

## **Division of Ancient Period**

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### **DIVISION OF ANCIENT PERIOD**

India Valley Civilization Period	(3250 B.C.– 2500 B.C.)
The Vedic Period	(2500 B.C.– 600 B.C.)
Early Hindu Period	(600 B.C.– 320 B.C.)
Later Hindu Period	(320 AD – 1000 AD)
Medieval Period	(1000 AD – 1757 AD)

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### **Indus ally Civilization Period (3250 B.C. – 2500B.C.)**

There is no record of any physical art or craft during the pre-vedic age. But an idea of the can be formed from a careful study of the war weapons, tool and implements, seals and sculptures found at Harappan and Mahanjodaro. During this age the objective of physical exercise was achieved through a daily routine of work games, sports and amusements.

Dancing, particularly community dancing, was the favorite recreation of pre-vedic people as it appears from a bronze dancing girl from Mahanjodaro in the National Museum in Delhi. The most important and interesting things during the Indus Valley Civilization at Mahanjodaro was the Grcort Bath, which was similar to modern swimming pool. It was a part of vast dropalhic establishment, which measured 60 mts by 36 mts. The actual swimming pool measuring 18 mts by 7 mts. Was situated in the middle of a quadrangle having varandhas on all sides. Near the great bath was situated hammam, a kind of hot and cold shower and oil room.

Marbles, balls and dice were used for games. Dicing was a very popular game as it would be evident from a large no of dices unearthed. Both cubical and tubular specimens have been found. It is, however, not certain whether the throwing of dice constituted a game in itself. Most probably dices were used along with board games. Two incomplete specimens of game boards have been found. Animal fighting was another past time during this civilization. Boxing was also in practice as evident from a seal found.

### **Vedic period (2500 B.C. – 600B.C.)**

Suryanamaskara, the origin of which dates back to vedic period was performed more as a religious duty than today a mere physical exercise or training. Now this has developed into a very popular exercise for health. The practice of pranayama was another important development which took place during this period. It was considered beneficial for the lungs and as a means of prolonged life. Military training was also popular during this period, because Aryans were engaged in subjugating non-Aryans and establishing their supremacy. As it demanded physical strength, vigour and martial skill they were involved in hand wrestling, use bow and arrow, dagger fight, sword fight, mace fight, hurling the discuss and spear. Horse riding, chariot racing, hunting, elephant riding and boxing were also needed in battle.

Ball games were in practice during this period and were played by men as well as women. Game with ball seems to have been the chief outdoor physical exercise. Playing of dice had become very popular. It was played by the young as well as old. The art of the boxing was known to the Aryans and it was used in battles for defeating the enemies.

Hunting as a sport was also prevalent. Music and dancing as well known. Birds and animals fitting was also popular pastime. Fights were organized in the fair and festivals for amusements. Great emphasis was placed on the culture of physique greater than academic learning. Physical strength was emphasized greater than academic learning. Practice of yoga was recommended for the development of spiritual strength.

### **Early Hindu Period (600 B.C – 320 A.D.)**

Ramayana makes a great deal of reference to physical training and recreation. Dramas and festivals played an important part in the life of citizens during this period. Hunting was very popular which was considered a royal sport. Big dogs were domesticated for the purpose of sport. Enjoying water sports surrounded by female attendants was another diversion for the kings. Dicing and chess were popular games. **The game of chess was in fact the invention of some Hindu and this country is considered the original home of this game which spread throughout the ancient world.** Animals' combats were also prevalent. Wrestling, male fight, chariot driving, archery and water tactics prevalent during the Mahabharata period, depict the nature of physical culture practice existence at that time. Balarama was a strong man and excelled in wrestling and male fighting. He was an excellent teacher in the art of teaching male fighting. Bhisma was skilled in all the branches of physical culture and weapons and was a mighty Bowman. The practice of fighting with animals was prevalent and was considered to be an important feature of this age.

### **Later Hindu Period (320 A.D. – 1000 A.D.)**

Great universities like Taksila and Nalanda developed during this period. There was a happy correlation of the physical, intellectual and aesthetic training at this centre of learning. Wrestling, archery, and mounting climbing were given special attention. At Nalanda University swimming, breathing, exercise and yoga formed an essential part of the daily life of student. During this period physical education was greatly patronized by the Gupta Rulers, people followed the glorious example set by their brave rulers and participated in mainly sports and physical activities. India during this period was a land of men noted for the excellence of their physique and keenness of their intellect. In the art work of Kusana period of Mathura, several scenes of combats between men and lion can be noticed. Great emphasis was laid on the military and physical art during the Ganga dynasty in Orissa. During this period hunting was very popular pastime of the people. There were 31 ways of hunting known to the people. Cock fighting was another popular sport. There were separate officials to look after each of the eight varieties of cocks which were known to be suitable for fighting. Elephant, buffalo, and partridge fighting was also in existence. There were more than ten swimming pools near Nalanda monastery and every morning a bell was sounded to remind the student of the swimming hours. Bodily health was considered important for the improvement of the spiritual condition. Exercises were encouraged in the monasteries. Great emphasis was laid on the maintenance of sound health and physical fitness which was achieved through regular habits, regular dirt, long walking, physical labour such as collecting of twigs and filling water etc.

### **Medieval Period (1000 A.D. – 1757 A.D.)**

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D. our system of physical education was promoted in the Gurukulas(place of study where the teachers and taught lived together) by our ancient teachers in the gymnasiums which enjoyed the high patronage of kings.

During the 1200 to 1525 A.D. kings paid more attention towards the military which resulted in practice of handling different types of weapons for self – defence.

The well known religious prophets like **Shree Samarth Ramadas Swamee** felt the importance of physical education. He used to practice 1200 Suryanamaskars everyday. He travelled throughout the country and inspired people to build gymnasium with a temple of God Hanuman and

practice namaskar everyday. Because of his efforts hundreds of gymnasiums were built in the country. Hence he can be rightly called as the “**Grand Father of Indian Movement**”. However, traditionally, the indigenous system of physical education was promoted in the religious places, though very few gymnasiums were in operation or functional. The physical activities in the gymnasium included Suryanamaskars, Dands, Heavy Club Swinging, Malkhamb, Wrestling, Sword fight etc. The rulers of the time themselves were lovers of gymnasium work and they patronized several wrestlers.

The art of Malkhamb was revived and a new type of Malkhamb known as Hanging Malkhamb and care Malkhamb were introduced during this period. Horse riding, Javeline, Wrestling, hunting, male fighting, and above all archery were extremely popular sports with the Rajputs. The Rajputs were lovers of festivals, music and dance. The Rajput girls were also tough to ride horses without saddle. The tradition of religious fairs in Rajasthan speaks of that glory. The chess was extremely popular recreational activity not only amongst the princes but also among the masses.

Later on the Mughals gained supremacy over the entire sub-continent. The physical education continued to play an important role in the life of the countries and soldiers. Hunting, sword fighting, mace fighting, horse riding were preferred to yogic exercises, because physical activity leading to acquisition of war skills was an important aspect of the life of these people. The Mughals were great patrons of wrestling as it served dual purpose as a recreation game as well as suitable actually for war preparedness. They encouraged the wrestling schools and even kept wrestlers in their courts. Often dands and baithaks were used to develop muscular power and elasticity. Massaging was an extremely important aspect of wrestling training. Boxing was another notable activity. Hunting, swimming, animal fight were other activities which were popular during this period. Chagan is considered to be a precursor of polo. This sports was even played at night. Pigeon flying was another past-time very popular during this period. Individual sports competitions especially horse riding and sword fighting were a matter of routine in the courts.

Apart from out-door activity sporting events the countries and the commoners recreated themselves with such activities as chess, changer, pachissi etc. This way the history owes to the Mughals rulers who had great love for games and sports and for construction of great gardens in various parts of the country which are able regarded as a big source of recreation.

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