**General notes for the practitioner**

In the traditional texts, there are innumerable rules and regulations pertaining to pranayama. The main points are to exercise moderation, balance, and common sense with regard to inner and outer thinking and living. However, for those who seriously wish to take up the advanced practices of pranayama, the guidance of a guru or competent teacher is essential.

**Contra-indications:**

Pranayama should not be practiced during illness, although simple techniques such as breath awareness and abdominal breathing in shavasana may be performed. Carefully observe the contra-indications given for individual practices.

**Time of practice:**

The best time to practise pranayama is at dawn, when the body is fresh and the mind has very few impressions. If this is not possible, another good time is just after sunset. Tranquillizing pranayamas may be performed before sleep. Try to practise regularly at the same time and place each day. Regularity in practice increases strength and willpower as well as acclimatizing the body and mind to the increased prank force. Do not be in a hurry; slow, steady progress is essential.

**Bathing:**

Take a bath or shower before commencing the practice, or at least wash the hands, face and feet. Do not take a bath for at least half an hour after the practice to allow the body temperature to normalize.

**Clothes:**

Loose, comfortable clothing made of natural fibres should be worn during the practice. The body may be covered with a sheet or blanket when it is cold or to keep insects away.

**Empty stomach:**

Practise before eating in the morning or wait at least three to four hours after meals before starting pranayama. Food in the stomach places pressure on the diaphragm and lungs, making full, deep respiration difficult.

**Diet:**

A balanced diet of protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals is suitable for most pranayama practices. A combination of grains, pulses, fresh fruit and vegetables, with some milk products if necessary; is recommended.  
When commencing pranayama practice, constipation and a reduction in the quantity of urine may be experienced. In the case of dry motions, stop taking salt and spices, and drink plenty of water. In the case of loose motions, stop the practices for a few days and go on a diet of rice and curd or yoghurt.  
The more advanced stages of pranayama require a change in diet and a guru should be consulted for guidance on this.

**Place of practice:**

Practise in a quiet, clean and pleasant room, which is well ventilated but not draughty. Generally, avoid practising in direct sunlight as the body will become over-heated, except at dawn when the soft rays of the early morning sun are beneficial. Practising in a draught or wind, in air-conditioning or under a fan may upset the body temperature and cause chills.

**Breathing:**

Always breathe through the nose and not the mouth unless specifically instructed otherwise. Both nostrils must be clear and flowing freely. Mucous blockages may beremoved through the practice of neti or kapalbhati. If the flow of breath in the nostrils is unequal, it may be balanced by practising padadhirasana as a breath balancing technique.

**Sequence:**

Pranayama should be performed after shat­karmas and asanas, and before meditation practice. Nadi shodhana pranayama should be practised in each pranayama session as its balancing and purifying effects form the basis for successful pranayama. After practising pranayama, one may lie down in shavasana for a few minutes.

**Sitting position:**

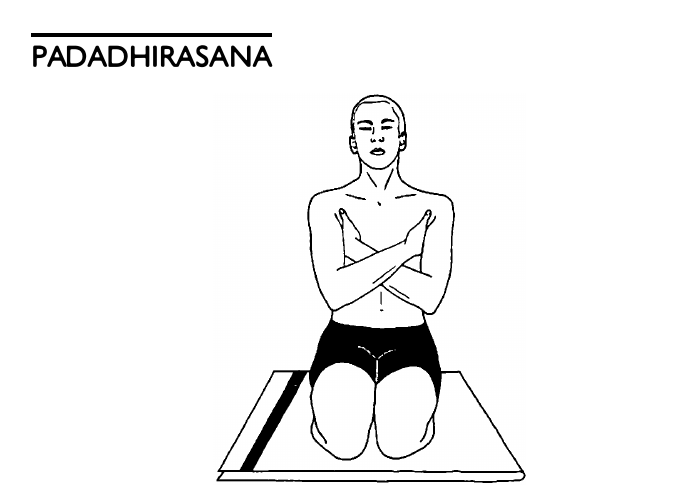
A comfortable, sustainable meditation posture is necessary to enable efficient breathing and body steadiness during the practice. Siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana are the best postures for pranayama. The body should be as relaxed as possible throughout the practice with the spine, neck and head erect. Sit on a folded blanket or cloth of natural fibre to ensure the maximum conduction of energy during the practice. Those who cannot sit in a meditation posture may sit against a wall with the legs outstretched or in a chair which has a straight back.

**Avoid strain:**

With all pranayama practices, it is important to remember that the instruction not to strain, not to try to increase your capacity too fast, applies just as it does to asana practice. If one is advised to practise a pranayama technique until it is mastered, and it can be practised without any strain or dicomfort, it is wise to follow that instruction before moving on to a more advanced practice or ratio. Furthermore, breath retention should only be practised for as long as is comfortable.  
The lungs are very delicate organs and any misuse can easily cause them injury. Not only the physical body, but also the mental and emotional aspects of the personality need time to adjust. Never strain in any way.

**Side effects:**

Various symptoms may manifest in normally healthy people. These are caused by the process of purification and the expulsion of toxins. Sensations of itching, tingling, heat or cold, and feelings of lightness or heaviness may occur. Such experiences are generally temporary, but if they persist, check with a competent teacher. Energy levels may increase or fluctuate; interests may change. If such changes cause difficulty in lifestyle, decrease or stop the practice until a competent teacher or guru gives guidance.



**Padadhirasana (breath balancing pose)**

Sit in vajrasana. Cross the arms in front of the chest, placing the hands under the opposite armpits with the thumbs pointing upward, or, for a stronger effect, make fists of the hands and place them under the armpits. Close the eyes and become aware of the breathing process.

**Breathing:**

Slow, deep and rhythmical. Practise until the flow of the breath in both nostrils becomes equalized.

**Duration:**

To prepare for pranayama, practise until the flow of the breath equalizes, or for 5 to 1 0 minutes.

**Awareness:**   
  
Physical - on the breathing process in the nose.  
Spiritual - on ajna chakra.

**Benefits:**

The pressure under both the armpits helps to open the nostrils to facilitate the practice of pranayama. Since the breath flow in the right and left nostrils influences the activities of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems respectively, opening of the two nostrils induces a state of autonomic balance.

**Practice note:**

Padadhirasana may be used as a preparation for pranayama. It is especially useful when one or both nostrils are blocked. If only one nostril is blocked, or partially blocked, place the hand of that side underneath the opposite armpit. Maintain the pressure for a minute or two, although changes may sometimes occur within a few seconds.

**Pranayama 1**

**Note de Susan ji :**

La narine gauche concerne tous les aliments liquide et la narine droite les aliments solides. Il est conseillé de dormir sur le côté droit pour laisser de l’espace à la narine gauche. Le Kapalpati n’est pas un pranayama.

**KAPALPHATI**

Exercices

20 x 3 Kapalpati

Anulom vilom x 10 1:1 (5:5)

**NATURAL BREATHING**

This is a simple technique which introduces practitioners to their own respiratory system and breathing patterns. It is **very relaxing and may be practised at any time**. Awareness of the breathing process is itself sufficient to slow down the respiratory rate and establish a more relaxed rhythm.

**Natural breathing**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation posture or lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
* Observe the natural and spontaneous breathing process.
* Develop total awareness of the rhythmic flow of the breath.
* Feel the breath flowing in and out of the nose. Do not control the breath in any way. Notice that the breath is cool as it enters the nostrils and warm as it flows out.
* Observe this with the attitude of a detached witness.
* Feel the breath flowing in and out at the back of the mouth above the throat.
* Bring the awareness down to the region of the throat and feel the breath flowing in the throat.
* Bring the awareness down to the region of the chest and feel the breath flowing in the trachea and bronchial tubes.
* Next, feel the breath flowing in the lungs.
* Be aware of the lungs expanding and relaxing.
* Shift the attention to the ribcage and observe the expansion and relaxation of this area.
* Bring the awareness down to the abdomen.
* Feel the abdomen move upward on inhalation and downward on exhalation.
* Finally, become aware of the whole breathing process from the nostrils to the abdomen and continue observing it for some time.
* Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as one unit and open the eyes.

**ABDOMINAL BREATHING**

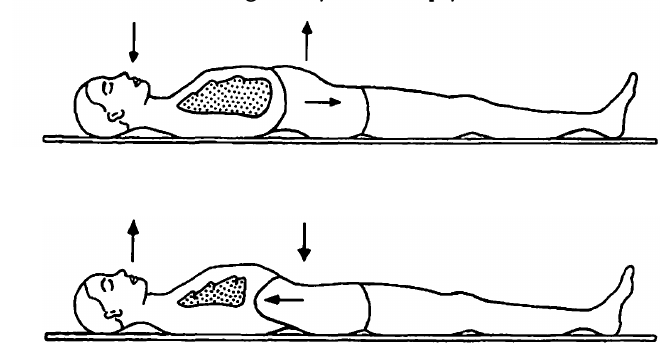
Abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing is practised by enhancing the action of the diaphragm and minimizing **the action of the ribcage**. The diaphragm is a domed sheet of muscle that separates the lungs from the abdominal cavity and, when functioning correctly, **promotes the most efficient type of breathing**. It is the effect of the diaphragm rather than the diaphragm itself that is experienced as the stomach rises and falls, but sensitivity will come with practice. During inhalation the diaphragm moves downward, pushing the abdominal contents downward and outward. During exhalation the diaphragm moves upward, and the abdominal contents move inward.

Movement of the diaphragm signifies that the lower lobes of the lungs are being utilized. The proper use of the diaphragm causes equal expansion of the alveoli, improves lymphatic drainage from basal parts of the lungs, massages the liver, stomach, intestines and other organs that lie immediately beneath it, exerts a positive effect on the cardiac functions and coronary supply, and improves oxygenation of the blood and circulation.

Abdominal breathing is the most natural and efficient way to breathe. However, due to tension, poor posture, restrictive clothing and lack of training, it is often forgotten. Once this technique again becomes a part of daily life and correct breathing is restored, there will be a great improvement in the state of physical and mental well-being.

**Abdominal (or diaphragmatic) breathing**

* Lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
* Place the right hand on the abdomen just above the navel and the left hand over the centre of the chest.
* Observe the spontaneous breath without controlling it in any way.
* Let it be absolutely natural.
* To practise abdominal breathing, feel as though you are drawing the energy and breath in and out directly through the navel. The right hand will move up with inhalation and down with exhalation. The left hand remains almost still.
* Let the abdomen relax. Do not try to force the movement In any way.
* Do not expand the chest or move the shoulders.
* Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting.
* Continue breathing slowly and deeply.



* Inhale while expanding the abdomen as much as is comfortable, without expanding the ribcage.
* At the end of the inhalation, the diaphragm will be compressing the abdomen and the navel will be at its highest point.
* On exhalation, the diaphragm moves upward and theabdomen moves downward.
* At the end ofthe exhalation, the abdomen will be contracted, and the navel compressed towards the spine.
* Continue for a few minutes. Relax any effort and once again watch the spontaneous breathing pattern.
* Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as a whole.
* Be aware of the surroundings and gently open the eyes.

**Pranayama 2**

**Note de Susan ji :**

Hygiène du nez est importante.  
Avant de commencer les Pranayama, on utilise le jal neti.  
On peut faire 20 kapalpati entre chaque utilisation du jal neti.

Exercices  
10 kapalpati à chaque jal neti   
20 kapalpati x 3  
15 kapalpati en sautant  
15 kapalpati en se penchant x 2

La narine droite est lié au soleil (pingala nadi) chaud la gauche à la lune (ida nadi) le froid.

Anulom vilom x 15 1:1 (5:5)

**THORACIC BREATHING**

Thoracic breathing utilizes the middle lobes of the lungs by expanding and contracting the ribcage. It expends more energy than abdominal breathing for the same quantity of air exchange. It is often associated with physical exercise and exertion, as well as stress and tension; when combined with abdominal breathing, it helps the body to obtain more oxygen. However, the tendency in many people is to continue this type of breathing instead of abdominal breathing long after the stressful situation has passed, creating bad breathing habits and continued tension.

**Thoracic breathing**

* Sit in a meditation posture or lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
* Maintain unbroken awareness of the natural breath for some time, concentrating on the sides of the chest.
* Discontinue any further use of the diaphragm and begin to inhale by slowly expanding the ribcage.
* Feel the movement of the individual ribs outward and upward and be aware of this expansion drawing air into the lungs.
* Expand the chest as much as possible.
* Exhale by relaxing the chest muscles.
* Feel the ribcage contracting and forcing the air out of the lungs.
* Breathe slowly and deeply through the chest with total awareness. Do not use the diaphragm.
* Continue thoracic breathing for a few minutes, pausing slightly after each inhalation and exhalation.
* Relax any effort and once again watch the spontaneous breathing pattern.
* Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as a whole.
* Be aware of the surroundings and gently open the eyes.

**CLAVICULAR BREATHING**

Clavicular breathing is the final stage of total ribcage expansion. It occurs after the thoracic inhalation has been completed. In order to absorb a little more air into the lungs, the upper ribs and the collar bone are pulled upwards by the muscles of the neck, throat and sternum. This requires maximum expansion on inhalation and only the upper lobes of the lungs are ventilated. In daily life, clavicular breathing is only used under conditions of extreme physical exertion and when experiencingobstructive airway diseases such as asthma.

**Clavicular breathing**

* Lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
* Maintain unbroken awareness of the natural breath for some time, concentrating on the sides of the chest.
* Perform thoracic breathing for a few minutes.
* Inhale, fully expanding the ribcage.
* When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs around the base of the neck. The shoulders and collar bone should also move up slightly. This will take some effort.
* Exhale slowly, first releasing the lower neck and upper chest, then relaxing the rest of the ribcage back to its starting position.
* Continue for a few more breaths, observing the effect of this type of breathing.
* Relax any effort and once again watch the spontaneous breathing pattern.
* Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as a whole.
* Be aware of the surroundings and gently open the eyes.

**Pranayama 3**

Exercices

30 kapalpati x 4  
Anulom vilom x 20 1:1 (5:5)

**Nadi shodan pranayama x 5:**

**Hand position:**  
Nasagra Mudra (nosetip position) Hold the fingers of the right hand in front of the face.Rest the index and middle fingers gently on the eyebrow centre. Both fingers should be relaxed. The thumb is above the right nostril and the ring finger above the left. These two digits control the flow of breath in the nostrils by alternately pressing on one nostril, blocking the flow of breath, and then the other.  
The little finger is comfortably folded. When practicing for long periods, the elbow may be supported in the palm of the left hand, although care is needed to prevent chest restriction.

**Technique I : Preparatory practice**

**Stage I :**

* Sit in any comfortable meditation posture, preferably siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana.
* Keep the head and spine upright.
* Relax the whole body and close the eyes.
* Practise yogic breathing for some time.
* Adopt nasagra mudra with the right hand and place the left hand on the knee in chin or jnana mudra.
* Close the right nostril with the thumb.
* Inhale and exhale through the left nostril 5 times. The rate of inhalation/exhalation should be normal.
* Be aware of each breath.
* After completing 5 breaths, release the pressure of the thumb on the right nostril and press the left nostril with the ring finger, blocking the flow of air.
* Inhale and exhale through the right nostril 5 times, keeping the respiration rate normal.
* Lower the hand and breathe 5 times through both nostrils together.

This is one round.

* Practise 5 rounds or for 3 to 5 minutes, making sure that there is no sound as the air passes through the nostrils. Practise until this stage is mastered before commencing the next stage.

**Note de Susan ji:**

1. 1 Inhale Left nostril : 1: Hold 2 : Exhale Right nostril & 1I : 1H 2E one round
2. 1 I : 2 H : 2 E & 1 I : 2 H : 2 E one round (No cigarettes for this level)
3. 1 : 3 : 2 & 1 : 3 : 2 one round (No cigarettes nor Alcohol)
4. 1 : 4 : 2 & 1 : 4 : 2 one round (No cigarettes nor Alcohol nor spicy food)
5. 1 : 4 : 2 : 1 Hold & 1 : 4 : 2 : Hold one round (No cigarettes nor Alcohol nor spicy food nor meat)

La peur de la mort peut être surmonté grâce au pranayama.

**YOGIC BREATHING**

Yogic breathing combines the previous three techniques. 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 practiced 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.

**Yogic breathing**

* Sit in a meditation posture or lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
* Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand fully.
* 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.
* At the end of abdominal expansion, start to expand the chest outward and upward.
* When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs around the base of the neck.
* The shoulders and collar bone should also move up slightly. Some tension will be felt in the neck muscles.
* 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.
* There should be no jerks or unnecessary strain. The breathing should be like the swell of the sea.
* Now start to exhale.
* 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.
* The entire movement should be harmonious and flowing.
* Hold the breath for a few seconds at the end of exhalation.

**This completes one round of yogic breathing.** At first perform 5 to 10 rounds and slowly increase to 10 minutes daily.

* Relax any effort and once again watch the spontaneous breathing pattern.
* Bring the awareness back to observing the physical body as a whole.
* Be aware of the surroundings and gently open the eyes.

**Practice note:**

The main requirement in pranayama is that respiration be comfortable and relaxed. Consequently, once awareness and control of the breathing process has been established, the clavicular technique is dropped, and yogic breathing is modified to become a combination of abdominal and thoracic breathing. The breath should flow naturally and not be forced.

**Pranayama 4**

**Exercices**

30 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 20 1:1 (5:5)  
Nadi shodan 1:1:2 & 1:1:2 x 5 (3:3:6)

**Note de Susan ji:**

Explication de bidu le nectar de la vie sa consommation par le manipura chakra et le vishuddi chakra qui peut redistribuer ce nectar.

**Sheetali Pranayama (cooling breath)**



**Technique I**

* 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.

**Duration:**

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 is sufficient; however, up to 60 rounds may be performed in extremely hot weather.

**Awareness:**

On the tongue, the sound and the cooling sensation of the inhaled breath.

**Sequence:**

Practice after asanas and other yogic practices which heat the body in order to restore temperature balance.  
  
**Benefits:**

This practice cools the body and affects important brain centers 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 tranquility and may be used as a tranquillizer before sleep. It gives control over hunger and thirst and generates a feeling of satisfaction.

**Practice note:**

About one -third of the population is genetically unable to roll the sides of the tongue into a tube. However, the practice of sheetkari pranayama gives similar benefits.

**Note:** Sheetali is derived from the root sheet, which means 'cold'. Sheetal means 'that which is calm, passionless and soothing'.  
  
**Sheetkari Pranayama (hissing breath)**

**Technique I**

* 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.

**Awareness:**

On the hissing sound and the cooling sensation of the inhaled breath.

**Contra-indications:**

Practitioners with sensitive teeth, missing teeth or dentures should practise sheetali pranayama instead.

**Benefits:**

Natural beauty

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 5**

**Nettoyage jal neti**

**test du sutra neti  
Exercices**

40 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 30 1:1 (5:5)  
Nadi shodan 1:1:2 & 1:1:2 x 5 (3:3:6)

**Bhastrika Pranayama (bellows breath)**

**Technique I: Preparatory practice**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation posture with the hands resting on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra.
* Keep the head and spine straight, close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* Take a deep breath in and breathe out forcefully through the nose.
* Immediately afterwards breathe in with the same force. Forceful inhalation results from fully expanding the abdominal muscles and forceful exhalation from firm contraction of the abdominal muscles.
* Do not strain.
* During inhalation, the diaphragm descends and the abdomen moves outward.
* During exhalation, the diaphragm moves upward and the abdomen moves inward.
* The movements should be slightly exaggerated.
* Continue in this manner, counting 10 breaths.
* Take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly.

This is one round. Practice up to 5 rounds.

**Practice note:** When accustomed to this style of breathing, gradually increase the speed, always keeping the breath rhythmical. The force of inhalation and exhalation must be equal.  
  
**Technique 2: Alternate nostrils**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation asana, preferably padmasana or siddha/siddha yoni asana.
* Keep the head and spine straight.
* Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* Raise the right hand and perform nasagra mudra.

***Left nostril:***

* Close the right nostril with the thumb.
* Breathe in and out forcefully, without straining, through the left nostril 10 times.
* There should be a snuffing sound in the nose, but no sound should come from the throat or chest.
* The abdomen should expand and contract rhythmically with the breath.
* The pumping action should be performed by the abdomen alone; the chest, shoulders and face remain relaxed.

After 10 breaths, take a deep breath in and breathe out through the left nostril.

***Right nostril:***

* Close the left nostril and repeat the same process through the right nostril.

**Both nostrils:**

* Replace the raised hand on the knee.
* Repeat the same process through both nostrils

**Duration:** Ten breaths through the left, the right and both nostrils, as above, forms one complete round. Practice up to 5 rounds.

**Breathing:** Beginners may take several free breaths between rounds so that there is no strain. Breathing may be practised at 3 breath rates: slow, medium and fast, depending on individual capacity.  
Slow bhastrika is approximately one breath every 2 seconds, with no undue force on inhalation or exhalation. It is like amplified normal breathing. It is especially useful for beginners but may also be practiced at all stages.   
Medium breathing increases the speed of respiration to approximately one breath every second.

Fast breathing means a speed of around 2 breaths per second. Both medium and fast breathing are suitable for intermediate and advanced practitioners. As abdominal muscles become stronger with regular practice, the number of respirations may be increased by 5

per month until the count of 50 respirations is attained.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - on the breathing process and the physical movement of the abdomen.  
Spiritual - on manipura chakra.

**Precautions:** Bhastrika is a dynamic practice requiring a large expenditure of physical energy. Beginners are advised to take a short rest after each round. Avoid violent respiration, facial contortions and excessive shaking of the body. A feeling of faintness, excessive perspiration or vomiting indicates that the practice is being performed incorrectly. If any of these symptoms are experienced, the advice of a competent teacher should be sought. This practice purifies the blood. However, if the stages are rushed, all the impurities will be ejected from the body in a rush, which may exacerbate conditions caused by detoxification. A slow, conscientious approach to this practice is therefore recommended.

**Contra-indications:**

Bhastrika should not be practised by people with high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia,gastric ulcer, stroke, epilepsy, retinal problems, glaucoma or vertigo. The elderly, those suffering from lung diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, those recovering from tuberculosis, or in the first trimester of pregnancy are recommended to practise only under the guidance of a competent teacher.

**Benefits:**

This practice burns up toxins and helps balance the doshas or humours: kapha, phlegm; pitta, bile; and vata,wind. It is a useful practice for women during labour after a few months of proper preparation. Because of the rapid exchange of air in the lungs, there is an increase in the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide into and out of the bloodstream. This stimulates the metabolic rate, producing heat and flushing out wastes and toxins. The rapid and rhythmic movement of the diaphragm also massages and stimulates the visceral organs, toning the digestive system. Bhastrika reduces the level of carbon dioxide in the blood. It helps to alleviate inflammation in the throat and any accumulation of phlegm. It balances and strengthens the nervous system, inducing peace, tranquillity and one pointedness of mind in preparation for meditation.

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 6 (Samedi)  
Exercices**50 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 15 1:1 (10:10)  
Nadi shodan 1:1:2 & 1:1:2 x 5 (5:5:10)

**BHRAMARI PRANAYAMA (humming bee breath) x 6**



**Technique I**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation asana, preferably padmasana or siddha/siddha yoni asana with the hands resting on the knees in jnana or chin mudra.
* Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* The lips should remain gently closed with the teeth slightly separated throughout the practice. This allows the sound vibration to be heard and felt more distinctly.
* Raise the arms sideways and bend the elbows, bringing the hands to the ears.
* Use the index or middle finger to plug the ears or the flaps of the ears may be pressed without inserting the fingers.
* Bring the awareness to the centre of the head, where ajna chakra is located, and keep the body still.
* Inhale through the nose.
* Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the black bee.
* The humming should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the exhalation.
* The sound should be soft and mellow, making the front of the skull reverberate.
* At the end of exhalation, the hands can be kept steady or returned to the knee and then raised again for the next round.
* The inhalation and exhalation should be smooth and controlled.

**This is one round.**

**Awareness:**

Physical - on the humming sound within the head and on the steady, even breath.  
Spiritual - on ajna chakra.

**Duration:**   
5 to 10 rounds is sufficient in the beginning, then slowly increase to 10 to 15 minutes. In cases of extreme mental tension or anxiety, or when used to assist the healing process, practice for up to 30 minutes.

**Time of practice:**  
The best time to practice is late at night or in the early morning as there are fewer external noises to interfere with internal perception. Practicing at this time awakens psychic sensitivity. However, bhramari may be practised at any time to relieve mental tension.

**Contra-indications:**  
Bhramari should not be performed while lying down. People suffering from severe ear infections should not practice this pranayama.

**Benefits:** Bhramari relieves stress and cerebral tension, and so helps in alleviating anger, anxiety, and insomnia, increasing the healing capacity of the body. It strengthens and improves the voice. Bhramari induces a meditative state by harmonizing the mind and directing the awareness inward. The vibration of the humming sound creates a soothing effect on the mind and nervous system.

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 7**

**Exercices**50 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (10:20)  
**Nadi shodan** 1:1:2 & 1:1:2 x 5 (5:5:10)

**SURYA BHEDA PRANAYAMA**

**Surya Bheda Pranayama (vitality stimulating breath)**

**Technique I**

* Assume a 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.

**Awareness:**   
On the breath in the right nostril.

**Duration:**   
When first practicing surya bheda pranayama, 10 rounds are sufficient. Over time, however, as the practice becomes comfortable, the duration may be increased to 10  
minutes. Slowly increase the length of retention over a matter of months.  
A ratio of 1 : 1 : 1 may be introduced to stabilize the practice. Once this is mastered, it may be increased to 1 : 1 : 2 and then 1 : 2 : 2 .  
  
**Precautions:**  
Never practise surya bheda pranayama after eating, as it will interfere with the natural flow of energy associated with digestion. This pranayama may cause imbalance in the breathing cycle if performed for prolonged periods. Surya bheda is a very powerful pranayama and should only be performed under the guidance of a competent teacher.  
Do not practice pranayama with bandhas without the guidance of a competent teacher.

**Contra-indications:**   
People suffering from heart disease, hypertension, epilepsy, hyperthyroid, peptic ulcer, acidity or anxiety should not practise this pranayama.  
  
**Benefits:**   
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.

Note: The Sanskrit word surya means 'sun', which refers to pingala nadi, while bheda means 'to pierce', 'pass through' or 'awaken'.  
Surya bheda, then, means to pierce or purify pingala nadi.

**CHANDRA BHEDA PRANAYAMA**

**CHANDRA Bheda Pranayama (vitality stimulating breath)**

**Technique I**

* Assume a 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 right nostril with the thumb and inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril.
* Exhale slowly through the left nostril, keeping the right nostril closed with the thumb.

This is one round.

**Awareness:**   
On the breath in the left nostril.

**Duration:**   
When first practicing chandra bheda pranayama, 10 rounds are sufficient. Over time, however, as the practice becomes comfortable, the duration may be increased to 10  
minutes. Slowly increase the length of retention over a matter of months.  
A ratio of 1 : 1 : 1 may be introduced to stabilize the practice. Once this is mastered, it may be increased to 1 : 1 : 2 and then 1 : 2 : 2 .  
  
**Benefits:**   
The breath flowing in from the left side is influenced by the Chandra nadi or moon energy. That’s why is good to practice this pranayama when it is hot, it brings cooling energy. The mind is then peaceful and help the one who is suffering from high blood pressure. You will feel light, pleasant and attractive.

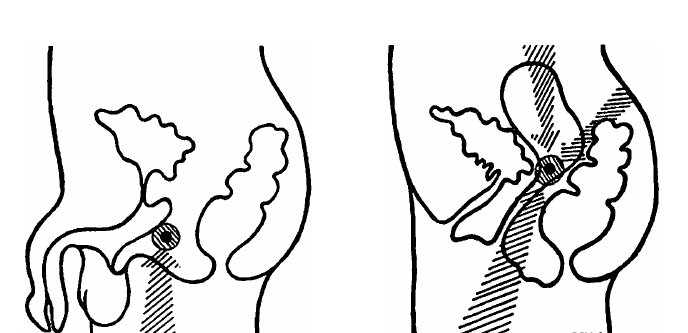
**Note:** The Sanskrit word chandra means 'moon', which refers to ida nadi, while bheda means 'to pierce', 'pass through' or 'awaken'.  
Surya bheda, then, means to pierce or purify ida nadi.  
  
**Bastrika + surya bedhan**

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 8  
Nettoyage jal et sutra neti**

**Exercices**50 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (10:20)  
 **Introduction to Bandha**

Traditionally, bandhas were classified as part of mudras, and were handed down by word of mouth from guru to disciple. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika deals with bandhas and mudras together and the ancient tantric texts also make no distinction between the two. 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 practiced 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 contra­ indications.  
  
***Bandhas and the granthis pour les 300***



**Technique 1: Moola Bandha (perineum contraction)**

**Stage I:**

* 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.

**Stage 2:**

* Continue to breathe normally; do not hold the breath.
* Slowly contract the perineal/vaginal region and hold the contraction.
* Be totally aware of the physical sensation.
* Contract a little tighter, but keep the rest of the body relaxed.
* Contract only those muscles related to the mooladhara region.
* In the beginning the anal and urinary sphincters will also contract, but as greater awareness and control is developed, this will minimize and eventually cease. Ultimately, only one point of contraction will be felt.
* Relax the muscles slowly and evenly.
* Adjust the tension in the spine to help focus on the point of contraction.
* Repeat 10 times with maximum contraction and total relaxation.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - at the point of perineal contraction.  
Spiritual - on mooladhara chakra.

**Sequence:** Moola bandha is ideally performed in conjunction with mudras, band has and pranayamas. If practiced on its own, it should be performed after asanas and pranayamas and before meditation.

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

**Benefits:**   
Moola bandha bestows many physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. It stimulates the pelvic nerves and tones the uro-genital 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. It may be used to sublimate sexual energy for spiritual development (brahmacharya), or for enhancement of marital relations.

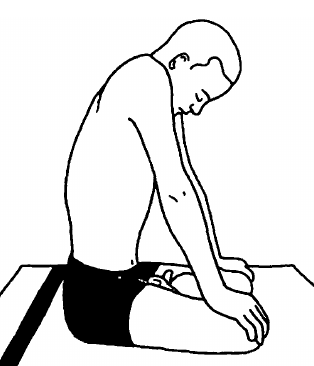
**Practice note:**Moola bandha is the contraction of specific muscles in the pelvic floor, not the whole perineum. In the male body, the area of contraction is between the anus and the testes. In the female body, the point of contraction is behind the cervix, where the uterus projects into the vagina. On the subtle level, it is the energizing of mooladhara chakra. The perineal body, which is the convergence of many muscles in the groin, acts as a trigger point for the location of mooladhara chakra. Initially, this area is difficult to isolate, so it is recommended that ashwini and vajroli mudras be performed in preparation for moola bandha.

**Note:**   
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.  
  
**Nadi shodan** 1:2:2 & 1:2:2 x 10 (5:10:10) with mulabanda

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 9**

**Exercices**50 kapalpati x 6  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (10:20)  
**JALANDHARA BANDHA**



**Jalandhara Bandha (throat lock)**

* 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 of the hands 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.

**Variation:**   
In kriya yoga a more simple and subtle form of jalandhara bandha is practised where the head is simply bent fotward so that the chin presses the neck. This variation is commonly used in association with pranayama practices.

**Breathing:**   
The practice is performed during internal retention. It may also be performed with external breath retention.

**Duration:**   
Jalandhara bandha can be held for as long as the practitioner is able to comfortably retain the breath. Maintain a count while retaining the breath and gradually increase the count. This practice may be repeated up to 5 times.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - on the throat pit and sensations connected with breath retention.  
Spiritual - on vishuddhi chakra.

**Sequence:**  
This bandha is ideally performed in conjunction with mudras, bandhas and pranayamas. If practiced on its own, it should be performed after asanas and pranayamas and before meditation.

**Contra-indications:**  
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.

**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 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. This practice produces mental relaxation, relieving stress, anxiety and anger. It develops meditative introversion and one-pointedness. The stimulus on the throat helps to balance thyroid function and regulate the metabolism.

**Practice note:**   
Do not exhale or inhale until the chin lock and arm lock have been released and the head is fully upright. If suffocation is felt, end the practice and rest. Once the sensation has passed, resume the practice.

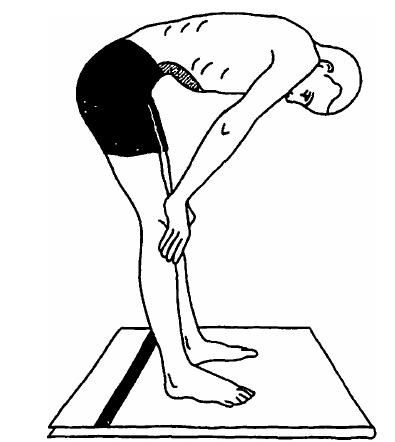
**Note:**   
The Sanskrit word jalan means 'net' and dhara means 'stream' or 'flow'. One interpretation of jalandhara bandha is the lock which controls the network of nadis in the neck. The physical manifestation of these nadis is the blood vessels and nerves of the neck. An alternative definition is that jal means 'water'. Jalandhara bandha is therefore the throat lock which holds the nectar or fluid flowing down to vishuddhi from bindu, and prevents it from falling into the digestive fire. In this way, prana is conserved.

**Nadi shodan** 1:2:2 & 1:2:2 x 10 (5:10:10) with mulabandah and jalandarah

**YOGIC BREATHING**

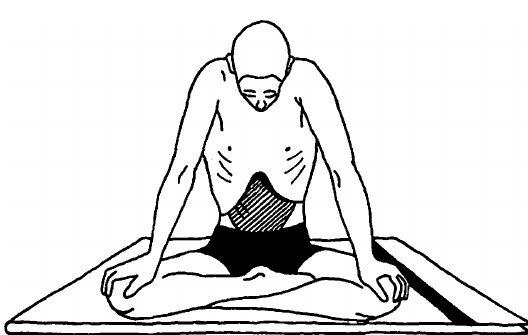
**Pranayama 10**

50 kapalpati x 6  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (10:20)  
  
**UDDIYANA BANDHA**



**Preparatory practice: Standing abdominal contraction**

* 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 the breath outside.
* Keep the spine horizontal and bend the knees slightly.
* Place the palms of the hands 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.



**Uddiyana Bandha (abdominal contraction)**

* Sit in siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana with the spine erect and the knees in contact with the floor.
* Place the palms of the hands flat on the knees.
* Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* Inhale deeply through the nostrils.
* Exhale fully.
* Hold the breath outside.
* Lean forward and press down on the knees with the palms of the hands.
* Straighten the elbows and raise the shoulders, allowing further extension of the spinal cord.
* Practice jalandhara bandha, pressing the chin against the chest.
* Contract the abdominal muscles inward and upward.
* Hold the abdominal lock and the breath outside for as long as you can without straining.
* Then release the abdominal lock, bend the elbows and lower the shoulders.
* Raise the head and then slowly inhale.
* Remain in this position until the respiration returns to normal, then begin the next round.

**Breathing:**   
Uddiyana bandha is performed with external breath retention only.

**Duration:**   
Practice 3 rounds in the beginning and gradually increase to 10 rounds over a few months as the system becomes accustomed to the practice.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - on the abdomen and breath.  
Spiritual - on manipura chakra.

**Sequence:**   
Uddiyana bandha is easier to perform if preceded by an inverted asana. It is ideally performed in conjunction with mudras, bandhas and pranayamas. If practiced on its own, it should be performed after asanas and pranayamas and before meditation.

**Precaution:**   
Uddiyana bandha is an advanced technique and should be attempted only under the guidance of a competent teacher. It should be practiced after attaining proficiency in external breath retention, and jalandhara and moola bandhas.

**Contra-indications:**

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.

**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.  
Uddiyana bandha stimulates the solar plexus, which has many subtle influences on the distribution of energy throughout the body. It creates a suction pressure which reverses the energy flow of apana and prana, uniting them with samana and stimulating manipura chakra.

**Practice note:**  
Uddiyana bandha must be practised on an empty stomach. The bowels should also be empty. Agnisara kriya is an excellent preparatory practice.

**Note:** 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.  
  
**AGNISARA KRIYA  
Agnisara Kriya or Vahnisara Dhauti (activating the digestive fire or cleansing with the essence of fire)**

* Sit in bhadrasana with the big toes touching, or in padmasana.
* Inhale deeply.
* Exhale, emptying the lungs as much as possible.
* Lean forward slightly, straightening the elbows.
* Push down on the knees with the hands and perform jalandhara bandha.
* Contract and expand the abdominal muscles rapidly for as long as it is possible to hold the breath outside comfortably.
* Do not strain.
* Release jalandhara bandha.
* When the head is upright, take a slow, deep breath in.

This is one round.  
Relax until the breathing normalizes before commencing the next round.

**Duration:**   
Beginners may find this practice difficult and quickly become tired due to lack of voluntary control over the abdominal muscles. The muscles must be slowly and gradually developed over a period of time.Three rounds of 10 abdominal contractions and expansions is sufficient at first. With regular practice, up to 50 abdominal movements may be performed with each round.  
The time of breath retention should be gradually increased over a period of time.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - on the abdominal movement.  
Spiritual - on manipura chakra.

**Sequence:** Practise after asanas. Agnisara kriya should be practised on an empty stomach, preferably in the early morning before breakfast, and ideally after the bowels have been emptied.

**Precautions:**   
During summer months, this practice should be performed with care as it may raise the body heat and blood pressure excessively. During this period, it should always be followed by a cooling pranayama such as sheetkari or sheetali.

**Contra-indications:**   
People suffering from high blood pressure, heart disease, acute duodenal or peptic ulcers, overactive thyroid gland or chronic diarrhea should not perform this kriya. Women who are pregnant should refrain from this practice.

**Benefits:**   
Agnisara kriya stimulates the appetite and improves the digestion. It massages the abdomen, strengthens the abdominal muscles and encourages optimum health of the abdominal organs. Agnisara kriya stimulates the five pranas, especially samana, and raises the energy levels markedly. It alleviates depression, dullness and lethargy.

**Nadi shodan** 1:2:2 & 1:2:2 x 10 (6:12:12)

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 11**

**Nettoyage sutra jal neti**

60 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (12:24)

**MAHA BANDHA**

**Maha Bandha (the great lock)**

* Sit in siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana with the hands on the 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 moolaband has 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.

**Awareness:**   
Physical - on the perineal, abdominal and throat regions. Be aware of each region for a few seconds.  
Spiritual - on mooladhara, manipura and vishuddhi chakras. Be aware of each chakra for a few seconds.  
  
**Duration:**   
Once proficiency is attained, increase by one round until 9 rounds can be performed.

**Sequence:** Maha bandha is ideally performed in conjunction with pranayamas and mudras. If practised on its own, it should be done after asanas and pranayamas and before meditation.

**Precaution:**   
Do not attempt maha bandha until the other three bandhas have been mastered.

**Contra-indications:** 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.

**Benefits:** Maha bandha gives enhanced benefits of 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.

**Practice note:**  
Maha bandha can also be performed from utthanpadasana.

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

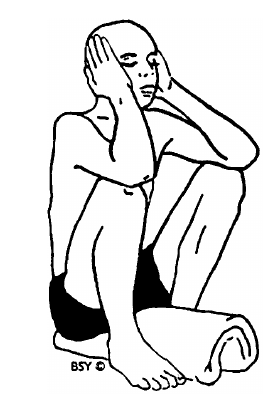
**Nadi shodan** 1:3:2 & 1:3:2 x 10 (5:15:10) with Maha bandhas

**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 12 (Samedi)**

60 kapalpati x 5  
Anulom vilom x 10 1:2 (12:24)  
**Nadi shodan** 1:3:2 & 1:3:2 x 10 (5:15:10) with bandhas

**Brahmari Variation: NadanusandhanaAsana   
(exploration of sound pose)**



* Sit on a rolled blanket with the heels drawn up to the buttocks.
* Place the feet flat on the floor with the knees raised and the elbows resting on the knees.
* Plug the ears with the thumbs, resting the other four fingers on the head.

This position gives increased stability without strain when practicing for long periods of time as a preparatory practice for nada yoga, which uses subtle sound vibration to attune the practitioners with their true nature. X3  
 **Brahmari Technique 2: with Antar Kumbhaka (inner retention)**

* Inhale slowly and deeply through the nose.
* Retain the breath inside with awareness at ajna or bindu.
* The exhalation should be as long as is comfortable to enhance the mind's absorption in the humming sound.

**Contra-indications:**   
People with heart disease must practice without breath retention.

**Practice note:**   
Inner retention should be gradually increased as it helps in increasing introversion and concentration.  
Do not strain when performing kumbhaka; one or two seconds is sufficient at first. The duration may be increased gradually as the technique is mastered.

**Advanced practice: (addition of bandhas)**

Before applying the bandhas in this practice, they should be perfected as individual practices.  
Once antar kumbhaka has been mastered, jalandhara and moola bandhas may be incorporated.  
The full form of jalandhara can be practiced if the hands are returned to the knees between rounds. If the hands remain raised, plugging the ears, then practice the simple variation of jalandhara.

* Inhale for a long smooth breath.
* Practice jalandhara and then moola bandha during internal retention for a comfortable duration.
* Release moola bandha and then jalandhara bandha, and exhale through the nose.

This is one round. Once the bandha can be held without strain, gradually build up the number of rounds. **X3**  
  
**Precaution:**   
Do not practice pranayama with bandhas without the guidance of a competent teacher or guru.  
  
**YOGIC BREATHING**

**Pranayama 13**

60 kapalpati x 5  
  
**Nadi shodan** 1:3:2 & 1:3:2 x 10 (5:15:10) with bandhas

**Ujjayi Pranayama (psychic breath)**

Ujjayi means 'victorious' and comes from the root ujji, 'to conquer' or 'acquire by conquest'. Ujjayi is one of the most important, yet one of the simplest pranayamas. It is practiced by contracting the glottis and breathing through the throat. When done correctly, ujjayi breathing sounds like a cat purring or a baby snoring. When a healthy child sleeps, he always breathes by contracting the glottis, so that the sound of the breath comes from the throat. This kind of breathing is replicated in ujjayi. Of course, the breath flows through the nostrils, but the glottis is contracted so a light snoring sound is produced by the breath in the throat.  
Ujjayi is a deep breathing practice which is perfected by relaxing the breath rather than forcing it. It is the one pranayama that may be practised in any position - standing,sitting or prone. Ujjayi is also known as the psychic breath,as it induces a meditative state and leads to very subtle states of mind. It is an indispensable part of many meditative techniques such as mantra japa, ajapa japa, kriya yoga and prana vidya.

**Pranayama 14 jal**

100 kapalpati x 3  
  
**Nadi shodan** 1:3:2 & 1:3:2 x 10 (8:24:16) with bandhas

**Tranquillizing Pranayamas**

The tranquillizing practices of pranayama are designed to relax the body and the mind while simultaneously increasing the pranic capacity and conscious awareness. These pranayamas stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system and draw the awareness within. Some bring about greater psychic sensitivity, while others cool the system. The tranquillizing techniques are usually practiced after nadi shodhana, which balances the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems by regulating the breath flow in the alternate nostrils.  
Therefore, the tranquillizing practices are done through both nostrils together and in some cases through the mouth. These practices should be avoided by persons who are excessively introverted, oversensitive or psychically unbalanced, as they may exacerbate these conditions.

* **Sheetali**
* **Sheetkari**
* **Brahmari**
* **Chandra Bheda**
* **Ujjayi**
* **Moorchha**



**Moorchha Pranayama (swooning or fainting breath)**

Moorchha means 'fainting' or 'swooning' (évanouissement). This pranayama is intended to arouse the feeling of unconsciousness and is best learned under expert guidance. Moorchha also means to expand, pervade and congeal (imprégner et se figer).   
It expands the consciousness, awakens bindu chakra and helps in storing prana.

**Technique**

* Sit in any comfortable meditation asana.
* Keep the head and spine straight. Relax the whole body.
* Observe the breath until it becomes slow and deep.
* Perform khechari mudra.
* Slowly inhaling through both nostrils with ujjayi pranayama, gently and smoothly bend the head slightly back.
* Retain the breath inside and perform shambhavi mudra.
* Straighten the arms by locking the elbows and pressing the knees with the hands.
* Retain the breath and shambhavi for as long as is comfortable.
* Exhale and relax the arms. Close the eyes and slowly bring the head back to the upright position.
* Relax the whole body for a few seconds, keeping the eyes
* closed.
* Experience lightness and tranquility in the mind and body.
* This is one round.
* Practice until a fainting sensation is felt.

**Awareness:**   
Physical- on the breath, head movement and eyebrow centre.   
Spiritual - on the void behind the eyebrow centre.

**Sequence:**   
After asanas and other pranayamas and before meditation; also beneficial before sleep.

**Contra-indications:** This technique should not be practiced by those suffering from heart disease, high blood pressure, epilepsy, brain disorders or atherosclerosis of the carotidor basilar arteries.

**Precautions:**   
Discontinue the practice as soon as the fainting sensation is felt. The aim is to induce a swooning sensation, not complete unconsciousness.

**Benefits:**   
Moorchha pranayama is an excellent preparation for meditation as it draws the mind inwards and enables a psychic state to be experienced. It cuts out the distractionsof the outside world, inhibits identification with the physical body and brings about mental tranquillity. It helps alleviate tension, anxiety, anger and neuroses, and raises the level of prana.

**Practice note:**   
The essence of moorchha pranayama is internal breath retention. Stopping the breath acts directly on the mind via the pranic body to induce a state of void. The sensation of fainting and light-headedness arises for two reasons. Firstly, pressure on the blood vessels in the neck causes fluctuations in the pressure within the cranial cavity. Secondly, the carotid sinuses, vital to maintaining autonomic control of the body's circulation, are continuously compressed, changing the tone of the autonomic nervous system and inducing a swooning sensation. The practice of antar kumbhaka further reduces the oxygen supply to the brain.

**Pranayama 15**

100 kapalpati x 3  
  
**Nadi shodan** 1:3:2 & 1:3:2 x 10 (8:24:16) with bandhas

**Bhastrika Pranayama (bellows breath) = (respiration du soufflet)**

**Technique I: Preparatory practice**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation posture with the hands resting on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra.
* Keep the head and spine straight, close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* Take a deep breath in and breathe out forcefully through the nose.
* Immediately afterwards breathe in with the same force.
* Forceful inhalation results from fully expanding the abdominal muscles and forceful exhalation from firm contraction of the abdominal muscles.
* Do not strain.
* During inhalation, the diaphragm descends, and the abdomen moves outward.
* During exhalation, the diaphragm moves upward and the abdomen moves inward.
* The movements should be slightly exaggerated.
* Continue in this manner, counting 10 breaths.
* Take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly.  
  This is one round. Practise up to 5 rounds.

**Practice note:**   
When accustomed to this style of breathing, gradually increase the speed, always keeping the breath rhythmical. The force of inhalation and exhalation must be equal.

**Technique 2: Alternate nostrils**

* Sit in a comfortable meditation asana, preferably padmasana or siddha/siddha yoni asana.
* Keep the head and spine straight.
* Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
* Raise the right hand and perform nasagra mudra.

**Left nostril:**

* Close the right nostril with the thumb.
* Breathe in and out forcefully, without straining, through the left nostril 10 times.
* There should be a snuffing sound in the nose, but no sound should come from the throat or chest.
* The abdomen should expand and contract rhythmically with the breath.
* The pumping action should be performed by the abdomen alone; the chest, shoulders and face remain relaxed.
* After 10 breaths, take a deep breath in and breathe out through the left nostril.

**Right nostril:**

* Close the left nostril and repeat the same process through the right nostril.

**Both nostrils:**

* Replace the raised hand on the knee.
* Repeat the same process through both nostrils.

**Duration:**   
Ten breaths through the left, the right and both nostrils, as above, forms one complete round. Practice up to 5 rounds.

**Breathing:**   
Beginners may take several free breaths between rounds so that there is no strain.Breathing may be practiced at 3 breath rates: slow, medium and fast, depending on individual capacity.  
Slow bhastrika is approximately one breath every 2 seconds, with no undue force on inhalation or exhalation. It is like amplified normal breathing. It is especially useful for beginners, but may also be practiced at all stages.  
Medium breathing increases the speed of respiration to approximately one breath every second.  
Fast breathing means a speed of around 2 breaths per second. Both medium and fast breathing are suitable for intermediate and advanced practitioners.  
As abdominal muscles become stronger with regular practice, the number of respirations may be increased by 5 per month until the count of 50 respirations is attained.

**Awareness:**  
Physical - on the breathing process and the physical movement of the abdomen.  
Spiritual - on manipura chakra.

**Precautions:**   
Bhastrika is a dynamic practice requiring a large expenditure of physical energy. Beginners are advised to take a short rest after each round. Avoid violent respiration, facial contortions and excessive shaking of the body. A feeling of faintness, excessive perspiration or vomiting indicates that the practice is being performed incorrectly. If any of these symptoms are experienced, the advice of a competent teacher should be sought.  
This practice purifies the blood. However, if the stages are rushed, all the impurities will be ejected from the body in a rush, which may exacerbate conditions caused by detoxification. A slow, conscientious approach to this practice is therefore recommended.

**Contra-indications:**   
Bhastrika should not be practised by people with high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia, gastric ulcer, stroke, epilepsy, retinal problems, glaucoma or vertigo. The elderly, those suffering from lung diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, those recovering from tuberculosis, or in the first trimester of pregnancy are recommended to practise only under the guidance of a competent teacher.

**Benefits:**

This practice burns up toxins and helps balance the doshas or humours: kapha, phlegm; pitta, bile; and vata,wind. It is a useful practice for women during labour after a few months of proper preparation.  
Because of the rapid exchange of air in the lungs, there is an increase in the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide into and out of the bloodstream. This stimulates the metabolic rate, producing heat and flushing out wastes and toxins. The rapid and rhythmic movement of the diaphragm also massages and stimulates the visceral organs, toning the digestive system.  
Bhastrika reduces the level of carbon dioxide in the blood. It helps to alleviate inflammation in the throat and any accumulation of phlegm. It balances and strengthens the nervous system, inducing peace, tranquillity and one­pointedness of mind in preparation for meditation.

**Pranayama 16**

**Pranayama 17 jal**

**Pranayama 18 (Samedi)**

**Trataka**

**Trataka (concentrated gazing)**

* Light a candle and place it on a small table so that the flame is exactly at eye level when sitting.
* Trim the wick and protect the flame from draughts so that it remains steady.
* Sit in any comfortable meditation asana with the head and spine erect.
* Adjust the position so that the candle is an arm's length away from the body.
* Close the eyes and relax the whole body, especially the eyes.
* Be aware of body steadiness for a few minutes.
* Keep the body absolutely still throughout the practice.
* Open the eyes and gaze steadily at the flame.
* Try not to blink or move the eyeballs in any way.
* Do not strain as this will cause tension and the eyes will flicker.
* The awareness should be so completely centred on the flame that body awareness is lost.
* If the mind begins to wander, gently bring it back to the practice.
* After a minute or two, when the eyes become tired or begin to water, close them gently.
* Gaze at the after-image of the flame in the space in front of the closed eyes.
* If the image moves up or down, or from side to side, observe it and try to stabilize it.
* When the image of the flame begins to fade, try to bring it back.
* When the image can no longer be retained, gently open the eyes and gaze at the flame once more.
* Repeat the procedure for external gazing.
* Close the eyes once more and gaze at the inner image.
* Continue in this way 3 or 4 times.

After completing the final round, practice the technique of palming 2 or 3 times, before opening the eyes.

This completes the practice.

**Time of practice:**  
Trataka may be performed at any time, but the best time is at dawn or dusk when the stomach is empty.

**Duration:**   
Beginners should gaze for 1 or 2 minutes only, and then close the eyes. For general purposes 5 to 10 minutes is sufficient. For spiritual purposes, trataka may be performed for extended periods of time under the guidance of a competent teacher. Those who suffer from insomnia and mental tension should perform this practice for 10 to 15 minutes before sleeping at night.

**Sequence:**   
Trataka should be performed after asanas, pranayamas, mudras and bandhas to steady the body and mind.

**Precautions:** In the case of eye ailments, such as eyestrain, astigmatism and even the early symptoms of cataract, see the alternative practices on the following page.  
People with myopia (short-sightedness) severe enough to warrant glasses should retain their glasses while practicing trataka on a flame.

**Contra-indications:**   
People suffering from glaucoma should not practice trataka. Epileptics should not practice trataka on a candle flame (see the alternative practice on the following page).  
Avoid practicing trataka on the sun, as the delicate membranes of the eyes may be damaged.

**Benefits:**   
This practice makes the eyes clear and bright. It balances the nervous system, relieving nervous tension. It improves the memory and helps to develop good concentration and strong willpower. It activates ajna chakra and is an excellent preparation for meditation.

**Practice note:** When trataka is practiced on a steady flame, there should be no draught in the vicinity. The practitioner should always avoid undue strain. The ability to keep the eyes open without blinking should be developed gradually with consistent practice.  
Trataka is an excellent method for clearing accumulated complexes, problems and suppressed thoughts from the mind, enabling the practitioner to witness what is surfacing. It is also possible, however, for these problems to manifest too rapidly, which may be mentally disturbing. If this occurs, stop the practice and seek advice from a competent teacher.  
Trataka focuses the mind and curbs oscillating tendencies, making it one-pointed and awakening inner vision. All the attention and power of the mind is channelled into one continuous stream. Once this has been achieved, the latent potential within the mind is able to arise spontaneously.

**Alternative practices:**

In the case of eye ailments, such as eyestrain, astigmatism and even the early symptoms of cataract, a black dot should be used, instead of gazing at a candle flame. Practice in daylight or with steady background lighting. Epileptics should not practice trataka on a candle flame, but should choose a black dot or some other completely steady object to gaze at, with steady background light.

Note: The word trataka means 'to look' or 'to gaze'. Trataka is the last of the shatkarmas. It acts as a stepping-stone between physically oriented practices and mental practices which lead to higher states of awareness. It forms a bridge between hatha yoga and raja yoga. Traditionally, it is a part of hatha yoga, but it may also be considered a part of raja yoga.

**Pranayama 19**

**Pranayama 20**

**Pranayama 21**

**Pranayama 22**

**Pranayama 23**

**Pranayama 24**