

The life force we breathe enters the body and assumes 5 Portfolios!!!

What?!!! 😳

What does it mean? Isn't the air that we breathe going into all of our body?!!!

In simple terminology it can be explained as - We breathe air as it has oxygen which is necessary for the human body to live. It goes to our lungs from which it enters the bloodstream, to our organs and tissues through cells which create energy. Carbon dioxide is expelled out of the lungs when we breathe out.

But there is much more depth to this. What is called a breath of air is so profound that it is called "Prana" the vital life force. The word Prana comes from Sanskrit - Pra (means constant) and An (means movement) combining to mean constant flow of energy starting from birth until death. It's not just oxygen from the air, it's the energy of the cosmos which exists and manifests in all matter, the same which flows out within our body to keep us and every organism alive and active. Profoundness of prana can be understood by the fact that the soul experiences everything through Prana, all sensory organs function with this vital force.

This vital life force "Prana" moves in our body through subtle invisible energy channels called Nadis. There are 72000 Nadis or channels in our body, the most primary ones called "Ida" & "Pingala" in the yogic anatomy "Yin" & "Yang" in Chinese philosophy.

How does this Yogic physiology work - As we breathe and the Prana enters our body it divides into five major and five subtypes in the body, almost like taking up different portfolios in an organization committed to support that department at the same time work in cohesion and harmony with each other. For now let's look into the five major types, they are called Panch Pran (Five Prana's) classified by their location and function in the body.

1. **Apana** - This is the descending energy or gravitational force moving downward associated with [Muladhara \(Root\) Chakra/Swadhisthana \(Sacral\) Chakra](#) or [Lumbar/Coccygeal Plexus](#). Excretion/elimination such as feces, urine, gas as prime responsibility, governs the area below navel, large intestine, genitals, kidneys, rectum, menstrual cycle, childbirth, some common health issues caused by imbalance of this are constipation, lethargy, Lower limbs pain, piles, etc. it is associated with water element.
2. **Samana** - This is the energy flowing sideways from the navel to the diaphragm. This controls all digestive and metabolic functions, governs the heart, circulatory system, small intestine, liver, stomach, pancreas, spleen. This sideway flowing Prana helps break down nutrients, metabolism and digestion. It is associated with [Manipura \(Solar\) Chakra](#) or [Solar Plexus](#) corresponding to fire elements. On a spiritual level this is responsible for overall transformation including spiritual/conscience expansion. Imbalance of this would lead to indigestion, slow metabolism, obesity, malnourishment, mental peace,etc.
3. **Prana** - This is upward flowing from the chest to the thoracic area associated with heart, organs of respiration lungs, larynx (chest region). This is a force by which breath is

drawn inside and is associated with [Anahata\(Heart\) Chakra](#) or Cardiac Plexus corresponding to the Air element and This controls the respiration function, pumping of heart and all muscles, nerves and tissues around it. It moves in and out through the nose, and exists in eyes, ears. Imbalance of this can lead to all heart and lung diseases. At the time of death it is this Prana which exits the body first within 45-90 minutes of last breath.

4. **Udana** - This energy governs the region above the neck - face and head. It is responsible for the nervous system's smooth functioning, coordinates with all sensory organs hence governs our thoughts and consciousness. This is associated with [Vishhudhi \(Throat\) Chakra or Carotid,Thyroid/Parathyroid Plexus](#) corresponding to elements of Space or Ether. It controls functions of speech, circadian cycle etc. Imbalance of this can lead to vision/hearing/speech related problems, breathing, poor clarity of thoughts. At the time of death it separated the astral body from the physical body.
5. **Vyana** - This fifth Prana pervades the entire body, coordinates with all other Pranas and acts like a reserve force. We could relate it to the Human Resources function of an organization which works with all departments to keep a balance, regulate performance and provide timely needs. This is associated with [Agnya and Sahasrara \(Third eye, Crown\) Chakra or Cerebral Glands/Medalu Plexus](#) corresponding to the Earth element. Whenever there is shortage of energy it nourishes the cells, regulates muscular movements, moves through all Nadi's to maintain blood flow, lymph detoxification, sweating, hence any imbalance can lead to tightening of muscles, tremors, disturbance in coordination of body systems.

Panch Pranas reside in the Pranamaya Kosha, the 2nd layer of the Panch Kosha. Pranayam or breathing exercises are stimulation and balance for these.