

LAYOGA

AYURVEDA AND HEALTH

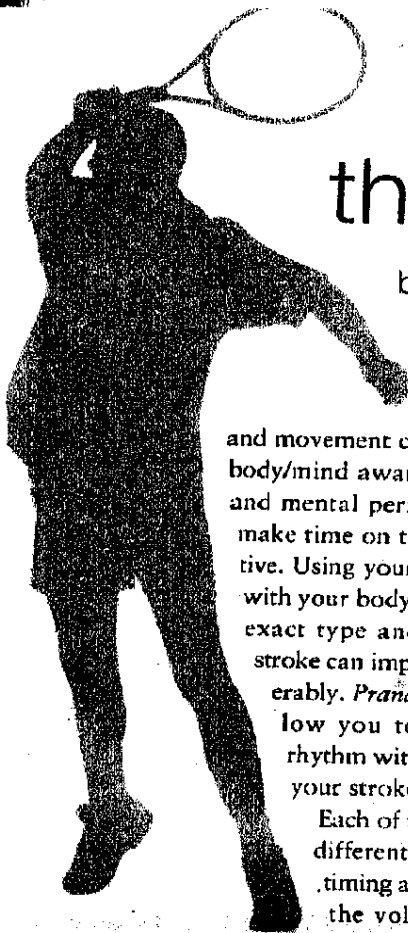
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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S
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as a
performance
countdown to
LA marathon
breathe for
better tennis
relax to
reinvigorate

the zen of tennis

breathing with the ball



COORDINATING BREATH and movement creates a greater integration of body/mind awareness and increased physical and mental performance beyond the mat to make time on the tennis court more productive. Using your breath to first find a rhythm with your body movements and then find the exact type and length of breath for each stroke can improve your tennis game considerably. *Pranayama* (breath control) will allow you to relax your muscles, find rhythm with your footwork and produce your strokes more effortlessly.

Each of the strokes in tennis requires a different type of breath based on the timing and the length of the swing. For the volley, the breath is short and

quick. Take a preparatory inhalation on the split step, and then exhale when you make contact with the ball.

For the groundstroke, the breath is long. Inhale in preparation as you draw your racket back and then exhale as you hit the ball.

For the serve, there are three specific phases for the breath. First, exhale as you lower your arms, then inhale as you raise your arms up to toss the ball, and when your hitting arm extends up again to hit the ball, accelerate your exhalation to match the pace of your arm's movement. The overhead is similar to the serve, without the first inhalation.

While we may grunt and groan on the court, the practice of more coordinated and fluid integration of breath and movement soon becomes second nature and is well worth the effort.

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Betsy Wise teaches ZENnis™, a blend of yoga and tennis to groups and individuals to help people coordinate breath with physical movements on the tennis court. Find out more at: zennis.net.