Stay Fit with Angamardana

The human muscular system is a phenomenal thing. What our muscles can do is fantastic. And this can be enhanced by strengthening them, but at the same time, keep them very flexible. In yoga, we do not just look at muscular strength alone. If you do a lot of weights, your muscles will look big but will not have flexibility. You may have seen people with big muscles, but they cannot even bend. If you build muscle beyond a certain point, you will need a lot of sleep as the body has to do too much unnecessary work. If you become excessively muscular, you will not be able to sit with your eyes closed. If strength and resilience is what you are looking for, you need to strengthen the fundamental fabric of the body. This is what Angamardana does.

Angamardana is one of those dimensions of yoga that most people are not aware of. It means to “master your limbs”. It uses your own body weight to do all the exercise, so you don’t need any equipment, just a 6x6 ft space. Angamardana works on the ligaments and sinews of the body more than the muscles. It is not like lifting weights for bigger muscles. If you do Angamardana, the load will be on the ligaments and sinews. The “bands” that hold the skeletal system and muscles together are stretched the most. This is why Angamardana gives you a different kind of strength and resilience.

When I was young, I could climb just about anything. Just a small hold of half-an-inch depth was quite enough for me. I could easily reach my body weight in this small area. When I was 13-year-old, I once saw a 70-year-old man climbing up a 55 to 60 feet deep well faster than I, on holds that were just deep enough to grip with your fingertips. Obviously he had prepared his body way better than me. At that time, I had not even heard of Angamardana. To be able to have every single muscle in my body to climb every tree and structure that I saw. But he had systematically trained himself.

If you think of the many regions in India and Nepal, you will see women, who are barely four-and-a-half to five feet tall, looking frail and malnourished. They may weigh only 40 kg, but they carry woods or other materials which weigh around 70 kg. Their system has become so strong because from an early age, living in the mountains, they have been walking up and down the slopes, carrying loads.

Another example is the Sherpa boys who come with Isha on the Mt. Kailash trek. Once, when we climbed the Thorong La pass, which is at an altitude of 17,800 feet, participants were panting for air with every step. But these Sherpa boys were carrying the whole baggage, gas cylinders, cooking equipment, etc. on top of everything else. When we reached there, all of us sat down, glad that our hearts did not fail, and waited for our breath to settle down. But these guys threw the baggage down and instantly started running around, chasing each other, leaping upon each other, fighting and rolling around just for fun—at this altitude.

This is the kind of fitness that is built right from childhood. These are not only aerobic capabili-
ties—their basic fabric of life is strong.

Similarities with Angamardana, it builds a different level of strength as well as building muscles, but to strengthen the ligaments and sinews that anchor you to your skeletal system which gives you the fundamental form. Once you strengthen them, they will keep you in good stead for a lifetime.

Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, a bestselling author & poet. He has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan in 2017. Isha.sadhguru.org