



Ginger could help control diabetes

GINGER COULD HELP manage high levels of blood sugar which create complications for long-term diabetic patients.

A new report reveals the potential power of ginger to control blood glucose. Ginger extracts were able to increase the uptake of glucose into muscle cells independently of insulin, says Basil Roufogalis, professor of pharmaceutical chemistry, University of Sydney, who led the study.

“This assists in the management of high levels of blood sugar that create complications for long-term diabetic patients, and may allow cells to operate independently of insulin,” says Roufogalis, the journal *Planta Medica* reports.

“The components responsible for the increase in glucose were gingerols - the major phenolic components of the ginger rhizome. Under normal conditions, blood glucose level is strictly maintained within a narrow range, and skeletal muscle is a major site of glucose clearance in the body,” says Roufogalis, according to a Sydney statement. *IANS*



Adopting certain yoga styles during a period of fasting can help strengthen and shape your body

A perfect balance

WHEN WE FAST we have to brace ourselves for a number of lifestyle changes.

While fasting tests and enhances the endurance levels of your body, eating healthily, and adopting a work-out regime additionally help strengthen and shape your body. But this doesn't mean those who are fasting need to play their usual soccer or basketball games or go for a long run. It is necessary to stay hydrated and avoid working up a sweat, so just take up light activities such as walking, biking or beginner's yoga.

Exercising during Ramadan is good, especially the time before breaking the fast, and it can be re-energizing.

Jakartadoyoga instructor Yusni Irene says certain yoga styles which do not require excessive movement are good for those who are fasting as it can balance the body's natural system. She says there are two important things to remember when fasting: “The energy in the body becomes limited as there are fewer calories consumed and there is a lengthy gap between the beginning



and the breaking of the fast. Second, there's a kind of detoxification in the body, a process which is ongoing in an empty stomach.”

Yoga is very beneficial for one who is fasting as during a fast the body starts to release toxins quite rapidly, she added.

“Yoga postures and breathing exercises accelerate the elimination of these toxins which may otherwise remain longer in the system resulting in side effects such as headaches and a general feeling of tiredness.”

Continuing, she said yoga would raise the energy level and aid in the body's detoxification process so that the body remained fit.

“Small bending movements such as the cobra and upward dog pose will raise the chest bone up so the heart will pump oxygen-rich

blood throughout the body. The pressure in the stomach will improve the power of the organs in the stomach. Deep back bending such as the upward bow pose or back bending (urdhva dhanurasana) will also provide similar effects.”

Practicing yoga during fasting, however, will require extra strength as energy and blood pressure are lower which may cause side effects such as dizziness for some people. “You can use a device such as a chair, pillow or wooden block to do the back bending or wheel pose.”

Forward bending will provide relaxation as there is pressure in the forebrain, as the position of the heart is parallel with other body parts which decreases blood pumping rates.

“Yoga's breathing exercises are also important

and a very beneficial aspect for those who are fasting. Breathing exercises increase the oxygen in the body's cells and balance hormone production. The result is a stabilised, relaxed and fresh body and more energy.”

So, during fasting or normal daily activities when our energy level is low or one is feeling tired after a long working day, yoga re-energises and restores the body's natural systems, she reiterates.

“The best time to practice yoga during the fasting month is in the morning or at least two hours after eating, as the stomach should be empty. Before breaking the fast is also a good time for yoga as the stomach is really empty and the detoxification process is already underway.”

Fasting is not only about hunger and thirst and yoga is not only about exercise. They both purify the body, mind and soul. Through yoga, people can exercise, feel relaxed and be purified, says yoga facilitator Pujiastuti Sindhu of Yoga Leaf.

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ALIGN YOUR LIFE

The Sound of Silence

Our day starts with noise - from the ringing of the alarm clock to the honking of the car, from blaring music to the sound of building construction. The list is endless. With each passing moment we are hearing more and more. Wherever we go, the sound follows. With all the noise around us, it's no wonder we can't hear ourselves anymore. Global studies show that more people are losing their ability to hear clearly. But in reality we are losing something else - our peace of mind.

As a result, silence is slowly finding its way back into our chaotic lives. More people are opting for yoga and meditation retreats over in-your-face blaring workout regimes. So why are we so keen to soundproof our lives? Because we are realising now that in the process of building a perfect life, we have compromised on “alone time”. In this generation of iPods and mobile phones, how often do we hear the beat of our own heart? There is just no time or space for silence in our lives anymore. Many of us are caught up in the daily grind to the extent that we have lost our ability to reflect and ponder. As a result we don't know who we are anymore.

If only we realise how important silence is in our lives, will we be able to evaluate our lives. When we are still and silent, we are rediscovering ourselves. And in the process learning to appreciate life and enjoy small moments that bring us joy. For many years now, silent retreats have helped people overcome trauma and stress. Silence during meditation helps in calming the mind and nourishes the soul. Silence helps in putting things in perspective. A few moments of silence on a daily basis will help you remain calm and composed all day long.

You don't need to take big breaks to enjoy “alone time”. Sometimes ten minutes is good enough to break the monotony of the day and give you that much needed shot in the arm. You can find this time anywhere - at work while sitting on your desk, while buying groceries, walking on the beach or sitting in your car in the parking lot. The key is to switch off your phone for ten minutes and just focus on yourself for a change. Let the music rest in the background, while you enjoy the sound of silence.

Shivani Adalja is an Abu Dhabi-based well-being expert. She runs the Alignment Institute which offers effective solutions that focus on stress management and overall wellbeing

