

Hello
Spring!

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FACULTY DESK

Carpe diem: Yoga and Meditation can help

As International Yoga Day is approaching, this is the best time to accept the yoga challenge. Yoga develops inner awareness. It focuses your attention on your body's abilities at the present moment. It helps develop breath and strength of mind and body. It's not about physical appearance. Through various yoga postures and practices, we can focus our awareness inward rather than on how a pose or the people around us look.

Yoga is also known for its ability to calm tension and anxiety in the mind and body. Further, it can also have an impact on a person's exercise capacity.

Harvard Health Publishing established that practicing yoga has been shown to increase mindfulness in all areas of a person's life. Surveys have found that those who practiced yoga were more aware of their bodies than people who didn't practice yoga. They were also more satisfied with and less critical of their bodies.

Harvard researchers studied a small group of sedentary individuals who had not practiced yoga before. After eight weeks of practicing yoga at least twice a week for a total of 180 minutes, participants had greater muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, and cardio-respiratory fitness. Several small studies have found yoga to have a positive effect on cardiovascular risk factors: It helped lower blood pressure in people who have hypertension.

Researchers found that people who practiced yoga for at least 30 minutes once a week for at least four years, gained less weight during middle adulthood. People who were overweight actually lost weight. Overall, those who practiced yoga had lower body mass indexes (BMIs) compared with those who did not practice yoga. Researchers attributed this to mindfulness.

Mindfulness refers to focusing your attention on what you are experiencing in the present moment without judging yourself.

Another study found that practicing yoga improved lipid profiles in healthy patients as well as patients with known coronary artery disease. It also lowered excessive blood sugar levels in people with non-insulin-dependent diabetes and reduced their need for medications. Yoga is now being included in many cardiac rehabilitation programs due to its cardiovascular and stress-relieving benefits. Researchers are also studying if yoga can help people with depression and arthritis, and improve survival from cancer.

Bessel Van Der Kolk in his book "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, And Body in the Healing of Trauma" states that "When we start to go into practices such as yoga and meditation, we start to understand that a lot of unconscious energy is trapped in the body"

Yoga helps to connect mind, body, and breath. Yoga helps to achieve peace of mind and emotional and mental stability. Meditation enhances the self-realization process and promotes well-being but curtails excessive thinking and coordinating breath control. Meditation practice consists of no exercises or bodily movements. A person sits calmly at a definite place and tries to focus the energies within the body on a particular object, sound, breath, etc. Meditation is a part of yoga,

Summing up, in this world full of uncertainties, our life with so many deadlines targets responsibilities, stress, and unexplained fears. This multi-tasking brings a dis-joint. When there is a disparity between the thought process and the actions we tend to perform in a given time. But when your thoughts and actions are a perfect match you don't feel the conflict or the stress and are genuinely focused at that moment in time. You are committed to living in the present moment.

Yoga and meditation should be adopted together for gaining holistic health benefits, but ensure that both are done under the guidance of an experienced Yoga teacher.

Yoga may help bring calm and mindfulness to your busy life. Yoga is a key to healing society. Embrace it. Accept the challenge on June 21 and make it a way of your life. *Carpe Diem*

Prof. Neelam Rani

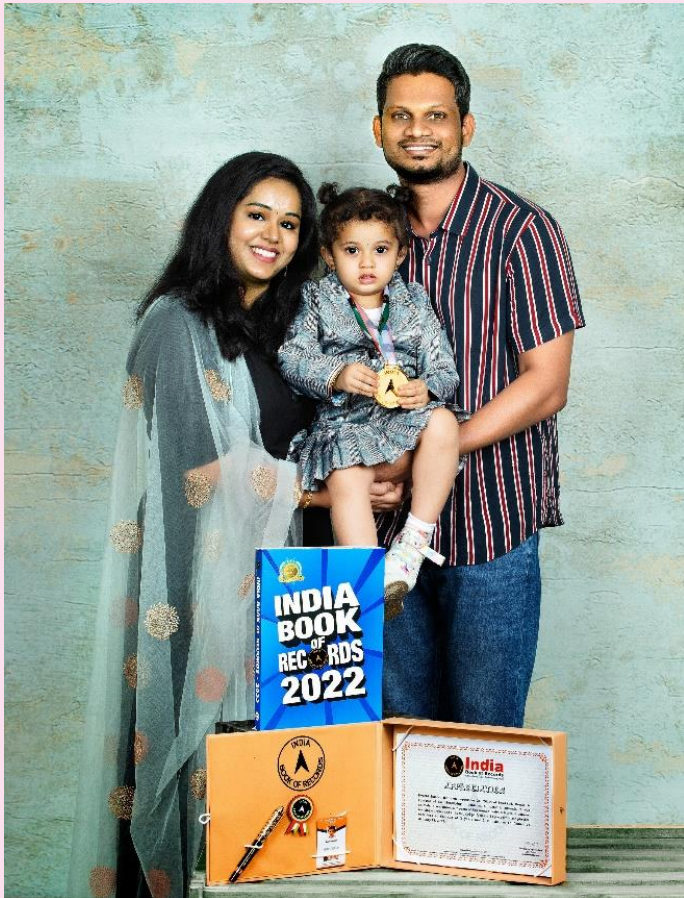


ABOUT NUKSA

Nuksa The Pine Chronicle is the monthly news magazine of IIM Shillong.

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I've taken part in several Infosys PINKATHON events to raise awareness about breast cancer, and I've also got a gold medal for taking part in challenges like "At Home Steps." Painting is one of my favorite ways to relax and unwind, and it's the most gratifying pastime I have. I also like to keep a daily journal. It assists me in expressing my creativity. With a few pages flip, it helps me to return to my past. Adventure sports have always piqued my interest.

I had always chosen my conflicts by viewing time as the most powerful force, and I had always attempted to emit positive energy. The universe works on the principle that what goes around comes around. What you put out is reflected back to you. If you radiate love, you will soon be living in wealth.

Divya Mohan
(PGPEX 2022-2023)

Adulting as a Data Scientist

'Sexiest job of the 21st century'

Harvard Business Review announced 'data scientist' as the sexiest job of the 21st century, in 2012. The world was already in a data boom created with improvements in the 3V's of Big Data - Velocity, Volume & Variety.

As a student with strengths in math, and coding abilities, I too took a plunge to learn data science and become a data scientist.

I enrolled in a 1 year PG course, which was to be the 2nd batch of

the program in data science in Manipal University. Data science as a stream was still coming up slowly and gathering steam in India back in 2017.

As in the training of a data scientist, we covered courses in python/R programming, machine learning, deep learning, visualisation and few other courses in marketing and finance.

Back in those days, as aspiring data scientists, we, a batch of 50 data junkies, would find our fix in competing in hackathons, learning the latest ML packages & basically building models with highest accuracy and getting to the top percentiles, all while wearing our hoodies and pulling redbull all-nighters. Success was defined by the % accuracy of the models we trained and predicted on test data, and we were narrowly focused on it.

This was my perception of success in data science when I left college.

Transitioning to Industry

I joined a youthful data storytelling company called Gramener, in Bangalore, out of campus. My first project at work as to build models that predict household poverty levels using census data in South America. My idea of success was to get the highest possible accuracy using the most advanced of gradient boosting models, with hyper parameter tuning, ensembling models and using every possible trick in the bag to get to 99% accuracy in predictions.

While I was excited that from a baseline accuracy of 77% I had improved my models to get to a 83%, my business stakeholders had a very different set of preoccupations, questions and expectations from this project.

This is where I got my first real learning in data science.

Their questions were along the lines of, 'which are the most important predictors of poverty at a national level'? Do the predictors change in the northern region vs the southern regions of the country, as it is more prosperous as a whole? What does average poverty level look like in terms of indicators such as income, education, access to public services -in each of these 4 levels? Which factor needs to be focused on, region wise, to uplift people from one level of poverty to a higher level of prosperity.

I had none of these answers, as I hadn't even bothered to look.

There were exploratory analysis questions that were more important to answer than predicting a poverty level with higher accuracy. Actionable insights come from asking the right questions to data, and models may (or may not) help you answer those questions which lead to transformative actions

The data scientist training that I received taught me to build predictive models, but not how to answer business questions and drive actions using data science as a tool. Curiosity & the right direction of analysis to uncover truths is a trait that is most valued in data science.

