

Teacher Vairagya Ranko Presents Basic Principles of Ashtanga Yoga*

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Teacher, Vairagya Ranko briefly presents basic principles of Ashtanga Yoga to the readers of magazine Story.

Ashtanga Yoga is at the same time science and practice, a skill that has been evolving for thousands of years with the purpose to lead us to the unification of our mind, body and soul, but also to help us in mental, emotional, moral, physical and spiritual development. Therefore, the final destination is self-realisation or enlightenment, bliss and getting to know your true nature.

The occurrence of this unification or insight require, first of all, taking control over your mind, which is possible to achieve through the improvement and control of breath. In the practice of Ashtanga Yoga, asanas and breath are used with the purpose to connect mind and body. Asanas represent means for connecting mind and body through the sequence of breath. In this system of yoga, the breath is the key to achieving mind focus. At the beginning of Ashtanga Yoga practice, the accent is on everyday exercising of asanas, or yoga positions in order to improve the discipline, strength and flexibility of your body.

What represents a very important feature of Ashtanga Yoga and makes a significant difference between this and other systems of yoga is a specific relation between breath and movement – the Vinyasa, which also is a specific way to connect the asanas. Breathing (Ujjayi), psycho-physical contractions (bandha) and focal point (drishti) represent three core techniques of the Vinyasa. When applied together with a specific method of counting they can bring to the accomplishment of both – physical and meditative aspects of Ashtanga Yoga.

Breathing with contractions, movements and a series of positions or asanas in which we stay for several breaths, warm up our blood, creating warmth that leads to sweating and elimination of toxins. At the beginning of the practice, superficial parts of our body are purified, but, as the student progresses, the purification also affects deeper tissues and inner

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organs, the toxins are deliberated and we get a healthy, strong and flexible body full of energy along with a calm peaceful mind.

When it comes to nutrition, no special diet regime is required, apart from being moderate in everything. Beginners should organise themselves so that they take several smaller meals and to have their last meal at least two or three hours before going to sleep.

I used to and I still do train many famous persons. One of the most famous was actor Ralph Fiennes while he was shooting a movie in Belgrade in 2010. Our famous basketball player Žarko Paspalj and actress Maja Mandžuka are also among them. Many people from the music industry: Lepa Brena, Aleksandra Radović, brothers Goran and Dejan Antović (who cooperate with Sergej Ćetković and Vlado Georgijev, and who previously worked with band Galija and other bands), Vladimir Negovanović (music producer, guitar player of the band Kiki Lesendrić i Piloti), people from the world of business and media - Zdenka Milanović (Managing Director of McCann Erickson Agency); Mrs Elena Karaman Karić, Zeljka Mrđa (journalist of Studio B), Roland Wass (Executive Director of Raiffeisen Bank), General Director of one large foreign bank etc.