



shirley flack

In virtuoso

... or why Mr Menuhin stands on his head

THIS is the age of the expense-account paunch and the aching back. Inevitably it is also the age of the slimming salon. Figure care has become a cult and it is no longer exclusive to women.

Almost every man I know is currently doing something to achieve or retain that trim, youthful look.

Methods vary with personality. Ernest Marples pedals. Lord Hailsham swims. Jack Hylton goes into seclusion and lives on water and fruit juice.

So young,
so sad,
says Miss
Cooper

GLADYS COOPER, who is 74 and currently appearing in a play called *The Bird of Time*, was talking about the modern trend in entertainment and the corresponding differences in young actors and actresses.

"I like the play I'm doing," she said. "because it reminds me of the plays I used to do. Once it was glamorous to go to the theatre. Now it's all so dirty. Elegance is an old-fashioned

Next week an event takes place which is going to have an even more significant effect on thousands of British waistlines. Mr. B. K. Iyengar, India's foremost teacher of yoga—whose pupils include Mr. Nehru, the Queen Mother of Belgium, and Yehudi Menuhin—arrives in person in Britain.

Already applications to attend his lecture demonstrations are piling in. There is a queue for private lessons, so much so that the organisers of the visit are having to vet would-be "pupils" to make sure his valuable time is not wasted by frivolous people.

Squatting

FASCINATION with yoga extends predictably from Aldous Huxley to Professor J. S. S. Haldane. More surprising is that as you read this, thousands of less elevated people are standing on their heads, squatting in Lotus pose (knees bent and flat on the floor, feet crossing in the middle) or practising their Yoga Mudra.

Every morning Yehudi Menuhin springs out of bed and does 20 minutes of shirsasan (standing on his head). He considers his day wouldn't be right without it.

"Sometimes," said Mrs. Menuhin, formerly ballerina Dorcen Gould, "he does it during the day too. If pressure gets too much he'll just quietly put his hands on the ground and stand on his head for a few minutes. It relieves all the tension."



Mrs Menuhin: 'So slimming'



Menuhin plays it Da Capo—"from the head"

Visiting

YOGA came into their life in Bombay in 1954. Mrs. Menuhin explained: "My husband had always been looking for some sort of exercises. We all need an antidote to the everyday strain. But lift-ups and bends create more of a strain.

"Then we met Mr. Nehru in India. He said that he kept his health during his long terms in prison by doing yoga morning and night. He introduced us to Mr. Iyengar. My husband started taking lessons from him and visits him at every opportunity, sometimes at six in the morning."

Both their sons, Jeremy, 9, and Gerard, 12, do it, too. "They stand on their heads very often," said Mrs. Menuhin. "We're always being rung up by friends, famous people at the top of their professions who are having problems with tension. We tell them to try yoga and it always works."

Dabbling

ONE very famous pianist had such appalling cramp in his shoulders that he thought he would have to give up music. He took up yoga and has never had a pain since.

"My husband doesn't go in for the spiritual side of yoga. With him it's purely a physical thing, and he's become very good at it. He can take up the most fantastic positions you've ever seen in your life with his legs wound round his neck, and not upset the rhythm of his breathing. Really good pupils fall asleep within seconds."

Mrs. Menuhin (who admits that she just dabbles in yoga occasionally but nothing serious) is not put out by being surrounded by a house full of people who continually stand on their heads or freeze in odd positions on the floor. "I think it's a jolly good thing," she said. "It is marvellous for the figure."