



The Art of Healthy Living

Practical Tips

Speak of Health, and the first few things that come to the mind are doctors, medicines, exercise, food. But surely health is more than a mere absence of disease or discomfort? More than anything else Health may be described as Harmony, a state of Equilibrium - in the various parts of our being (mental, emotional, physical). Present-day western medicine too has now acknowledged the inextricable link between one's inner state and its outer manifestation as illness - a fact long known to our ancients. How does one cultivate a positive state of Health? To be healthy in the fullest sense of the word, one needs to do much more than only avoid illness. The following passages are selected with a view to introduce practical ways to live one's day more consciously, building up the foundations of health in oneself on a daily basis.

Why does one get up tired in the morning, and what should one do to have better sleep?

If you get up tired in the morning, it is because of *tamas*, nothing else, a formidable mass of *tamas*; I discovered it when I began to do the yoga of the body. It is inevitable so long as the body is not transformed.

You must lie flat on your back and relax all the muscles and nerves - it is an easy thing to learn - to be like what I call a piece of cloth on the bed; nothing else remains. If you can do that with the mind also, you get rid of all the stupid dreams that make you more tired when you get up than when you went to bed. It is the cellular activity of the brain that continues without control, and that tires much. Therefore a total relaxation, a kind of complete calm, without tension in which everything is stopped. But this is only the beginning.

Afterwards, a self-giving as total as possible, of all, from top to bottom, from the outside to the inmost, and an eradication also as total as possible of all resistance of the ego, and you begin repeating your mantra - your mantra, if you have one or any other word which has power over you, a word leaping from the heart, spontaneously, like a prayer and that sums up your aspiration. After having repeated a few times, if you are accustomed to it, you get into trance. And from that trance you pass into sleep. The trance lasts as long as it should and quite naturally, spontaneously you pass into sleep. But when you come back from this sleep, you remember everything, the sleep was but a continuation of the trance.

Fundamentally the sole purpose of sleep is to enable the body to assimilate the effect of the trance so that the effect may be accepted everywhere, to enable the body to do its natural function of the night and eliminate the toxins. And when it wakes up, there is no trace of heaviness which comes from sleep, the effect of the trance continues.

Even for those who have been in trance, **it is good to repeat a mantra, a word, a prayer before going into sleep.** But there must be a life in the words, I do not mean an intellectual signification, nothing of that kind, but a vibration. And on the body its effect is extraordinary: it begins to vibrate, vibrate, vibrate... and quietly you let yourself go as though you wanted to get into sleep. The body vibrates more and more and still more and away you go. That is the cure for *tamas*.

It is *tamas* which causes bad sleep. There are two kinds of bad sleep: the sleep that makes you heavy, dull, as though you lose all the effect of the effort you put in during the preceding day; and the sleep that exhausts you as if you were passing your time in fight. **I have noticed that if you cut your sleep into slices (it is simply a habit to form), the nights become better.** That is to say, you must be able to come back to your normal consciousness and aspiration at fixed intervals - come back to the call of the consciousness... but for that you must not make use of an alarm bell. When you are in trance, it is not good to be shaken out of it.



When you are about to go into sleep, you can make a formation and say "I shall wake up at such an hour" (you do that very well when you are a child). For the first stretch of sleep you must count at least three hours; for the last one hour is sufficient. But the first one must be three hours at the minimum. On the whole, you have to remain in bed at least seven hours; in six hours you do not have time enough to do much (naturally I am looking from the point of view of sadhana) to make the nights useful.

To make use of the nights is an excellent thing; it has a double effect: a negative effect, it prevents you from falling backward, losing whatever you have gained - that, indeed, is painful - and a positive effect, you make some progress, you continue your progress. You make use of the night; then there is no trace of fatigue any more.

Two things you must eliminate: falling into the torpor of the inconstance, with all these things of the subconscious and of the inconstant that rise up, invade you, enter into you; and a vital and mental superactivity where you pass your time in fighting, literally, terrible battles. People come out of that state bruised, as if they had received blows - and they did receive them; then it is not "as if"! And I see only one way, change the nature of sleep.¹

It is very difficult to put one's mind into repose. The majority of men get up very tired, more tired than when they went to sleep. One must learn how to quieten one's mind, make it completely blank, and then when one wakes up, one feels refreshed. One must relax the whole mind in the pure white silence, then one has the least number of dreams.²

Life is so busy - how does one find the time to exercise?

...*h*ow is it that the movements we make almost constantly in our everyday life, or which we have to make in our work if it is a physical work, do not help or help very little, almost negligibly, to develop the muscles and to create harmony in the body? These same movements, on the other hand, if they are made consciously, deliberately, with a definite aim suddenly start helping you to form your muscles and build up your body. ... in the conscious will, there is something which adds considerably to the movement itself. Those who really want to practise physical culture as it is conceived now, everything they do, they do consciously. They walk downstairs consciously, they make the movements of ordinary life consciously, not mechanically. An attentive eye will perhaps notice a little difference but the greatest difference lies in the will they put into it, the consciousness they put into it. Walking to go somewhere and walking as an exercise is not the same thing. It is the conscious will in all these things which is important, it is that which brings about the progress and obtains the result. Therefore, what I mean is that the method one uses has only a relative importance in itself, it is the will to obtain a certain result that is important. ...

...you only have to try it, you will understand very well what I mean. **For instance, all the movements you make when dressing, taking your bath, tidying your room... no matter what; make them consciously, with the will that this muscle should work, that muscle should work. You will see, you will obtain really amazing results.**

Going up and down the stairs - you cannot imagine how useful that can be from the point of view of physical culture, if you know how to make use of it. Instead of going up because you are going up and coming down because you are coming down, like any ordinary man, you go up with the consciousness of all the muscles which are working and of making them work harmoniously. You will see. Just try a little, you will see! This means that you can use all the movements of your life for a harmonious development of your body.

You bend down to pick something up, you stretch up to find something right at the top of a cupboard, you open a door, you close it, you have to go round an obstacle, **there are a hundred and one things you do constantly and which you can make use of for your physical culture and which will demonstrate to you that it is the consciousness you put into it which**



produces the effect, a hundred times more than just the material fact of doing it. So, you choose the method you like best, but you can use the whole of your daily life in this way.... To think constantly of the harmony of the body, of the

beauty of the movements, of not doing anything that is ungraceful and awkward. You can obtain a rhythm of movement and gesture which is very exceptional.³

The day passes by leaving me tired. How can one have 'rest in action'?

Fatigue comes from doing without interest the things you do.

Whatever you do you can find interest in it, provided you take it as a means of progressing; you must try to do better and better what you are doing, the will for progress must always be there and then you take interest in what you do, whatever it is.⁴

Tiredness shows lack of will for progress. When you feel tired or fatigued that is lack of will for progress.⁵

That [rest in action] comes from a kind of certitude of inner choice. When one aspires for something, if at the same time one knows that the aspiration will be heard and answered in the best way possible, that establishes a quietude in the being, a quietude in its vibrations; whilst if there is a doubt, an uncertainty, if one does not know what will lead one to the goal or if ever

one will reach it or whether there is a way of doing so, and so on, then one gets disturbed and that usually creates a sort of little whirlwind around the being; which prevents it from receiving the real thing. Instead, if one has a quiet faith, if whilst aspiring one knows that there is no aspiration (naturally, sincere aspiration) which remains unanswered, then one is quiet. **One aspires with as much fervour as possible, but does not stand in nervous agitation asking oneself why one does not get immediately what one has asked for. One knows how to wait.** I have said somewhere: "To know how to wait is to put time on one's side." That is quite true. For if one gets excited, one loses all one's time - one loses one's time, loses one's energy, loses one's movements. To be very quiet, calm, peaceful, with the faith that what is true will take place, and that if one lets it happen, it will happen so much the quicker. Then,⁶ in that peace everything goes much better.

One day we are full of energy and the next day we are quite tired. Why?

People think they have only to continue doing for ever what they were doing or at least remain in the same state of consciousness, day after day do their little work, and all will go well. But it is not like that. **Suddenly, for some reason or other, one part of the being - either your feelings or your thoughts or your vital - makes progress, has discovered something, received a light, progressed. It takes a leap in progress. All the rest remains behind. This brings about**

a disequilibrium. That is enough to make you very tired. But in fact, it is not tiredness: it is something which makes you want to keep quiet, to concentrate, remain within yourself, be like that, and build up slowly a new harmony among the different parts of the being. And it is very necessary to have, at a given moment, a sort of rest, for an assimilation of what one has learnt and a harmonisation of the different parts of the being.⁷



At times one feels lazy...does one continue to work then?

That depends on the work; there we enter another domain.

If it is a work that you are doing for the collectivity and not for yourself personally, then you must do it, whatever happens. It is an elementary discipline. You have undertaken to do this work or have been given the work and have taken it up, therefore you have accepted it, and in that case you must do it. At all times, unless you are absolutely ill, ill in the last degree and unable to move, you must do it. Even if you are rather ill, you must do it. **An unselfish work always cures you of your petty personal maladies.** Naturally, if you are really compelled to be in bed without being able to move, with a terrible fever or a very serious illness, then that's quite different. But otherwise, if you are just a little indisposed: "I am not feeling quite well, I have a little headache or I have indigestion, or I have a bad cold, I am coughing", things like that - then doing your work, not thinking of yourself, thinking of the work, doing it as well as you can, that puts you right immediately.

An end to Laziness...

You must exert your consciousness, your will, your force, gather your energy, shake yourself a little and whip yourself and say: "Clac! clac! forward, march." If it is laziness that keeps you back from, say, doing the vaulting, you must immediately do something much more tiring and say: "Well, you don't want to do that? All right, you are going to do 1500 metres running!" Or else: "I don't want to do the weight-lifting today, I don't feel like doing it: good, I shall do skipping 4000 times at a stretch."⁹

Should one undertake physical work which seems beyond one's capacity?

If one did not spend, one would never receive. The great force a child has for growth, for development is that he spends without stint.

Naturally, when one spends, one must recuperate and must have the time that is needed to recuperate; but what a child cannot do one day,

he can do the next. So **if you never go beyond the limit you have reached, you will never progress.** It is quite obvious that people who practise physical culture, for example, if they make progress, it is just because they gradually exceed, go beyond what they could do.¹⁰

How can Depression be Controlled?

Oh! there's a very simple way. Depression occurs generally in the vital, and one is overpowered by depression only when one keeps the consciousness in the vital, when one remains there. The only thing to do is to get out of the vital and enter a deeper consciousness. Even the higher mind, the luminous, higher mind, the most lofty thoughts have the power to drive away

depression. Even when one reaches just the highest domains of thought, usually the depression disappears. But in any case, if one seeks shelter in the psychic, then there is no longer any room for depression.

Depression may come from two causes: either from a want of vital satisfaction or from a considerable nervous fatigue in the body. De-



pression arising from physical fatigue is set right fairly easily: one has but to take rest. One goes to bed and sleeps until one feels well again, or else one rests, dreams, lies down. The want of vital satisfaction is pretty easily produced and usually one must face it with one's reason, must ferret out the cause of the depression, what has brought about the lack of satisfaction in the vital; and then **one looks at it straight in the face and asks oneself whether that indeed has anything to do with one's inner aspiration or whether it is simply quite an ordinary movement.** Generally one discovers that it has nothing to do with the inner aspiration and one can quite easily overcome it and resume one's normal movement. If that does not suffice, then one must go deeper and deeper until one touches the psychic reality. Then one has only to put this psychic reality in contact with the movement of depression,¹¹ and instantaneously it will vanish into thin air.

To Overcome Depression...

1. Become aware of your depression - not only of the depression but of the causes of depression, why you get depressed so easily.
2. Then, once you have become conscious, you must master the depressions, must stop being depressed even when the cause of depression is there - you must master your depression, stop it from coming.
3. And finally, after this work has been done for a sufficiently long time, the nature loses the habit of having depressions and no longer reacts in the same way, the nature is changed.¹²

What makes one Grow Old?

It is not the number of years you have lived that makes you old. You become old when you stop progressing.

As soon as you feel you have done what you had to do, as soon as you think you know what you ought to know, as soon as you want to sit and enjoy the results of your effort, with the feeling you have worked enough in life, then at once you become old and begin to decline.

When, on the contrary, you are convinced that what you know is nothing compared to all that remains to be known, when you feel that

what you have done is just the starting-point of what remains to be done, **when you see the future like an attractive sun shining with the innumerable possibilities yet to be achieved, then you are young**, howsoever many are the years you have passed upon earth, young and rich with all the realisations of tomorrow.

And if you do not want your body to fail you, avoid wasting your energies in useless agitation. Whatever you do, do it in a quiet and composed poise. In peace and silence is the greatest strength.¹³

☞ Compiled by Anuradha

¹ The Mother *Bulletin* Nov.1960 p.87

² The Mother *Collected Works of The Mother* v.5 p.26

³ Ibid. v.9 pp.153-55

⁴ The Mother *Health and Healing in Yoga* p.245

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Mother *Collected Works of The Mother* v.5 pp.396-97

⁷ Ibid. v.6 pp.35-36

⁸ Ibid. v.5 pp.121-22

⁹ Ibid. pp.120-21

¹⁰ Ibid. v.8 p.196

¹¹ Ibid. v.6 pp.32-33

¹² Source: Ibid. v.4 p.342

¹³ The Mother *Bulletin* Feb.1968 p.19