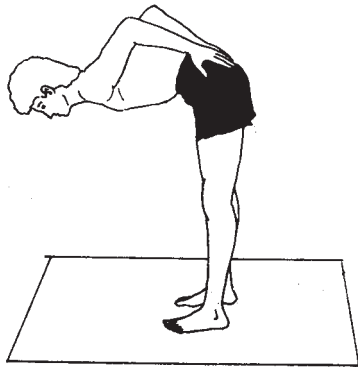
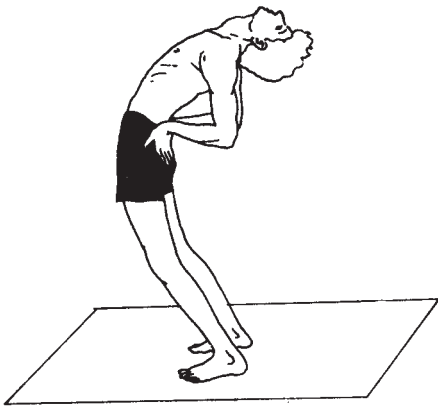
Dr. Kapadia then briefly addresses the group, a group discussion follows. The program ends with the participants joining hands and reciting an all-religion prayer composed by Vinoba Bhave.

STRETCHING AND RELAXATION

1. Stand erect but relaxed. Keep arms by your side and feet less than shoulder-width apart. Gently bring forward your hands and raise them above your head stretching them a little. Then relax and let the arms come to normal position by the side of the body.



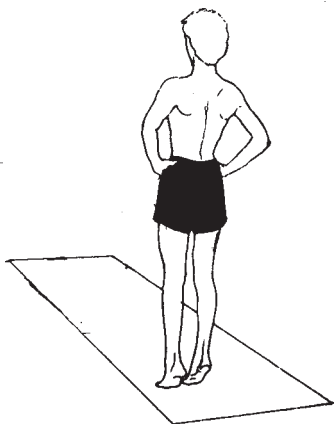
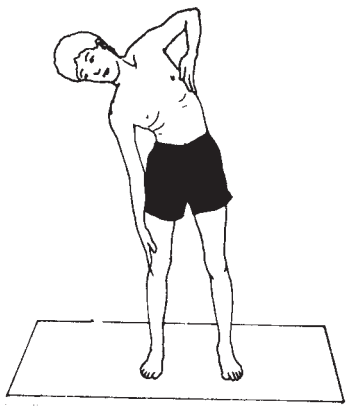
2. Raise your left arm above the head. Bend the upper half of your body on the right side as far as you comfortably can. Then relax and return to the normal position. Repeat the same with the right arm.



3. While standing, support the hips with both hands.

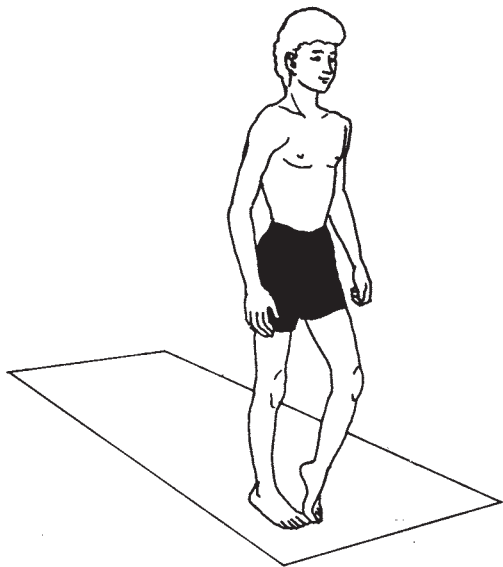
3a. Slowly bend backward from neck to waist. Then relax and bend forward. During bending forward no special effort should be done. After the age of forty, bending forward with a jerk or force is not advisable.

4. Pull the left arm upward by the side of the body towards the armpit, while bending to the right and the right arm moving downward by side the of the body. Relax and return to the normal position. Repeat the same with the right arm and the left side of the body.



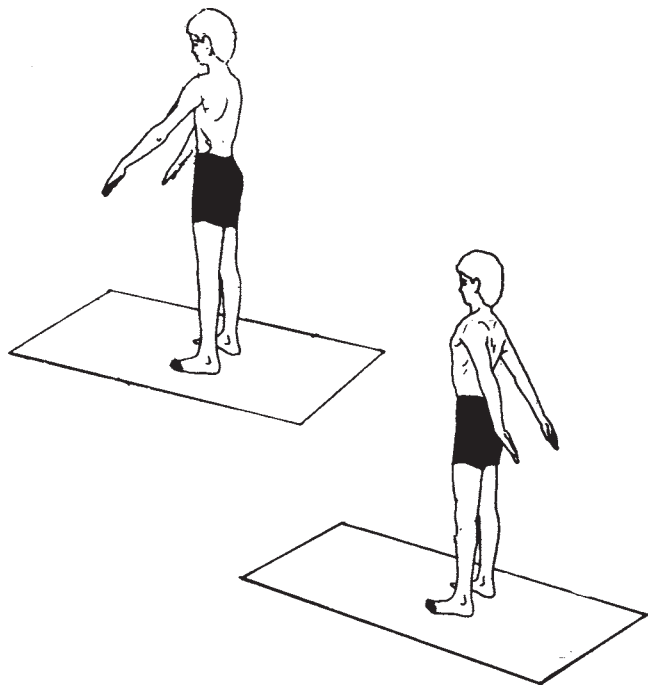
5. Support the waist with hands, raise the body lifting the heels and standing on the toes. Experience the stretching of the muscles of the back of the legs. Relax and return to the normal position.

6. Lift the legs alternately bending the knees without lifting the toes. Straighten the leg extending the knee and experience the stretching and relaxation of the muscles of the leg. Continue this exercise for sometime enjoying the stretching and relaxation of the leg muscles.

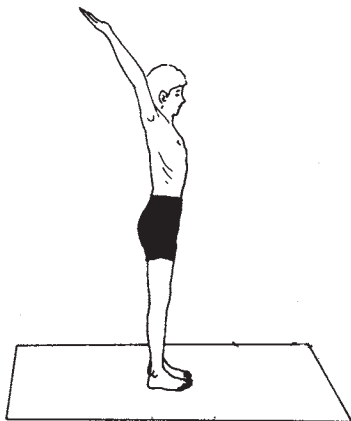
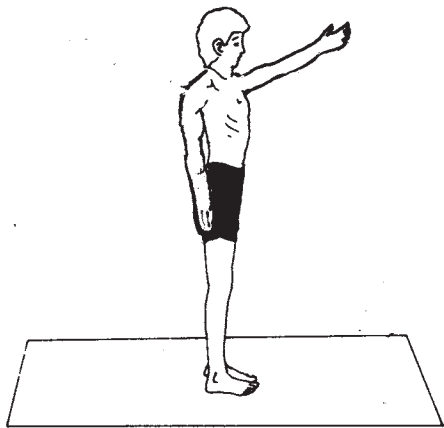


7. Chinese “Swiso” - swinging of hands.

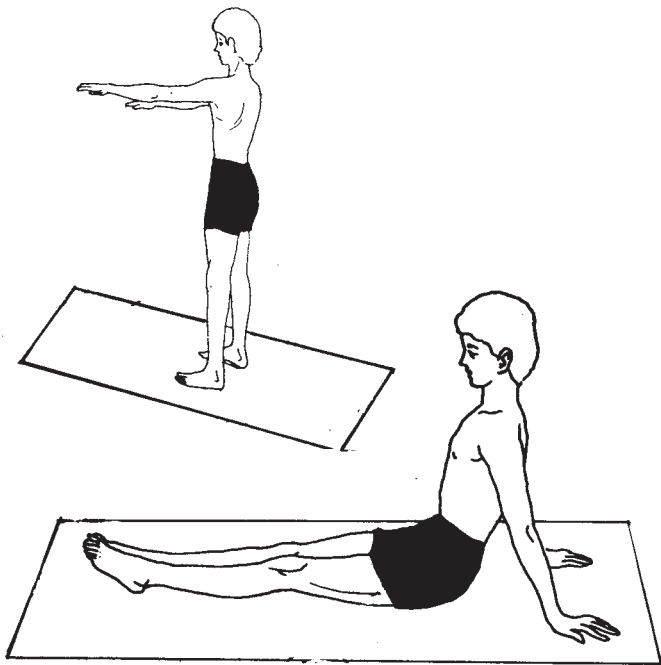
7a. Stand with your feet shoulder width wide apart. Slightly tighten the gluteal muscles and exert pressure on the lower half of the body keeping the upper half relaxed. Now swing the arms backward with a slight push and let them come forward on their own. Stretch the muscles a little while pushing the hands backward-relax and let the hands swing forward automatically. Do this simple exercise as long as you feel comfortable. This helps in lowering the high blood pressure.



8, 8a. Rotate your arms one after the other at the shoulder joint in a relaxed manner in a clockwise and anticlockwise direction.

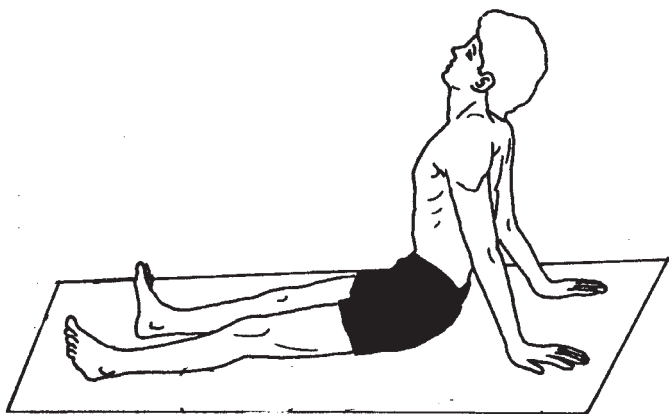
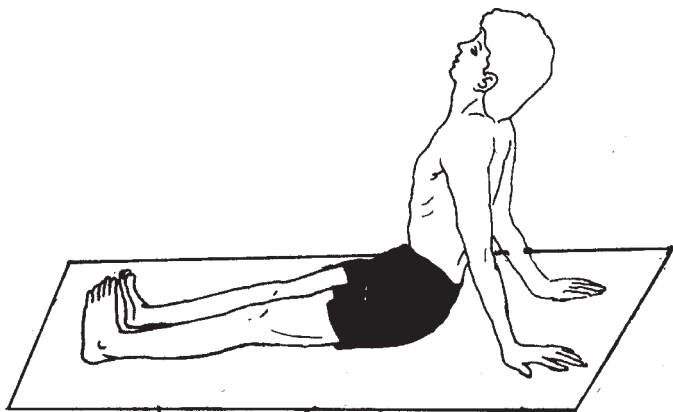


9. Extend both the hands in front of you at the chest level and slowly lower the body taking the weight of body on the toes with the heels off the ground. Then sit down with the legs extended in front and both the palms on the ground, supporting the trunk in a sitting position.

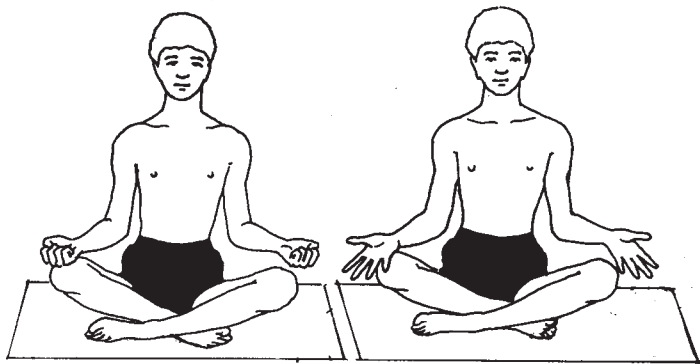
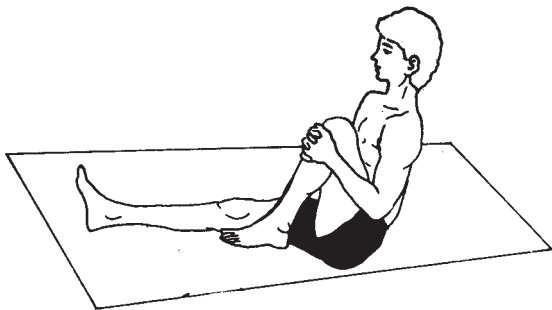


10. While sitting with legs extended in front and arms extended behind the body, stretch both the feet flexing them at the ankles; and then relax bringing the toes to normal position.

11, 11a. Rotate the feet at the ankles from outside in and from inside out - in the sitting position.



12. Bend the left leg from knee. Hold the knee with both the hands, pressing it to the chest, keeping the sole of the foot raised about two inches off the ground. Then relax. Repeat the same with the right leg.



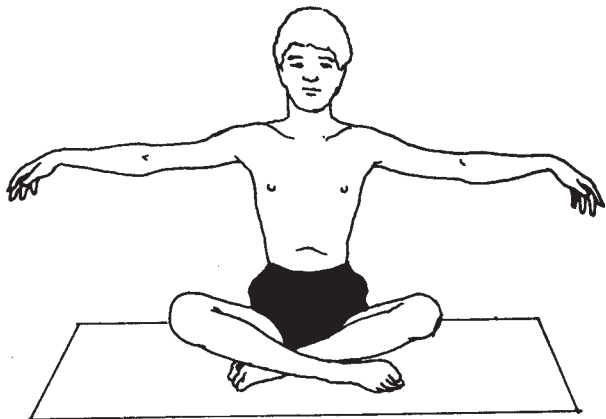
13, 13a. Sit comfortably with crossed legs and arms in front of you. Close the fists with moderate pressure and relax. Open the fists. Repeat this for about five times.

14. Rotate the hands at the wrist joints in the clockwise and the anticlockwise direction keeping the fists closed.



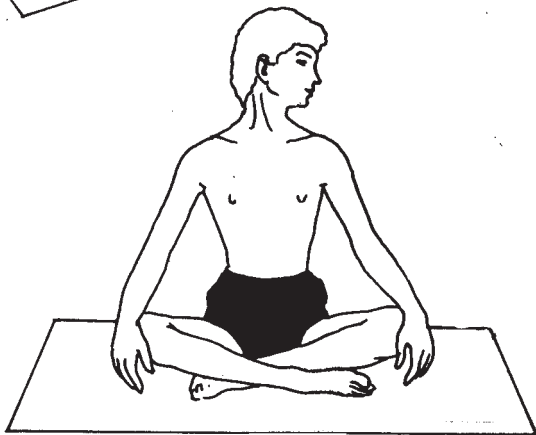
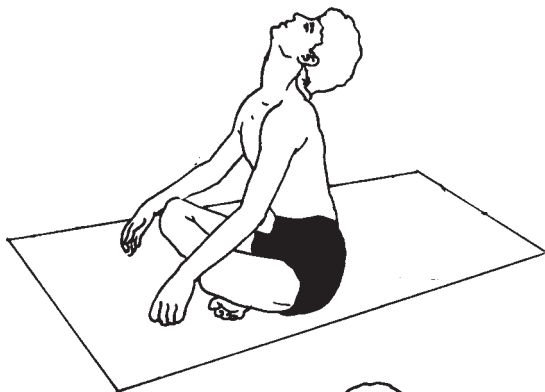
15. Perform the rapid flapping movements at the wrist joints to further relax the muscles of the hands.

16. Rapid flapping movements of outstretched arms.



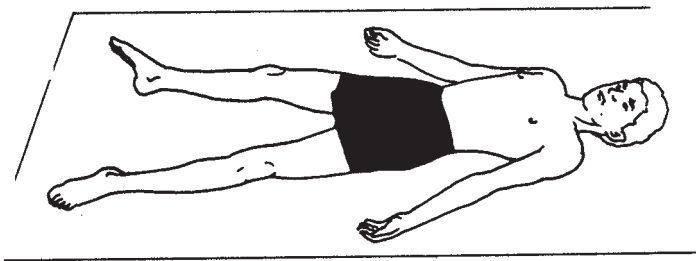
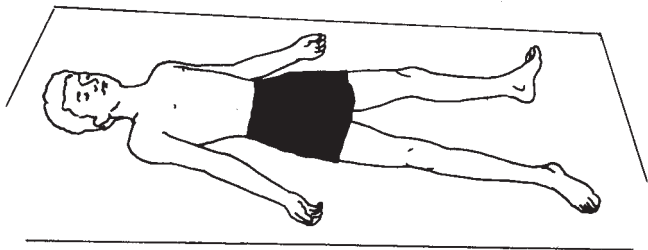
17. Raise the shoulders by the side of the head and relax.

18. Bend the neck backward as far back as comfortable - stretching the muscles a little and then relax bringing the neck forward to its normal position.



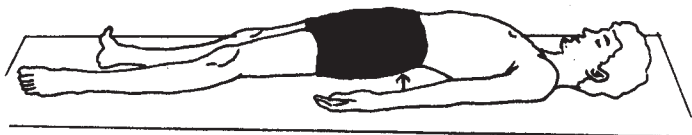
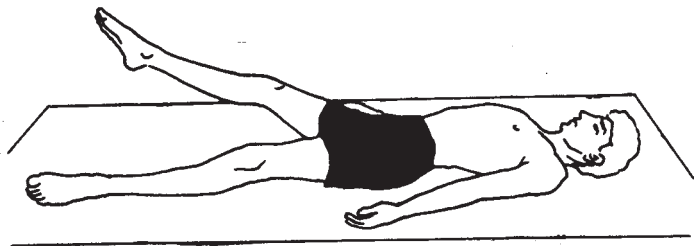
19. Turn the neck to the right as far as comfortable — stretching the muscles a little, and relax bringing the neck to the normal position.

20. Lie on your back. Keep your feet 12" to 18" apart. Let each foot lie on its side in a comfortable position. Keep your arms 6" away from the body with your palms facing the sky and fingers half bent.



21. Bring your awareness to the feet and bend the toes towards the ground and then relax. Now forget the toes.

22. Stretch the muscles of the right leg from toes to hips ,lifting the leg a little off the ground. Feel the stretching of the muscles. Then relax. The leg will automatically fall to the ground. Now forget the right leg and repeat the same with the left leg.



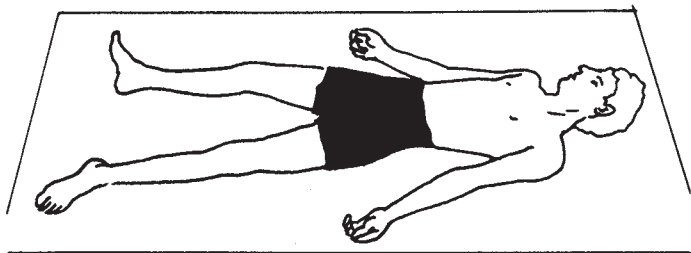
Contract the muscles of the lower back and pelvic region (around the hip joints). Body will rise slightly off the ground. Relax and the body will come down automatically.

24. Contract the muscles of the chest while inhaling and raising the chest a little off the ground. Then relax. Chest will come down automatically.



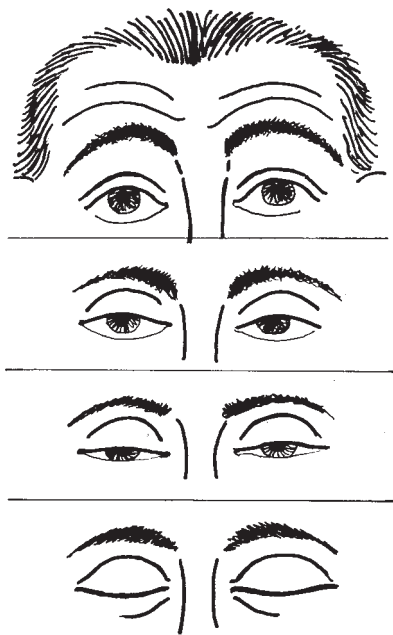
25. Close the fist of the left arm. Contract the muscles of the whole arm up to the shoulder lifting the arm a little above the ground. Then relax. The arm will come down automatically to the ground. Repeat the same with right arm.

26. Rotate the neck from side to side gently as if somebody is holding the neck and moving it. Then relax keeping the neck in a comfortable position.



27. Open the lower jaw towards the chest and experience the stretching of the muscles of the jaws and the cheeks. Then relax, bringing the jaw back to the normal position.

28. Open the eyes gently and fully, stretching the muscles of the eyes, brows and the forehead. Then relax these muscles letting the eyes close effortlessly.



EPILOGUE

As the science tries to unravel the complex problem of coronary heart disease, very important clues for the creation of health are coming to light, which require to be pondered over by everyone who deals with the matters of health.

Hostility aggravates the disease and compassionate, forgiving attitude ameliorates it. Intolerance for other persons' views and dogmatic behaviour are the hallmarks of hostility.

All the studies related to coronary heart disease done in Europe and USA have shown that Betablocker medications reduce the incidence of heart attack quite appreciably. This fact underlies the importance of keeping the sympathetic activity at its optimum. Persistent increase in sympathetic activity is deleterious to health as noted in its effect on heart rate variability (HRV) and on the health of the immune system. In coronary heart disease the increased sympathetic activity reduces HDL (good cholesterol) and increases free radical damage to the endothelial lining of the coronary arteries and increases the platelet adhesiveness resulting in the increased viscosity of the blood. The chief cause of the enhanced sympathetic activity is the selfcentered, cynical and hostile attitude.

This attitude is the result of the sense of separation or isolation.

So, what is the remedy? What is the antidote to the sense of isolation? Decidedly the answer lies in the development of the feeling of connectedness. And how does one develop connectedness? Here our ancient tradition of 'yoga' which literally means connection has shown the way. Universal Healing Program now completing seven years with a formidable following of more than seven thousand coronary heart patients justifies this claim.