

HEALTHISE YOGA INFORMATION

HEALTHISE HEALTH INFORMATION FOR ALL

YOGA: ORIGIN, TYPES, CHARACTERISTICS AND IMMUNITY AGAINST AIDS

[Healthise](#) presents to you Yoga origin and its complete benefit. Yoga is an age-old science made up of different disciplines of mind and body. It has originated in India 2500 years ago and is still effective in bringing overall health and well being to any person who does it regularly. The word yoga is based upon a Sanskrit verb Yuja. It means to connect, to culminate or to concur. It's the culmination of mind and body or the culmination of Jiva and Shiva (soul and the universal spirit). It's also a culmination of Purush and Prakriti (Yin and Yang).

The term Yoga has a very broad scope. There are several schools or systems of Yoga. Dnyanayoga (Yoga through knowledge), Bhaktiyoga (Yoga through devotion), Karmayoga (Yoga through action), Rajayoga (Royal or supreme Yoga) and Hathayoga (Yoga by balancing opposite principles of body). All of these schools of Yoga are not necessarily very different from each other. They are rather like threads of the same cloth, entangled into each other. For thousands of years, Yoga has been looked upon as an effective way of self-improvement and spiritual enlightenment. All these systems essentially have this same purpose; only the ways of achieving it are little different for each of them. In its most popular form, the term Yoga has come to associate with the last of these systems which is Hathayoga. For the purpose of this article too, the term Yoga is used with the same meaning. Although, when it comes to

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Philosophy of Yoga, which is at the end of this article, the term Yoga will have a broader scope.

ASANA AND PRANAYAMA

Let's take a detailed look at the main two components of Hathayoga i.e. Asana and Pranayama.

1 Asana:

Asana means acquiring a body posture and maintaining it as long as one's body allows. Asana, when done rightly according to the rules discussed above, render enormous physical and psychological benefits. Asana are looked upon as the preliminary step to Pranayama. With the practice of Asana there is a balancing of opposite principles in the body and psyche. It also helps to get rid of inertia. Benefits of Asana are enhanced with

longer maintenance of it. Asana should be stable, steady and pleasant. Here is the summary of general rules to be followed for doing Asana.

Summary of rules:

1. Normal breathing
2. Focused stretching
3. Stable and pleasant postures (sthiram sukham asanam)
4. Minimal efforts (Prayatnay shaithilyam)
5. No comparisons or competition with others
6. No jerks or rapid actions. Maintain a slow and steady tempo.

Each asana has its own benefits and a few common benefits such as stability, flexibility, better hormonal secretion, feeling refreshed and rejuvenated. It's a misconception that an

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Asana (Yoga stretch) has to be difficult to do in order to be beneficial. Many of the easiest Asana render most of the common benefits of Yoga to their fullest. Besides, the beauty of Yoga is in the fact that at a not-so-perfect level most of the benefits are still available. That means even a beginner benefits from Yoga as much as an expert.

In their quest to find a solution to the miseries of human body and mind, the founders of Yoga found part of their answers in the nature. They watched the birds and animals stretching their bodies in particular fashion to get rid of the inertia and malaise. Based upon these observations, they created Yoga stretches and named them after the birds or animals or fish that inspired these stretches. For example, matsyasana (fish pose), makarasana (crocodile pose), shalabhasana (grasshopper pose), bhujangasana (cobra pose), marjarasana (cat pose), mayurasana (peacock pose), vrischikasana (scorpion pose), gomukhasana (cow's mouth pose), parvatasana (mountain pose), vrikshasana (tree pose) etc.

Many of the Asana can be broadly categorized based upon the type of pressure on the abdomen. Most of the forward bending Asana are positive pressure Asana as they put positive pressure on the stomach by crunching it e.g. Pashchimatanasana, Yogamudra (Yoga symbol pose), Hastapadasana (hand and feet pose), Pavanmuktasana (wind free pose) etc. The backward bending Asana are the negative pressure Asana as they take pressure away from the abdomen e.g. Dhanurasana (bow pose), Bhujangasana (cobra

Pose) others is greatly discouraged. Doing something beyond one's capacity just out of competition generally results in hurting one's body and hence is greatly discouraged. Breathing in Yoga remains steady unlike many aerobic

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exercises. Yoga is also Isotonic unlike bodybuilding exercises, which are isometric in nature. In isotonic stretches, length of the muscles increases while tone stays the same as opposed to the isometric exercises in which length of the muscles stays the same while the tone changes. In Isotonic stretches, body is stretched in a particular manner and maintained that way for some time.

2) Longer maintenance and fewer repetitions (as per the body's capacity).

[Benefits of Yoga are enhanced](#) with the maintenance of a body stretch. Longer the maintenance better will be the effect. However one cannot force oneself into maintaining the stretch longer than the body can bear. Each and every position is pleasant and stable (Sthiram Sukham Asanam). Sthiram means steady. Sukham means pleasant and Asanam means a body posture or position. The right position for you is that in which your body remains steady (sthiram) and which is pleasant and comfortable to you (sukham). The moment a stretch becomes unbearable and uncomfortable and the body starts shaking, one needs to come out of that position in a very slow, smooth and controlled manner. There will be more repetitions and shorter maintenance for a beginner. With more practice, the repetitions will be fewer and maintenance will be longer. After doing Yoga one should only feel pleasant and fresh and nothing else. If you feel tired or fatigued or any part of your body aches, it only means that you have tried beyond your capacity.

3) Trust your body. Apply minimum efforts:

With the practice of Yoga, you also learn to trust your body's capacity to progress in terms of flexibility without conscious efforts. As long as the aim is in mind and the body is stretched only to its current capacity, the flexibility develops

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on its own. One needs to just focus on breath, focus on the present state of the body pose and enjoy that pose as long as it feels comfortable. 'Prayatnay Shaithilyam' means minimum efforts. Although there is an ideal position described and desired for each asana, no one is forced into attaining the ideal position. Yoga is done with the trust that flexibility is acquired after a continuous and regular practice. There is a message here and that is to have faith in the unknown. This message along with the improved endocrine function, better muscle tone, calmer mind and increased positive outlook can be enormously beneficial for recovery from any illness.

4) Focused stretching:

The ability to stretch or pressure one muscle group while relaxing the rest of the body is called focused stretching. For example if a particular Asana is based upon stretching the stomach as the main muscle group (the pivotal muscles), then the rest of the body is relaxed while the stomach is stretched or pressured. One has to watch for unnecessary straining of those muscles that are supposed to be relaxed. Initially this is hard to follow nevertheless it becomes easier with some practice. This habit of differentiating between different muscles for the pressure becomes very useful in other areas of life too. It enables you to relax better while driving during rush hour. While doing normal daily tasks it makes you aware of the unnecessary tension on different parts of your body. You are watchful even while talking to someone or while brushing your teeth or when stuck in a traffic jam. You learn to ask yourself, 'Am I holding my breath, are my shoulders tense, is my neck stiff, are my fingers curled?' etc. etc. These acts are unnecessary and they dissipate energy. Yoga teaches you how to relax and gives you time free of worries and regrets, impatience and anxieties.

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5) Breathing:

Monitoring your breathing is an integral part of Yoga. Common mistakes such as holding of breath or breathing deliberately occur during Yoga. Both these mistakes must be avoided. Holding back on breath gives headaches, fatigue and thus the benefits of Yoga are lost by improper or inadequate breathing.

6) Anantha Samapatti (Merging with the Infinite):

Ultimate goal of Yoga is the amalgamation of self into the greater self. Yuja means to combine or to connect. A connection of Atma and Parmatma is the merging of the body and the spirit. Yoga is a way of life. It's a total integration. According to Patanjali (founder of Yoga), two things define Yoga postures; a stable and comfortable body posture and Anantha Samapatti. Therefore you cannot separate bodily postures from meditation. In fact a body that has become flexible and steady through practice of various positions becomes a good basis for the ultimate transcendental state of mind (Samadhi). The kriya (cleansing processes) purify the body. Mudra and bandha bring the necessary stability of mind and concentration, initially on one's breathing (pranadharana) and then on God (Ishwarpranidhana).

Initially the mind wanders a lot and that's o.k. One should let it wander. Later one should count his breaths and should observe the inner and outer flow of air through the air passages. (pranadharna). This will enable him to concentrate better on himself (sakshibhavana). In the beginning it will be difficult to concentrate since the body postures are not that steady. But with practice it becomes better and better. For this one must purposely take away his mind from body

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posture and focus it on to the breathing process (pranadharana).

BENEFITS OF YOGA

If you follow the basic rules, several benefits can be reaped. Maintenance of body stretches makes the body supple, lean, flexible and stable. Breathing techniques purify the blood and cleanse nasal passages and sinuses. Stress relief is the greatest of all the benefits. Relaxing positions in Yoga teach you to relax your muscles and let the gravity work on your body. The ability to differentiate between tension on different parts of the body, i.e. to stretch one muscle group while relaxing all the others teaches you to relax and not waste energy during your daily routine. The part about concentration is important in providing relief to your mind from worry and stress of everyday activities. Here is a detailed look at some of the major benefits of Yoga.

1. Stress relief

Stress, tension, anxiety are the inevitable features of modern day life. Yoga offers many techniques to cope up with the stress and anxiety. A stress free mind reduces the chances of catching a disease to half, this has been widely known by now. Yoga teaches very effective breathing and relaxing techniques to achieve this. Yoga also helps you to feel relaxed quicker and raise your energy reserve by teaching you how to let the gravity work on your body. Half of the fatigue in any activity comes from improper and inadequate breathing and by holding breath unnecessarily. Yoga teaches you how to breathe adequately and how not to make your body tense and stiff while doing other daily tasks too. The principle of focused stretching teaches you how to not waste energy during your daily routine. It makes you aware of the

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unnecessary tension on different parts of your body. Yoga teaches you to relax fully and gives you time free of worries and regrets and impatience and anxieties. People having busy schedules who are used to being in action all the time, must understand that relaxing is not a crime or not a waste of time. On the contrary it gives you new energy to do your tasks better.

2. Feeling energized and refreshed

Adequate breathing plays a great role in rejuvenating and refreshing mind and body. Breathing techniques in Yoga provide abundant supply of oxygen to the lungs, cleanse nasal passages and sinuses and thus help feel refreshed. A body that has become lean and flexible with stretches and maintenance of the stretches gets purified by breathing techniques and becomes energized. Various Yoga stretches induce a balanced secretion of hormones, which subsequently rejuvenates the whole body and one feels refreshed and energized as a result.

3. Flexibility of mind and body

Apart from the relaxing effect, yoga also consists of many body stretches which when maintained for a few minutes give a wonderful flexibility to our muscles. One starts wondering, 'Am I the same person who used to be so stiff?' In many chronic disorders of the spine, Yoga has helped many people to reduce the frequency and intensity of the disorder such as spondylitis, arthritis etc. Maintenance of body stretches makes the body supple, lean, flexible and stable. In the process, not only your body but also your mind becomes flexible. The mind acquires faith that things can change favorably given enough time.

4. Relief from chronic disorders

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Yoga is particularly good for having control over breath and spine. Breath and spine are like wild animals. You force them to do something they pounce on you. You coax them, be patient with them, they can be tamed to any extent. Many Yoga stretches make the spine strong and flexible. Time and again Yoga has proved to be a blessing for all kinds of disorders of the back. The technique of exhaling twice longer than inhaling (Pranayama) gives abundant supply of oxygen to blood and many impurities of blood are cured. The deliberate exhaling technique (Shwasanmargshuddhi) cleanse the nasal passage and the sinuses. They help get rid of chronic sinus trouble or clogging of nasal passage for many people. That makes the lungs and respiratory organs stronger. The abdominal breathing technique (Kapalbhati) helps people with asthma or weak diaphragm to breathe easily.

5. Focus of mind

Practice of Yoga helps in getting better focus of mind. Meditation, being part of Yoga, teaches you how to focus better and achieve more from any activity. Dharana, which means narrowed focus on a subject by restricting Chitta (mind) is one of the 8 limbs of Ashtangayoga. It teaches you to get rid of all other thoughts from the mind and focus on the target. People have benefited enormously in terms of focus of mind by doing meditation (Dhyana) and Dharana throughout all ages.

6. Benefits at not-so-perfect level

Even if one cannot achieve perfection in an Asana, the benefits of an Asana are still available at a not-so-perfect level such as calmer mind, better flexibility, better blood pressure, lower pulse rate and better endocrine function. Whatever state of Asana one is in, if one maintains the pose

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comfortably, body gets the necessary massage and stretch. There is a better secretion of endocrine glands as a result of the steady and sufficient stretch. The brain cells get the necessary signals and mind becomes calmer. Breath is more controlled and as a result feels refreshed. All of this happens regardless of the level of perfection. It's the steadiness and level of comfort that's more important than perfection.

ORIGIN AND PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA

Ashtangayoga

Yes [there are many types of Yoga](#).

Among the many proponents of Yoga, Patanjali (2nd century B.C) is the most well known and most revered of all and is well accepted as the founder of Yoga. His book Shripatanjali Darshan which is a collection of hymns (also called as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras) is held in high esteem by the experts and practitioners and is known as one of the most revered reference book (a workbook for actual practice) on Yoga. Patanjali's Yoga is called Patanjala (that of Patanjali) and is also considered as Rajayoga, which means the royal Yoga or the supreme, sublime Yoga since it consists of practices that lead to spiritual liberation (Moksha). Rajayoga is a part of Sankhya philosophy and is known to awaken Kundalini (Complete opening of Chakra when reached in

transcendental state of meditation) and results into complete spiritual enlightenment if practiced regularly.

Patanjalayoga is also called Ashtangayoga since it has 8 dimensions or 8 limbs. Ashta means 8 and Anga means dimension or a limb in Sanskrit. Yama (Rules for the social life), Niyama (Rules for personal development), Asana (Yoga

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Posture), Pranayama (Prolonged and controlled breathing), Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), Dharana (narrowed focusing on a subject), Dhyana (continued experience of meditation), Samadhi (transcendental state in which there is only an essence of pure existence) are the 8 limbs of Ashtangayoga. The first four dimensions make up the exoteric (Bahiranga) part of Ashtangayoga while the last four dimensions make up the esoteric (Antaranga) part of Ashtangayoga. Out of the 8 limbs of Ashtangayoga, Asana and Pranayama are the only two limbs that generally stand for the term Yoga in its most popular form.

Hathayoga

In the 15th century A.D. Yogi Swatmaram founded one of the six systems of Yoga called Hathayoga. Although the term Hatha in Sanskrit means being forceful, Hathayoga is not about Hatha but is about the balance between the two principles of the body. Ha and Tha are essentially symbols. Ha means surya (sun). Tha means chandra (moon). Right nostril (Pingala) is the Surya nadi while the left nostril (Ida) is the Chandra nadi. Just the way the sun and the moon balance the life cycle of the world; the two nostrils balance the life cycle of the body. Nadi is a channel through which the life force flows. Hathayoga helps to maintain this balance by correcting the functional disorders of the body and bringing mental peace. Hathayogapradipika is the standard textbook on Hathayoga written by Yogi Swatmaram. Hathayoga accepts Patanjala Yoga as standard. Although it's a completely independent school of philosophy in its own right, it's essentially based upon the philosophy of Rajayoga expounded in Patanjali's Yogasutra.

In fact, every school of philosophy culminates into Rajayoga since the aim of every school is the same as Rajayoga i.e. to attain ever-lasting peace and happiness.

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Hathayoga consists of

a. Asana (body positions or stretches e.g. mountain pose, cobra pose)

b. Pranayama (controlled breathing techniques e.g. Ujjayi, Anuloma Viloma)

c. Kriya (cleansing processes e.g. Kapalbhati)

d. Bandha and Mudra (Locks and symbol poses e.g. Udiyana bandha, Jivha bandha, Simhamudra)

As per Hathayoga, Asana, Pranayama, Kriya, Bandha and Mudra are stepping stones to achieve the ultimate psycho spiritual effect of Rajayoga. They create the necessary foundation of stable and calm mind and body for Rajayoga. There are however subtle differences between Patanjala Yoga and Hathayoga. Patanjali emphasizes more on the psycho spiritual effect of Yoga rather than the physical aspects and actual techniques of Asana and Pranayama. His Asana and Pranayama are also much simpler and easier to do than the ones in Hathayoga. For this he recommends least amount of efforts (Prayatnay Shaithilyam) and maintaining a steady, rhythmic tempo and a stable, comfortable body position. Patanjali's Yogasutra discuss Asana and Pranayama only in the chapter of Kriyayoga (part of Sadhana pada) as the tool to achieve physical and mental health. On the other hand, the emphasis of Hathayoga is more on the techniques of Asana and Pranayama, Kriya, Bandha and Mudra.

Philosophy of Yogasutra:

Patanjali's Yogasutra consists of 195 sutra and 4 Pada (sections or chapters): Samadhi pada, Sadhana Pada, Vibhuti Pada and Kaivalya pada. Kriyayoga, the chapter on the actual practice of Yoga is a part of Sadhana Pada (section about the means of study and practice of Yoga). Kriyayoga discusses Asana and Pranayama viz. the physical part of Yoga. Just to

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give a glimpse of Patanjali's philosophy, here are a few thoughts from the Samadhi Pada and Sadhana Pada of Yogasutra:

According to Patanjali, meaning and purpose of Yoga is to attain Samadhi (ultimate transcendental state in which there is sense of pure existence and nothing else). Yoga is a union of mind and body. It's compared with a calm river, which flows down towards its inclined bed without efforts. Thus Yoga is more than a physical exercise. To be able to concentrate your mind is the greatest benefit of Yoga. Yoga is nothing but self-study. Purpose of Yoga is to be self-aware. Yoga teaches you to be nearer to nature and lead a healthy life. For this you need determination and faith in Yoga.

Tapaswadhyayeshwarpranidhanani Kriyayogah

Tapa (austerities), Swadhyaya (reading of scriptures), Ishwarpranidhana. Tapa is to make body alert and active glowing with health. Swadhyaya is the continuous study to sharpen the intellect. These sadhanas are to be used to wipe out faults of human nature. There are five kleshas (bad tendencies) such as avidya (ignorance), asmita (ego), Rag (attraction-affection), dwesh (hatred) and abhinivesh (self insistence, stubbornness). These five vrittis disappear by Dhyana.

Yogaschittavrittinirodhah. By practice of Yoga, all the functional modifications of the mind completely cease.

[Control of your mind is what Yoga is about.](#) You have to involve your mind in the Asana. Asana is an instrument to Yoga. Body postures, maintenance and rounds of an asana are to be done according to one's own capacity. Retention is more desirable than repetition. Meditation cannot be separated from Yoga.

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Prayatne Shaithilyam anantha samapatti. While doing Yogasana (Yogic postures), two things need to be observed. One is to be relaxed mentally and physically. The second one is Anantha samapatti. It means to merge with something infinite. Patanjali says that all good things happen when you stop trying hard. You become one with Ishwara, you let go your control and forget that you are in particular body posture. Yoga should be the way of life.

Yoga chitasya malam apakarot, Padena vachanam malam, sharirasya cha vaidyaken yo apakarot. The speech is improved by reading loud a Pada (stanza of a poem) and a physician cures the diseases of body. Similarly, Yoga cures and cleanses an ill mind.

According to Samadhipada, all kinds of mental and physical problems such as disease, laziness, doubts and suspicions, disobedience, misunderstandings, temptations, unhealthy thoughts are the modifications of Chitta (mind).

Consequences of these modifications are unease, instability, shakiness and disturbances of inhalations and exhalations. Patanjali says that through total concentration and steadfastness and a regular practice of Yoga, one can get rid of all these problems.

Ishwarpranidhanadva However if that is very difficult for someone, there is another way to achieve total health and peace and that is to surrender to God (Ishwarpranidhanadva). According to Samadhi pada, when you have no knowledge whatsoever, surrender to God completely and you will gain knowledge.

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YOGA CHIROPRACTIC AND IMMUNITY OF AIDS

Chiropractic has 33 principles that comprise its' philosophy. The 1st principle is that there is intelligence in the universe (Universal Intelligence). This intelligence is present in all matter and gives matter all properties and actions.

The expression of universal intelligence through matter is the chiropractic meaning of life. This is the 2nd principle.

This intelligence is present in the body and it's called innate intelligence (principle #20). There are many functions of innate intelligence. It adapts the body to it's environment and maintains health (principle #23), and does everything in the body that we don't have to think about such as digestion, assimilation, excretion, healing of wounds, immune system function, and thousands of other activities.

Innate intelligence operates through the nervous system (principle #28). Interference with this innate intelligence, results in lack of harmony or disease (principle #29 & #30). Interference in the body is due to subluxation in the spinal column (principle #31). A vertebral subluxation is a misaligned vertebra causing interference with nerve messages between your brain and your body. Doctors of chiropractic specialize in locating, analyzing and correcting vertebral subluxations. Subluxations can be caused by trauma, toxins(impurities through diet, breathing, exposure to toxins, etc,.) and thoughts(that can result in stressful responses).

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Most of the chiropractic work done with HIV/AIDS patients is new and very clinical. Clinical studies indicate chiropractic can: 1) boost immune system function, 2) help with secondary symptoms (i.e. peripheral neuropathy), 3) address quality of life issues (reduction in stress, the prevention of disease and symptoms). All of these are self empowering HIV/AIDS patients to live a more positive quality of life. This in turn increases life expectancy.

Chiropractic has been proven on a very introductory scale.

In *Psychoimmunity and the Healing Process : A Holistic Approach to Immunity and AIDS*, the use of chiropractic is highly recommended:

Chiropractic alignment of the body, specifically to alleviate stress and tensions placed upon the medulla oblongata and the coccyx, is important in cases of AIDS and immune dysfunction. Adjustment of the medulla oblongata allows for clear flows of energy along the neurological pathways which help stimulate immune system. Correct alignment of the coccyx, which is the reflex point for the adrenals, helps with proper functioning of endocrine system and nervous system; by helping to "ground" and center an individual, it promotes calm and reduces stress.

To alleviate stress upon the medulla oblongata, we suggest alignment of the entire cranial area- in particular loosening and alleviating tension at the sagittal suture and the temporal mandibular joint. Pg. 127

*(Make note of the anatomy and the reduction of stress)

PNI (psychoneuroimmunology)

There is a new science, deeply rooted in western empiricism, called Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI). This is a science that

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blends immunology, neurology, and endocrinology. It started, accidentally, with the discovery of experimental conditioning of the immune system. Robert Ader and Nicholas Cohen were studying taste aversion in animals by pairing a saccharin flavored solution with a nausea-producing drug, that coincidentally suppressed the immune system. After conditioning, (the drug no longer given) suppression of the immune system was still created when given saccharin, and in turn higher mortality rates. Conditioning of the immune system was also demonstrated with other animals.

PNI has been getting increased attention do to its sound research. No one has done more then Dr. Candice Pert. She is a pharmacologist and research professor at Georgetown University in the Depart of Biophysics and Physiology. Dr. Pert also was Chief of Brain Biochemistry at The National Institute of Health for 13 years. She has done research that proves the nervous, immune, and endocrine systems have a "multidirectional network of communication, linked by information carriers known as neuropeptides. There are many well-studied physiological substrates showing that communication exists in both directions for every single one of these areas and their organs."

Dr. Pert goes on to state,

A number of brain loci , many within emotion-mediating brain areas, are enriched with many types of neuropeptides receptors, suggesting a convergence of information processing at these nodes. Additionally, neuropeptide receptors occur on mobile cells of the immune system: Monocytes can chemo tax to numerous neuropathies via processes shown by structure-activity analysis to be mediated by distinct receptors indistinguishable from those found in the brain. Neuropeptides and their receptors thus join the brain, glands, and immune system in a network of

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