Ancient India

In India, the pursuit of fitness was discouraged because Buddhism and Hinduism put a greater emphasis on spirituality than on physical fitness. However, Hindu priests did develop an exercise program that conformed to their religious beliefs; that program came to be known as yoga. Though its exact origin has yet to be identified, yoga has existed for at least the past 5,000 years. Translated, the word *yoga* means "union," a reference to the Hindu philosophy that strives to unite and develop the body, mind and spirit. By observing and mimicking the movement patterns of animals, the priests hoped to achieve the same balance with nature that animals seemed to possess.