

Building Immunity - Avoiding the Flu

-- Rajvi H Mehta

*“More than the swine flu,
it is the fear of the flu that worries people.”*

Guruji Yogacharya B K S Iyengar was born during the 1918 influenza pandemic and even his mother was not spared the infection during her pregnancy. This had led to a very sickly childhood for our Guruji. It was this ill-health that introduced him to yoga with which he has given health to millions across the world

91 years later, the pandemic struck again. Earlier it was the Spanish flu while this time it was the swine flu. More than the flu, it was the fear of contracting the flu that worried people. Those who travelled to another land feared of contracting it while the locals feared that the visitors may have brought the virus with them! Government authorities attempted to control the spread of the virus by closing down schools and Institutions. RIMYI was also not spared and was asked to shut down for a week although none of the students were affected. Pune was the epicenter of the epidemic in India and with so many visitors from foreign lands at RIMYI – the risk appeared to be high. But, the officials did not realize that RIMYI had some very potent mode of prevention of swine flu-the experience and wisdom of Guruji.

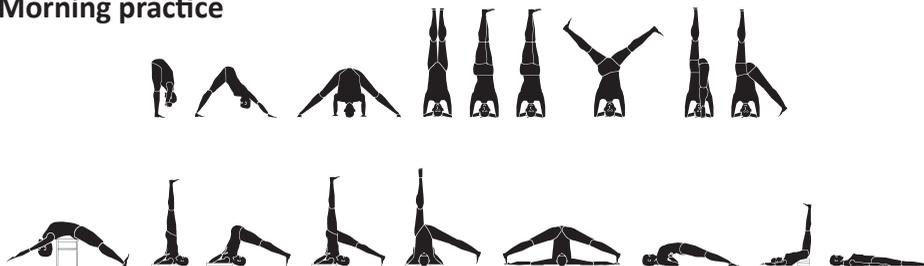
Yes. We can curtail the spread of any infection by getting into isolation. But, is that a real, practical solution? Why is it that not all people exposed to an infected person acquire the disease? If a H1N1 (the virus responsible for the current pandemic) infected person were to sneeze, he/she does indeed release tons of the virus and all the people who breathe that air should get infected. But, that does not happen. Only a few contract the disease. Most people who get infected manage to recover without medication. It is only some who develop complications. It is all about immunity! Build a strong immune system and you reduce your risks to becoming susceptible to infections. But, how does one do that?

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Modern science is aware of mechanisms of building muscles and cardiovascular system through exercise but what about the immune system? There are some thoughts that vitamins help, a healthy diet and a hygienic lifestyle helps but there does not seem anything specific at the moment that can help build immune system.

Guruji provided us with a specific sequence of āsana-s that help build the immune system. This was posted on the RIMYI notice board during the swine flu pandemic. This can help us not only avert the flu virus but also many more bacteria and viruses especially when they are lurking in the air and water!

Morning practice



- *Uttanāsana* 5 min
- *Adho Mukha Svanāsana* 5 min
- *Prasarita Padotanāsana* 3 min
- *Sirsāsana* 5 min straight, 10 mins of variations)
- *Viparita Dandāsana* (on chair) 5 mins
- *Sarvangāsana* 10 min
- *Halāsana* 5 min
- *Sarvangāsana* cycle 5 mins
- *Setu Bandha Sarvangāsana* 5 mins
- *Viparita Karani* 5 min
- *Savāsana* with *Viloma* / *Ujjayi pranayama* 10 min

Evening practice



- *Sirsāsana* 10 mins
- *Sarvangāsana* 10 mins
- *Halāsana* 5 min
- *Setu Bandha Sarvangāsana* 10 min
- *Savāsana* with *Viloma / Ujjayi pranayama* 10 min

Those who cannot stay for the specified duration can do these same *āsana-s* with the help of props.
