Yoga and the Endocrine System

Some people have referred to Yoga as an Endocrine therapy. The Endocrine System is finely balanced and interconnected, with the health of each gland (and certain organs) as important as the next. If one goes slightly out of balance it can affect all of them.

As well as relating, to a large extent, to the Chakra system, the function of the glandular system – homeostasis – in many ways mirrors that of Yoga; a slow, mindful way of maintaining balance.

In modern society, where there is a tendency towards stress hormone domination, Yoga restores balance by boosting the relaxation response, which in turn decreases adrenal and cortisol levels.

Stress is the biggest disruptor of the endocrine system, so Yoga is a natural partner for it. This must be a consistent Yoga practice to make any permanent change. The nervous system reacts to stress very quickly and has the capacity to return to balance equally quickly. The endocrine system is much slower, taking time to release hormones into the blood. These hormones can remain in the system, long after the stressor has been removed.

The mindfulness aspect of Yoga, especially in relation to directing awareness to the Chakras, creates stronger mind-gland connections. We can note changes or imbalance more readily, and, to a large extent modulate the glands.

- Many of the yoga postures compress or open the glands and thus stimulate them – think of the **thyroid** in Camel Pose and Jalanda Bandha (neck lock). Yoga has been shown to lower metabolism rates so you can be more efficient on less
- Yoga has been shown to modulate **the Pancreas** and help regulate Type 2 Diabetes
- In managing stress, Yoga supports **adrenal gland** health and prevents adrenal fatigue and burnout. It also reduces stress hormones like cortisol which can have a damaging impact on health

- It also balances **reproductive** hormones with benefits for PMS, menopausal symptoms, and fertility.
- Yoga is said to stimulate the **thymus gland** which produces T-Cells for the immune system.
- It also tones and balances **the pineal gland** for increased body rhythm, better sleep patterns etc.
- The focus in yoga on the third eye or 6th Chakra brings healing and balance to the master gland – **the pituitary** – and also to **the pineal**. It is also said to re-enforce the hypothalamus – pituitary complex, where the actions of the endocrine and nervous system are coordinated.