



USAP News

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh

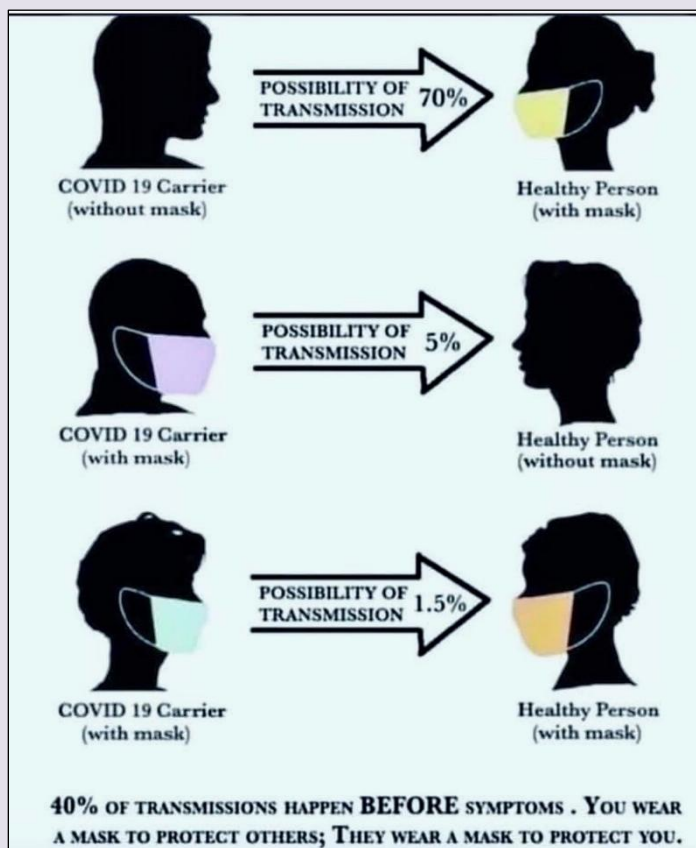
www.USAofpittsburgh.org

Volume 2 Issue 3

July 2020

CORONAVIRUS, cause of COVID19, likely will be with us for a while. Just like the 2011 attack on the World Trade Center forever changed how we fly and made airport security checks a norm of life, the coronavirus is going to make wearing a mask in public a new norm, at least

for the foreseeable future. The Governor of Pennsylvania has made it mandatory to wear a mask in public places, outdoors or indoors when social distancing is not possible. Senior citizens are especially vulnerable and should take this reminder seriously! Wearing a mask does help reduce virus transmission significantly as depicted in the attached graphic.



The volunteers at Sewa for Community group have provided home made fabric masks for free to many local organizations and are willing to provide them to any senior citizen just for the asking. There are advantages to fabric masks as they can be easily washed and ironed and thus can be reused many times. You can easily insert an added tissue inside the mask for added protection.

You can request these masks at no cost by writing to USAP at

usaofpittsburgh@gmail.com and specify the number of masks you need.

USAP NEEDS YOUR HELP

We request you to please renew your membership online at USAP secure website -

<https://www.usaofpittsburgh.org>

Individual memberships: Annual \$30; 4 year \$100; Charter \$500

Please do it today. The strength of USAP lies in its membership.



USAP Presents

Dynamic Wellness through Tai Chi & Qigong

Dr. Kalind Bakshi, M.D.



10:00am
Sunday
July 12, 2020



Similar to Yoga, **Tai chi and Qigong** have their origins from the Ancient Visionaries, monks and ascetics investigating the origin, the purpose and the way of healthy life. **Qigong** is the unknowable or "indescribable" but all powerful, the all knowing and origin of everything- much akin to the Brahman, the non duality in Vedanta. From there, gets "born" the system of Duality - the "Tai Chi" with its famous circle- black and white, night and day, the good and the evil! **ALL LIFE IS NOW IN MOTION**. Practice of **Tai chi** is achieving Balance - body, mind, spirit is often described as "**Meditation in Motion.**"

Qigong is investigation or an exploration of the "unknown" and experience of the Vital entity - the Qi which is the Vitality or the Chaitanya. Ongoing practice of **Tai Chi** leads to the **Qigong** state which is the goal in all these practices. Along the way, health, wellness and balance in life are tangible benefits. During this presentation, participants even with health challenges will learn easy practices and expect to get immediate benefits.

Kalind is a retired Vascular surgeon, Prof of Vascular Surgery, was in practice for 30 years in Philadelphia.

After retirement, he studied Holistic medicine and then became a Board Certified Health Wellness & Life coach. He is a Senior Master Coach, & Coach Trainer with Circle of Life Institute. He has created many coaching programs including weight management, stress mastery, business coaching to name a few. He grew up with a strong foundation of Yoga and Vedanta. He is a Senior Trainer in:

Tai chi & Qigong with IIQTC (Institute of Integral Qigong & Tai chi) & Healer Within Foundation.

He is a Trainer in Oxygen Advantage- a program for optimizing breathing particularly applicable in these times.

He conducts training programs in coaching, Tai chi Qigong and Energy Medicine.

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Meeting ID: 267 278 1054
Meeting PW: 0164713

United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh is a tax-exempt charitable organization. Your support goes a long way in supporting free lunches and expanding our services to the senior citizens.
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USAP News is published quarterly by United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh to keep its members and subscribers informed and connected. Your comments and suggestions are welcome to improve the dialogue.

Editors:

Subash Ahuja, Chetan Patel, Dilip Desai,
Khozem Mogri



How to know if a website is secure?

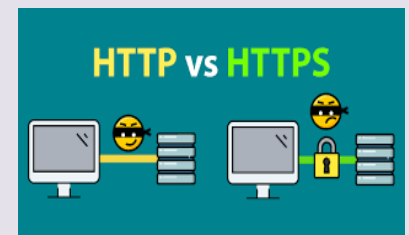
By Dilip Desai

Look at the URL of the **website**. If it begins with “[https](#)” instead of “[http](#)” it means the site is secured. The “**s**” stands for secure [encryption](#), which can only be guaranteed with an [SSL certificate](#). SSL Certificate is required to secure all the data as it is passed from a browser to the website's server. It is secured by encrypting the data by the browser and decrypting the data at the other end by the server.



USAP cares about protecting its members from Identity Fraud, *Data Security* and about their Wellbeing. Rest assured <https://www.USAofPittsburgh.org> is a fully secured site. We purchased and installed an SSL Certificate. Also, USAP site has gone through a major revision including much informative and useful information added on the redesigned site. I draw your attention to the **Resource Guide** tab which offers a list of useful websites on subjects such as Finance, Health, Aging, Travel, Technology and many Senior Sites. Our Website is in its final phase of going through minor cosmetic changes and final testing. Thanks to our own Manoj Verma, original developer of the site to help bring it to full completion in coming weeks.

[HTTP](#) (*Hypertext Transfer Protocol*) and [HTTPS](#) (*Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure*) are two methods used to transfer data across the Internet. As you can see from the names above, [HTTPS](#) provides security enhancements over the original HTTP protocol. When browsing the web, when you visit a website using the HTTP protocol, all of the data moving between your computer or website is sent unencrypted.



Imagine buying something on an eCommerce website, and all of your essential details such as credit card information are sent in plain text. If a hacker managed to interfere in with the data transfer taking place between two systems, your details are there for the taking! [HTTPS](#) was created, so any data sent over the Internet is done in an encrypted way. If a hacker managed to gain access to the data transfer, i.e., your online payment, they'd see a random jumble of letters and numbers in replacement of your credit card details.

The [HTTPS](#) protocol encrypts the entire transaction by using a [Secure Socket Layer \(SSL\)](#). The purpose of [SSL](#) is to create a safe and secure connection between the two critical elements of data transfer, which are server and the web browser. This way, the [HTTPS](#) can provide an encrypted identification of a network server.

[Encryption](#) is a process that encodes a message or file so that it can only be read by certain people. Encryption uses an algorithm to scramble, or encrypt, data and then uses a key for the receiving party to unscramble, or decrypt, the information. In its encrypted, unreadable form it is referred to as cipher text.

[SSL Certificates](#) are small data files that digitally bind a cryptographic key to an organization's details. When installed on a web server, it activates the padlock and the https protocol and allows secure connections from a web server to a browser.

GOOD NEWS FOR JAPAN TRAVELLERS



The COVID19 pandemic has affected us in many ways. Our much-anticipated trip to Japan in April 2020, much to our dismay, got cancelled as a result. USAP had partnered with Chicago based AirTours in arranging this Japan-South Korea tour. Although, everyone was disappointed, we were happy there was no financial loss as a result. Thanks to the efforts of the tour organizers at USAP and the professionalism shown by AirTours, the entire cost of the trip (Pittsburgh to Japan), including the airfare was reimbursed to the tour participants. An administrative cost of \$250 that was withheld was issued as a travel voucher for future use with Air Tours.

The Japan-Korea segment of air travel, however, was difficult to recover, as the offices of the flight operators and Air Tours were temporarily closed because of the pandemic.

We are happy to report, due to the diligent efforts of Air Tours, we have recovered the \$350 charges of the last leg of air travel. Air Tours will be returning this amount to the participating travelers shortly.

Air Tours is customer friendly and reliable and has earned the trust of USAP members!

Kiran Bakshi
Chairman, Travels & Tours

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES FOR 2020

The following membership categories were approved at the General Body meeting held in December 2019.

1. Annual Member (\$30 per person, applicable on a calendar year basis (January to December)).
2. Four-year member (\$100 per person, applicable on a calendar year basis (January to December)).
3. Charter Member (Lifetime Membership; \$500 per person).

A Four-year member can opt to become a Charter member any time during the four-year period by paying the difference of \$400.

NEW 4 YEAR MEMBERS

1. Bhupendra & Niru Kamdar
2. Jagannath & Deepa Karambelkar
3. Rajesh & Kamakshi Mankad
4. Meena Pandit

USAP MEMBERSHIP 2020

Charter Members	:	45
4 Year Members	:	83
Annual Members	:	37

ASWAGANDHA – THE WONDER HERB

By Bhavna Mehta



All of us are born with a spark, with an energy. As we grow, that light dims. Stress, jobs, and daily life get in the way. Fortunately, when this light dims, it is not gone. We are a part of this universe, and on this planet, we humans are not alone. We coexist with everything. For example, the carbon dioxide that we exhale becomes food for trees, which then in turn give us oxygen back. As much as we would like to say that we are independent creatures, we live an interdependent life with nature. We live in a world where we can help heal each other.

Earth has so many herbs that can help the human beings when the spark is dim. Among them, **Ashwagandha** is one of the top herbs. The scientific name for ashwagandha is *Withania somnifera*. It has so much power that many people refer to it as the Indian ginseng. The sacred books of Ayurveda refer to Ashwagandha as “Rasayan.” Rasayan refers to any substance that has a rejuvenating quality and/or reduces emotional tension and bodily discomfort. It establishes a solid foundation of overall physical, mental, and emotional stability in us.

The most well-known qualities of Ashwagandha are:

Adaptogen

Restorative

Tonic

Aphrodisiac

Thermogenic

Stimulant

Anti-depressant

Emotional stabilizer

Rejuvenator

Anti-oxidant

On top of these qualities, it supports longevity and vitality. It helps build strength. It stabilizes mood. Stress can bring havoc on the body, but this herb may support us to shield against its negative effects. It helps against maldevelopment in children. It helps with blood deficiencies and reduces inflammatory, arthritic, and rheumatic conditions. It is particularly useful in alleviating negative conditions associated with old age like dementia and Alzheimer's. It is a mild diuretic and therefore reduces excessive bodily fluid, and it clears edema and heart disease.

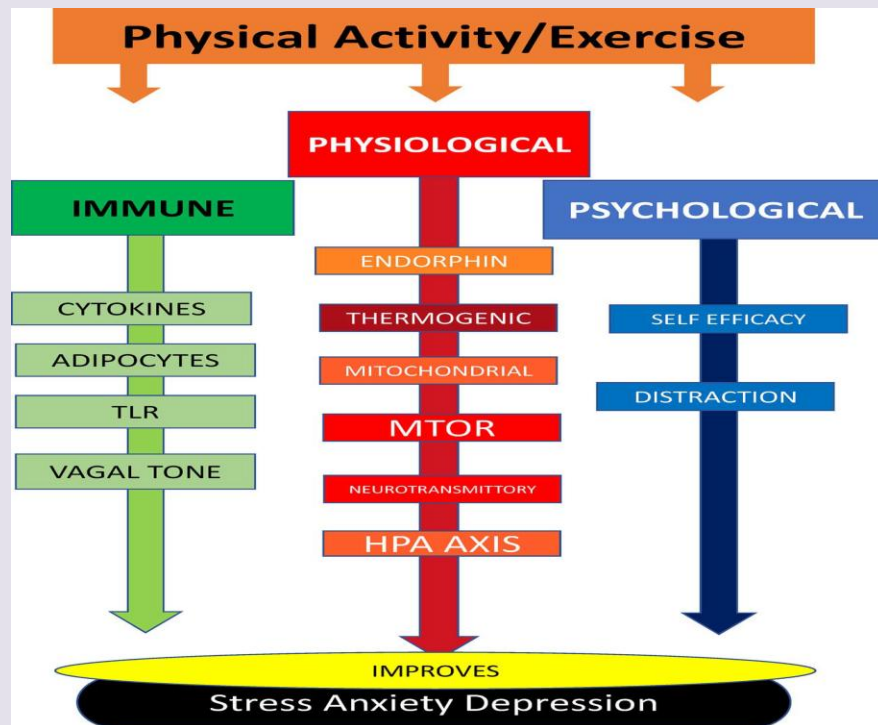
For millennia, ashwagandha has been used on the South Asian subcontinent. The lands at the foothills of the Himalayas provide the fertile conditions for ashwagandha to grow. The nutrient rich powers and properties are transformed into this herb which gives it a transformative power when we consume it.

Modern research on Ashwagandha shows that it can be consumed by itself or as part of a health formula. For best effects, take 2 to 3 grams at least twice a day with warm milk or warm water. It has almost zero known contraindications. Ashwagandha works best when you take it in the morning or at night before sleeping.

THE MANY BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

By Ravi Kolli, M.D.

Dr. Ravi Kolli, a psychiatrist in active practice, gave us an educational ZOOM teleconference in May 2020, regarding How to Cope with COVID19, Physically, Socially, Mentally and Spiritually. Here in this article, he provides the many benefits of exercise which are backed by research and published literature.



EXERCISE AND DEPRESSION & ANXIETY

The literature shows that exercise plays a major role in reducing symptoms of depression. This is an important fact because depression is second only to ischemic heart disease for years lost to disability or premature death.

Research has shown that exercise results in improvement of mood, self-esteem and lowers stress and anxiety. The physical effects of exercise include reduction of blood pressure, improved cardiovascular fitness, weight loss, and prevention of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, osteoporosis, and cognitive conditions like Alzheimer's.

EXERCISE AND BLOOD GLUCOSE

Physical activity improves insulin sensitivity, which in turn lowers blood glucose levels. Regular physical activity (30 minutes per day, 5 or more days per week) is associated with a decrease in blood glucose levels in individuals who have type 2 diabetes mellitus, with an average decrease of Hg A1c levels of 0.5% to 1%.

EXERCISE AND CANCER

Many epidemiologic studies have shown reduction of cancer risk with physical activity. There are multiple factors that play a role in the development of cancer, including diet, alcohol and tobacco use, physical activity, and environmental factors. Regarding exercise, the strongest evidence is seen in the research on prevention of colon and breast cancer.

EXERCISE AND OSTEOARTHRITIS

Arthritis affects more than 70 million Americans, making it the leading cause of physical disability in older individuals. Although the development of osteoarthritis is multifactorial, obesity is a primary risk factor. The Framingham Knee Osteoarthritis Observational Study found that in women who had a BMI greater than 25, losing at least 5.1 kg of weight decreases the risk for developing knee osteoarthritis by 50%.

EXERCISE AND MENOPAUSE

Exercise is shown to have a positive effect on the overall health in women. Several studies in the medical literature demonstrated that women who exercise regularly have a lower rate of hot flashes.

EXERCISE AND OSTEOPOROSIS

Regular physical activity has a positive influence on bone mineral density and strength secondary to bone turnover caused by skeletal muscle activity. A systematic review of the literature from 1966 to 1997 examining the effect of impact and nonimpact exercise on bone mass in pre- and postmenopausal women showed that both types of exercise have a positive effect on bone mass at the lumbar spine. The data showed that exercise slowed the rate of spine bone mass loss in postmenopausal women.

There are many other benefits of exercise. Physical activity has a positive effect on neuronal growth and on learning and memory. [Exercise helps control overweight and obesity, and in preventing heart disease.](#)

SUMMARY

Physical activity is associated with multiple health benefits across the life course. Regular activity has been shown to play a role in the primary and secondary prevention of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and obesity. In addition to these physical health benefits, regular participation in physical activity is associated with a range of positive mental health–related outcomes, including reduced anxiety, stress, and depression, enhanced cognitive function and academic performance

The article has been abridged with key essentials for lack of space. Anyone interested in further reading the full article with attached bibliography can e-mail the request to Subash.ahuja@gmail.com.

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

By Khozem Mogri

SURYA NAMASKAR			
ASANA	BREATH	CHAKRA	BENEFITS
Pranamasana	Inhale & Exhale	Anahata (Heart)	Induces a sense of calm and introspection
Hasta Uttanasana	Inhale	Vishuddhi (Throat)	Stretches the chest & abdomen lifting the Prana to the upper body
Padahastanasana	Exhale	Muladhara (Root)	Stretches hamstrings and blood flows to the brain. Prana travels to the lower body
Ashwa Sanchalanasana	Inhale	Ajna (Third Eye)	Improves hip flexibility and stretches groin muscles
Chaturanga Dandasana	Exhale	Vishuddhi (Throat)	Strengthens core abdominal muscles, arms, wrists, upper back & neck
Ashtangasana	Hold breath in	Swadhisthana (Spleen)	Increases blood flow to the chest and strengthens the arms & shoulders
Bhujangasana	Inhale	Muladhara (Root)	Relieves tension in the lower back & gives an expansion to the abdomen & chest
Adho Mukha Shvanasana	Exhale	Vishuddhi (Throat)	Strengthen arms, shoulders & legs & stretches the calf muscles. Increases blood flow to the brain
Ashwa Sanchalanasana	Inhale	Ajna (Third Eye)	Improves hip flexibility and stretches groin muscles
Padahastanasana	Exhale	Muladhara (Root)	Stretches hamstrings and blood flows to the brain. Prana travels to the lower body
Hasta Uttanasana	Inhale	Vishuddhi (Throat)	Stretches the chest & abdomen lifting the Prana to the upper body
Pranamasana	Exhale	Anahata (Heart)	Induces a sense of calm and introspection

The idea of International Yoga Day was first proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 27, 2014, during his speech at the UN General Assembly. The suggested date for International Yoga day was 21st June as it is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and shares a special significance in many parts of the world. This resolution received support from 177 nations, the highest number of co-sponsors for any UN resolution. International Day of Yoga has now been celebrated annually all over the world on 21st June since 2015.

Yoga International Day is observed every year to spread awareness of the importance of effects of yoga on the general health of people. Here in Pittsburgh, USAP celebrated International Yoga Day via Zoom teleconference. Celebrated yoga teachers Bhavna Mehta (from Classic Yoga and Wellness Studio) and Sushil Shinde (from The Art of Living) led the audience with the various asanas of yoga and meditation, providing the true sense of Yog – the union of the body and the mind.

We all dread sickness and are fearful of the uncertainties of the future. Further, COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown has further added physical, mental, emotional, and financial stresses that influence one's well-being. Here, we can benefit from yoga if we make it part of the daily routines of our life.

THE MANY BENEFITS OF YOGA THAT ARE SUPPORTED BY SCIENCE

1. Decrease stress
2. Relieves Anxiety
3. Reduces inflammation
4. Improve heart health
5. Improves quality of life
6. Fights depression
7. Increase strength
8. Reduces chronic pain
9. Promotes sleep quality
10. Improves flexibility and balance
11. Improves breathing
12. Relieves migraines
13. Promotes healthy eating habits

SEWA FOR COMMUNITY

IN NAME OF SEWA OUR COMMUNITY STANDS UNITED

By Hiral Shah and Sai Phanindra Venkatapurapu



COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in unprecedented ways. While long term consequences on societies, nations, and economies are sure to lead us to a new normal, in the short-term many local communities are experiencing great hardships. This crisis, however, has brought out the best in our community. Thanks to the leadership provided by Kiran Patil, Volunteers from 26 local Indian organizations have joined hands and pooled their various strengths under the banner of #Sewa4Community to serve the many humanitarian needs in Pittsburgh community. These volunteers are selfless people who have donated their time, skills, effort and money, not only to provide help where needed, but also stretched their hands to honor and show

appreciation to the many first responders, the unsung heroes during these difficult times. As of June, Sewa4Community has provided help in one way or another, to hospitals, police departments, fire departments, community centers, soup kitchens and the homeless shelters.

A total of 1049 reusable fabric masks were distributed to St. Clair Hospital, Franklin Park Volunteer Fire Company, Franklin Park Police Department, Taj Mahal Restaurant, AHN, Concordia of South Fayette, Troop 81 Boys Scouts of America, Waste Management employees, Upper St. Clair Police Department, Jubilee Soup Kitchen, Hindu Jain Temple and BRAVE (Bhutanese Response Assistance Volunteer Effort). Additionally, we donated 1800 packed lunch bags to the Light of Life rescue mission (homeless shelter) and Jubilee Soup Kitchen. We expressed our gratitude for the first responders working on the front lines by providing meals to UPMC East Emergency Department, Murrysville Police Department, Plum Police Department, Forbes Hospital, Monroeville Police Department, South Fayette Police Department and Upper St Clair Police Department. The Latino Community Center appreciated our donation of food, essential supplies, and baby essentials to their families. Our volunteers also participated in Greater Pittsburgh Community Food bank's home delivery program for at-risk individuals in the community.

Along with the many different organizations, Taj Mahal Indian Restaurant has been a major contributor during this time of crisis. They provided nearly 800 lunch boxes to the heroes working on the front lines at UPMC, St. Clair Hospitals, Allegheny Health Network, Washington Health Systems, and Ross Township Police Department.



Thanks also to Manjiri Kshirsagar, Preeti Paranjpe, Raja Pragallapati, Shweta Chakradeo, Sathya Vagheeswar, Swatee Nanivadekar, Hitesh Mehta, Priyesh Shah, Jigar Amin, Jayesh Bhanushali, Vebugopal Nair, to name a few, who helped coordinate all these activities.

In addition to the above service activities, volunteers from Art of Living, Village Center for Holistic Therapy and Isha Foundation teamed up with the United Seniors Association of Pittsburgh and provided free yoga and meditation classes to improve the physical and mental well-being of the Pittsburghers!

We Hindus follow a culture of empathy and togetherness and there is no better way to express these emotions than helping fellow human beings at time of their need.



About Sewa4Community

Sewa4Community is a collective effort of organizations and individuals rooted in Indic Values. We believe in “Sewa Dharma” which translates to “Service to Humanity is Service to Divinity”. Sewa4Community also exists in many other cities across the US.

Check <https://www.sewa4community.us> for more information.