



Introduction

I remember the first time I saw my guru Paramahansa Swami Sri Satyananda Saraswati. He was giving a spiritual discourse in my home town. What struck me first about him was his amazing appearance. Even at sixty, his body was so muscular and so well toned! His skin was literally glowing; and it seemed incredibly smooth, like a baby's. He was so impressive and handsome that my ten-year-old daughter lost her heart to him. And, when I wanted to leave after the discourse was over, she wouldn't budge! She was ready to follow him to the end of the world.

The exterior is but the reflection of the various aspects of the interior—a fact which mankind has never fully appreciated. Since antiquity they have chased the dream to be beautiful and to remain youthful forever. They have tried every conceivable means to fulfil their wish. If Cleopatra bathed in milk and Noorjehan in rose water; today's generation is injecting neuro-toxins into the body, snipping away portions of the skin and sucking out kilos of fat. Adipose tissues have become the source of anxiety and stress all over the world. A fortune is spent by thousands of people on beauty products like lotions and potions which focus only on the exterior.

The cause of a beauty problem may lie at any level in the





Trimmers

CHAPTER I

Exremely high calorie diet and lack of adequate physical activities have led to one of the major problems of the developed countries — obesity. Obese parents transmit their genes to their offsprings, making them obese as well. These children with too many fat cells in the body, rarely lose weight, exposing themselves to various problems in life.

First, obesity puts excessive strain on the system as each gland and organ has to work much more than it is designed to. The heart has to work overtime to supply blood to these glands and organs for their extra work. At the same time, the extra fat cells and muscle cells too need blood for them which again the heart has to provide. Making the heart work so much can lead to its exhaustion which could prove fatal.

Secondly, mental and psychological problems may also manifest in overweight people. Their features look heavy and unattractive, making them look older. This often causes a lack of self-esteem in them, which in turn can lead to other behavioural problems. They may shun people; care less about their appearance and health and get into a depression.

On the other hand, a trim and well-proportioned



body is a great asset. It promotes good health; it is pleasing to the eyes; and it is a moral booster. It draws the admiration of every beholder, whether or not its owner is bestowed with classical beauty features. All this helps the person acquire better self-confidence and sail through life with ease.

To combat obesity, taking a low calorie diet is the first step. Most of the modern slimming diets which are being marketed worldwide emphasise on certain constituents at the cost of some others, which can cause serious health problems. Some recommend eliminating carbohydrates from the diet altogether and concentrate on proteins. A protein rich diet increases uric acid in the body as the end product of all proteins is uric acid. Too much of this acid can put tremendous burden on the kidneys and damage them. It can also lead to ailments such as arthritis and gout.



Uric acid is the end product of proteins

Excluding carbohydrates from the diet has its own problems. Carbohydrates are the chief source of energy for body tissues. If this food is excluded, all the tissues including those of the brain are starved, which is undesirable. Excluding fat from diet too is harmful. It hampers the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Also, body hormones are made from fat. In its absence their secretion is inadequate. As all the activities of the system are regulated by



hormones, their insufficiency can cause various problems. Hence, having a balanced diet is essential for good health.

Therefore, have your own dietary chart. Avoid high-calorie food such as refined flour, refined sugar, fried food and excess fat.

Adequate physical exercise is equally important to trim the body. Normal exercise, if overdone, can cause more harm than good. Whereas there is no danger of overdoing yogic exercises. In fact yogic exercises make the body stronger while trimming it down. Hence it is wiser to play safe and practise yoga, which has been around for centuries proving its worth.

The following yogasanas are dynamic in nature which affect all parts of the body equally effectively.

SURYA NAMASKAR

This is one of the most effective yogic exercise, which stretches, massages and trims down the body in the shortest possible time. Unlike other asanas Surya Namaskar can be practised as many as 108 rounds, though 20-50 rounds are more common. The best thing about Surya Namaskar is that one does not lose energy practising this exercise so many times; rather one gains it, i.e. the more you do it the more energetic you feel.



I once suggested it to a girl whose energy level was not too high, though, being a classical dancer she needed extra energy for her daily practise. Every day after her dance session, she would just flop into bed listless. When I told her about Surya Namaskar she looked at me unbelievably. She couldn't think of doing something which seemed so vigorous. But, because of her faith in me, she agreed to do just one round. Now she does ten rounds of this *asana* and two hours of back-breaking dance every day and is still up and about!

Technique

- STEP I— Stand straight with feet close together. Join hands in front of your chest.
- STEP II- Inhaling, raise arms up, fully stretching the body, bending backward.



TRIMMERS

- STEP III- Exhaling, bend forward to place hands on the floor to the outside of your feet. (Initially you may bend your knees to assume the correct posture.)
- STEP IV- Inhaling, extend the right leg backward while bringing down the hips to rest on the left heel. The face should be turned upward.
- STEP V - Exhaling, lift the hips high up while taking the left foot back to join the right one. Keep head down and in between the arms.

