

to be aware of the fact that during these three weeks the risk of miscarriage is the greatest, and therefore you better avoid practice.

Pregnancy Yoga is slightly different from regular Yoga. Yoga helps to develop a greater awareness of your body so you can respond better to your body's subtle signals. During pregnancy ligaments around the joints become loose and soft. Care should therefore be taken not to overstretch the body. One general rule is that whenever there is discomfort in doing any Yoga posture (Asana) during pregnancy, that Posture ought to be omitted or modified according to circumstances and the student's physical nature. In all postures, the abdomen should remain relaxed; soft at all times and be well extended to create space for the baby. Though the baby is well protected, both by your abdominal muscles and by its sac of amniotic fluid in the womb do not do Asanas that constrict the abdomen. Never jump into or out of any Asana. Pranayama without retention may be practiced throughout pregnancy, as regular deep breathing will help considerably during labor. Pregnancy can make you feel more tired than usual. Yoga generates energy, rather than dissipates it. Yoga will diminished stress rather than add stress to your body. It is essential to be aware of this and try not to do things to the point of fatigue or breathless. If you feel tired after Yoga, it means that you have done too much. Listen to your body - you are the best judge of what you can and cannot do while you are pregnant and of how to adapt your Asanas to meet your own particular needs. Always come out of an Asana if you feel any strain or discomfort. Signals such as pain, stitches, cramps, nausea, dizziness, headache and contractions should never be felt during or after Yoga practice. If you experience dizziness, sudden swelling, extreme shortness or breath, or vaginal bleeding, see your doctor immediately.

It is important to inform the teacher of any complications or any previous miscarriages or medical history or any treatment that you are receiving. If already attending a class, inform the teacher as soon as pregnancy has been confirmed. Tell your doctor you are practicing Yoga, and get

his or her consent for all poses you plan on practicing. If your doctor is not familiar with Yoga, ask him/her to contact the Yoga teacher.

MOTHER AND BABY

During postnatal time, practicing Yoga now is important because you need the energy. Postnatal practice stimulates the pituitary glands, promoting a healthy supply of breast milk. Yoga Postures will help abdominal and pelvic muscles return to their former shape and condition. They will also strengthen the entire body, and specifically the nervous system.

With your doctors' approval, you can usually start gentle Yoga postures four weeks after delivery, a few weeks longer if you had a caesarean section. Start with just a few poses, and gradually increase the regular Yoga postures (Asanas) routine as your body lets you know it is ready, but you should wait about three months before coming to a regular practice. Hold off on inverted poses for at least six weeks. All women have postnatal bleeding for a few weeks after pregnancy. Watch this flow for signs that you are going too fast. If the bleeding gets heavier or brighter red, you need to slow down and give your doctor a call.

MENOPAUSE- A NEW LIFE

Menopause is the time of life when a woman stops ovulating. It commonly occurs around age 50. Dizziness, depression, heart palpitations, decreased sex drive, and shortness of breath are all symptoms of decreased estrogens levels. A drop in your estrogens levels can cause you to lose bone mass, but you can easily counter this by exercising your bones. Considering menopause can last for five years you will probably want to do everything you can to minimize the unpleasantness. Inverted postures and Pranayama are particularly helpful of hot flashes because they cool the body and fill it with energy and life force.

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WOMEN IN YOGA

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WOMEN IN YOGA

Historically, nature has endowed woman with a supple body. Around forty years ago western women were apparently first drawn to yoga because it was a gentle exercise for the mind, body and soul. Now it seems that women are drawn to yoga for its strength and power. The control of the yogic system over all the chief ductless glands, including the Pituitary, Thyroid and through that the Ovaries, is direct, effective and unexampled.

GOOD-BYE TO PMS

Women experience menstruation as their first title of passage into womanhood, and many of them experience menopause. PMS, or premenstrual syndrome, is a condition that affects a lot of women before the onset of their menstrual period. PMS commonly occurs during the week or two before the start of your period and can last until menstruation starts. Symptoms are diverse as overall discomfort, bloating, backache, headache, irritability, food cravings, depression, acne, painful or swollen breast, insomnia, fatigue, and even uncharacteristically violent or suicidal behavior. Some may even experience no symptoms at all. Yoga can help by relieving the discomfort and keep you fit, strong, clear thinking and with bliss. Be dedicated to your Yoga routine during PMS. Also step up your Pranayama practice and Meditation; a process which can help you to move beyond your physical body for a while to give yourself a break from aches and pains.

MENSTRUATION-THE NATURE'S CYCLE

Menstruation is part of your body's fertility cycle. Indian Medical Science and orthodox convention strictly enjoin rest on women during the three to four

days of menstruation. It became in Indian households as a ridiculous severity of touch me not isms and kept at distant isms. During the period, there are often disturbances of other functions of the body, which are so common that to be 'unwell' is the recognized polite description of the menstrual period. Thus, it is often attended with pains in the abdomen, a feeling of weight and fullness, disturbance of digestion, headache and neuralgia of various



descriptions. At the same time, there is a general disinclination for exertion. The amount of blood lost at each menstrual period varying between 100 and 300 grams. It was said that practicing Asanas (Yoga Postures) during menstruation may cause cramps, feeling spacey, tiredness, fainting and excessive bleeding. The performances of these Asanas are therefore forbidden so long as the menstrual flow lasts. In contrast, some experienced modern Hatha Yoga women teachers say "doing strong Asana practice before, during and after menstruation is extremely beneficial and reduces cramping and symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. Regular strong practice, barring any medical problems, should eliminate cramps altogether. It is observed that the rate of flow does increase for the first day or so, but the duration of the menses is decreased. The bleeding is quite heavy for two days and then it is over which may be natural and healthy, and preferable to dragging out the whole ordeal for seven or eight days". Nowadays practicing Yoga during menses becomes a matter of personal preference. If you feel tired the first day or two of the cycle simply take it easy and shorten the practice somewhat, then have a long rest afterwards. However what works for someone, may not work for you. Listen to your body, you are the best judge of what you can and cannot do while you are under menstruation, then that should be your final word. It is argued that "it is counter productive to work against gravity by practicing inverted (upside-down) postures or energizing breathing techniques (like Kapalapadi) while menstruating, as they reverse and interfere with the natural downward gravitational pull of the menstrual flow from the body". On no account, stand on your head (Headstand) during the menstrual period. Use your common sense and intuition: Yoga is the art of awareness, of subtle experiment and of cautious exploration.

PREGNANCY- ONE BECOMES TWO

Pregnancy is a natural state in a woman's life. It does however bring a great physiological change throughout the body, which should be respected. Yoga is an ideal form of exercise during pregnancy and it can help you keep fit, relax, and enjoy your pregnancy. In particular, it can help strengthen the pelvic area, normalize thyroid functioning and blood pressure, and help keep you calm and relaxed, all of which is good for the baby too. Yoga helps improve breathing, fluid and hormone balance, and prevention of varicose veins. You will find both the physical Yoga Postures, Pranayama (breathing techniques) and Meditation processes are ideal mind-body preparations for the birth. Yoga postures exercise the spinal column, lessening lower back pain and strengthen the pelvic floor. The cavity in the pelvic region is expanded, creating space inside the uterus, ensuring there is both proper blood circulation and adequate room for the baby to move. The Yoga postures (Asanas) also relieve tiredness and tension and revitalize the internal organs. Pranayama opens the chest and helps to improve circulation in both mother and baby, ensuring a proper supply of oxygen to the blood. It also helps to calm the nerves and enables the mother to be in a greater control of her breathing during labor. Pregnancy is an excellent time for Meditation. Study the movement of the mind, turn the mind within, and you will be free of all fears or discomforts. If you are new to Yoga and have a history of miscarriage, you should not start Yoga until you are 14 weeks pregnant. If you have no history of miscarriage, do all the poses fully until the third month. Then cut out all the exercises in which you lie on the stomach and thus put a lot of pressure on the abdomen. Do not attend class in the 11th, 12th, and 13th weeks- it is important,

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