

## Precaution, responsibility and opportunity

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**Respect for the other before anything else. At the heart of mutual aid is crisis management. How can the values and tools of yoga help us get through this anxiety-provoking period, which can also bring about change?**



### **Journal du Yoga A word on this crisis?**

**Dr Lionel Coudron** In these exceptionally difficult times, we must all be stronger and more determined than ever. Many of us are on the front lines in the fight against Covid 19 and many of us are continuing their work by physically going to their workplaces to ensure the continuity of essential services. We are all standing together in solidarity with each other and wholeheartedly together to assure them of our support. Yoga means connection, we are even more aware of this today.

### **JdY And on the confinement ?**

**Dr L.C.** At the end of March 2020, we are for the most part confined to our homes and it is true that this situation generates complex feelings. But we are all connected by this thing that is beyond us. We know that this confinement is the

best solution today to deal with this enemy that is the Coronavirus. Not to protect ourselves from others, but because we care about others.

Indeed, limiting contact is the only means at our disposal to limit contamination and the influx of sick people into health and hospital services. We are fortunate to know our enemy, we fortunately know that it is a microscopic virus, and thanks to the knowledge acquired by many researchers, we know how to adapt our attitude so as not to be a link in the chain of contamination. We need to take every measure to ensure that we do not transmit this disease to others. But a legitimate concern is gaining us all, for ourselves, for our loved ones, for the health situation but also for our daily lives and the future. Whether we are at home working from home or unemployed. What is going to happen when faced with a new enemy that is nothing like the others?

### **JdY It is about remaining grounded, isn't it?**

**Dr L.C.** So, whether we're at the front or at home, it's important to keep our serenity, our determination and to make even more use of this time to develop these resources that are within us. Because we have resources that are just waiting to be expressed. It is our responsibility to ensure that the "good words" of yoga find their full meaning today and do not remain unheard. Yoga is interesting in that it can help us with practical, concrete and effective tools, physically, morally and spiritually.

The situation requires us to recover more quickly for some of us, given the workload, for others not to give in to the gloom of the lack of occupation. It is therefore an opportunity to take advantage of what the practical and concrete philosophy of yoga has been bringing us for so many centuries. It is the moment to use all the tools it offers us: postures, breathing and meditation/relaxation but also introspection.

## **JdY What practice do you suggest for the confinement ?**

**Dr L.C.** When we are confined, when we can't go outside, we must continue with physical activity, we must not be sedentary under any circumstances. To help you, you can practice the sun salutations, which is the most complete exercise that you can do in 12 minutes to get and keep in shape. Let me remind you that studies have shown that twelve minutes of sun salutations have the same effect on your biological constants as three quarters of an hour of intensive aerobic exercise.

To do this, get on your mat and do two salutations (four in total if you count each side) at your usual pace (approximately two minutes in total) and then one salutation (each side, approximately one minute) at a fast, steady pace, then start this cycle again and finish with a slower salutation. (Twelve minutes in total).

## **JdY What is the contribution of yoga in the management of this rather anxiety-provoking situation?**

**Dr L.C.** When anxiety wins you over, the practice of closed postures, where you practice letting go, and which will have been preceded by two sun salutations to trap tensions, will help you to develop and find peace within yourself. These postures will allow you to restart the production of serotonin (the neuro-mediator that helps control emotions). You can do for example all the sitting postures cross-legged and half-way lifts in forward fold in a twenty-minute session for example which ensures a deep exhalation. You can add exercises such as pawanuktasana, cat cow pose.



## **JdY What about when people are tired from the extra work, professional or family related?**

**Dr L.C.** If you are physically exhausted by your professional commitment or if you lack sleep, inverted postures will be major assets, whether you know how to do headstands or shoulder stands or to a lesser degree plow pose. These postures improve recovery and decrease (headstand posture) the duration of the need for sleep (half-bridge, plow, shoulder stand and headstand postures for those who can).

## **JdY But what do we do when the situation or events overcome us?**

**Dr L.C.** For all of us, it is important to refocus and to take time (even if we don't have it) to put our thoughts and our state in order. Every day, we must take fifteen minutes to sit still. To observe our general state, to take stock of our emotions, our thoughts that pass through our head. And put things in order. Our objective during these fifteen minutes is to install a time of peace, inner joy and consciousness (sat chit ananda). This is quite easily doable and it is an opportunity to get into it if you are not used to doing it. For fifteen minutes, sit down and be attentive to your feelings, your breathing, your thoughts and "put everything in order". Adjust the posture so as to feel good, calm your breathing, become aware of thoughts. You will work on your "state", your "being" to connect to a feeling of euphoria and peace.

## **JdY After the crisis, will we still be the same?**

**Dr L.C.** It is also a time for introspection, for looking inside ourselves. To meditate. To bring back meaning, essential things in our lives. It is certain that there will be a before and after Covid 19 for each of us who are living through this period but also on the level of humanity as a whole. The whole planet is affected and this crisis shows us that disasters can happen. It makes us aware of our fragility and of our most precious assets. It will redistribute priorities for all. We are concerned by these issues that challenge us. We are at the beginning of this crisis, but we know that collectively we will solve it. We can therefore all use this moment to meditate. And to come out of it as a stronger and more humane humanity.

## **To go further**

*Yogathérapie, soigner les chocs émotionnels et les peurs*, by Dr. Coudron and Corinne Miéville, Ed. Odile Jacob, 2018 (13€).