

YOGA, ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Yoga, Its Origin, History and Development

Yoga is a spiritual discipline that focuses on bringing mind and body into harmony. It is based on a very subtle science. It is both an art and a science of living a healthy lifestyle. The name 'Yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj,' which means 'to join, yoke, or unite.' Yoga, according to Yogic texts, leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, implying complete harmony between the mind and body, as well as between Man and Nature. Everything in the universe, according to current scientists, is only a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga, and is termed as a yogi, having attained to a state of freedom referred to as mukti, nirvana or moksha. Thus, the aim of Yoga is Self-realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). Living with freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of Yoga practice. "Yoga" also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can realize this union and achieve mastery over their destiny. Yoga, being widely considered as an 'immortal cultural outcome' of Indus Saraswati Valley civilization – dating back to 2700 B.C., has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. Basic humane values are the very identity of Yoga Sadhana.

A Brief History and Development of Yoga:

The science of Yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religion or belief systems were born. The seers and sages carried this powerful Yogic science to different parts of the world including Asia, the Middle East, northern Africa and South America. Interestingly, modern scholars have noted and marvelled at the close parallels found between ancient cultures across the globe. However, it was in India that the Yogic system found its fullest expression. Agastya, the saptarishi, who travelled across the Indian subcontinent, crafted this culture around a core Yogic way of life.

Yoga is widely considered as an "immortal cultural outcome" of the Indus Saraswati Valley Civilisation - dating back to 2700 BC - and has proven itself to cater to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. A number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati Valley Civilisation with Yogic motifs and figures performing Yoga sādhanā suggest the presence of Yoga in ancient India. The seals and idols of mother Goddess are suggestive of Tantra Yoga. The presence of Yoga is also available in folk traditions, Vedic and Upanishadic heritage, Buddhist and Jain traditions, Darshanas, epics of Mahabharata including Bhagawadgita and Ramayana, theistic traditions of Shaivas, Vaishnavas and Tantric traditions. Though Yoga was being practiced in the pre-Vedic period, the great sage Maharishi Patanjali systematised and codified the then existing Yogic practices,

its meaning and its related knowledge through Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

After Patanjali, many sages and Yoga masters contributed greatly for the preservation and development of the field through well documented practices and literature. Yoga has spread all over the world by the teachings of eminent Yoga masters from ancient times to the present date.

Today, everybody has conviction about Yoga practices towards prevention of diseases, and promotion of health. Millions of people across the globe have benefitted by the practice of Yoga and the practice of Yoga is blossoming and growing more vibrant with each passing day.

Etymology

The Sanskrit yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj "to attach, join, harness, yoke". According to Burley, the first use of the root of the word "yoga" is in hymn of the Rig Veda, a dedication to the rising Sun- god in the morning (Savitri), where it has been interpreted as "yoke" or "yogically control".

Definition of Yoga in Classical Indian Texts:

Vaisesika sutra: "Pleasure and suffering arise as a result of the drawing together of the sense organs, the mind and objects. When that does not happen because the mind is in the self, there is no pleasure or suffering for one who is embodied. That is yoga"

Katha Upanishad: "When the five senses, along with the mind, remain still and the intellect is not active, that is known as the highest state. They consider yoga to be firm restraint of the senses. Then one becomes un-distracted for yoga is the arising and the passing away"

Bhagavad Gita: "Be equal minded in both success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yoga" "Yoga is skill in action". "Know that which is called yoga to be separation from contact with suffering".

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: "Yoga is fourfold: faith, aspiration, perseverance and means"

Linga Purana: "By the word 'yoga' is meant nirvana, the condition of Shiva."

Yogabija, a Hatha yoga work: "The union of apana and prana, one's own rajas and semen, the sun and moon, the individual Self and the supreme Self, and in the same way the union of all dualities, is called yoga. "

Etymology and Definitions of Yoga:

Hatha Yoga:

Hatha yoga is described in the Yoga Upanishads as a method of achieving physical and mental purity and balance. Although hatha yoga is the most well-known form of yoga, its meaning is greatly misunderstood. Hatha is commonly translated as 'force,' but it is actually a combination of two words, ha and tha, which correlate to the pingala and ida nadis, respectively, in yogic literature. The main nadis in Hatha yoga are Ida, Pingala & Susumna. There are five distinct practices in Hatha yoga are Asanas, Pranayama, Bandhas, Mudras & Kriyas.

Prostrating first to the Guru, Yogi Swatmarama instructs the knowledge of Hatha which is also known as one of the highest state of Yoga. It is also emphasized that Hatha yoga is to be practiced for the sole purpose of preparing oneself for the highest state of Raja yoga i.e., Samadhi.

Bhagavad Gita:

1. योगस्थो कुरु कर्मणां सङ्गमं त्यक्त्वा धनान्जया

सिद्धि-असिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वम् योग उच्यते 2.48

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya

siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate

yoga-sthaḥ—being steadfast in yog; kuru—perform; karmāṇi—duties; saṅgaṁ—

attachment; tyaktvā—having abandoned; dhanañjaya—

Arjun; siddhi-asiddhyoḥ—in success and failure; samaḥ—equipoised; bhūtvā—

becoming; samatvam—equanimity; yogaḥ—Yog; uchyate—is called.

Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, O Arjun, abandoning attachment to success and failure. Such equanimity is called Yog.

2. बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीहा उभे सुकृता-दुष्कृते

तस्माद् योग्या युज्यस्वा योग कर्मासु कौशलम् 2.50

buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛita-duṣhkṛite

tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśhalam

buddhi-yuktaḥ—endowed with wisdom; jahāti—get rid of; iha—in this life; ubhe—both;

sukṛita-duṣhkṛite—good and bad deeds; tasmāt—

therefore; yogāya—for Yog; yujyasva—strive for; yogaḥ—yog is; karmasu kauśhalam—the art of working skillfully

One who prudently practices the science of work without attachment can get rid of both good and bad reactions in this life itself.

Therefore, strive for Yog, which is the art of working skillfully (in proper consciousness).

3. अपानं जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणे 'पानं तथापरे

प्राणपाना-गतिं रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामा-परायणं

अपरे नियतहारं प्राणं प्राणेशु जुह्वति

सर्वे 'प्येते यज्ज्ञा-विदो यज्ज्ञा-क्षपिता-कल्माषाः

अपानं जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणे 'पानं तथापरे

प्राणपाना-गतिं रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामा-परायणं

अपरे नियतहारं प्राणं प्राणेशु जुह्वति

sarve 'pyete yajña-vido yajña-kṣhapita-kalmaṣāḥ

apāne—the incoming breath; juhvati—offer; prāṇam—the outgoing breath; prāṇe—in

the outgoing breath; apānam—incoming breath; tathā—

also; apare—others; prāṇa—of the outgoing breath; apāna—and the incoming breath;

gatī—movement; ruddhvā—blocking; prāṇa-āyāma—control

of breath; parāyaṇāḥ—wholly devoted; apare—others; niyata—having controlled;

āhārāḥ—food intake; prāṇān—life-breaths; prāṇeṣhu—lifeenergy;

juhvati—sacrifice; sarve—all; api—also; ete—these; yajña-vidaḥ—knowers of sacrifices;

yajña-kṣhapita—being cleansed by performances

of sacrifices; kalmaṣāḥ—of impurities

Still others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming breath, while some offer the incoming breath into the outgoing breath.

Some arduously practice prāṇāyām and restrain the incoming and outgoing breaths, purely absorbed in the regulation of the life-energy.

Yet others curtail their food intake and offer the breath into the life-energy as sacrifice.

All these knowers of sacrifice are cleansed of

their impurities as a result of such performances.

Katha Upanishad

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
यदा पाँचवातिष्ठान्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा साहा ।
बुद्धिर्ना विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमार्थं गतिम् ॥
तान् योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरमिन्द्रियधराणाम् ।
अप्रमत्तास्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रब्रह्मवैश्वानराय ॥

yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha |

buddhiśca na viceṣṭate tāmāhuḥ paramārtham gatim ||

tān yogamiti manyante sthirāmindriyadhārāṇām |

apramattastadā bhavati yogo hi prabhavāpyayau ||

Only when Manas (mind) with thoughts and the five senses stand still,
and when Buddhi (intellect, power to reason) does not waver, that they call the highest
path.

That is what one calls Yoga, the stillness of the senses, concentration of the mind,

It is not thoughtless heedless sluggishness, Yoga is creation and dissolution.

Yoga Vashishtha

ॐ:ॐॐॐॐ ॐॐॐ:ॐॐ ॐॐॐॐॐॐॐॐ ! (ॐ.ॐ.3-9-32)

Manah prashamanopayah yoga ityabhidhiyate(Yoga Vasistha)

yoga is called skilful trick to calm down the mind.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Aims, Objectives and Misconceptions

aim of Yoga is Self-realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya).

Some yoga masters have described the ultimate goal of yoga as achieving a “higher state of being”. You might have heard of the word “moksha”

which means Nirvana or the liberation from worldly suffering and the cycle of rebirth and reincarnation, leading to an enlightened relationship with

the Creator. However, different yoga schools have different beliefs about this relationship.

Generally, for most of us, the ultimate goal of yoga is to be a better version of ourselves – to be healthier and happier. To achieve a new

perspective on life and all that comes with it, to discover and embrace the true self and to appreciate every moment, and to live a happy, balanced

and useful life. This would make a lot of sense to most of us as the word “yoga” itself means “to join or unite”, which implies joining or integrating all

aspects of the individual body with mind and mind with soul.

Yoga education helps in self-discipline and self-control, leading to immense amount of awareness, concentration and higher level of consciousness.

Briefly the objectives of Yoga education are:

1) To enable the student to have good health.

2) To practice mental hygiene.

3) To possess emotional stability.

4) To integrate moral values.

5) To attain higher level of consciousness.

Misconceptions:

Yoga = Yoga Asanas. It Is Just A Form Of Exercise
Yoga Is A Religious Practice
Only Flexible People And Those With A Certain Body Type Can Perform Yoga Asanas
Older People Can't Do Yoga
Yoga Is Not For Youngsters
Yoga Takes A Lot Of Time To Practice
You Can Experience The Yoga Benefits In Your Life By Understanding Yoga Completely
Yoga Is Physically Demanding
You Shouldn't Do Yoga During Pregnancy

ASHTANGA YOGA

“Ashta” means “eight” and “Anga” means “limbs,” the road is known as the Eight Limb Path. Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy is the foundation of Ashtanga Yoga. Ashtanga Yoga is a specific yoga tradition; however, it may also be considered as including all components of yoga within any yoga system.

Maharishi Patanjali, the ancient author of the famous Patanjali yoga sutras that define Ashtanga Yoga, is commonly referred to as Patanjali Yoga. The composition of these texts is dated to roughly 200 B.C. by historians, but the original is likely thousands of years older. These lessons are part of an oral tradition that has been passed down the generations by memorization of the verses that contain their wisdom.

The 8 limbs of Ashtanga yoga are:

1. Yama – the five restraints or the “don’ts”
 - Ahimsa – Non-violence
 - Satya – Truthfulness
 - Brahmacharya – Control of the senses and celibacy
 - Asteya – Non-stealing
 - Aparigraha – Non-covetousness and non-acceptance of gift
2. Niyama – the five observances or the “do’s”
 - Saucha – Purity, cleanliness
 - Santosha – Contentment
 - Tapas – Austerity
 - Swadhyaya – Self-study, the study of scriptures
 - Ishvara Pranidhana – Surrender to God’s will
3. Asana – Steady posture
4. Pranayama – Control of prana or life force
5. Pratyahara – Withdrawal of the senses
6. Dharana – Concentration
7. Dhyana – Meditation
8. Samadhi – Super-conscious state

YAMA

A Yama is a duty or observance that is suggested as part of the eight-limbed path of yoga by yogic philosophy and teaching. As his first "limb" of yoga, Patanjali outlines five Yamas in his Yoga Sutras.

The word Yama originally meant "bridle" or "rein", and it refers to the Yamas restraint.

These Yamas are activities that are believed to be observances from the outside world. They are a method of adapting yoga's behavioural norms to the way a yogi interacts with the world. They are regarded as a significant and timely resource for yogis seeking to live ethically.

- Ahimsa

Nonviolence or non-harming of all things, including ourselves, is referred to as ahimsa.

Ahimsa is typically said to guide yogis to practise compassion and non-judgment as a method for building nonviolence by avoiding physical, mental, and emotional aggression.

- Satya

Honesty or truthfulness in speech and behaviour. It's critical to practise this with the first Yama of nonviolence because the desire to share the truth must be weighed against the need to avoid harming others.

- Asteya

Stealing no one else's property or time This involves not committing or being involved in theft, exploitation, or oppression, as well as not taking something that has not been freely and willingly given.

- Brahmacharya

Chastity is a term that can be used to describe sexual restriction or marital fidelity. This can be applied to all of the yogi's urges, not only sexual ones, as continence or moderation. Brahmacharya is thought to benefit the yogi in becoming healthier, wiser, and stronger by conserving energy, which can then be better used to pursue higher spiritual goals.

- Aparigraha

Non-coveting. This is a method of letting go of everything that isn't absolutely necessary and only keeping what is necessary. This, it is thought, allows the yogi to focus on the one thing he or she genuinely has, Atman (the Self), without being distracted by material goods.

NIYAMA

Niyama is the Sanskrit term for duty or observance that is suggested as part of the yoga path by yogic philosophy and teaching. As part of the second limb of yoga, Patanjali specifies five Niyamas in his Yoga Sutras.

All these Niyamas are activities that can be classified as inner observances. They are a means of adapting yoga's ethical rules to the student's own mind, body, and spirit, assisting in the creation of a positive internal environment. The yogi is thought to gain the inner power, clarity, and discipline needed to proceed on his or her spiritual path by doing the Niyamas.

- Saucha

Purification, cleanliness, and mental clarity, as well as communication and physical body, are all important. This acknowledges that the

yogi's exterior surroundings have an impact on his or her inner purity. Meditation, for example, can assist in cultivating the cleanliness of mind that saucha refers to.

- Santosha

Satisfaction and acceptance of oneself, the world, and one's circumstances as one are. This entails letting go of desires for things one does not possess. This is said to put an end to one's misery.

- Tapas

Even in the face of adversity, asceticism entails extreme self-discipline and willpower. This acknowledges the need to perform tough or unpleasant things on occasion in order to have a beneficial impact on one's life and existence.

- Svadhyaya

Self-reflection and self-study are two different things. This can include introspection through the use of scriptures or religious books. It entails recognising oneself in the present moment as well as investigating one's relationship with the Divine.

- Ishvara Pranidhana

Contemplation and surrender to the Divine or Supreme Being. This entails dedicating one's effort to a higher force and letting go of egodriven ambitions.

ASANAS

The physical aspect of yoga is the third step on the path to freedom, and if we're being honest, the term asana doesn't refer to the capability to do a handstand or an aesthetically pleasing backbend; rather, it refers to the seat you would assume for meditation. The only alignment guideline given by Patanjali for this asana is "sthira sukham asanam," which means "stable and comfortable posture."

PRANAYAMA

The regulation and control of energy through the breath, the expansion of vital energy, and the extension of the breath are all referred to as pranayama. Pranayama literally means "awareness and extension of prana." It's the fourth rung of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga and a crucial component of Hatha Yoga. Pranayama is the next step on the route to yoga after a solid asana practice has been established. Pranayama is defined by Patanjali as the control of breathing, expiration, and retention. Pranayama, on the other hand, is more than just breathing exercises because it demands constant awareness and attention in order to control otherwise erratic breathing patterns.

PRATYAHARA

The withdrawal of senses. Pratyahara means "to pull away from" and refers to the idea of pulling the senses away from their objects of desire, withdrawing them inward and developing a deep sense of internalization. Pratyahara teaches us how to gain control over our senses. It entails shifting our senses from an exterior to an interior flow, allowing us to

become more aware of our own desires, worries, and ideas. The energy that was given to the senses in the pursuit of pleasure is reclaimed and directed toward mind relaxation. We don't pay enough attention to this stage of detachment from sensory stimuli in meditation.

DHARANA

"Concentration," dharana, is the sixth limb of Ashtanga Yoga. It is one of the internal stages. The word dharana comes from the root dhri, meaning "to hold."

Dharana entails more than simply mental focus. It's when all of your mental resources are absorbed into a single location. To reach the next two levels, dhyana (meditation) and samadhi, you must be able to focus with steadfast attention. We will never be able to regulate our minds without single-pointed focus, and it will be hard to sustain mental calm for lengthy periods of time. Our awareness is easily captured in the continual cycles of thoughts and emotions since the mind is innately dynamic. Concentration needs a persistent effort to bring the mind back to the object of attention—again and again.

DHYANA

We naturally open to dhyana once the mind has become one-pointed, concentrated, and capable of being in dharana (concentration) with only one object in its attention (meditation, contemplation). The flow of attention on a gross or subtle object continues spontaneously and without force in dhyana—we have progressed from effort to effortlessness, and the object of focus has become an object of deep curiosity.

This state may only last a brief time in the beginning. However, the more we practise, the easier it will be to enter a state of meditation and the longer it will last. When an unwavering interest in the object of attention becomes a natural condition, it leads to samadhi, the last stage of Classical Yoga.

SAMADHI

The state in which the subject (the meditator) and the object (of meditation) merge into one is referred to as samadhi. It is the blissful state in which one's limited sense of self-identity vanishes. It is also the final stage of the samyama process, according to Patanjali (direct knowledge through identification). As a result, samadhi is the last step before complete emancipation, or yoga (union with God).

YOGA FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Yoga has been performed in some form or another for over 5,000 years. Though few people are aware of the reason for this. Most people believe yoga is simply "Stretching," but relatively few people consider the health advantages of yoga. So, how about we take a look at a few of these? All-around fitness, weight loss, stress relief, inner peace, improved immunity, living with greater awareness, better relationships, increased energy, better flexibility and posture, better intuition, increased lubrication of the joints, ligaments, and tendons, massages all of the

organs in the body, complete detoxification are some of the most commonly discussed benefits of yoga.

Below are some preliminary research results that suggest that yoga may have several different types of benefits for general well-being.

a. Stress Management: According to several studies, practising yoga can help with physical and psychological elements of stress.

b. Balancing: Several studies that looked at the effect of yoga on healthy people's balance concluded that it improved.

c. Positive Mental Health: Some, but not all, studies on the impact of yoga on positive elements of mental health revealed evidence of advantages, such as improved resilience or overall mental well-being.

d. Weight Control: Yoga has been linked to a reduction in BMI in trials of adults who were overweight or obese. The most effective yogabased weight-loss programmes had longer and more frequent yoga sessions, a longer overall programme duration, a yoga-based dietary component, a residential component (such as a full weekend to begin the programme), the inclusion of a larger number of yoga elements, and home practise.

e. Diabetes: According to several studies, involvement in yoga programmes is linked to improved blood sugar control in patients with type 2 diabetes, at least in the short term.

f. Sleep Problem: Yoga has been shown to enhance sleep in a number of people, including cancer patients, older persons, people with arthritis, pregnant women, and women with menopause symptoms, according to some research.

When done properly and under the supervision of a skilled instructor, yoga is generally regarded as a safe type of physical activity for healthy persons. Yoga, like any other physical activity, has the potential to cause injury.

Sprains and strains are the most prevalent yoga-related injuries. Serious injuries are quite uncommon. Yoga poses have a lower risk of injury than more high-impact sports.

Older persons, pregnant women, and anyone with medical conditions should talk to their doctors and yoga instructors about their needs. Some yoga positions and practices may need to be modified or avoided.

YOGIC PRINCIPLES OF HEALTHY LIVING

Lifestyle of a person is decided by the environment, surroundings, family, culture, eating habits, education, financial condition and day-to-day activities. A person is considered to be healthy when he is completely satisfied, has growth potential, joy of living and developing harmony among all layers of life (annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijnanmaya kosha and anandmaya kosha). Healthy living means how one lives, works, enjoys, and spends his/her time more constructively, happily and positively or deals with situations of life in a manner which does not interfere with normal functions of life.

All the texts explaining the yogic principles for healthy living are stressing on almost the same principles. Goal decides how the yoga will be practiced. These principles are often considered as pillars of yoga which are applicable even today. The yogic principles of healthy living have been categorised as:

- o Ahara (Food) - It is related to one's eating habits. In yogic practice, the ideal food is called 'mitahara' which refers to proper quality, proper quantity and proper mental set-up.

Mitahara is defined as agreeable and sweet food leaving one fourth of the stomach free and eaten as an offering to please Shiva (God) This shloka explains that the stomach should never be completely filled with food. Rather, the one fourth part of stomach should be kept empty and that part of food should be offered to the lord Shiva. Food should be taken with a sense of dharma (duty), jnana (knowledge) and vairagya (detachment).

According to Yogic scriptures, there are three types of foods that we eat, which are explained below:

- o Sattavic: This food is easily digestible. This is naturally grown, easy to digest and gives energy. The sattavic food includes milk, milk products such as curd, cheese etc. fruits, dried fruits, vegetables of the season, cereals, sprouts, pulses, honey, jaggery, sugarcane, natural and unprocessed sugar and oil.

- o Rajasic: The food is essential for physically active people and is heavy to digest.

- o Tamasic: These are nerve stimulating. They are usually unnatural in state. Stale, frozen, canned foods; bakery products of refined flour such as cake, pastries; chocolates, soft drinks, tea, coffee, wines and liquor, tobacco etc. fall under this category. This type of food disturbs the balance of nerves.

Yogic approach puts emphasis on how and when to eat. One should never drink water with food. A person should never eat when agitated, disturbed, stressed or worried. This is the reason why yoga puts stress on proper mental set-up for food intake. The timings for taking meals also should be fixed as far as possible. It can be four times a day with a gap of four hours between two meals. The timings can be adjusted depending upon the need and requirement of the person.

- o Vihara (Recreation): It refers to such activities that are joyful, relaxing and creative in nature. These are the recreational activities one involves in spare time. This principle of healthy living gives immense importance to such activities. These may include painting, dancing, pottery, drawing, singing, gardening or playing. The activity should be based on the interest of the individual. Then only a person can enjoy it fully.

- o A person should be encouraged to perform creative activities like drawing, painting, singing or any other activity which would help in regulating and controlling the emotions in the long-run. A person must learn the art of conscious relaxation and should discipline

himself/herself. The relaxation includes sleep also. Sleep is a conscious relaxation. Mind should be calm and quiet for a good sleep.

o Achara (Conduct): These include the right habits, right attitude and behaviour with oneself and others. The yogic life style expects that a person would develop good habits and exercise self-discipline and self-control in his life. It has been seen that most of the times external difficulties are caused by the inappropriate action in life and can be fixed only with his good conduct. Yama and niyama are the systematic procedures that can improve one's personal and social conduct. This principle says that an individual need to be disciplined to self and the society to lead a happy life. This procedure makes a person well-organised. Once these two parts of Ashtanga yoga are internalised, a person can lead a happy life.

o Vichara (Thinking): In this principle, emphasis is laid on the importance of thinking. We have heard a lot about the value of positive thinking. As per yogic practices, our way of thinking is very important in achieving happiness in our lives. Our thoughts are very powerful. As per the law of attraction, whatever is happening in present with us is because we have thought about it, consciously or subconsciously, in past. And whatever we are thinking now, will decide our future. Everything happens with us, whether good or bad, is because of our mental set of attitudes. We create our own world, good or bad, by means of our own thought process. In order to lead a happy life, one's thoughts should be disciplined, proper and channelised in the right direction. For this, things should be seen in the right perspective and integrated accordingly. A right perspective brings clarity and positivity in thoughts which brings optimism and courage to face the problems and the individual thus does not get unreasonably frightened and disturbed.

Yogic exercises help in controlling the vrittis (modification of thoughts) of the mind and thereby giving positive direction to the negative thoughts. The seventh limb of Ashtanga yoga which is Dhyana, when practiced, helps in control of mental aspects of life.

o Vyavahara (Behaviour): Vyavahara is considered as our conduct towards others. Yoga, in various texts, has prescribed how to behave with others. In this context, Karma yoga (of the Bhagavad Gita) and Kriyayoga (of Maharishi Patanjali) are very relevant. The Bhagavad Gita propounds that actions must be performed with a series of detachment and duty. Patanjali emphasises on tapa, swadhyaya and ishwarpranidhana. There should be regularity and detachment while doing the things in day-to-day life.

4 PILLARS OF YOGA

The most common perceptions of yoga include coming to a studio, laying out your mat, and moving your body through a series of physical

postures and movements. However, this is only a small part of the genuine, complete yoga picture. Without a mat or a studio, the 4 Pillars provide us with other options to practise yoga in our daily lives.

- Raja Yoga – Yoga for Mind
- Karma Yoga – Yoga of Action and Effect
- Bhakti Yoga – Yoga of Devotion and Love
- Jnana Yoga – Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom

RAJA YOGA

“Traditionally, the word Yoga by itself refers to Raja Yoga, the mental science... Its ultimate aim is to bring about a thorough metamorphosis of the individual who practices it sincerely.”

- Vidya Vonne

Raja means "king" or "royal" in Sanskrit, referring to Raja yoga's standing as a "royal path" or primary style of yoga. Raja yoga is a term that has been used to describe both the objective of yoga and the means of achieving it. As a result, it's also said to be the feeling of serenity and satisfaction that comes with regular yoga and meditation practice

Raja yoga is a type of yoga that focuses on mind and body control, as well as meditation and energetics. It incorporates teachings from all of the major traditions, and hatha yoga and modern asana practise evolved from Raja yoga. The Primary base of Raja yoga is known as The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

This ancient text outlines 196 Sutras, or ‘sutures’ of timeless wisdom intended to aid in following the 8-Limbed Path towards the final limb, Samadhi, or the Union of Self.

KARMA YOGA

“Every moment of your life you perform an action – physically, mentally, emotionally, and energy-wise. Each action creates a certain memory. That is karma.”

- Sadhguru

The Bhagavad Gita, a 700-verse Hindu text believed to have been written between the 5th and 2nd century B.C.E., was the first to mention karma yoga. Karma yoga is undoubtedly the most practical of the Bhagavad Gita's ways to freedom from suffering, self-realization, and connection with the Divine.

Attachment to the results of one's deeds is believed to cause misery, especially when something in return is expected. To truly practise Karma yoga, the practitioner must act without expecting anything in return and serve others without considering the outcome.

As a result, Karma yoga helps to eliminate any sense of separation between self and others by reducing the ego. It is believed that acting in this manner purifies the mind and is the most virtuous approach to service.

To Karma yogis, a selfless action is a form of prayer and connection with the Divine. Some teachings even suggest mantra chanting whilst

engaging in Karma yoga, in order to purify the mind and develop a selfless mindset. Practising Karma yoga also involves fully accepting one's dharma (duty in life) in order to let go of selfish desires.

BHAKTI YOGA

"Bhakti yoga is a way of transforming your emotion from negativity to utmost pleasantness."

- Sadhguru

Bhakti yoga is a practice of selfless devotion and acknowledgement of the Divine in everything. It is derived from the Sanskrit root bhaj, which means "to serve God."

Bhakti yoga is one of the most widely practised spiritual paths, especially in India, where it began. The Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads, ancient Hindu literature that emphasises suffering relief, were the first to describe the concept. Bhakti yoga is surrendering to the Divine or merging with global awareness via activities like chanting, singing, dancing, and selfless community service.

Bhakti yoga is also known as the "way of the heart," and practitioners may worship through chanting, devotional mantras, prayer, kirtan, and rituals. This was historically a more accessible way for women and individuals from lower castes in Hindu society, who lacked the education required for more studious yoga paths. Surrender is both a fundamental component of Bhakti yoga practice and a natural result of it; by recognising the divinity of everything in the cosmos, conceptions of self and ego, as well as a sense of separation from others, tend to dissolve.

JNANA YOGA

"In the yogic context, jnana is the wisdom derived from direct acquaintance with the Self."

- Rolf Sovik

Jnana in Sanskrit means "knowledge" or "wisdom," Jnana is the intellectual path of scriptures and self-study, considered to be one of the most direct and yet challenging means of spiritual development.

The Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Hindu scripture focusing on suffering liberation, originally defined the notion of Jnana yoga. Although Jnana yoga includes a systematic study of the scriptures, it is not purely academic; it also includes practical, experienced knowledge gained via meditation training.

Jnana yoga is simply a comprehensive examination of one's own nature. When practising Jnana yoga, the goal is to use the mind to understand and expose the truth that lies beneath the mind. According to Jnana yoga, simply accepting doctrinal doctrine is insufficient, and practitioners must seek experiential knowledge of the Divine, universal consciousness, or absolute Truth. In this way, Jnana yoga goes beyond intellect and necessitates a rational and open mind.

There are four prescribed steps in Jnana Yoga known as Sadhana Chatushtaya (the Four Pillars of Knowledge). These practices build upon one another in order to cultivate the spiritual insight required for this path:

1. Viveka (discernment, discrimination) - a deliberate, intellectual effort to distinguish between the real and the unreal.
2. Vairagya (dispassion, detachment) - cultivating non-attachment toward worldly possessions and the ego-mind.
3. Shat Sampat (six virtues) - six mental practices to stabilize the mind and emotions.
4. Mumukshutva (longing, yearning) - an intense and passionate desire for achieving liberation from suffering.

SADHAK & BADHAK TATTVA

In Hatha yoga, the sadhaka and badhaka tattva lay out specific sets of rules to advance your yoga practice. Basically, they tell you how to

be successful (sadhaka) or how to fail (badhaka) in your yoga path.

In Sanskrit, sadhaka means a person who follows a sadhana, which is basically a way of life. Tattva refers to the principles of living a

certain way. Badhaka roughly translates to harm. Together, sadhaka and badhaka tattva lay out 6 facilitating and 6 obstructing factors in

Hatha Yoga.

Badhaka Tattva

Over eating

This one just makes sense. Overeating can lead to feeling sluggish mentally and physically. As yoga prepares the mind and body, overeating will literally weigh you down.

Over Exertion

Hustle. Go for it. You've heard it before, but over exerting yourself can lead to physical injury and mental exhaustion. Focus on balance and give yourself rest, you can really go for it when the time matters!

Excessive talking

Do you mindlessly chatter to fill space? If the chatter gets out of control, you never have time for silence and reflection. Remember, balance is key.

Adhering to Rules- too much!

Rules exist to organize, protect and direct. Adhering to rules too much can lead to you not thinking with your own mind. Rules are therefore a reason, but should also be questioned.

Excessive public contact

It is great to be social, but like all things, you need some balance. Spending time with others is great, but spend time with yourself, too!

Fickle mind

A mind that is always changing is distracting, and often doesn't lead you very far. Help control the stream of thought and try to cultivate focus.

Sadhaka Tattva

Enthusiasm

When is enthusiasm not good? Being passionate and excited about something is great. It makes a task fun, and gives you're a positive, and often more grateful, perspective.

Courage

Starting anything new takes some guts. The ebb and flow of life can also challenge you- stay strong.

Patience

Results do not often happen quickly. It takes good old time and consistency. Stay patient and enjoy the process.

Determination

Life gets in the way sometimes, but you decide to stop or to keep going. Don't be deterred- be determined!

Faith:

Sometimes, you just need to have faith that it will work out. Believing in something you can't see can be tough, but it can also give you hope.

Avoid hanging out with jerks:

Sometimes, we hang with jerks because we think we have to. But here is the thing- you don't. Investing time in people that don't deserve your time, or that aren't very good people, bring you down. Honor yourself and stay away from them!

The badhaka and sadhaka tattva ultimately help you find balance in your mind, body and ultimately your yoga practice.

PRANAYAMA

What is Pranayama?

Pranayama is a set of techniques for harnessing and manipulating prana, or universal energy. It's an important part of yoga, and it's frequently incorporated into asana practice or utilised as a warm-up for meditation.

The name comes from many Sanskrit roots: prana, which means "vital life energy," Yama, which means "control," and ayama, which means "extension" or "expansion." The breath is a symbol for prana, and pranayama is a set of techniques for extending and expanding vital life force energy through the purposeful regulation of breathing. Prana surrounds the body with an aura. It passes via thousands of nadis, or subtle energy pathways, and chakras, or energy centres. The amount and quality of prana, as well as how it travels through the nadis and chakras, affect one's mental state.

The mind remains peaceful, optimistic, and eager when the prana level is high and the flow is continuous, smooth, and steady. However, a lack of awareness and attention to one's breath can result in nadis and chakras being partially blocked. Unfortunately, this results in a choppy, broken flow of prana. Worries, worry, uncertainty, tensions, conflict, and other undesirable attributes grow as a result.

The Hatha Yoga Pradipika is one of the first texts to give detailed descriptions of pranayama techniques, including surya bheda, ujjayi, sitkari, sitali, bhasrika, bhramari, murcha and plavini, each with their own specific benefits. The Gheranda Samhita later added sahita and kevali to this list. The four discernable stages of Pranayama are:

1. Puraka (inhalation)

2. Antara Kumbhaka (the mindful pause after inhalation)

3. Rechaka (exhalation)

4. Bahya Kumbhaka (the mindful pause after exhalation)

Kumbhak or breath retention is considered to be a more advanced technique, not to be practised until the practitioner has mastered other forms of pranayama.

BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA

Bhastrika means Bellow (pronunciation: be-lo). So it's also called 'The Bellows Pranayama' and below means to roar/anger. In Bhastrika, we exhale forcefully and quickly out of the lungs. Inhalation can be normal in the beginning and slowly one can inhale with the same momentum. According to Gheranda Samhita, people who practise Bhastrika 3 times a day will never suffer from any disease. In fact, they grow healthier day by day.

Why Bhastrika is important

- These days, not many people are breathing properly – leading to shallow breathing.
- The lungs are not fully utilized and exercised.
- Bhastrika helps the air cells get oxygenated and opens up the air cells of the lungs
- With this practice, Germs, mucus and stagnant air also get eliminated from the lungs.

Benefits of Bhastrika Pranayama

- Most people are shallow breathing these days, Since the lungs are not fully utilized, the small air cells (called alveoli) get closed permanently
- When the air cells get closed, mucus builds up in the lungs which lead to the growth of germs and disease.
- When the air cells remain permanently closed the blood is not fully oxygenated. This means the closed air cells do not let the exchange of oxygen & carbon dioxide happen. The overall effect will decrease oxygen content in the blood.
- Bhastrika directly opens up closed air cells. Air cells get cleaned with this process, leading to an increased transfer of oxygen.
- This process leads to increased transfer of oxygen and better removal of carbon-dioxide
- With this practice, Germs, mucus and stagnant air get eliminated from the lungs.

Contraindications

- High blood pressure, Any Heart ailment
- Hernia
- Gastric ulcer
- Stroke, Epilepsy
- Retinal problems
- Glaucoma
- Vertigo
- Menstruation
- Pregnancy

Precautions

The practise should be stopped immediately if you feel:

- Fainting
- Excessive perspiration
- Excessive shaking of the body
- Vomiting

Steps to do Bhastrika Pranayama

- a. Sit in vajrasana
- b. Keep the neck and abdomen in one straight line
- c. With a loose fist in both hands, place the fists in front of the shoulders.
- d. Breathe in and raise both hands up, open the fist.
- e. Breathe out forcefully (and rapidly) bringing both the hands back to the starting point.
- f. Keep your mouth closed and exhale through the two nostrils.
- g. The exhalation should be such that it makes a sound from the heart to the forehead.
- h. Then inhale and fill the lungs.
- i. Continue this process – we normally do 30 times X 3 initially
- j. After every round, make sure the breath comes back to normal

NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA

Nadi means 'path way'. This is a pranic/subtle pathway through which prana flows and Shodhana means 'purification. There are 3 main nadis in the body and they are Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. Ida is related to the left nostril and is connected to the right brain. When this Nadi is active, the body experiences a cooling effect. The right nostril is related to the Pingala Nadi and is connected to the left brain. When this Nadi is active, it has a heating effect on the body. The Sushumna Nadi lies in the middle of Ida and Pingala. It begins at the base of the spine and ends at the crown of the head, and is activated when Ida and Pingala are activated thoroughly. Nadi Shodhan pranayama, thus, activates both sides of the brain, maintaining equilibrium between the two hemispheres. This state of equilibrium helps the prana to circulate freely throughout the body and has various benefits. Through this practice, the pranic pathways are purified and decongested (clears accumulation of toxins). Also called alternate nostril pranayama (because air is inhaled through one nostril and exhaled through the other).

Benefits of Nadi Shodhana

1. Develops a state of harmony in the individual so that one is neither too lethargic nor too active
2. It induces calmness of the mind by regulating the flow of prana in the body.
3. A very good technique to do before meditation.
4. Excellent pranayama to do before meditation or relaxation techniques
5. Very effective in balancing the airflow through the two nostrils
6. It helps to remove congestion or blockage of the Nadis and thereby allows the free flow of prana
7. The whole body is nourished with an extra supply of oxygen and the carbon dioxide is more efficiently eliminated.
8. This purifies the whole-blood system and increases the overall health of the body, including its power to resist disease

9. The deep, slow breathing encourages the removal of stagnant air from the lungs
10. Activates both Hemispheres of the brain.

Contraindications

People Suffering from:

- Cold & Flu

Steps to do Nadi Shodhana Pranayama

1. Hold the right hand in front of the face (or left according to your convenience)
2. Place the index and middle fingers so that they are on the forehead at the eyebrow centre. Both fingers should be straight.
3. Now the thumb should be next to the right nostril and the ring finger next to the left nostril.
4. You can now press and release the right nostril with your thumb to prevent or allow air to flow. Similarly, the ring finger for the left nostril
5. The Elbow of the right palm should be in front and near the chest. The forearm should be as vertical as possible. This will reduce the tendency of the raised arm to become tired after some time.
6. The head and back should be held upright but without strain.

Is Anulom Vilom same as Nadi Shodhana

These two practises are very close. Anulom vilom means up and down, 'alternate' or 'reversed'. In this practice, you feel (you don't use hand mudra) that you are breathing in from the left nostril and breathing out from the right nostril. Your imagination may be necessary for this practice.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

- This is a unique form of pranayama. One makes a hissing or whispering sound in the region of the throat.
- Ujjayi means victorious breath / 'to lift up' – Also referred to as ocean breath due to the sound it creates.
- It is far easier to do than to describe.
- Ujjayi is a deep-chest inhalation with a slightly closed glottis and then slow exhalation. Abdominal muscles get slightly contracted during inhalation and exhalation.

- Inhalation must be slow, uniform, smooth and without any friction in the nostrils.
- Gently constrict the opening of the throat to create a subtle hissing sound. This constriction of the throat will ensure the airflow through the channel is streamlined and some friction is generated

Benefits Of Ujjayi Pranayama

- Calms the mind, soothes the nervous system. People who just want to relax can do ujjayi combining meditation or in Shavasana
- Good for those who suffer from insomnia
- Those who suffer from high blood pressure will find that ujjayi helps to reduce the pressure
- Ujjayi is therapeutic and is helpful for all ailments related to nervousness or chronic stress
- If you practise regularly, you can prevent diseases related to Kapha – for example, cough, fever, indigestion, nervous disorders,

enlarged spleen.

- It is tranquillizing pranayama, but it also has a heating effect so it is not advised to replace normal breathing with Ujjayi.

Contraindications

- People with acute heart ailments should avoid this practice.
- Those with heart problems or high blood pressure must avoid doing Kumbhaka (Breath retention) in the practice
- You should not put too much strain or tighten the throat, which would be the wrong way of doing it. Constriction has to be of the glottis which is a part of the larynx.
- Those who are highly introverted and have very low blood pressure should practice Ujjayi only under the careful guidance of a master since Ujjayi may cause further introversion and lower blood pressure.

Steps to do Ujjayi Pranayama

- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Partially close the glottis in the throat. That is by slightly contracting the throat.
- Breathe in allowing the air to pass through the constricted region of the throat.
- Breathe out the same way. Both inhalation and exhalation should be long, deep and controlled.
- When you contract the glottis you will automatically feel a slight pulling sensation in the region of the abdomen.

BHRAMARI PRANAYAMA

Bhramari pranayama breathing technique gets its name from Bhramari, a black Indian bee. Bhramari pranayama is effective in settling the mind

quickly. It is one of the most effective breathing exercises for reducing agitation, annoyance, and anxiety, as well as rage. It's a simple method that can be used anywhere - at work or at home - and is a quick way to de-stress.

The exhalation in this pranayama resembles the typical humming sound of a bee, which explains why it is named so.

Science Behind Bhramari Pranayama

It soothes and calms the nerves, especially those around the brain and forehead. The vibrations of the humming sound provide a natural soothing effect.

Benefits Of Bhramari Pranayama

- Gives instant relief from tension, anger and anxiety. It is a very effective breathing technique for people suffering from hypertension as it calms down the agitated mind.
- Gives relief if you're feeling hot or have a slight headache
- Helps mitigate migraines.
- Pranayama benefits in Improving concentration and memory
- Builds confidence.
- Pranayama benefits in reducing blood pressure.
- Helps calm the mind in preparation for meditation.

Contraindications

None. Anyone, from a kid to an elderly person, can do this pranayama after learning it correctly. The sole stipulation is that this pranayama be

performed on an empty stomach.

Steps To Do Bhramari Pranayama

1. Sit up straight in a quiet corner with your eyes closed. Keep a gentle smile on your face.
2. Observe the sensations in the body and the quietness within.
3. Place your index fingers on your ears. There is cartilage between your cheek and ear. Place your index fingers on the cartilage.
4. Take a deep breath in and as you breathe out, gently press the cartilage. You can keep the cartilage pressed or press it in and out with your fingers while making a loud humming sound like a bee.
5. You can also make a low-pitched sound but it is a good idea to make a high-pitched one for better results.
6. Breathe in again and continue the same pattern 3-4 times.

Precautions For Doing Bhramari Pranayama

- Ensure that you are not putting your finger inside the ear but on the cartilage.
- Don't press the cartilage too hard. Gently press and release with the finger.
- While making the humming sound, keep your mouth closed.
- You can also do Bhramari pranayama with your fingers in the Shanmukhi Mudra.

KAPALBHATI

Kapala = skull / forehead

Bhathi = chimney / bellows

Kapalabhati = 'the skull cleansing' / 'frontal brain bellowing' / 'frontal brain cleansing'

That purifies the frontal portion of the brain, Massages and tones the abdominal organs & cleanses the sinuses. We also engage the parasympathetic nervous system which governs our relaxation and regeneration response, making us more resilient to face challenges.

Benefits of Kapalabhati

- Massages the abdominal organs
- Improves the function of digestive organs
- Improves respiration
- Stimulates the pranic flow
- Helpful for those suffering from respiratory ailments such as bronchitis, tuberculosis, etc.

Contraindications

Avoid practising this breathing technique if you have an artificial pacemaker or stent, epilepsy, hernia, backache due to slip disc, or have recently undergone abdominal surgery. Women should not practice the Skull Shining Breathing technique during and shortly after pregnancy as well as during menstruation as it involves vigorous abdominal squeezes. People with hypertension and heart problems should practice this breathing technique only under a yoga expert's guidance.

Steps to do Kapalabhati

- Sit in a comfortable asana.
- Breathe rapidly from the abdomen.
- Exhale with a forceful contraction of the abdominal muscles.
- Inhale by passively allowing the abdominal muscles to expand

- Repeat only a comfortable number of rapid respirations.
- Then take one deep and slow inhalation.
- And breathe normally or continue more rounds according to your capacity.
- Stop the practice if you feel any discomfort in the form of pain, dizziness, fainting and so on.

SHEETALI PRANAYAMA

Sheetali Pranayama, or cooling breath, is a type of pranayama. With the help of a breathing method, it is an exercise that activates the body's cooling mechanism. The term "sheet" comes from Sanskrit and means "cold." Sheetali pranayama is a Hatha yoga method. With practice, the duration of the inhalation should gradually become longer to increase the cooling effect. Gradually increase the number of rounds from 9 to 15.

For general purposes 15 rounds are sufficient; however, up to 60 rounds may be performed in very hot weather.

Benefits of Sheetali Pranayama

This practice cools the body and affects important brain centres associated with biological drives and temperature regulation. It cools and reduces mental and emotional excitation and encourages the free flow of prana throughout the body. It induces muscular relaxation, mental tranquillity and may be used as a tranquiliser before sleep. It gives control over hunger and thirst and generates a feeling of satisfaction.

Contraindications

People suffering from low blood pressure or respiratory disorders such as asthma, bronchitis and excessive mucus, should not practise this pranayama. Those with heart disease should practise without breath retention. This practice cools down the activity of the lower energy centres and therefore those suffering from chronic constipation should avoid it. Generally, this pranayama should not be practised in winter or in cool climates.

Precautions

Do not practise in a polluted atmosphere or during cold weather. The nose heats up and cleans the inhaled air before it enters the delicate lungs. However, breathing through the mouth bypasses this air-conditioning and the induction of cold or dirty air directly into the lungs may cause harm. Practise inner retention for a short time only as prolonged kumbhaka has a heating effect.

Steps to do Sheetali Pranayama

- Sit in any comfortable meditation posture.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Extend the tongue outside the mouth as far as possible without strain. Roll the sides of the tongue up so that it forms a tube. Practise a long, smooth, and controlled inhalation through the rolled tongue.
- At the end of inhalation, draw the tongue in, close the mouth and exhale through the nose.
- Practise yogic breathing throughout.
- The breath should produce a sucking sound.

- A feeling of icy coldness will be experienced on the tongue and the roof of the mouth. This is one round.

SHEETKARI PRANAYAMA

Sheetkari Pranayama relaxes the mind while also cooling the body. The term is derived from the Sanskrit words sitkari, which means "sipping"

or "hissing," prana, which means "vital power," and ayama, which means "extension."

To practise, take a deep breath in through your mouth while keeping your teeth closed.

Benefits of Sheetkari Pranayama

This practice cools the body and affects important brain centres associated with biological drives and temperature regulation. It cools and reduces mental and emotional excitation and encourages the free flow of prana throughout the body. It induces muscular relaxation, mental tranquillity and may be used as a tranquiliser before sleep. It gives control over hunger and thirst and generates a feeling of satisfaction.

Contraindications

As for sheetkari pranayama, practitioners with sensitive teeth, missing teeth or dentures should practise sheetali pranayama instead.

Steps to do Sheetkari Pranayama

- Sit in any comfortable meditation posture.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Hold the teeth lightly together. Separate the lips, exposing the teeth.
- The tongue may be kept flat or folded against the soft palate in khechari mudra.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through the teeth.
- At the end of the inhalation, close the mouth.
- Exhale slowly through the nose in a controlled manner.
- This is one round.

SURYA BHEDANA PRANAYAMA

Surya means 'Sun', 'Bhedana' means 'Piercing' or 'Entering'. While Pranayama comprises 'Prana' is the 'Life Force' and 'Yama' is the

'Control'. Surya Bhedana Pranayama is the deep inhalation of breath through the right nostril, then holding the breath for as long as comfortable and finally, exhaling through the left nostril.

Benefits of Surya Bhedana Pranayama

- This practice creates heat in the body and counteracts imbalances of the vata (wind) and kapha (phlegm) doshas (humours).
- It stimulates and awakens the pranic energy by activating pingala nadi.
- By increasing extroversion and dynamism, it enables physical activities to be performed more efficiently and helps to alleviate depression.
- It is especially recommended for those who are dull and lethargic or who find it difficult to communicate with the external world.
- It makes the mind more alert and perceptive and is an excellent pre-meditation pranayama.

Contraindications

People suffering from the below issues should avoid practising

- heart disease
- hypertension,
- epilepsy,
- hyperthyroid,
- peptic ulcer
- acidity
- anxiety

Precautions

- Never practise surya bhedana pranayama after eating, as it will interfere with the natural flow of energy associated with digestion.
- This pranayama may cause an imbalance in the breathing cycle if performed for prolonged periods.

Steps to do Surya Bhedana

- Sit in comfortable meditation asana.
- Place the hands on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body. When the body is comfortable and still, watch the breath until it spontaneously becomes slow and deep.
- Adopt nasagra mudra. Close the left nostril with the ring finger and inhale slowly and deeply through the right nostril.
- Exhale slowly through the right nostril, keeping the left nostril closed with the ring finger.
- This is one round.

CHANDRA BHEDANA PRANAYAMA

Chandra means "moon" or "lunar aspect" in Sanskrit, and Bhedana means "piercing" or "penetrating" in Sanskrit. Chandra Bhedana

Pranayama means "moon piercing breathing" in Sanskrit. We enter the Ida Nadi by breathing mostly from the left nostril. Our bodies become cooler as a result of this Nadi. It is refreshing, tranquil, and soothing, just like the moon. Our bodies' heat is then evacuated through the right nostril. This breathwork is also known as "left nostril breathing" because of the technique.

Benefits of Chandra Bhedana Pranayama

- Chandra Bhedana Pranayama is better not practised if you have asthma, low blood pressure, a cough, or other respiratory ailments.
- Also, it is best not to practice too much during winter sessions or on a cool day. Practitioners should not eat right before and after the practice of this Pranayama.

● It is best not to practice Chandra Bhedana pranayama just after or before other breathwork, primarily through the right nostril. Opposite Pranayama may neutralize the effects of one another.

Contraindications

- This pranayama should not be done in the winter.
- People with heart disease, low blood pressure or epilepsy should avoid this pranayama.
- Do not hold your breath during the initial phase.

- Complete pranayama on an empty stomach.
- Be sure to practice Pranayama Chandra Bhedana 4-5 hours after eating.
- Do not do Chandra Bhedana and Surya Bhedana Pranayama on the same day.
- This should not be done if you suffer from a cold, it will increase the cooling of your body.

Steps to do Chandra Bhedana

- Sit in comfortable meditation asana.
- Place the hands on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body. When the body is comfortable and still, watch the breath until it spontaneously becomes slow and deep.
- With the thumbs of the right hand, press the right nostril and through the left nostril (Chandra Nadi) inhale while making a sound.
- Exhale slowly through the left nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with the ring finger.
- This is one round.

YOGIC BREATHING

Yogic breathing combines the previous three techniques namely the Abdominal, Thoracic & Clavicular. It is used to maximize inhalation and exhalation. Its purpose is to gain control of the breath, correct poor breathing habits and increase oxygen intake. It may be practised at any time and is especially useful in situations of high stress or anger for calming the nerves. However, while its inclusion in a daily yoga program will correct and deepen natural breathing patterns, yogic breathing itself should not be performed continually.

Benefits

- Release tension, either acute or chronic, that may have accumulated due to strenuous work or routine. This not only helps you to get rid of pain and aches in your body but also gives a gentle internal massage to the internal organs like the heart and the lungs.
- If you suffer from any illness of the respiratory system, yogic breathing techniques can help overcome shortness of breath and asthma.
- Strengthen the cardiovascular system and stimulate the nervous system.
- Reduce anxiety and mental stress, helping an individual achieve calm and inner peace.
- Cause detoxification of the body, helping to expel toxins from the body and increasing the number of red blood cells.
- Improve stamina and vitality.

Contraindications

Daily practice of yogic breathing along with other yogic practices will correct and deepen natural breathing patterns, however, it should not be performed repeatedly by itself. Yogic breathing should not be practised at all times of the day.

Steps to do Yogic Breathing

1. Sit in a meditation posture or lie in Shavasana and relax the whole body.

2. Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand fully.
3. Try to breathe so slowly that little or no sound of the breath can be heard. Feel the air reaching into the bottom of the lungs.
4. At the end of the abdominal expansion, start to expand the chest outward and upward. When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until the expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs around the base of the neck.
5. The shoulders and collarbone should also move up slightly. Some tension will be felt in the neck muscles.
6. The rest of the body should be relaxed. Feel the air filling the upper lobes of the lungs. This completes one inhalation. The whole process should be one continuous movement, each phase of breathing merging into the next without any obvious transition point.
7. There should be no jerks or unnecessary strain.
8. The breathing should be like the swell of the sea. Now start to exhale.
9. First, relax the lower neck and upper chest, then allow the chest to contract downward and then inward. Next, allow the diaphragm to push upward and toward the chest. Without straining, try to empty the lungs as much as possible by drawing or pulling the abdominal wall as near as possible to the spine.
10. The entire movement should be harmonious and flowing. Hold your breath for a few seconds at the end of the exhalation. This completes one round of yogic breathing. At first, perform 5 to 10 rounds and slowly increase to 10 minutes daily.
11. Relax any effort and once again watch the spontaneous breathing pattern. Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as a whole.
12. Be aware of the surroundings and gently open your eyes.

PANCHA KOSHAS

What is Pancha Kosha?

Pancha means five. Kosha means covering or sheath or layers. According to Yoga Philosophy, we have 5 sheaths. Each layer is made up of subtle energy.

The 5 sheaths or Pancha kosha are:

1. Annamaya kosha (related to body)
2. Pranamaya kosha (related to breath)
3. Manomaya kosha (related to thoughts)
4. Vijñanamaya kosha (related to intellect/intuition)
5. Anandamaya kosha (related to SELF / Bliss)

When you uncover all these layers, you will find out who you truly are, which is nothing but ATMAN. ATMAN doesn't undergo changes. Pancha Kosha can be represented either way.

ANNAMAYA KOSHA

This is related to the Physical Body. The word anna means 'food' and Maya 'comprises'. This body is what we eat and drink. Also called food sheath. This is where one experiences pleasure and pain. This kosha keeps changing. Therefore, the Atman is not Annamaya Kosha. Sathvik diet, Hatha Yoga and meditative postures enhance Annamaya kosha.

PRANAMAYA KOSHA

The second sheath is Pranamaya kosha (vital sheath). This is a subtle layer. Pranamaya practices work with this kosha. Prana is the life force that is responsible for the various physiological functions within the body. Exercises like diaphragmatic breathing, the complete yogic breath, and alternate nostril breathing are specifically designed to enhance the proper functioning of your second sheath. Prana is constantly changing hence this is not the ultimate / Atman.

MANOMAYA KOSHA

Manas means Mind. We experience this prana in the form of thoughts. This is the conscious mind. This kosha is where all thoughts originate such as doubts, anger, lust etc. Manomaya also keeps changing, hence this cannot be Atman. One can improve manomaya kosha through the practice of mantra meditation.

VIGNANAMAYA KOSHA

The fourth sheath is called Vignanamaya kosha. This body is composed of intellect/wisdom. This gives the ability to discriminate. Vijnanamaya kosha is the link between the individual mind and the universal mind. This sheath is often expressed as buddhi. One who works on this kosha will be free from unhealthy thoughts and actions. You can enhance the kosha by following Yamas and Niyamas, increasing your knowledge. This kosha changes continuously so this is not SELF.

ANANDAMAYA KOSHA

The fifth sheath is called Anandamaya kosha. The Sheath consists of bliss and joy. This is the house of the most subtle prana. This is the kosha closer to the Atman. You feel blissful. It is a state of being in which one can detach oneself from the emotions and live in perfect health of body and mind. You can enhance this kosha with Selfless service and Bhakti yoga. This kosha also changes. To find Brahman we need to uncover all the 5 koshas. As you evolve through the five Koshas, the veil of ignorance gets destroyed and you will experience Atman / SELF.

5 KLESHAS

Five kleshas

5 Kleshas and how to overcome them

Sage Patanjali mentions the five kleshas in Yoga Sutra 2.3 "Avidya-Asmita-Raga-Dvesha-Abhinivesa-Klesha" responsible for all our suffering in life.

Avidya: ignorance

Asmita: I-ness, ego sense

Raga: attachment

Dvesha: aversion

Abhinivesah: fear of death, clinging to life

Klesha: painful, afflicted

Only through proper understanding, we can outgrow our intrinsic afflictions. We are all born with these kleshas. The first step is to understand these kleshas and then putting in an effort to eliminate them. All of these afflictions are tangled together within our egos.

Avidya # Ignorance

Mistaking the impermanent for the permanent for example- We spend so much of time on our outward appearance, and we fail to understand that looks are temporary. Youth is fleeting, yet we want to hold on. Age gracefully and accept the fact that change is the only permanent factor in everyone's life.

Asmita # Ego

Second affliction very few people acknowledge or even admit it. But yes we all have an ego. Next time you find yourself labelling or being defensive I don't have an ego – Take a deep breath and then settle into your seat and try reflection techniques. Be the witness to your own thought process objectively. Awareness is the first step.

Attachment (RAGA) Set yourself free

Raga # Attachment

Desires are the root cause of all our sufferings. We attached to our children, family, spouse, food, smartphones...list is endless. Moderation and balance is the key that helps to overcome this affliction. Your needs and desires should be in check.

Dvesha # Aversion

"I don't like this food, colour, relative...etc." Dveshas are strong dislikes or avoidance.

We do this because we do not like stepping out of our comfort zone, but we fail to notice the tremendous growth opportunity it brings with it.

Best way to step aside aversion is to challenge yourself to face uncomfortable situations in life rather than avoiding them. Example- I use to avoid this aunty because she would gossip a lot whenever she came to my house. One day decided to face her. This time I was prepared took following measures

Table set with foods items she liked, but I made it a point to include more chewy foods so she can be quiet and chew food for some time.

All gossip remarks were cut short with three questions; "Is it true?; Is it good?; Is it useful?"

Abhinivesha # fear of death

The fear of death or a clinging to life reduces your focus and inhibits with your ability to experience the spiritual autonomy that is the goal of

yoga. If you start living each day of your life as if it were your last and then you can overcome this fear of death or Abhinivesha. Start the day

with a priority list and complete things that are important. Be easy on yourself and gentle towards people you love.

All these kleshas are derived from ignorance, and the practice of yoga awakens the awareness that is innate. Ignorance cannot survive in the light of consciousness which is a requisite for spiritual advancement.

NADIS & CHAKRAS

NADIS

The word nadis literally means 'flow' or 'current'. The ancient texts say that there are seventy-two thousand nadis in the psychic body. These are visible as currents of light to a person who has developed psychic vision. In recent times the word nadis has been translated as 'nerve', but actually, nadis are blueprints for physical manifestation. Like the chakras, they are not actually part of the physical body, although they correspond with the nerves. Nadis are the subtle channels through which the pranic forces flow. Out of a large number of nadis in the psychic body, ten are major. Of these, three are most significant: Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. The most important of these three is Sushumna. All the nadis in the psychic body are subordinate to Sushumna. Sushumna Nadi is the spiritual channel, and to concentrate on it, awareness is taken to the centre of the spinal cord. Sushumna originates from mooladhara chakra and terminates at sahasrara. Ida Nadi flows from the left side of mooladhara in spirals, passing through each chakra in turn, forming a crisscross pathway that terminates at the left side of ajna chakra. Pingala Nadi flows from the right side of mooladhara, mirroring ida, terminating at the right side of ajna. Ida and pingala represent the two opposite forces flowing within us. Ida is passive, introverted and feminine; it is also known as the Chandra or moon Nadi. Pingala, on the other hand, is active, extroverted and masculine, and is called the surya or sun nadi.

CHAKRAS

Chakra means 'vortex' or 'whirlpool'. It is a whirlpool of Pranic Energy that controls the circulation of prana within the human structure. There are 7 main chakras. Ida and Pingala nadis cross each other at six main chakras.

The main chakras are:

1. Mooladhara
2. Swadhisthana
3. Manipura
4. Anahata
5. Vishuddhi
6. Ajna
7. Sahasrara

Chakra is a centralized location where subtle energy channels / nadis unite / meet / converge. Chakras don't physically exist; they are subtle in nature. Chakras directly influence physical organs in the body. Chakras correspond to Pancha maha bhutas. Each chakra has a lotus with certain fixed petals associated with it that indicates obstacles related to that particular chakra. Each chakra has a bija mantra, positive emotions

and negative emotions associated with it.

MOOLADHARA CHAKRA

It is located at the base of the spine - In the region of the perineum. It is slightly different in man and woman as follows: For males: midway between the anus and the sexual organ, a centimetre or so above the skin surface. For females: at the cervix, where the vagina and the uterus join. At mooladhara all the 3 nadis will meet - Ida Pingala and Sushmna

- Meaning: Moola - Base
- Petals: 4
- Colour: Red
- Location: Base of the spine.
- Beeja Mantra: LAM
- Positive energy: Enthusiasm
- Negative energy: Inertia

SWADHISTHANA CHAKRA

It is located at the pelvis / reproductive organs. It is located at the base of the spine, at the coccyx.

- Meaning: Swa- self Sthana - dwelling place.
- Petals: 6
- Colour: Orange
- Location: 3 inches below the navel.
- Beeja Mantra: VAM
- Positive energy: Creativity
- Negative energy: Lust/ sexual desires.

MANIPURA CHAKRA

Manipura is located in the middle of the spine directly behind the navel.

- Meaning: Mani - gem Pura -Place/city
- Petals: 10
- Colour: Yellow
- Location: Behind the navel
- Beeja Mantra: RAM
- Positive energy: Joy and Generosity
- Negative energy: Jealousy and Greed

ANAHATA CHAKRA

This chakra is located in the spine directly behind the heart.

- Meaning: Unstuck Sound
- Petals: 12
- Colour: Green
- Location: Heart (behind the sternum)
- Beeja Mantra: YAM
- Positive energy: Unconditional Love
- Negative energy: Fear and Hatred

VISHUDDHA CHAKRA

This chakra is located near the base of the throat.

- Meaning: Shuddhi - Purification
- Petals: 16

- Colour: Blue
- Location: Throat
- Beeja Mantra: HUM
- Positive energy: Gratefulness
- Negative energy: Grief

AJNA CHAKRA

Ajna is located between the eyebrows.

- Meaning: Command
- Petals: 2
- Colour: Indigo
- Location: Between the eyebrows
- Beeja Mantra: OM
- Positive energy: Intuition / Foresight
- Negative energy: Anger / Fear

SAHASRARA CHAKRA

Sahasrara is located above the crown of the head.

- Meaning: Thousand petal lotus
- Petals: 1000
- Colour: Violet
- Location: Top of the head
- Beeja Mantra: OM
- Positive energy: Spiritual Enlightenment
- Negative energy: None

BANDHAS

Introduction to Bandha

Traditionally, bandhas were classified as part of mudras and were handed down by word of mouth from guru to disciple. Bandhas are extensively incorporated in mudra as well as pranayama techniques. Their locking action, however, reveals them as a fundamentally important group of practices in their own right. The Sanskrit word bandha means to 'hold', 'tighten' or 'lock'. These definitions precisely describe the physical action involved in the bandha practices and their effect on the pranic body. The bandhas aim to lock the pranas in particular areas and redirect their flow into Sushumna Nadi for the purpose of spiritual awakening. Bandhas should first be practised and mastered individually. Only then can they be beneficially incorporated with mudra and pranayama practices. When combined in this way, they awaken the psychic faculties and form an adjunct to higher yogic practices. However, it is important to observe the Contraindications.

There are 4 types of Bandhas:

1. Jalandhara Bandha
 2. Moola Bandha
 3. Uddiyana Bandha
 4. Maha Bandha
- #### JALANDHARA BANDHA

The Sanskrit word Jalan means 'net' and Dhara means 'stream' or 'flow'. One interpretation of Jalandhara bandha is the lock that controls the network of nadis in the neck. The physical manifestation of these nadis is the blood vessels and nerves of the neck.

Procedure

- Sit in padmasana or Siddha/Siddha yoni asana with the head and spine straight.
- The knees should be in firm contact with the floor. Place the palms on the knees. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Inhale slowly and deeply and retain the breath inside.
- While retaining the breath, bend the head forward and press the chin tightly against the chest. Straighten the arms and lock them firmly into position, pressing the knees down with the hands.
- Simultaneously, hunch the shoulders upward and forward.
- This will ensure that the arms stay locked, thus intensifying the pressure applied to the neck. Stay in the final position for a few seconds, to begin with.
- Do not strain. Relax the shoulders, bend the arms and slowly release the lock.
- Raise the head and then exhale. Repeat when the respiration has returned to normal.

Benefits

The full form of Jalandhara bandha compresses the carotid sinuses, which are located on the carotid arteries, the main arteries in the neck.

The simple variation exerts a subtler pressure. These sinuses help to regulate the circulatory and respiratory systems. Normally, a decrease in oxygen and an increase in carbon dioxide in the body leads to an increased heart rate and heavier breathing. This process is initiated by the carotid sinuses. By exerting pressure on these sinuses, this tendency is prevented, allowing for decreased heart rate and increased breath retention.

Contraindications

People suffering from cervical spondylosis, high intracranial pressure, vertigo, high blood pressure or heart disease should not practise Jalandhara bandha. Although the neck lock reduces blood pressure, long retention of the breath strains the heart. Jalandhara is the first bandha to be taught as the effects are light and soothing. Refrain from the practice if any vertigo or dizziness arises.

MOOLA BANDHA

The Sanskrit word moola means 'root', 'firmly fixed', 'source' or 'cause'. In this context, it refers to the root of the spine or the perineum where mooladhara chakra, the seat of kundalini, the primal energy, is located. Moola bandha is effective for locating and awakening mooladhara chakra.

Procedure

- Sit in a comfortable meditative asana, preferably Siddha/Siddha yoni asana, so that pressure is applied to the perineal/ vaginal region.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Be aware of the natural breath.
- Focus the awareness on the perineal /vaginal region.

- Contract this region by pulling up on the muscles of the pelvic floor and then relaxing them.
- Continue to briefly contract and relax the perineal /vaginal region as rhythmically and evenly as possible. Breathe normally throughout the practice.

Benefits

Moola bandha bestows many physical, mental and spiritual benefits. It stimulates the pelvic nerves and tones the urogenital and excretory systems. It is helpful in psychosomatic and degenerative illnesses. It relieves depression and promotes good health. It helps to realign the physical, mental and psychic bodies in preparation for spiritual awakening. Moola bandha is a means to attain sexual control.

Contraindications

This practice should only be performed under the guidance of a competent teacher. Moola bandha raises energy and may precipitate hyperactivity. Do not practise during menstruation.

UDDIYANA BANDHA

The Sanskrit word uddiyana means 'to rise up' or 'to fly upward'. This practice is so-called because the physical lock applied to the body causes the diaphragm to rise towards the chest. Uddiyana is therefore often translated as the stomach lift. Another meaning is that the physical lock helps to direct prana into sushumna nadi so that it flows upward to sahasrara chakra.

Procedure

- Stand erect with the feet about half a metre apart. Inhale deeply through the nostrils.
- Bend forward from the waist and exhale all the air through the mouth. Empty the lungs as much as possible.
- Hold your breath outside. Keep the spine horizontal and bend the knees slightly. Place the palms on the thighs just above the knees, so that the knees are supporting the weight of the upper body.
- The fingers can point either downward or inwards. Make sure the arms are straight. In this position, there is an automatic contraction of the abdominal region.
- Bend the head forward, but do not press the chin against the chest.
- Make a false inhalation, keeping the glottis closed and expanding the chest, as though breathing in but not actually taking in air.

Straighten the knees.

- This movement will automatically draw the abdomen upward and inward towards the spine to form uddiyana bandha.
- Hold this position for a comfortable length of time. Do not strain. Release the abdominal lock and relax the chest.
- Raise the head and torso to the upright position.
- Exhale slightly to release the lock on the lungs and finally inhale slowly through the nose.
- Remain in the standing position until the breath returns to normal before beginning the next round.

Benefits

Uddiyana bandha is a panacea for the abdomen. It stimulates the function of the pancreas and liver and strengthens the internal organs. The digestive fire is stimulated, and the abdominal organs are massaged and toned. The adrenal glands are balanced, removing lethargy and soothing anxiety and tension. It improves blood circulation throughout the torso.

Contraindications

Persons suffering from colitis, stomach or intestinal ulcer, diaphragmatic hernia, major abdominal problems, high blood pressure, heart disease, glaucoma and raised intracranial pressure should not perform this practice. It should also be avoided during pregnancy.

MAHA BANDHA

The Sanskrit word maha means 'great'. Maha bandha is called the great lock as it combines all the three bandhas in one practice.

Procedure

- Sit in siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana with your hands on your knees. The spine should be erect and the head straight. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through the nose. Exhale forcefully and completely.
- Retain the breath outside.
- Successively perform jalandhara, uddiyana and moola bands in this order. Hold the bandhas and the breath for as long as is comfortable without straining.
- Then release moola, uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas in this order. Inhale slowly when the head is upright.
- This is one round.
- Keep the eyes closed, relax the body and let the breath return to normal before commencing the next round.

Benefits

Maha bandha gives enhanced benefits to all three bandhas. It affects the hormonal secretions of the pineal gland and regulates the entire endocrine system. The degenerative and ageing processes are checked, and every cell of the body is rejuvenated. It introverts the mind prior to meditation. When perfected, it can fully awaken prana in the main chakras. It leads to the merger of prana, Apana and Samana in Manipura chakra, which is the culmination of all pranayamas.

Contraindications

People suffering from high or low blood pressure, heart conditions, stroke, hernia, stomach or intestinal ulcer, and those recovering from any visceral ailment should avoid this practice. Pregnant women should also not attempt this practice.

CONCEPT OF MITAHARA, PATHYA & APTHAYA

susnighdha-madhurāhāraśchaturthāṃśa-vivarjitah |
bhujiyate śiva-samprītyai mitāhārah sa uchyate ||

Meaning:

Agreeable and sweet food, leaving one fourth of the stomach free, and eaten as an offering to Lord Shiva is Mitahara
susnighdha-madhur does not literally mean oily and sweet, what it represents here? The food which is fresh, has its juices intact, has pleasant taste and which is not dried is susnighdha and madhur. The diet which is according to one's metabolism and body type.
chaturthāṁśa-vivarjitaḥ means keep the stomach 1/4 empty. It clearly signifies one should not overload the stomach. It is said it should be half filled with food, 1/4 filled with water and 1/4 with air. Keeping stomach little empty is like giving space to food for churning properly.
bhujiyate śiva-samprītyai means eat as an offering to please Shiva (Lord Shiva is is adiyogi, the master of all yogis). Offer the food to God first and eat it as the prasada (the food given by god). Body is temple and God or Lord Shiva resides there. Be in this state- that food is an offering to God residing in the body temple. Why so? The reason is we always offer good and appropriate things to those we love. Be in that state, offer moderate, right, sattvic and delicious food and as a result of prasada this body and mind will be strengthened, purified and get good health.

Yogic Diet is an integral part of yoga and human existence. Taittiriya Upanishad says, "Annata purushah": The individual grows out of the food that he takes. Bhagavad Gita, the fountainhead of Indian school of thought considers diet as 'Yuktaahar' which means balanced diet.

Various yogic scriptures identify food items to be as Pathya (wholesome) and Apathya (unwholesome) food and forms basis of Yogic diet.

Apathya/ Un-Wholesome food:

The foods which are prohibited (for the yogi) are: those which are bitter, sour, pungent, salty, heating, green vegetables (other than those ordained), sour gruel, oil, sesame and mustard, alcohol, fish, flesh foods, curds, buttermilk, horse gram, oil cakes, asafetida and garlic.

Unhealthy diet should not be taken, that which is reheated after becoming cold, which is dry (devoid of natural oil), which is excessively salty or acidic, stale or has too many (mixed) vegetables.

Pathya/Wholesome food: The most conducive foods for the yogi are: good grains, wheat, rice, barley, milk, ghee, brown sugar, sugar candy (crystallized sugar), honey, dry ginger, patola fruit (species of cucumber), five vegetables, mung and such pulses, and pure water.

The yogi should take nourishing and sweet food mixed with, ghee and milk; it should nourish the dhatus (basic body constituents) and be pleasing and suitable.

PANCHA PRANAS

Prana is a vital force that runs in the body. PRANA in our body is divided into 5 Pancha Pranas. They are Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana, Udana.

PRANA VAYU

The job of Prana Vayu is to obtain the energy from the elements and supply to the system. The location of the Prana Vayu is the chest / thoracic region. This is responsible for the Respiratory system and cardiovascular system. It is related to ailments related to the common cold, flu, chest infection, etc.

SAMANA VAYU

Samana means balancing. It is responsible for the absorption of nutrients from the food we intake. This is located between the diaphragm and navel region. This is responsible for the digestive system. This is an energy that moves in a circular pattern and goes inwards. Ailments related to Samana Vayu are Indigestion, etc.

APANA VAYU

Apana vayu works on the elimination and excretion of our waste (CO₂, faeces, urine, sweat). Apana is located below the navel. It is responsible for both excretory and reproductive systems. Weak apana means problems such as Constipation, Urinary tract infections, menstrual problems, reproductive issues will occur.

VYANA VAYU

Vyana vayu is the energy that circulates through the entire system of the body. It flows through arms, legs, and all around the body. The energy that is generated by PRANA vayu and SAMANA vayu is distributed by VYANA vayu. It is responsible for the circulatory system. Controls the voluntary and involuntary muscles in the body.

UDANA VAYU

Udana vayu is the energy that moves in the upward direction from your neck to the head. It is the energy that gives us higher thinking capabilities, logical thinking, and intuition power. It controls the neurological system. It moves from neck to head. It controls the nervous system.

5 UPA PRANAS - Five minor pranas

Along with the five major pranas, there are five minor pranas called upa pranas.

These are: naga, koorma, krikara, devadatta and dhananjaya.

1. Naga: This field of activity causes belching and hiccups.
2. Koorma: This field causes the blinking of the eyes, the opening of the eyes, and keeps the eyes healthy, moist and protected.
3. Krikara: This field causes hunger and thirst, sneezing, cough and assists in respiration.
4. Devadatta: This field sleeps and yawns. Due to its relation with yawning, its origin is sloth (laziness) and lethargy.
5. Dhananjaya: This is related to the organ of touch. It influences the work of the muscles, arteries and veins, and skin. Dhananjaya is the last prana to leave the body after death and is responsible for the decomposition of the body.

YOGA AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

What is stress

Stress is the body's reaction to harmful situations -- whether they're real or perceived. When you feel threatened, a chemical reaction occurs in your body that allows you to act in a way to prevent injury. This reaction is known as "fight-or-flight" or the stress response. During the stress response, your heart rate increases, breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and blood pressure rises. You've gotten ready to act. It is how you protect yourself.

Stress means different things to different people. What causes stress in one person may be of little concern to another. Some people are better able to handle stress than others. And, not all stress is bad. In small doses, stress can help you accomplish tasks and prevent you from getting hurt.

For example, stress is what gets you to slam on the brakes to avoid hitting the car in front of you. That's a good thing.

Our bodies are designed to handle small doses of stress. But, we are not equipped to handle long-term, chronic stress without ill consequences.

What Are the Symptoms of Stress?

Stress can affect all parts of your life, including your emotions, behaviors, thinking ability, and physical health. No part of the body is immune. But, because people handle stress differently, symptoms of stress can vary. Symptoms can be vague and may be the same as those caused by medical conditions. So it is important to discuss them with your doctor. You may have any of the following symptoms of stress.

Emotional symptoms of stress include:

- ☐ Becoming easily agitated, frustrated, and moody
- ☐ Feeling overwhelmed, as if you are losing control or need to take control
- ☐ Having a hard time relaxing and quieting your mind
- ☐ Feeling bad about yourself (low self-esteem), and feeling lonely, worthless, and depressed
- ☐ Avoiding others

Physical symptoms of stress include:

- ☐ Low energy
- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Upset stomach, including diarrhea, constipation, and nausea
- ☐ Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- ☐ Chest pain and rapid heartbeat
- ☐ Insomnia
- ☐ Frequent colds and infections
- ☐ Loss of sexual desire and/or ability
- ☐ Nervousness and shaking, ringing in the ears, and cold or sweaty hands and feet
- ☐ Dry mouth and a hard time swallowing
- ☐ Clenched jaw and grinding teeth

Cognitive symptoms of stress include:

- ☐ Constant worrying
- ☐ Racing thoughts
- ☐ Forgetfulness and disorganization
- ☐ Inability to focus
- ☐ Poor judgment

- Being pessimistic or seeing only the negative side

Behavioral symptoms of stress include:

- Changes in appetite -- either not eating or eating too much
- Procrastinating and avoiding responsibilities
- More use of alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes
- Having more nervous behaviors, such as nail biting, fidgeting, and pacing

What Are the Consequences of Long-Term Stress?

A little stress every now and then is not something to be concerned about. But ongoing, chronic stress can cause or worsen many serious health problems, including:

- Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, and personality disorders
- Cardiovascular disease, including heart disease, high blood pressure, abnormal heart rhythms, heart attacks, and strokes
- Obesity and other eating disorders
- Menstrual problems
- Sexual dysfunction, such as impotence and premature ejaculation in men and loss of sexual desire in men and women
- Skin and hair problems, such as acne, psoriasis, and eczema, and permanent hair loss
- Gastrointestinal problems, such as GERD, gastritis, ulcerative colitis, and irritable colon

Types of Stress

Physical stress: trauma (injury, infection, surgery), intense physical labor/over-exertion, environmental pollution (pesticides, herbicides, toxins, heavy metals, inadequate light, radiation, noise, electromagnetic fields), illness (viral, bacterial, or fungal agents), fatigue, inadequate oxygen supply, hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), hormonal and/or biochemical imbalances, dietary stress (nutritional deficiencies, food allergies and sensitivities, unhealthy eating habits), dehydration, substance abuse, dental challenges, and musculoskeletal misalignments/imbbalances.

Psychological stress: emotional stress (resentments, fears, frustration, sadness, anger, grief/bereavement), cognitive stress (information overload, accelerated sense of time, worry, guilt, shame, jealousy, resistance, attachments, self-criticism, self-loathing, unworkable perfectionism, anxiety, panic attacks, not feeling like yourself, not feeling like things are real, and a sense of being out of control/not being in control), and perceptual stress (beliefs, roles, stories, attitudes, world view).

Psychosocial stress: relationship/marriage difficulties (partner, siblings, children, family, employer, co-workers, employer), lack of social support, lack of resources for adequate survival, loss of employment/investments/savings, loss of loved ones, bankruptcy, home foreclosure, and isolation.

Psycho-spiritual stress: A crisis of values, meaning, and purpose; joyless striving (instead of productive, satisfying, meaningful and fulfilling work; and a misalignment with one's core spiritual beliefs.

Yoga for Stress Management

Dating back over 5,000 years, yoga is considered by many to be the oldest defined practice of self-development. The methods of classical yoga include ethical disciplines, physical postures, breathing control, and meditation. Traditionally an Eastern practice, it's now becoming popular in the West. In fact, many companies, especially in Britain, are seeing the benefits of yoga, recognizing that relaxed workers are healthier and more creative, and are sponsoring yoga fitness programs.

Many studies have found that a little yoga in the morning, at night, or even on a lunch break, can minimize stress and increase productivity. It is believed that yoga is so effective for stress relief because, aside from the physical benefits that yoga brings, it encourages a good mood, an increase in mindfulness, and a healthy dose of self-compassion.

Stress-Relief Techniques Involved in Yoga

Many of the popular techniques found to reduce stress derive from yoga:

- ☐ Controlled breathing
- ☐ Meditation
- ☐ Physical movement
- ☐ Mental imagery
- ☐ Stretching

Yoga, which derives its name from the word, “yoke”—to bring together—does just that, bringing together the mind, body, and spirit. But whether you use yoga for spiritual transformation or for stress management and physical well-being, the benefits are numerous.

Effects on the Body

The following is only a partial list of yoga's benefits:

- ☐ Reduced stress and anxiety
- ☐ Sound sleep
- ☐ Reduced cortisol levels
- ☐ Improvement of many medical conditions
- ☐ Allergy and asthma symptom relief
- ☐ Lower blood pressure
- ☐ Smoking cessation help
- ☐ Lower heart rate
- ☐ Spiritual growth
- ☐ Sense of well-being
- ☐ Reduced muscle tension
- ☐ Increased strength and flexibility
- ☐ Slowed aging process

Yoga's benefits are so numerous; it gives a high payoff for the amount of effort involved.

Benefits

Virtually everyone can see physical benefits from yoga, and its practice can also give psychological benefits, such as stress reduction and a sense of well-being, and spiritual benefits, such as a feeling of connectedness with God or Spirit, or a feeling of transcendence. Certain poses can be done just about anywhere and a yoga program can go for hours or minutes, depending on one's schedule.

There are several mechanisms in yoga that have an effect on stress levels, meaning there are multiple ways that yoga can minimize your stress levels. Studies show that the most effective ways in which yoga targets stress are by lifting your mood (or positive affect), by allowing for increased mindfulness, and by increasing self-compassion.

Comparison to Stress Reduction Methods

As yoga combines several techniques used for stress reduction, it can be said to provide the combined benefits of breathing exercises, stretching exercises, fitness programs, meditation practice, and guided imagery, in one technique. However, for those with great physical limitations, simple breathing exercises, meditation, or guided imagery might be a preferable option and provide similar benefits.

SUN SALUTATION



BENEFITS OF SURYA NAMASKARA

The benefits of Surya Namaskar are manifold. It helps in the better functioning of the body and mental faculties.

Here are a few benefits of Surya Namaskar:

1. Helps to keep you disease-free and healthy.
2. Balances the body & mind.
3. Improves blood circulation.
4. Improves digestion system.
5. Strengthens the heart.
6. Stimulates abdominal muscles, respiratory system, lymphatic system, spinal nerves, and other internal organs.
7. Tones the spine, neck, shoulder, and arms, hands, wrist, back, and leg muscles, thereby promoting overall flexibility.

8. Psychologically, it regulates the interconnectedness of body, breath, and mind.
9. Makes one calmer and boosts energy levels with sharpened awareness.
10. Helps in losing weight.

Contraindication / Limitations

1. Pregnant Women should avoid practice.
2. During menstruation, advised to avoid.
3. Those having pain in knee / shoulders / hips / spine / slip disc/ sciatica must avoid the practise. This also depends on the severity.
4. If you have pain in the knee, you can also place a blanket or use kneecaps to support your knees.
5. Those with Hypertension, heart ailments, hernia, severe arthritis, and wrist issues should avoid this practice.

Instruction

1. Hasta Uttanasana– Breath in
2. Pada Hastasana - Breath out
3. Ashwa Sanchalana – Breath in
4. Adho mukha– Breath out
5. Phalakasana– Breath in
6. Ashtangasana– Breath out
7. Bhujangasana– Breath in
8. Adho mukha Svanasana– Breath out
9. Ashwa Sanchalanasana – Breath in
10. Padahastasana– Breath out
11. Hasta Uttanasana – Breath in
12. Pranamasana/ Namskarasana– Breath out

REPEAT ON THE LEFT SIDE