

Certification of Yoga Professionals

Official Guidebook

For Level I (Instructor)



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YOGA

Our Vision



A healthy body and a disciplined mind are the foundations of a world free from fear.

SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Hon'ble Prime Minister



**“ Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah
Sarve Santu Niramaya
Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu
Ma Kascit Dukkha Bhagbhavet**

**May All Be Happy
May all be free from illness
May all see that which is auspicious
May no one suffer**



अजीत मोहन शरण
AJIT M. SHARAN



सचिव
भारत सरकार
आयुर्वेद, योग व प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा
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FOREWORD

India, the land of mythology, spirituality and Ayurveda, is also the birth place of Yoga, an invaluable gift to the humanity. The practice of Yoga is believed to have commenced almost 5,000 years ago. The first reference to 'Yoga' is found in the *Rig Veda*, the earliest of all the *Vedas* and also the earliest available scripture for mankind. The precise date of the *Rig Veda* is difficult to ascertain, as the *Vedas* are said to be eternal. Yoga, considered as a holistic science, provides multifarious benefits to its practitioners. Practice of Yoga not only enhances the overall development of the body, but also strengthens the emotional foundations of the mind and provides fulfilment to spiritual aspirations. Today, Yoga is recognized worldwide as a great ancient art, culture and science of India. The Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India is taking adequate steps to secure and preserve the heritage of Yoga and expand its knowledge in its endeavour to offer the know-how of Yoga to millions of practitioners around India and the globe, and has developed a systematic plan to achieve this objective.

This book is a step towards spreading the message of Yoga in its true essence and spirit across the globe. While Yoga should be adopted as a way of life and practiced as a daily routine for achieving the physical and mental health, one should be fully conversant with its spiritual depth and benefits for realizing the synchronization and harmony of body, mind and soul. When considered in the sense of 'union', Yoga also unites the individual consciousness with cosmic consciousness. Yogic practices, done sincerely and regularly over a prolonged period of time will enhance the psycho-physical personality of the practitioners.

The *Yogasutras* of Patanjali are considered as the basic text of Yoga philosophy (*Yoga Darshana*). Ministry of AYUSH presents this publication to broaden the horizon of Yoga in the world. The book would have served its intended purpose, if it can act as an inspiration for a further deeper study of Yoga.

New Delhi
21st October, 2016

(Ajit M. Sharan)
Secretary
Ministry of AYUSH
Government of India

Preface

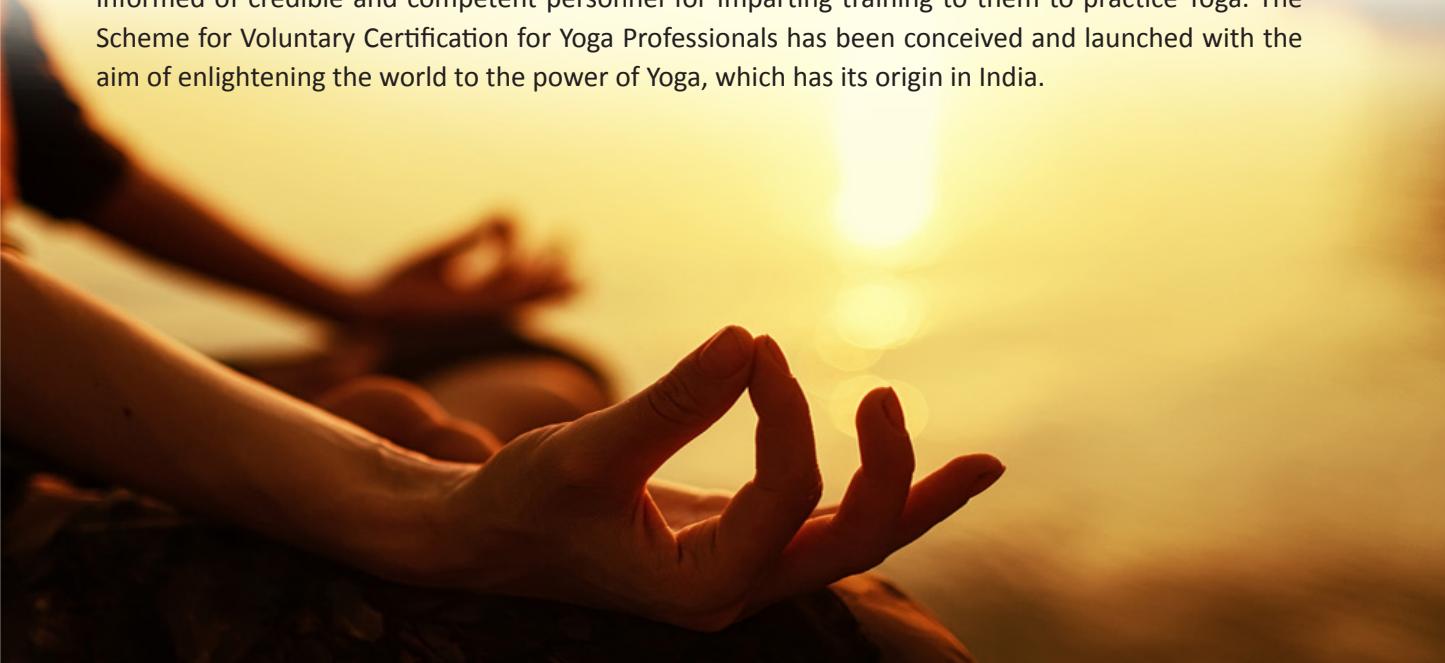
The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘yuj’ – which means to unite or integrate. Yoga is most commonly known to be a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced the world over for health and relaxation. Patanjali defined Yoga as ‘*Yogah Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*’, which means “Yoga is the removal of the fluctuations of the mind”. *Chitta* is mind, *Vrittis* are thought impulses, and *Nirodah* means cessation.

No exact date has been ascertained regarding the advent of Yoga. The Yoga tradition is much older; we can find its references in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagvad Gita*, identifying three kinds of Yoga. Yoga is a way of life, and finds mention in the *Vedas* about 5000 years ago. The classical Yoga has been documented in *Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras* outlining the Eightfold Path of Yoga (*Ashtanga Yoga*).

Nowadays, Yoga is being practiced mainly around elevating the life force or ‘*Kundalini*’, which can be achieved through a series of physical and mental exercises. At the physical level, the methods comprise various Yoga postures or *Asanas* that generally aim to keep the body healthy. The mental techniques include breathing exercises or *Pranayama*, and meditation or *Dhyana* to discipline the mind. It has been widely reported that since humans possess physical, mental and spiritual selves, Yoga helps in achieving the following:

- Attainment of perfect equilibrium and harmony among the three selves
- Self-healing: freeing the mind from negative blocks and removing toxins from the body
- Increased personal power and self-awareness
- Increased attention, focus and concentration
- Reduced stress and tension in the physical body by activating the para-sympathetic nervous system

People across the globe strive to practice Yoga for achieving a better quality of life. They need to be informed of credible and competent personnel for imparting training to them to practice Yoga. The Scheme for Voluntary Certification for Yoga Professionals has been conceived and launched with the aim of enlightening the world to the power of Yoga, which has its origin in India.



Acknowledgements

The conceptualization, planning and publishing of this book is the outcome of tireless efforts of countless people. We are indebted to the dedication shown by numerous zealots. However, we take this opportunity to wholeheartedly acknowledge the efforts of some who left an undisputed imprint on the quality of this outcome.

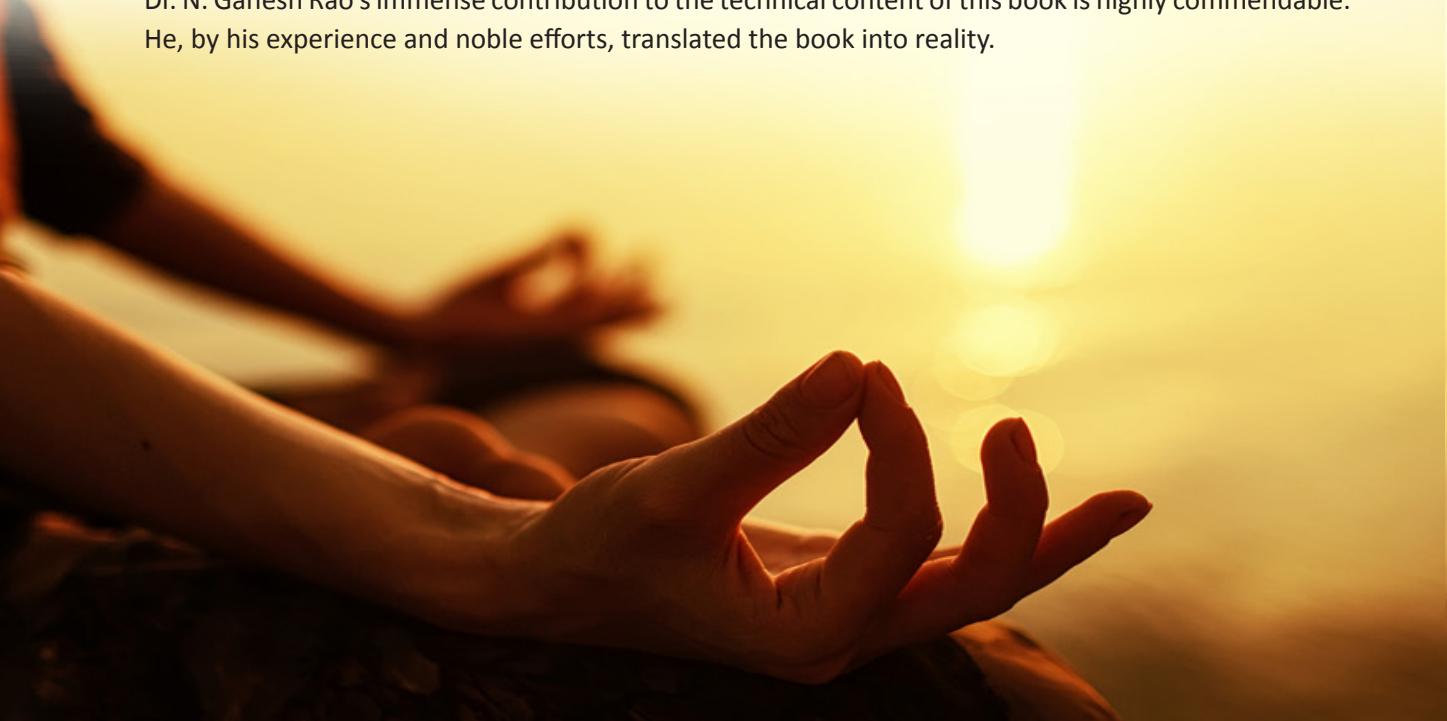
The creation of this book has been an overwhelming experience for all those who have worked towards giving it a shape and defining the contours of a vast subject where skipping a word or a sentence could simply manifest in diluting the importance of Yoga philosophy. Yet, balancing the content towards the readers in mind and what must define the core of Yoga has been an arduous task.

We got the benefit of the vast knowledge, experience and practical exposure of Yoga through discussions with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Yogrishi Ramdev, Dr. H. R. Nagendra and Smt. Hansa Ji. Our sincere thanks to Dr HR Nagendra, Chancellor, S-VYASA and the Chairperson, Technical committee, QCI Yoga Certification, who initiated the idea of bringing Level-1 Yoga guide book – a simplified version of Level-2 Yoga guide book. He was also instrumental in giving continues guidance and support in bringing this book.

We also thank Dr Ishwar V. Basavaraddi, Director, MDNIY for his continuous support in developing these Yoga guide books. Many others allowed us to decipher the intent and content in its purity through their technical sharpness, such as Shri Suneel Singh, Dr. Jaideep Arya, Shri. Arun Pandala, Shri. P.C. Kapoor, and members of the Technical Committee of the Yoga Certification Scheme. We are indebted to all our *gurus* who showed us the path and forced us to tread it carefully.

Dr. I. V. Basavaraddi's inputs and review associated with the technical content are also worth applauding. His inspirational guidance and generous efforts to ensure that the rich traditions of Yoga practiced through the centuries is preserved was commendable. His contribution will always be revered.

Dr. N. Ganesh Rao's immense contribution to the technical content of this book is highly commendable. He, by his experience and noble efforts, translated the book into reality.



A very special appreciation and honour goes, of course, to Dr. Karuna Nagarajan who took such unique and idiosyncratic efforts to find ways to make the work possible. Her patience and skills both are consummate.

This book is an outcome of the vision of Sh. Ajit N. Saran (Sec, AYUSH), Sh. Anil Kumar Ganeriwala (Joint Secretary, AYUSH), Sh. Jitendra Sharma (former Joint Secretary, AYUSH), Sh. Anurag Srivastava (Joint Secretary, AYUSH) who prompted, supported and encouraged us to create this it.

I would acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Anil Jauhri, CEO NABC, and Mr. S. Krishnamurthy for their untiring efforts to approach all stakeholders and steer them to a common goal for the benefit of millions around the world who would find this book a primary text to understand the nuances of yoga.

Dr. Manish Pande (Joint Director & Head PADD, Quality Council of India) deserves special mention for his efforts in the making of this book and has played a pivotal role in bringing consensus across variety of opinions and yet preserving the pristine beauty of Yoga. His efforts in contacting every revered organization in India and ensuring their commitment to this book is worth – applauding.

This book would have never existed if the committed team of Excel Books Pvt. Ltd. had not persevered with many design changes and editorial changes throughout its creation. The personal commitment of Dr. Rajan Chopra, MD Excel Books Pvt. Ltd. in encouraging his team through the process of production is worth appreciating.

This book is a creation of collaboration, produced for preserving the ancient knowledge of one of the most acclaimed as well as widely practiced traditions, which is known to improve the quality of human life. This knowledge needs to be spread widely and so this book on YOGA.

Thank you all who have been a part of this journey!

Dr. R.P. Singh
Secretary General, QCI

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Brief SCHEME

Indian scriptures richly describe Yoga as an ancient discipline developed by rishis and practised through centuries. The literature on Yoga has evolved over the years with references to the ancient scriptures of India. The prevalence, popularity and its effect on the human mind and body are predominantly accepted world over.

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, had desired to spread worldwide India's traditional knowledge of Yoga, with credible systems in place to assure quality of Yoga practices across the world. The Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy), Government of India, in pursuance of the above and in the wake of declaration of International Yoga Day in 2015, identified the Quality Council of India (QCI) to develop Scheme for Voluntary Certification of Yoga Professionals. QCI is an autonomous body set-up by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

The Scheme, by the name of 'Scheme for Voluntary Certification Yoga Professionals', was launched on 22nd June, 2015 by the Hon'ble Home Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh, in the valedictory function of the International Yoga Day celebrations.

The Competence Standard for the Scheme was prepared by engaging a group of experts having knowledge on different schools of Yoga. As is required internationally for designing a Scheme, a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee was constituted which was chaired by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji, along with members from the Government, Yoga Institutions, Universities, Industry Bodies, related organizations and experts. The Scheme is supported by a technical committee for technical standards and a certification committee to define the process of certification of Yoga professionals.

For this Voluntary Scheme, Ministry of AYUSH is the mentor, while QCI is the Scheme Owner. The Scheme aims to certify the competence of Yoga professionals using the principles of third party assessment by:

- Defining the competence requirements in terms of knowledge and skills to be complied with by Yoga professionals in the form of Competence Standard.
- Defining the process of evaluation and certification in the form of Certification Process.
- Laying down requirements for competence and operation of assessment bodies through Accreditation.

Incentivising/Benefits to Certified Yoga Professionals

- Certified Level-2 Yoga professionals will be sponsored by Indian Council of Cultural Relations to travel to various countries on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga each year.
- List of successful candidates with their details will be displayed on the Ministry of AYUSH website.
- Yoga professionals will get employment Opportunities in Government Schools, Colleges, Yoga Institutions and other Government recruitments in Yoga stream. Preference to certified candidates in Yoga teacher recruitments in India as well as opportunities abroad.
- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has been requested to mandate that for all overseas Yoga appointments. Also, In a major thrust to the Scheme, the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has announced 100% reimbursement of fee through QCI, for first 2000 successful candidates that pass in the first attempt.

A dedicated website for the Scheme (www.yogacertification.qci.org.in) has been created and all information is available on it.



Certification JOBS

The QCI has designed the Scheme for Voluntary Certification for Yoga Professionals by adopting the principles and requirements laid down in the international standard, "ISO/IEC 17024:2012(E) General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons". These bodies are accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies, a constituent board of QCI. The focus of the Scheme is to certify the competence of Yoga Professionals who provide Yoga lessons/classes as teachers or by whatever nomenclature they are called. This Scheme for Yoga Professionals will evaluate four levels of competence:

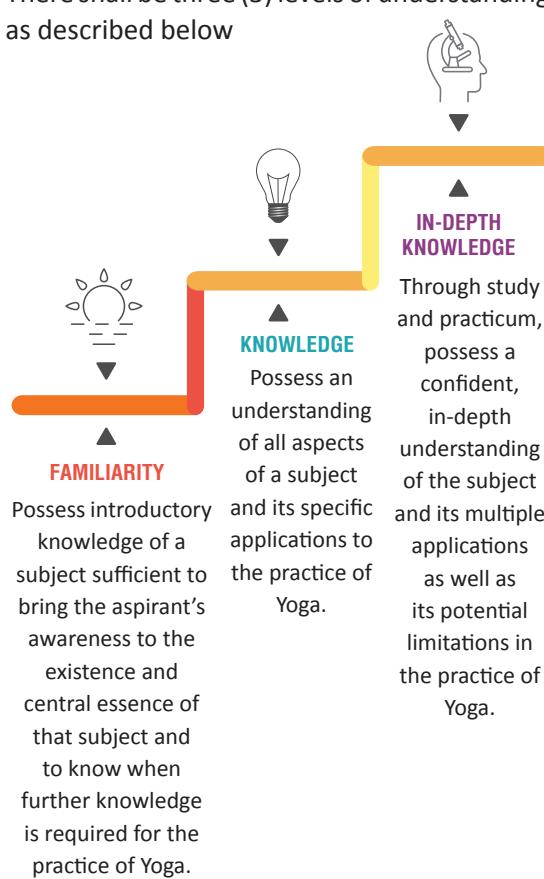
- Level 1: Yoga Instructor
- Level 3: Yoga Master
- Level 2: Yoga Teacher
- Level 4: Yoga Acharya

Yoga certification exam can be taken from anywhere across the globe through an online assessment system.

The following table indicates competency levels as specified under the Scheme:

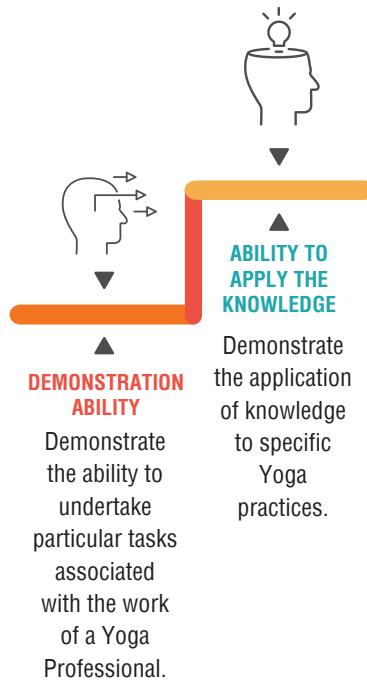
Knowledge:

There shall be three (3) levels of understanding as described below



Skills:

There shall be two (2) levels of understanding as described below





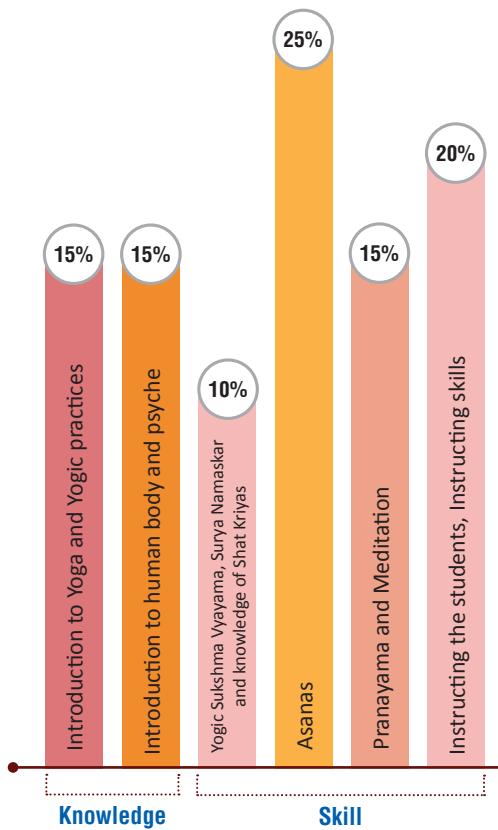
Evaluation Patterns of CERTIFICATION

The Scheme for Voluntary Certification for Yoga Professionals has a set of requirements as criteria against which the candidates shall be evaluated before being certified. These competence criteria to be used for evaluation of Yoga Professionals are also termed as Competence Standard. The objective of laying down the competence criteria or Standard is to provide a framework for examiners to assess the competence of candidates for validating their competency as Yoga professionals.

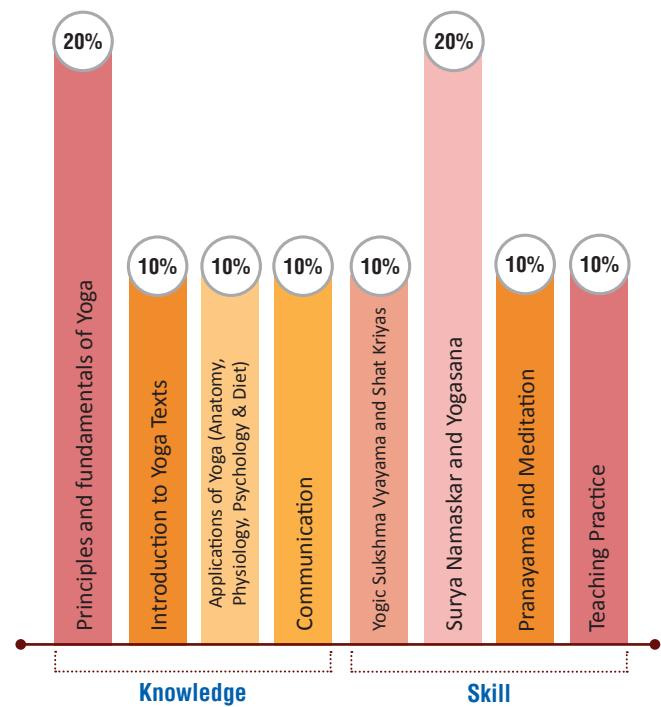
The criteria for evaluation of candidates includes assessing the knowledge and skill of a Yoga professional. The weightage of knowledge and skills is equally distributed while evaluating all the levels of Yoga professionals. The assessment of Yoga professionals shall be based on the scores secured by them.

The mark distribution for Level 1 – Yoga Instructor and Level 2 – Yoga Teacher is presented in Table 1 and 2 below, respectively. These tables indicate the distribution of marks in various sections of Knowledge and Skill. For Levels 3 (Master) and 4 (Acharya) the attributes of Knowledge and Skill shall remain the same but the weightage will be adjusted as per the focus required in Level 3 and 4.

**Table 1: Mark Distribution for Level 1 –
Yoga Instructor**



**Table 2: Mark Distribution for Level 2 –
Yoga Teacher**



Syllabus

COMPETENCE STANDARD FOR LEVEL 1 – YOGA INSTRUCTOR

SECTION 1

1.1 Introduction to Yoga and Yogic practices

- Etymology of Yoga and definitions of Yoga in different Classical Yoga texts
- Brief introduction to origin, history and development of Yoga
- Aim, Objectives and Misconceptions about Yoga
- General Introduction to Shad Darshanas with special reference to Sankhya and Yoga
- General introduction to four paths of Yoga; Principles of Yoga and Yogic practices
- Guidelines for Instructors

1.2 Introduction to Hatha Yoga

- Distinction between Yoga Asana and Non-Yogic physical practices
- Introduction to important Hatha Yoga Texts with special reference to Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita
- Concept of Yogic Diet
- Causes of Success (Sadhaka Tattwa) and Causes of Failure (Badraka Tattwa) in Hatha Yoga Sadhana
- Concept of Ghata and Ghata Shudhhi in Hatha Yoga
- Purpose and utility of Shat Kriyas in Hatha Yoga
- Purpose and utility of Asanas in Hatha Yoga
- Purpose and importance of Pranayama in Hatha Yoga

1.3 Introduction to Patanjali

- Definition, Nature and Aim of Yoga according to Patanjali
- Concept of Chitta and Chitta Bhumis; Chitta Vrittis and Chitta Vrittinirodhopaya (Abhyasa and Vairagya)
- Concept of Ishwara and Ishwara Pranidhana
- Chitta Vikshepas (Antarayas) and their associates (Sahabhuvas)
- Concept of Chitta Prasadana and their relevance in mental well-being
- Kleshas and their significance in Yoga
- Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali: its purpose, effects, and significance

SECTION 2

2.1 Introduction to Human Systems, Yoga and Health

- The nine systems of the human body

- Functions of different systems of the human body
- Introduction to sensory organs
- Neuromuscular coordination of sensory organs
- Basic understanding of exercise physiology
- Homeostasis
- The benefits of various asanas on different parts of the human body
- Limitations and contra-indications of specific Yoga practices

2.2 Yoga for Wellness

- Health, its meaning and definitions
- Yogic conceptions of health and diseases
- Concept of Pancha Koshas
- Concept of Triguna
- Concept of Panchamahabhutas
- Yogic principles of healthy living
- Introduction to yogic diet and nutrition

2.3 Yoga and Stress Management

- Human psyche: Yogic and modern concepts, behaviour and consciousness
- Frustration, conflicts, and psychosomatic disorders
- Relationship between mind and body
- Mental hygiene and role of Yoga in mental hygiene
- Mental health: a Yogic perspective
- Prayer and meditation for mental health
- Psycho-social environment and its importance for mental health (Yama and Niyama)
- Concept of stress according to modern science and Yoga
- Role of Yoga in stress management
- Role of Yoga in life management

SECTION 3

3.1 Movement of Key Body Joints

Familiarity with the movement of key joints of the body and demonstrate ability to perform the same: neck, fingers, wrist, elbow, shoulder, toes, ankle, knee, waist/hip.

3.2 Sukhshma Vyayama and Shat Kriyas

Familiarity with Neti, Dhauti, Kapalabhati, Trataka, Basti, Nauli.

SECTION 4

4.1 Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation)

Knowledge of and demonstration ability to perform Surya Namaskar.

4.2 Asanas

- Knowledge of basic postures and demonstrated ability to perform these postures: Saravangasana (shoulder stand); Halasana (the plough); Matsyasana (the fish); Paschimottanasana (the sitting forward bend); Bhujangasana (the cobra); Salabhasana (the locust); Dhanurasana (the bow); Ardh Matsyendrasana (the half spinal twist); Kakasana or Bakasana (the crow or crane); Padahasthasana (the standing forward bend); Trikonasana (the triangle).
- Knowledge of another five asanas and demonstrating ability to perform the same: Tadasana (palm tree pose); Utkatasana (chair pose); Ushtrasana (camel pose); Pawanmuktasana (wind releasing pose); Vrikshasana (tree pose).
- Knowledge of the Sanskrit names of postures and breathing exercises, their detailed benefits and caution.
- Knowledge of five spinal movements – inverted, forward, backward, lateral twist, and lateral bend of the spine – (Flexion, Extension, Lateral Flexion, Axial Rotation and Axial Extension).
- Knowledge of total Yogic exercise through the practice of asanas, proper relaxation, proper breathing, contra-indications, cautions and medical considerations, obvious and subtle benefits, and modification in basic postures to accommodate limitations.

SECTION 5

5.1 Pranayama

- Familiarity with and Demonstrated ability to perform abdominal (diaphragmatic), thoracic, clavicular breathing and the full Yogic breath.
- Familiarity with and demonstrated ability to perform Anuloma Viloma, Bhastrika, Chandrabhedana, Suryabhedhana, Ujjayi, Bhramari, Sheetali, Sheetkari, and the knowledge of their benefits, limitations and techniques.

5.2 Practices Leading to Meditation

- Familiarity with and demonstrating ability to perform Dharana and Dhyana and allied practices, like Mudras, Mantra and Japa.
- Familiarity with the concept of environment for meditation and the benefits of meditation on health and well-being and its practical application in modern life.

SECTION 6

6.1 Knowledge of Teaching Practice

- The scope of practice of Yoga and how to assess the need to refer to other professional services when needed.
- Observed capacity for well-developed communication skills, like listening, presence, directive and non-directive dialogue.

6.2 Demonstrating Ability to Teach Practice

- ↳ To recognize, adjust and adapt to specific aspirant's needs in a progressive class.
- ↳ To recognize and manage the subtle dynamics inherent in the teacher-aspirant relationship.

6.3 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants

Familiarity with and demonstrated ability to apply effective teaching methods, adapt to unique styles of learning, provide supportive and effective feedback, acknowledge the aspirant's progress, and cope with difficulties.

6.4 Principles and Skills for Working with Groups

- ↳ Familiarity with and demonstrated ability to design and implement group programs.
- ↳ Familiarity of group dynamics and allied techniques of communication skills, time management, and the establishment of priorities and boundaries.
- ↳ Familiarity with techniques to address the specific needs of individual participants, to the degree possible in a group setting.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO YOGA AND YOGIC PRACTICES





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 1.1 Etymology of Yoga
 - 1.2 Brief Introduction about the Origin and Development of Yoga
 - 1.3 Yoga - Aims and Objectives
 - 1.4 General Introduction to *Darshanas* with Special Reference to *Sankhya* and Yoga
 - 1.5 General Introduction to Four Paths of Yoga
 - 1.6 Principles of Yoga and *Yogic* Practices
 - 1.7 Guiding Principles for *Yogic* Practice
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe and understand the spiritual essence of yoga
- Discuss the origin and development of yoga
- Outline the aims and objectives of yoga
- Explain the concept of *Darshanas* with Special Reference to *Sankhya* and Yoga
- Describe the different paths of yoga
- Explain various principles of yoga and yogic practices



Introduction

Yoga is a vast discipline aimed at integrating mind, body and spirit to achieve a state of enlightenment or self-realization. Yoga is the science of right-living and it works wonders when integrated into our daily life. It works on all aspects of the person — the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The different branches of yoga prescribe different approaches and techniques but they all ultimately lead to the same goal of enlightenment.

The essence of yoga is practical and scientific, as it lays emphasis on direct experience and tangible results. It is not a religion, but a practice of self-inquiry and inner exploration. As the cultural and religious diversity of practitioners attest, yogic philosophy speaks of universal truths that can be incorporated into any belief system. All yoga practices have the same goal or destination – the discovery and fulfillment of the human potential.

1.1 Etymology of Yoga

The Sanskrit word “Yoga” is derived from the verbal root “*yuj*”. Yoga when commonly translated means union. In many yogic traditions, this union refers to the union of *jeeratma* (individual self) with the *paramatma* (the universal self).

According to Panini, the great Sanskrit grammarian of 6th century BC, the verbal root *yuj* has three connotations:

- (i) *yujir yoge* (*yuj* connotes union or yoking)
- (ii) *yuja samadhanu* (*yuj* connotes concentration)
- (iii) *yuja samyamane* (*yuj* connotes control).

In the context of the *Yoga Sutras* of Maharishi Patanjali, the word yoga has been used in the sense of concentration in consonance with the connotation *yuja samadhanu*. *Vyasa*, the authentic commentator of *Yoga Sutra*, considers yoga as *Samadhi* (concentration).

Yoga is the discipline (*sadhana*) or a continuous effort to attain that supreme state of realisation through intense concentration. According to some exponents of yoga, the purpose of Yoga is to attain spiritual perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind.

Yoga is an applied science, a systematized discipline to bring about a definite end. It takes up the laws of psychology, applicable to the unfolding of the whole consciousness of man on every plane of the world and applies them rationally in a particular case.



Notes

With so many aspirants climbing into the bandwagon of yoga for different reasons, it is becoming more difficult to answer the question, “What is Yoga?”. Each teacher uses Yoga differently as per the receptibility levels of their students. Beginner yoga practitioners aspiring to become teachers, search for schools that simply teach the kind of yoga they are already used to or are comfortable with. These changes mean that Yoga is transforming into something vastly different from the original tradition, so much so that Yoga experts who studied the discipline about three decades ago sometimes do not recognize it as “Yoga” anymore.

Definitions of Yoga

There are many definitions of Yoga, which apply to all levels of existence and awareness. Yoga is usually defined as a union between the Individual self and the supereme Self. In other words, yoga is the union of the “apparent man” identified with body, mind and senses with the “real man” who is free from all sorts of worldly limitations. In this sense, the aim of Yoga is to help us realize our identity with the Real. It is a total transformation of an individual to its ultimate nature.

Patanjali defines Yoga as, “complete cessation of mental modifications.” Expounding Patanjali Swami Vivekananda writes: “Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (*Chitta*) from taking various forms (*Vrittis*).” The mental modifications are termed *chitta vrittis* by him. When the mental modifications are annihilated, the seer abides in its real nature. In *Yoga-Vasishtha*, the essence of Yoga is beautifully portrayed thus, ‘*Manah Prashamanopayayah Yoga ityabhidhiyate*’ – Yoga is called a skilful trick to calm down the mind. It is an *Upayah*, a skilful subtle process and not a brutal, mechanical gross effort to stop the thoughts in the mind. Some of the definitions from the *Bhagavad Gita*, a very widely known classical text on Yoga, are given below:



Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is just a physical exercise. The fact is that Yoga is a holistic discipline. It can be considered a means of balancing and harmonizing the body, mind and spirit.

samatvam yoga ucyate ||

Yoga is the equanimity of mind.

yogah karmasu kausalam ||

Yoga is the art of performing action.

Yoga bharati dukkhaha ||

Yoga is the destroyer of misery.



Fig. 1.1: The *Bhagavad Gita* Manuscript

Two of the important definitions from the *Bhagavad Gita*, an important text book of Yoga, are given below:

*Yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya,
Siddhi-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate.*

BG II - 48

“O Dhananjaya, Perform action being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and remaining

equanimous in success and failure. Yoga is the equanimity of mind”.

Buddhi-yukto jabatiha ubbe sukerta-duskrte, Tasmad yogay yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam.

BG II - 50

“Endowed with wisdom of equanimity, cast off in this life both good and bad deeds. Thus, dedicate yourself to yoga. Skill in action is yoga”.



Caution

Though a very comprehensive text, “The *Yoga Sutras*” does not provide a comprehensive list of ‘asanas’ or ‘pranayama’ or gives techniques of ‘dhyana’, but has left them to be learnt from an *acharya* or an enlightened preceptor. Over the centuries, many great spiritual luminaries have presented their commentaries on the yoga sutras. Even to this day, contemporary yoga masters bring out commentaries on this ancient text.



Notes

In spiritual sense, yoga is the awakening of self. It is a method that allows us to wake up to who or what we really are, and to know what life is all about. It allows us to be more aware of ourselves and keeps us connected with ourselves.

1.2 Brief Introduction about the Origin and Development of Yoga

Originated in ancient India, yoga typically means “an integration” of mind, body and spirit. It involves the practice of physical postures, which is referred as *asana* in Sanskrit. As the name suggests, the ultimate aim of practicing yoga is to create a balance between the body and mind and to attain self-enlightenment. In order to accomplish this goal, yoga makes use of different body postures,

breathing exercises, relaxation techniques and meditation. Yoga is associated with a healthy and good lifestyle which leads to a balanced approach in life. The following pictures show different practices of yoga being performed by yogis in ancient India.



Fig. 1.2: Different Practices of Yoga in Ancient India

Origin of Yoga

The origin of Yoga is traced to the ‘Vedas’. There are references about yoga in the Vedas and the Upanishads. Besides, there have been a number of texts which are exclusively devoted to yoga. It is difficult to ascertain a fixed time period for the origin of these ancient texts, since historians differ on the dates when these texts were written. The teachings may date back even to an earlier time and their compilation into books would have taken place later.

The system of yoga is an ancient tradition and having its origin in India. The practice of yoga is believed to have started at the very dawn of civilization. In the yogic lore, lord Shiva is considered to be the first yogi or *Adiyogi*, and the first *Guru* or *Adi Guru*.

It was not until the discovery of the largest civilization known as Indus Valley Civilization, that knowledge about the origin of yoga surfaced. Archaeological findings, such as the yogi-like figures engraved on soapstone seal, verify the existence of yoga culture during this period.

A number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati Valley Civilization with yogic motifs and figures performing *yog sadhana* authenticate the existence of yoga praxis in ancient India.



Fig. 1.3: Ancient Seals and Fossil Remains with *Yogic* Images



Did You Know?

Historical evidences of the existence of yoga were seen in the pre-Vedic period (2700 B.C.), and thereafter till Patanjali’s period. The main sources from which we get the information about yoga practices and the related literature during this period, are the *Vedas* (4), *Upanishads* (main - 108), *Smritis*, the teachings of *Buddhism*, *Jainism*, *Panini*, *Epics* (2), *Puranas* (main - 18), etc.

History of Yoga

The development of yoga can be traced back to over 5,000 years ago but some researchers think that yoga may have existed even 10,000 years back. Yoga’s long rich history can be divided into four main periods of innovation, practice and development. These are:

- (i) Pre-Vedic Period
- (ii) Vedic period
- (iii) Classical Yoga period
- (iv) Post-classical Yoga period

Pre-Vedic Period

The study of the history of Indus valley civilization reveals that the practice of yoga was one of the significant features during this period.

The idols found in the excavation of the harappan civilization reveal the trace of yoga culture in the then society. The idol of *pashupati* in yogic posture is one of such specimens.

The Vedic Period

This period is marked with the emergence of the Vedas. The vedas are the knowledge par excellence. They form the basis of Hinduism. There are four Vedas:

- (i) *Rig Veda*
- (ii) *Sama Veda*
- (iii) *Yajur Veda*
- (iv) *Atharva Veda*

The Vedas are generally divided into two sections:

- (i) *Karma Kanda* (ritual portion)
- (ii) *Jnana Kanda* (knowledge portion)

The Upanishads are contained in the knowledge portion of the Vedas. The germ of the concepts of yoga are widely available in the Upnishads.

The Vedas contain the oldest known yogic teachings called the Vedic Yoga.

During this period, the people relied on the dedicated Vedic Yogis (*Rishis*) to teach them how to live in divine harmony. The *Rishis* were also gifted with the ability to see the ultimate reality through their intensive spiritual practice. It was also during this age that the yogis living in seclusion became known.

The Upanishads are the concluding portion and essence of the Vedas. They are also called Vedanta. The Upnishads describe the inner vision of reality resulting in intense self- inquiry. These expound upon three subjects: the *jīva* (embodied soul), *jagat* (the world), and *Ishwara* (God or the creator of the universe). The climax of the enquiry is the experience of the essential identity of an individual soul (*atman*) within with the ultimate reality

(*Brahman*). The Upanishads expound the teachings of the Vedas. They took the idea of ritual sacrifice from the earlier part of the Vedas and internalized it, teaching the sacrifice of the ego through self-knowledge, action (*Karma Yoga*) and wisdom (*Jnana Yoga*). Yogic practices, particularly meditation, are also found in Buddhism and Jainism.

Classical Yoga

In the pre-classical era, yoga was an incoherent mixture of various ideas, beliefs and techniques that often conflicted and contradicted each other. The Classical Period is defined by Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the first systematic presentation of Yoga. Written sometime between the 3rd and 6th century BC, this text describes the path of *Ashtanga Yoga*, often called "Classical Yoga". Patanjali organized the practices of yoga into an "eight- limbed path" containing the steps and stages towards obtaining *Samadhi* or enlightenment.

These eight limbs are:

- (i) ***Yama*** – social restraints/observances or ethical values
- (ii) ***Niyama*** – personal observances / restraints of study, purity and tolerance
- (iii) ***Asanas*** – physical postures
- (iv) ***Pranayama*** – control of life-force through breath control or regulation
- (v) ***Pratyahara*** – sense withdrawal in preparation for meditation
- (vi) ***Dharana*** – concentration
- (vii) ***Dhyana*** – meditation
- (viii) ***Samadhi*** – spiritual absorption



Did You Know?

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* provide implicitly or explicitly, principles for the practice of all other schools of Yoga.

Post-classical Yoga

Post-classical Yoga differs from the first three since its focus is more on the present. Harmony in empirical is emphasized upon. At this point, we see a proliferation of literature as well as the practice of yoga. A few centuries after Patanjali, a number of Yoga masters created a system of practices designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. They rejected the teachings of the ancient Vedas (though not totally) and embraced the concept of physical body as the means to achieve enlightenment. They developed *Tantra Yoga*, which consists of radical techniques to cleanse the body and mind to break the knots that bind us to our physical existence. This exploration of physical-spiritual connection and body-centered practices led to the creation of what we today understand as *Hatha Yoga*.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is necessary to be flexible before starting yoga practices. Hence it is recommended to do loosening exercises or *Shitilikarana Vyayama* before starting. On the contrary, yoga can help anyone gain flexibility with regular practice. There are subtle adjustments that a person can make to every pose so that he/she can benefit from the movements without having to endure pain.

Evolution of Yoga in the Modern Times

Swami Vivekananda's remarkable lectures in the West, especially in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, mark the proliferation of yogic culture in the modern times. The eternal message of yoga emanated from the lips of this cyclonic monk had a great influence on the western intelligentsia.

Subsequently, Yoga and its tradition received strong inspiration and impetus due to the pioneering efforts of several legends in India. To list the names of a few:

Babaji Maharaj, Shyamacharan Lahiri, Yukteswar Giri, Swami Yogananda, Madhav das Maharaj, Swami Kuvalayanandaji (Kaivalyadhama Health and Research Institute), T. Krishnamachari (Ashtanga Yoga), Swami Sivananda (Sivananda Yoga), B. K. S. Iyengar (Iyengar Yoga), Shri K. Pattabhi Jois, Shri T. K. V. Desikachar, Swami Ramdevji (Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar), Shri Yogendraji (The Yoga Institute), Swami Satyanandaji (Bihar School of Yoga), Sri Ravi Shankar (The Art of Living), Swami Jaggi Vasudevji (Isha Yoga Center), Swami Rama, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Shri O.P. Tiwari, Dr. Nagendra H R (SVYASA) so on and so forth.



Learning ACTIVITY

Prepare a report on evolutionary changes that have occurred in yoga and yogic practices in the modern age.

1.3 Yoga - Aims and Objectives

The ultimate aim of Yoga is to set the individual free from the sufferings of life. Yoga by its systematic and conscious process of calming down the mind erases the weaknesses in the mind and builds a will power into it. In such a mind each obstacle is conceived as a challenge and this arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation. Bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfast to the core, such a person takes up the challenges of life with marvellous temperance and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission.



Yoga offers the goal of life and the means to reach it.

Yoga performs the following functions:

- it gives deep relaxation at the muscular level,

- (ii) it slows down breath and maintains balance at pranic level,
- (iii) it increases creative and will powers at mental level,
- (iv) it sharpens the intellect and calms the mind down at the intellectual level,
- (v) it enhances happiness in life and equipoise at the emotional level, and
- (vi) it manifests the inherent divinity in man in all aspects of his life.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

The demonstration of *Bhugata Samadhi*, *Siddhis*, magic, *mantra-tantra*, rope-trick etc. are not yoga. For many, the practice of yoga is restricted to *Asanas* (postures). However, among the *Yoga Sutras*, just three *sutras* are dedicated to *asanas*! This goes a long way in setting right the perspective towards *asanas* in the context of total yoga. Fundamentally, *Hatha Yoga* can be said as a preparatory process so that the body can sustain higher levels of energy. The process begins with the body, then the breath, the mind, and the inner self.

Many consider yoga as an exercise and well-being regimen of the Hindus. On the contrary, yoga does not adhere to any particular religion, belief system or community. Rather, it has always been approached as a technology for inner well-being. Anyone who practices yoga with involvement can reap its benefits, irrespective of one's faith, ethnicity or culture.



Example

For instance, Power Yoga is aerobic in nature and strength-inducing. Executing postures in an *Ashtanga Yoga* class requires coordination and flexibility. Similarly, high level of endurance is required in a *Vinyasa* class.

Some people consider yoga as a mere exercise. However, yoga is much more than that. It is the

integration of the mind, body and spirit into one harmonious whole. It strives for attaining inner peace and union with the environment by means of quietening the constant chatter of the mind, creating a healthy body and being at peace with what one is and the world around one. Achieving this harmony is the core of yoga.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is a common misconception that yoga should be avoided by expectant mothers. The fact is that doctors themselves believe that yoga is one of the best things women can do to stay healthy during pregnancy. Yoga encourages gentle stretching that can alleviate back pain. Controlled breathing practices act as good relaxation techniques during pregnancy and help promote emotional well-being of an expectant mother.

1.4 General Introduction to Darshanas with Special Reference to Sankhya and Yoga

'Philosophy' in the Indian context is referred to as '*Darshana*'. The word *Darshana* has been derived from the verbal root *drish* which connotes intensive investigation (*drishir prekshané*). Therefore, *darshana* refers to the earnest inquiry into the nature of reality. There are generally nine prominent philosophies in India. These nine philosophies are grouped into two classes: the *astika darshana*, and the *nastika darshana*. The *astika darshana* accepts the authority of the Vedas and the *nastika darshanas*, though influenced by the Vedas, do not explicitly accept Vedic dicta. The *astika darshana* comprises the following six philosophies: *Nyaya*, *Vaisesika*, *Samkhya*, *yoga*, *purva mimamsa*, *Vedanta* (*uttara mimamsa*). The Buddhism, Jainism, and the *charvaka* philosophy belong to the group of the *nastika darshana*.

The *astika darshana* according to Indian Philosophy are:

Darsana	Originator
Nyaya	Gautama
Vaisesika	Kanada
Samkhya	Kapila
Yoga	Patanjali
Purva Mimamsa	Jaimini
Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa	Badarayana Vyasa

Table 1.1: The Shad Darshanas



Notes

Each *darshana* has a *Sutra* work which forms its basic text created by a *Sutrakara*, a great sage. These sages have founded and systematized the doctrines of the schools. They were the sages of the highest order who devoted their lives for the study and propagation of a specific philosophy.



Did You Know?

According to the traditional principles of classification, the philosophic thoughts of the sages are classified into two broad categories, namely orthodox (*astika*) and heterodox (*nastika*). The *Shad Darshanas* belong to the orthodox group. The heterodox group includes the systems like those of *Charvaka*, Buddhism and Jainism.

Samkhya is a dualistic philosophy. Its two metaphysical principles are the *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti*. *Puruṣa* is the principle of consciousness or pure consciousness. *Prakṛiti* is the principle of matter. Both *puruṣa* and *prakṛiti* are eternal and independent of each other. The entire universe is born out of the *Prakṛiti* or the primordial matter. *Puruṣa*, on the other hand, is as innumerable as there are living beings. *Puruṣa* is all-pervading and eternal. *Sankhya* believes in the creation of the universe as a result of the union between *Prakṛiti* and *Puruṣa*. The existence of God or the Supreme Being is not directly asserted.

The *Prakṛiti* is comprises of three *gunas* – *sattva guna*, *rajas guna* and *tamas guna*. Since *Prakṛiti* is the material cause of the universe, hence, all objects in the universe, living and non-living, physical and mental, are made of *Prakṛiti*, that is they are made up of the three *gunas*. *Sattaguna*, is associated with qualities, like happiness, pleasure, compassion, being good, illuminating, constructive; ‘*Rajoguna*’, is associated with qualities, like pain, suffering, chaos, and impulsiveness and ‘*Tamoguna*’, is associated with qualities, like inactivity, lethargy, darkness, ignorance, destruction and negativity.

The *Sankhya* School of Philosophy accepts only three *Pramanas* or the valid means of acquiring knowledge. These are *Pratyaksha* or direct perception, *Anumana* or drawing inference, and *Shabda* or verbal testimony. The *Samkhya* philosophy propounds *kaivalya* or liberation from the birth-life-death-rebirth cycle as the goal of human life. This liberation results in ultimate freedom for man from all the miseries and sufferings of human life. Pain or sufferings come from three different sources – *adhyātmic* (intra-organic or from one's own body and mind), *adhibhūtic* (extra-organic or from outside oneself but from the natural world) and *adhidairic* (extra-organic but from the supernatural world). The griefs of *adhyātmika* can be of two types, namely physical and mental. Physical causes are when the

Relationship between Sankhya Darshana and Yoga Darshana

The *Sankhya* system was propounded by Sage Kapila. This school is referred to as *Samkhya* or *Sankhya*. It means right knowledge or numbers. Accordingly, this philosophy is understood as the philosophy of right knowledge or philosophy of numbers or categories. There are twenty-five categories or principles in the *Samkhya*. *Samkhya* philosophy. It is termed as an uncompromising dualism, atheistic realism and spiritual pluralism.

body suffers from the imbalances of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* or the differences of food and habits. Mental causes refer to desires, rage, jealousy, hatred, and love like passion that cause grief. The *adhibhautika* griefs are caused by other animals like snake, scorpion stings and injuries by the other wild animals, being beaten by someone, suffering from abusive words come under this category. Examples for *adhidivika* sufferings are floods due to rain and snowfall, lightning strikes, earthquakes and such other abnormal disasters. The *Samkhya Darshana* starts with the assertion that existing remedies for these pains and sufferings suffer from the twin inadequacies of improper diagnosis and temporary solutions. It proposes that only Right Knowledge, which distinguishes our real self (*purusa* or consciousness) from our unreal self (*prakriti*), is the remedy which is free from the above-mentioned two inadequacies. *Kaivalya* is the state where all the three types of grief cease to be. What the *Samkhya* Philosophy propounds, yoga practices realize. Therefore *Samkhya* and yoga always go together. *Samkhya* is considered as theoretical yoga and yoga is considered as practical *Samkhya*.

Yoga Darshana as represented by *Yoga Sutras* was written by Maharishi Patanjali. Thus, the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali are considered as the basic text of yoga. These *sutras* propound the *ashtanga yoga* or Yoga of eight limbs.

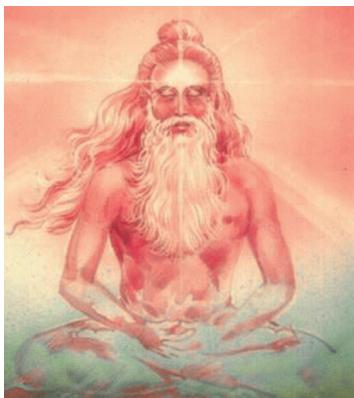


Fig. 1.4: Maharishi Patanjali

The *Yoga Sutras* are divided into 4 chapters or *Padas* as follows:

Samadhi Pada 51 *sutras*

Sadhana Pada 55 *sutras*

Vibhuti Pada 55 *sutras*

Kaivalya Pada ... 34 *sutras*.

Total ... 195 *sutras*.

Some renderings contain 196 *sutras* instead of 195 *sutras*. But the additional one *sutra* does not add anything essential to the existing 195 *sutras*.

The eight limbs are *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahar*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. These eight limbs or parts/steps are hierarchical in nature, i.e. one leading to the other higher *anga*. *Samadhi* is the goal wherein (in *Dharma* megha *Samadhi*) *Kaivalya* happens.

The *Samadhi Pada* starts in the 2nd *sutra* with the definition of yoga as “*chittavritti nirodha*”. It then gives the 5 *vrittis*, namely *pramana* (right knowledge), *viprayaya* (false knowledge), *vikalpa* (fancy or imagination), *nidra* (deep sleep) and *smriti* (memory). Among other things, the *Samadhi Pada* deals with *abhyasa* (practice), *Vairagya* (detachment), *Samprajnata* and *Asamprajnata* (states), *Ishvara* and *Ishvara pranidhan*, *Pranava Japa* (Om chanting), *Antarayas* (obstacles on the path of yoga) and their accompaniments (*Vikshepa Sahabhuvas*), *ekatatra abhyasa* (practice of one principle) to remove the accompaniments, *chitta prasadana* methods and *manas stithi nibandhinin* techniques to control/pacify/calm the mind, the concept and types of *Samapatti*, *Sabija Samadhi*, *Prajna* or intuition, *Nirbeeja Samadhi*, etc.

The *Sadhana Pada* starts with *Kriya Yoga* (*tapa*, *swadhyaya* and *ishvara pranidhan*) and among other things deals with *Kleshas* (*avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha* and *abhinivesha*), methods (*kriya yoga*, *dhyana* and *pratiprasava*) for eliminating the *kleshas*, the four-fold (*beya*, *beya-hetu*, *hana* and *hana upaya*) way of looking at pain and removal of the same, the

yamas as *mahavratas* or great vows, the *niyamas*, the technique of *pratipaksha bharana* for confronting negative thoughts/tendencies that come in mind, *asana* - definition, methodology and effect, *pranayama* – definition, types and effects, *pratyahar*, etc.

The *Vibhuti Pada* deals with the definition of *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, the concept of *Samyama*, the various types of *Vibhutis/Siddhis* – super-natural accomplishments acquired by the *yogi* in the state of *Samadhi*, etc.

The *Kaivalya Pada* is more philosophic in nature. Among other things it presents certain arguments refuting certain Buddhist philosophical doctrines, defines *Dharmegha Samadhi* as the ultimate state wherein *Kaivalya* happens, and wherein *chittavritti nirodha* finally takes place with effects of this, etc.

So many yoga practices are available of which *Astanga Yoga* of Patanjali is considered to be the most prominent, universal, all-time, sovereign, authentic and scientific one. As said, this yoga is known as the eightfold yoga, because it is divided into eight principal parts. These are:

Yama – restraints/observances which govern the social equation of an individual. They are five in number, viz. *Ahimsa* - non-harming, *Satya* - truthfulness, *Asteya* – non-robbing *Brahmacharya* – moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures, and *Aparigraha* non-possessiveness.

Niyama - restraints/observances which govern the personal equation of an individual. These are *shaucha* – purity or cleanliness, physical and mental, *Santosha* – contentment, *Tapa* – austerities/penances, *Swâdhyâya* – Self-study and *Iswarapranidhâna* – surrender to *Ishvara*.

Âsanas – *Asanas* is the posture, which gives steadiness at physical level and well-being at mental level. Patanjali says posture which gives stability and a sense of well-being.

Prânâyâma: *Ayama* of *prana* means stretching/expanding the *prana* which is the life force in us. Patanjali defines *pranayama* as breaking the pace of normal course of inhaling and exhaling making it longer and subtle.

Pratyâhâra- refers to the withdrawal of sense organs from their pre-occupation with their respective sense objects.

Dhârana- concentration. This refers to confining our mind to one region or object.

Dhyâna- meditation. Here the mind has become successful in concentration and there is stretchedness of the experience of only one object.

Samâdhi: spiritual absorption. This is a state of meditation wherein the self-nature of the meditator is as if not there and only the object of meditation shines forth or reveals itself completely. Patanjali explicitly refers to three stages of *Samadhi* – *Sabija Samadhi*, *Nirbijâ Samadhi* and *Dharma Megha Samadhi*.

Notes

The *Shad Darshanas* are divided in groups of two each, based on their closely related texts. *Samkhya* and yoga are paired because together they make a complete system. *Samkhya* is theoretical yoga and yoga is practical *Samkhya*. Also, *Samkhya* and yoga are together referred to as whole of Indian Philosophy.

1.5 General Introduction to Four Paths of Yoga

Paths of Yoga

Just as there are distinct philosophies based on different interpretations of the scriptures in world religions, there are different schools in the world of yoga. Accordingly, the living science of yoga has been organized into different paths or approaches over the centuries. It is no surprise

that human beings with so much diversity of thought and feeling would find several paths to their spiritual development in the realm of yoga.

Yet, just as the mountain top can be reached by taking two different routes, all paths in the spiritual realm lead to the same goal. Many people find that, as they progress through their lives, more than one path addresses their spiritual needs.

There are a number of recognized paths of yoga, of which six have gained prominence in the ancient culture of India. These paths are:

- i. *Jnana Yoga*
- ii. *Bhakti Yoga*
- iii. *Karma*
- iv. *Raja Yoga*
- v. *Hatha Yoga*
- vi. *Mantra Yoga*

Jnana Yoga

Jnana in Sanskrit means “knowledge”. Hence, *Jnana Yoga* is also called the Yoga of wisdom. It shows the path of self-realization through discerning the real from the unreal or illusory. It is a practice of discrimination between the products of nature and the transcendental Self, until the true Self is realized in the moment of liberation. *Jnana Yoga* is a strictly non-dualistic (*Advaita Vedanta*) path that encourages the yogi to separate the real from the unreal and the self from the non-self. Since, the mind is considered a part of the unreal, one must use the mind to outwit itself. The principal techniques of this path are contemplation and meditation.

The three stages of *Jnana Yoga* practice are considered as *sravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana*.

The *sadbhana chatustaya* helps in the preparation of the intellect, emotion and will. With such a preparation, the *sadhaka* or practitioner should begin study of *Vedanta* under a ‘realized’ teacher.

This study consists of the three stages of *Jnana Yoga* practice which are as follows:

- i. *Sravana* (listening or absorbing the instructions),
- ii. *Manana* (reflection or contemplation involving reasoning and arriving at intellectual convictions), and
- iii. *Nidhidhyasana* (repeated meditation implementation of convictions or attaining to oneness with Reality) on convictions/ accepted truths.



Caution

Jnana Yoga is the most difficult path requiring tremendous strength of will and intellect.

The *sadbhana chatustaya* helps in the preparation of the intellect, emotion and will. With such a preparation, the *sadhaka* or practitioner should begin the study of *Vedanta* under a ‘realized’ teacher. This study consists of the three stages of *Jnana Yoga* practice which are as follows:

- i. *Sravana* (listening or absorbing the instructions),
- ii. *Manana* (reflection or contemplation involving reasoning and arriving at intellectual convictions), and
- iii. *Nidhidhyasana* (repeated meditation on convictions/accepted truths, or implementation of convictions, or attaining oneness with Reality).

Bhakti Yoga

Unconditional and intense love for God is *Bhakti*. *Bhakti Yoga* is the yoga of devotion. It emphasizes the opening of the head to divine love, the union of lover (the *yogi*) and beloved (the divine). This devotion, all over is often translated into singing a

holy song or chant, with ecstatic repetition of the names of the beloved in gatherings called *kirtans*. *Bhakti Yoga* does not tell you where to direct that devotion, or the specific methods by which you should do it. That is left to the devotee's personal preferences.

Narada Bhakti Sutra (NBS) is a premier treatise on the nature of *bhakti* that emphasizes the connection between *bhakti* and *prema* and treats the age-old enigma about the nature of love in an original fashion.

Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It infuses joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge. All cares, worries and anxieties, fears, mental torments and tribulations vanish entirely. The devotee gets freedom from the cycle of birth and death. He attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.



Fig. 1.5: *Bhakti* Yoga

In this *Kali Yuga*, *bhakti* is seen as the surest, safest and easiest form of yoga to practice. The *bhakta* does not try to rid himself of emotions, but seeks to channel and harness the emotions by sublimating them into devotion. The aspirant treading the path of *bhakti* attempts to realize the Truth by devotion to and love of God in a personalized form, i.e., the *ishta-devata*. Prayer, chanting, *japa* (repeating a *mantra* or name of God), hearing or

telling stories of God and saints, *pujas*, ceremonies and rituals are the basic techniques of *bhakti*. A mystical relationship with God, who may seem as a friend, a child, a mother or a teacher, is sought and developed in *Bhakti Yoga*. It rids the aspirant of emotions and egocentricity by developing humility, self-surrender and the feeling of being an instrument in the hands of God.



Note

Bhakti Yoga appeals particularly to those who are emotional by nature. *Bhakti* is motivated chiefly by the power of love and sees God as the embodiment of love.

Qualities of a Bhakta

Four types of devotees are described in The *Bhagavad Gita* in the following *slokas*: *Chaturvidhā bhajantae mām janāḥ sukṛtinorjuna, Ārto jijnāsurarthārthee jnāneē cha bharatarshabha* (*Sreemad Bhagavad Gita*.7.16)

They are accordingly:

- *Ārta* (the distressed)
- *Jijnāsu* (the inquisitive)
- *Arthārthee* (the desirer of wealth)
- *Jnāni* (he, who is in search of the knowledge of the Absolute).

Further the *Bhagavad Gita* says,

Samtuṣṭah satatam yogee yatātmā drdhanischayah,

Mayyarpitamanobuddhīryo madbhaktah sa mae priyah.

– (*The Bhagavad Gita* 12.14)

“One who is not envious but who is a kind friend to all living entities, who does not think himself a proprietor, who is free from false ego and has equal mind both in happiness and in distress, who is always satisfied and engaged in devotional service with determination and whose mind and intelligence are in agreement with me - he is very dear to me”.

*Anapaekshah Suchirdaksha udáseeno gatavyathah,
Sarvárambhaparityâgee yo madbhaktah sa mae priyah.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 12.16)

“That devotee of mine, who is desireless, pure, expert, free from worry, free from agitation, unconcerned with any mundane (related to desires) endeavour, is very dear to me”.

*Yo na hrsyati na dvaeshti na sochati na kâmkshati,
Subhâsubhaparityâgee Bhaktimânyah sa mae priyah.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 12.17)

“One who grasps neither pleasure nor grief, who neither laments nor desires, and who renounces both auspicious and inauspicious things, that devotee is very dear to me”.

*Samah Satrau cha mitrae cha tathâ mânâpamânayoh,
Seetoshnasukhaduhkhaeshu samah samgarivarjitha.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 12.18)

“One who has equal feeling with his friends as well as enemies, who is equipoised in honour and dishonour, heat and cold, happiness and distress, is very dear to me”.

*Tulyanindâstutirmaunee santushto yaena kaenachit,
Anikaetah sthiramatirbhaktirmânmæ priyo narah.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 12.19)

“One who is silent even when he is praised or reputed, satisfied with whatever comes on its own accord, not attached to domestic life, fixed in determination and engaged in devotional service, is very dear to me”.

This way the whole of the 12th chapter of The *Bhagavad Gita*, from the beginning to the end, is filled with the characteristics of devotees.

Kirtan, the practice of chanting, is perhaps the most important technique in *Bhakti Yoga*. It can be considered the primary ingredient in the path of *Bhakti Yoga*. *Kirtan* is also referred as *sankirtan*, *keertan*, *bhajan*, chanting, sacred chants or yoga

chants. This style of devotional remembrance uses call and response singing to engross the mind in devotion. *Kirtan* brings relief to the mind and body. Chanting is an aid in meditation that helps us channel our devotional feelings. The sound of the *Kirtan* also helps to eliminate any external disturbances in our environment that may be a distraction to our meditation.

Karma Yoga

Karma means action. *Yoga* means Union. *Karma Yoga* means Yoga or Union through action. It is a path chosen primarily by those who are of an outgoing/ action-oriented nature. It purifies the heart by teaching the aspirant to act selflessly, without thought of personal gain or reward. By detaching yourself from the fruits of your actions and offering them up to God, you learn to sublimate the ego. According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, “*Karma Yoga* is the selfless devotion of all inner as well as the outer activities as a Sacrifice to the Lord of all works, offered to the eternal as Master of all the soul’s energies and austerities.”

*Karmanyâerâdbikârastae mā phalaeshu kadâchana,
Mâ karmaphalahaeturbburmâ tae samgostrvakarmani.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 2.47)

“You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you are not entitled to the fruits of action. Never consider yourself to be the cause (*Hetu*) of the results of your activities and never be attached to not doing your duty”. That means, you should never be inactive or passive in actions. Consider yourself as a tool in the hands of the supreme consciousness and dedicate yourself in the selfless service as far as you can.

*Yogasthna kuru karmâni samgam tyaktvâ dhanamjaya,
Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhutvâ samavratam Yoga uchyatae.*
– (The Bhagavad Gita 2.48).

Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna. Perform your duty and abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such evenness of mind is called yoga. *Yogi* is not the one who becomes egoistic, though attains miraculous powers and would not be apprehensive about their non-attainment. Without having any complaints, he would render his services with utmost devotion, to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord.

*Muktasamgonahamvâdee dhrtiyutsâhasamanvitna,
Siddhyasiddhyornirvikârna kartâ sâttvika uchyatae.*

– (The *Bhagavad Gita*.18.26)

The worker who is free from all material attachments and false ego, who is enthusiastic and resolute and who is indifferent to success or failure, is a *Sâttvik* performer of deeds in the righteous path.

The 4 major laws of *Karma Yoga* are described in The *Bhagavad Gita* so that you can enjoy every moment of your work totally free from all stresses.

- (a) Work with a sense of duty;
- (b) work without getting intensely attached (focussed attention) to the work;
- (c) never allow the anxieties about the results interfere with your mind during the currency of the job
- (d) accept failure and success with equanimity.



Did You Know?

Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi are some highly revered *karma yogis*.

Yoga. *Raja Yoga* here may not refer to a particular form of Yoga but to the ultimate state of Self-realization. Thanks to Swami Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga* came to be understood as Yoga propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*. Patanjali's *Yoga* is mind-oriented and meditation is the highest practice therein. In Maharishi Patanjali's words, it is “*Tada Drashtu Svarupe Arasthanam*” PYS I – S3. *Raja Yoga* or *Ashtanga Yoga* of Patanjali aims at restraining to the point of cessation of mental modifications so that Real Self within is restored to its pristine purity.



Note

Raja Yoga is also called *Ashtanga Yoga*, referring to the eight limbs that lead to absolute mental control. The chief practice of *Raja Yoga* is meditation.

Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga is sourced from *Tantra*. It is a form of Yoga which is more physically oriented. Most *Hatha Yoga* systems begin with purification practices (*Shodhana Kriyas* or *Shat Kriyas*) as against Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* which begins with *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. There are several texts of *Hatha Yoga* like *Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Sage Gheranda's *Gheranda Sambhita*, *Goraksha Sambhita* of Gorakshanath, *Shiv Sambhita*, *Yoga Rathnavali*, *Yoga Taravali*, etc. The word *hatha* is a Sanskrit combination of the words “*ha*” (sun) and “*tha*” (moon), which in itself is a union of the opposites. Qualities associated with the sun are heat, masculinity and effort, while moon qualities are coolness, femininity and surrender. *Hatha Yoga* is designed to help us bring pairs of opposites together in our heart, mind and body for the purpose of discovering something deeper about the nature of our existence.

Find a place in the middle. This middle place is a gateway into a whole new world for most of us. It

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga means royal or kingly Yoga. It is the supposed climax of all different paths of Yoga. In fact, *Swatmarama* in his *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says that *Hatha Yoga* is a staircase leading to *Raja*

is a place where we discover wonderful new things about our abilities and possibilities for our lives.

The term *Hatha* is wrongly understood as stubbornness or persisting beyond one's limit.

In Hatha Yoga, the term Hatha is symbolically used.

The *Hatha Pradipika* says,

*bakârenocaye suryas thakarasiandrasucakah |
candrasurye samibhute hathayogobhidhijate | |*

The term '*hatha*' is the union of two letters, viz., '*ha*' and '*tha*'. Here '*ha*' means the sun, '*tha*' means moon. *Pingala nâdi* represents the sun or *surya svar* and *idâ nâdi*, the moon or *Candra Svar*. '*Hatha*' means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon or the *pingala* and *ida* in us. With this union, the *kundalini*, which is in latent state would be awakened and through the *sushumna* it starts upward journey. It crosses all the *Shatcakrâs* while heading towards *sahasrâra*. There it unites with Brahman in *Brahma randhra* (the whole of *Brahman*) and stays forever there in the world of bliss. This is the union of *Atma* and *paramatma*. With this union, the ignorance of the practitioner would be eliminated and he then glimpses the radiance of divine enlightenment. All the sufferings would be uprooted.



Fig. 1.6: Hatha Yoga

Therefore, this state of the union is called 'yoga'. This is the valid sense of '*Hatha yoga*'. The aim of *Hatha yoga* is to control the body and mind. This is because, without strengthening and making the body and mind healthy, no spiritual endeavour gets accomplished.

Mantra Yoga

Mantra Yoga is the Yoga of sound. The word *mantra* is derived from the roots 'man', and 'tra'. 'Man' refers to 'mind' and 'tra' refers to 'to protect'.



Fig. 1.7: Mantra Yoga

Therefore, '*mantra*' stands for that which protects the mind. *Mantra* is a thought or intention expressed as sound. A *mantra* is a sacred utterance or sound charged with psycho-spiritual power. The power or potency of the *mantra* is what is exploded and attained by *mantra yoga*. *Yogis* use *mantras* to achieve deep states of meditation and to invoke specific states of consciousness. The most recognized and important *mantra* is the sound of *Om*.



Example

OM is referred to as the *mahamantra*, the greatest of all *mantras*.

1.6 Principles of Yoga and Yogic Practices

These Yogic principles are related to *ahāra* (food), *vihāra* (relaxation and recreation), *acāra* (conduct and attitudes) and *vicāra* (thinking) and *vyavahāra* (actions). In other words, one is to practice right Yogic food, right activities for recreation, right attitude and emotions, right thinking and right actions.

Yoga is a way of life. It is predominantly concerned with maintaining a state of equanimity at all costs. All yoga schools of thought emphasize the importance of the mind remaining calm because as the saying goes, only when the water is still can you see through it.



Caution

Contentment should not be confused with satisfaction. We can be in difficult, even painful circumstances and still find some semblance of contentment if we are able to see and accept things as they are. Contentment also should not be confused with complacency, in which we allow ourselves to stagnate in our growth. Rather, it is a sign that we are at peace with whatever stage of growth we are in and the circumstances we find ourselves in. This does not mean that we accept or tolerate unhealthy relationships or working conditions. But it may mean that we practice patience and attempt to live as best as we can within the given situation until we are able to improve our condition.

The three cardinal principles of Yoga are:

a. Relax the body

When the body is relaxed,

- It works most efficiently by harnessing the energies in the right direction.
- While resting all the muscles are relaxed the joints remain loose to conserve energy and the metabolic rate is very low.
- During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body.

- At crucial times, under conditions of high stress, the functions of organs coordinate so nicely that the necessary energy gets evoked and flows profusely into those regions which need more energy.
- The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation.
- This ‘stamina’ through harnessing of inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such co-ordination, can be effectively accomplished by yogic practices.
- It is in this area of application of yoga that the specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen, acrobats, gymnasts, etc. are keenly interested and are putting Yoga to utmost use.

b. Slow down your breath to rhythmic Phase

Good breathing habits harness the energies for systematic development of the physique and the psyche. Respiratory system is a bridge between the conscious and the sub-conscious, voluntary and the involuntary, or in general the body and mind. This system is both voluntary as well as involuntary. Using the voluntary control we change the involuntary functions.

c. Calm Down your Mind

Yoga by its systematic and conscious process of calms the mind down.

- It erases the weaknesses in the mind, and
- Builds will power into it
- In such a mind each obstacle is conceived as a challenge and there arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation.
- Bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfast becomes the core. Such a person takes up with marvellous sobriety the challenges in life and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission.

Pancha Kosha

The theory of *Pancha koshas* has been propounded by Adi Shankracharya taking cue from the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. *Taittiriya Upanishad* speaks about five different manifestations of the ultimate reality or *Brahman*. These manifestations are *Annamaya brahma*, *Pranamaya brahma*, *Manomaya brahma*, *Vijnanamaya brahma*, and *Anandamaya brahma*. It never speaks about *Koshas*. Adi Shankracharya converted all these to *Koshas* in order to suit his philosophy. Thus, *Annamaya brahma* has been mapped as *Annamaya kosha* and so on. The theory of *Pancha koshas* asserts that the relative world, comprising microcosm and macrocosm, is made up of five sheaths which cover the Real Self (*atman* or *purusa* or soul).

1. ***Annamaya kosha* or *kosha* made of food or the food body:** This is the outermost sheath, the most superficial sheath and is represented by our physical body made up of the five elements and constituted by the food that we eat. *Kriyas*, *asanas* and *pranayama* helps in strengthening this sheath.
2. ***Pranamaya kosha* or the energy body:** This is the *pranic* sheath which energises or invigorates all other sheaths. It is responsible for all the physiological and mental functions. It is mapped onto the physical body and extends slightly beyond the physical body. This extension is called the aura. The *pranamaya kosha* is in between the *annamaya kosha* (body) and *manomaya kosha* (mind). Thus, *prana* or our breath is the bridge between the body and the mind. *Pranayama* practices strengthen the *pranamaya kosha*.
3. ***Manomaya kosha* or the mental body:** This is the sheath of our thinking, feelings and emotions. It is comprised of *manas*, *ahamkar* and the lower *Buddhi*. *Pranayama* and *Pratyahar* practices cater to this *kosha*.

4. ***Vijnanamaya kosha* or the wisdom/higher intellect body:** This is the region where refined/higher level thinking and intuition starts happening. Meditation practices cater to this sheath.
5. ***Anandamaya kosha* or the bliss body:** This sheath is closest to our Real Self. Spirituality reigns here. Transcending the body, mind and intellect leads to bliss. Meditation strengthens this sheath.

Sad Chakras

'Chakra' means 'wheel' or 'circle'. In *yogic* context it refers to a 'vortex' or a minor 'whirlpool'. *Chakras* are *pranic* energy centers at specific areas in the body from where *prana* is supplied to all the parts of the entire human structure.

It is in order to make a mention of the *Sad Chakras* when dealing with the *Pranayamaya Kosha*. The *chakras* represent storehouses of *prana* within the *pranic* body of man. Because *prana* is a vibration, a force in constant motion, each *chakra* is associated with specific frequency levels and subtlety of *prana*. Also, in *Kundalini Yoga* or the *Chakra* system, *Chakras* represent specific levels of awareness – the higher the *chakra*, the higher the level of awareness. Thus, when *prana* is operated at a particular *chakra* level, it will induce a particular level of awareness. Also, a particular state of awareness means that *prana* is operating at the corresponding level of *chakra*. Thus, each *chakra* has two defining characteristics, i.e., *prana* and consciousness/awareness.

Despite there being innumerable *chakras* only a few of them are utilized in *yogic* practices. The main *chakras* are *Mooladhara*, *Swadishthana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishuddhi*, *Ajna* and *Sahasrara*. Factually speaking *Sahasrara* is not really a *chakra*. It transcends all the *chakras*. Sometimes an eighth *chakra* called *Manas Chakra* or *Bindu Chakra* or *Lalana Chakra* is also referred to.

Chakra Locations

The *chakras* belonging to the *pranic* body of man cannot be identified with the physical organs in the body. However, each *chakra* can be assigned a definite location within the framework of the body.

Most of the *chakras* lie within the spine; *mooladhara* is outside the bottom of the spine and *ajna* is at the top of the spine; *Sahasrara* is in the center of the crown of the head.

Yogic Practice

Yamas and Niymas

The *yamas* and *niyamas* are the two primary limbs of yoga. The word *yama* means restraint. Therefore, the practice of *yama* makes the aspirant restrained in every walk of his life. According to Patanjali, *yama* has five different modalities. They are: *ahimsa* (non injury to others), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non theft), *brahmacharya* (abstention from sensual enjoyment), and *aparigrah* (non receipt of gifts). These practices have not been advised in absolute sense. They are to be practised with moderation. *Niyamas* are the observances which are to be performed by a yoga aspirant. These observances are *shaucha* (internal and external cleanliness), *santosha* (satisfaction), *tapah* (austerity), *svadhyaya* (self study), *Ishvara paridhana* (surrender to God or gaining spiritual treasure). Infact, *yamas* and *niyamas* are the stepping stones to the higher practices of *Astanga Yoga*.

Kriyás

These are Yogic processes described in *Hatha Yoga* to cleanse the inner organs of our body. They bring about the following effects (a) Activating and revitalising of the organs (b) Toning up of their functions (c) Desensitization, and (d) Development of deep internal awareness. Among the major *Kriyás* enumerated in the texts of Yoga, simplified versions of a few *Kriyás* like *Catheter*

Neti, Jala Neti, Kapálabháti, Agnisára, Vaman Dhouti (Kunjal Kriya), etc. are used extensively.

Physical Exercises and Movements

Very simple physical movements to mobilize and activate the affected parts of the body are used. Some easy physical exercises are adopted to fulfil some peculiar needs of the body like to; (a) loosen the joints (b) stretch and relax the muscles (c) improve the power and (d) develop stamina.

The following is an extract from *Laghu Yoga Vásishtha* (in Sanskrit), which describes the genesis of Illnesses and suggests the remedy for the same.

Yogasanas - Postures

Yogasanas are physical postures often imitating the natural positions of the animals meant to make the mind tranquil. Through these postures, the physical revitalization and deep relaxation mental calmness is achieved.

Pranayama

Prana is the basic life principle. *Pranayama* is a process for gaining control over *Prána*. The five manifestations of *Prána* and the corresponding most comprehensive definition of *Pranayama* in the human system are described in *Prashnopanishat*. Also the conventional *Pranayama* through regulation of breath is described therein.

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi

Dharana is fixing one's mind to a particular object with reference to space and time. *Dhyana* is an unbroken flow of concentration to the object of meditation. When the forms disappear and the essence only shines is the state of *Samadhi*. These three taken together are called internal yoga or *antaranga yoga*. These states of yoga are very subtle and cannot be practiced deliberately. The *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* happen automatically in a yogi as a result of his external practices.

Yoga Asanas	Physical Culture
The effect of <i>asanas</i> in Patanjali's <i>Yoga Sutras</i> results in the removal of conflicts in life. In <i>Hatha Yoga</i> , <i>asanas</i> bring about physical benefits – health, steadiness, firmness and lightness of the body.	Exercises are meant for making the body beautiful and healthy without any reference to improvement of the mind.
The distinguishing feature of <i>asanas</i> is the critical element of awareness and development of the same.	Physical exercises are not performed for developing the awareness.
When <i>asanas</i> are done in a slow and steady manner as per classical Yoga, they generally stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system. Thus, there is a feeling of being refreshed and rejuvenated after doing such <i>asana</i> practice.	In the case of physical exercises, the sympathetic nervous system is stimulated. This consumes energy, produces heat in the body and generally leads to tiredness.
While doing <i>asanas</i> , the blood circulation remains more or less even throughout the body.	While doing exercises, there is unequal distribution of blood in the body.
<i>Asanas</i> bring about an increase in the tone of the muscles, particularly when during the practice of <i>asanas</i> , the final posture is held for a longer duration.	Physical exercises are mainly meant for bringing about strength and stamina.
The chances of injury and general wear and tear are very less while doing <i>asanas</i> .	In physical exercises, there is a lot of wear and tear and high chances of injury.
The muscles of an <i>asana</i> practitioner are firm and soft to the touch.	The muscles in the case of physical exercises become firm and hard to the touch.
The fundamental difference is that yoga <i>asanas</i> oppose violent muscle movements as this causes fatigue, muscle stiffness and injury.	Often emphasizes violent movements of muscles. Which produce large quantities of lactic acid in the muscle fibres causing fatigue.
They regard physical body as an instrument for the journey to perfection.	Designed to develop muscles for a stylish body.
They are designed to develop mental faculties and concentration.	<i>Rajasic</i> – violent movements, increase adrenaline to stimulate the mind.
Muscular movements do not necessarily mean a healthy body. Health is that state of body when all organs function perfectly under the intelligent control of the mind.	A strong body is necessary to undergo stresses and strains of daily life. However, the mind is not in control, short term health may give license to indulge in an unhealthy lifestyle.
The stretching of muscle forces blood through the valves of the veins; inverted postures use gravity to force the blood back to the heart and increases the volume of blood circulated.	Relies solely on aerobic exercises to increase heart-pumping and thereby blood circulation. This produces tremendous strain on the heart. Many highly trained athletes die of heart failure.
Muscle fatigue is counteracted through proper breathing and relaxation.	Violent movements exceed the muscle and circulation limits, causing fatigue.

Table 1.2: Distinction between Yoga *Asana* and Non-Yogic physical practices

1.7 Guiding Principles for Yogic Practice

The guiding principles given below should be followed by the *Sadhus* while performing the *yogic* practices:

Before

- *Shauch* means purity, an important prerequisite for Yogic practice. It Includes cleanliness of surroundings, body and mind. yogic practices should be performed in calm and quite atmosphere with a relaxed body and mind.
- Yogic practices should be performed on an empty/light stomach.
- Bladder and bowels should be emptied and evacuated before starting yogic practices.
- Yogic practices should not be performed on uneven surface. A mattress, durry or folded blanket should be used.
- Light and comfortable cotton clothes are preferred to facilitate easy movements of the body. Wear comfortable clothing to class. Wear shirts or T-shirts that won't come off while you perform an inverted posture or backbends. The lower garment could be a pair of loose pants or sports leggings.
- These practices should be altered when in a state of exhaustion or illness.

During

- Practice session should start with prayer as it creates conducive environment thereby relaxes the mind.
- Perform the practices slowly while breathing awareness along with relaxation.
- Breathing should always be done through nostrils unless instructed otherwise.

- Do not hold the body tight.
- Do not give jerks at any point of time.
- Do not hold breath unless it is specifically mentioned.
- While inhaling and exhaling, chest is to be expanded and compressed respectively.
- Do not to be greedy, i.e., perform according to your own capacity.
- Do not to get disappointed. It takes some time to get good results. Therefore, patience and regular practice is very essential for good results.
- There are contra-indications/limitations for each *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Kriya* and *Bandha*. Such contra-indications should always be kept in mind. In case of chronic diseases or cardiac problems, doctor and yoga therapist should be consulted prior to the performance of yogic exercises.
- During pregnancy and menstruation, yoga expert should be consulted prior to yogic practices.

After

- Bath may be taken only after fifteen to thirty minutes of yoga session.
- Light food may be taken only after fifteen to thirty minutes of Yoga session.
- After each practice session/sessions, *shavasana* may be practised as per need.
- Yoga session should end with a Meditation/ Deep Silence/*Shanti Path*.



Learning ACTIVITY

Why do you want to become a yoga instructor? Reflect on the qualities you think you have that will help you become a successful yoga instructor.



SUMMARY

- The word “Yoga” refers to different things in today’s time.
- The Sanskrit word “Yoga” or *Yog* is derived from the root “*yuj*”, which means to yoke, harness or join together.
- Patanjali Yoga consists of eight limbs and leads to *viveka khyati* (enlightened discrimination) which in turn paves the path for *kaivalya* (liberation from the cycle of birth and death).
- ‘Philosophy in the Indian context is referred to as ‘*Darshana*’, which means “immediate experience”.
- The *Sankhya* school of philosophy accepts only three *Pramanas* as the valid means of acquiring knowledge.
- There are a number of recognized paths of Yoga, of which six had gained prominence in the ancient culture of India. These paths are: *Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga* and *Mantra Yoga*.
- Yoga teachers and instructors have the moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the principles of yoga, including kindness, compassion, generosity, patience, helpfulness, forgiveness and purity.



KEYWORDS

Yoga: A spiritual discipline in Indian Philosophy that propagates spiritual union of the individual self with the Absolute or the Universal-Self.

Vedas: Ancient Indian scriptures that codify the ideas and practices of the *Vedic* religion.

Upanishads: Each of a series of Hindu sacred treatises written in Sanskrit, which expound the *Vedas* in predominantly mystical and monistic terms.

Darshanas: Six schools of philosophy based on the Vedas – *Darsana, Nyaya, Vaisesika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa* and *Vedanta* or *Uttara Mimamsa*.

Bhakti Yoga: The yoga of devotion.

Jnana Yoga: The yoga of wisdom.

Karma Yoga: The yoga of Action.

Raja Yoga: A form of yoga that promotes control over the mind.

Mantra Yoga: The yoga of sound.

Hatha Yoga: A form of yoga which propagates of bringing together opposites into a harmonious union and many other like *tantra yoga, laya yoga etc.*



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. Define yoga in your own words.
2. Write a short note on the yoga *Sutras*.
3. Name the eight limbs of *ashtanga* yoga.
4. List the key aims and objectives of yoga.
5. Enlist some obstacles on the path of yoga as defined by Maharishi Patanjali along with their Sanskrit names.

Long Questions

1. Discuss the origin and history of yoga.

2. What are the *Shad Darshanas*? Elaborate on the relation between *Sankhya Darshana* and *Yoga Darshana*.
 3. What are the different paths of yoga? Discuss each path briefly.
 4. Discuss the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* of *Patanjali Yoga*.
- Indian Philosophy by various authors.
Patanjali's Yoga Sutras – commentaries by various authors.
Hatha Pradipika – commentaries by various authors.
Hatha Yoga Texts – commentaries by various authors. Upanishads by various authors.
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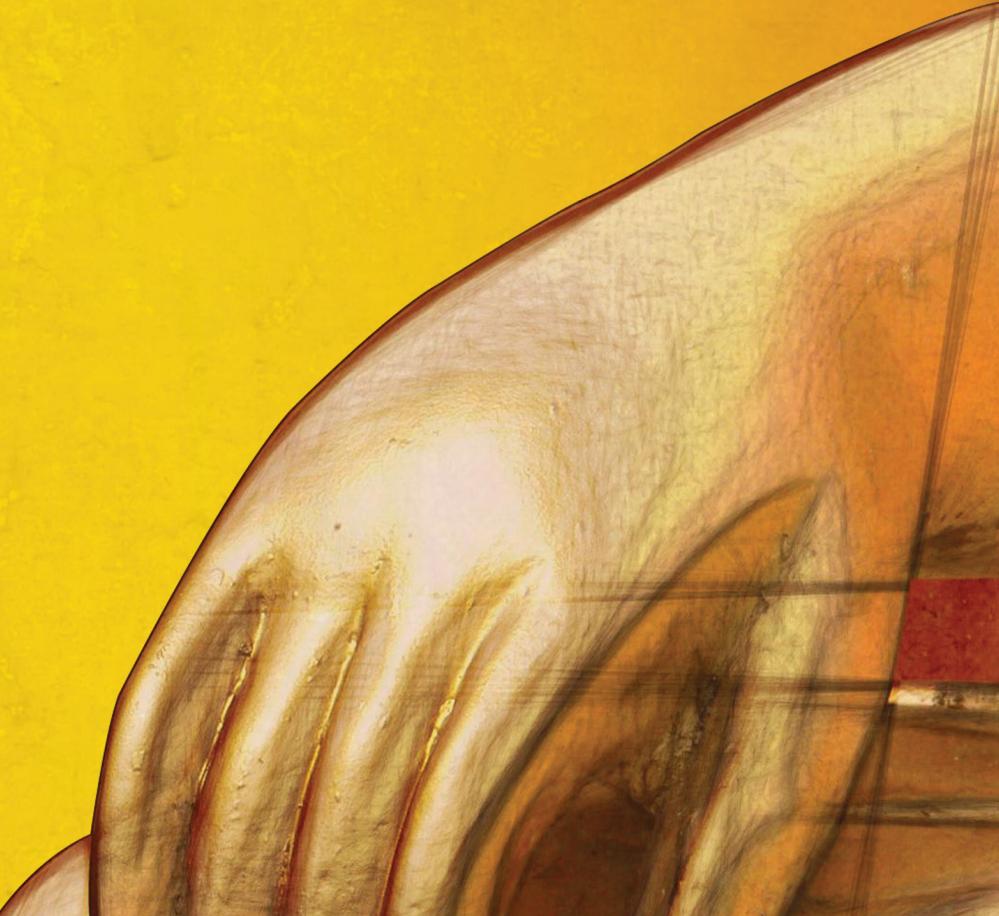


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CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO HATHA YOGA





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- Introduction
 - 2.1 Introduction to *Hatha Yoga*
 - 2.2 Important *Hatha Yoga* Texts with special reference to *Hatha Pradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita*
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Introduction

Yoga is a view of life as well as a way of life. Its philosophy and its practices aim at a harmonious integration of the different dimensions of human personality, i.e., the mind, body and spirit, so as to achieve the highest goal of human life, a state of Self-realization. *Hatha Yoga* being more physical is more popular. But it is only one school of Yoga. The different paths of yoga emphasize upon different methods but all of them ultimately lead to the same goal, that is of Self-realization. The body which is the vehicle of the spirit is strengthened by *yogasanas* so as to enable it to sustain higher levels of energy. Practice of yoga can bring about a life style change, a transformation in the total personality. Though yoga is not a religion, it is a spiritual practice of inquiry and exploration into one's inner self.



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe important *Hatha Yoga* Texts with special reference to *Hatha Pradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita*
- Discuss the concept of *Mitahara*, *Pathya/Apathya* according to *Hatha Yoga*
- Explain causes of success (*Sadhaka Tattwa*) and causes of failure (*Badhaka Tattwa*) in *Hatha Yoga Sadhana*
- Understand the concept of *Ghata* and *Ghata Shuddhi*
- Discuss the purpose and utility of *Shat Kriyas* and *Asana* in *Hatha Yoga*
- Explain the purpose and importance of *Pranayama* in *Hatha Yoga*

2.1 Introduction to Hatha Yoga

The word “*Hatha*” can be translated in two ways: as “willful” or “forceful,” - the yoga of activity, and as “sun” (*ha*) and “moon” (*tha*) - the yoga of balance. *Hatha* practices are designed to align and calm your body, mind, and spirit in preparation for meditation.



Fig. 2.1: Practicing *Hatha Yoga*



Most-common Mis-conceptions

The idea that an individual has to be flexible to even think about practicing yoga and that people with inflexible cannot benefit from yoga is completely bogus. People with inflexible bodies may initially encounter some difficulty, but everyone can improve his/her flexibility with yoga.

The Science of Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga though is more body-oriented as compared to Patanjali’s Yoga which lays more stress on the *chitta*. Yet it would be wrong to say that *Hatha Yoga* is only body-oriented. *Hatha Yoga* practices, start with the body, prepare the ground for reaching higher states of consciousness, and the final goal of *unmani avastha* (no-mind state) or *manonmani avastha* (mind-without a mind state).

Most *Hatha Yoga* practice traditions start with *Shodhana Kriyas* or purificatory practices and move on to *asanas*, *pranayama*, *bandhas/mudras* and meditation.

The concept of *Kundalini* comes from yogic philosophy of ancient India and refers to the mothering intelligence behind yogic awakening and spiritual maturation. It might be regarded by yogis as a sort of deity, hence the occasional capitalization of the term. According to the yogic tradition *Kundalini* is curled up in the back part of the root *chakra* in three and one-half turns around the sacrum. Yogic phenomenology states that *kundalini* awakening is associated with the appearance of bio-energetic phenomena that are said to be experienced somatically by the yogi.

The body is first purified, made free of toxins, so that the flow of *prana* is streamlined. Practice of *asanas* then strengthens and makes the body disease-free. Body is the temple and vehicle of the soul or consciousness. We must pay appropriate attention to the welfare and fitness of the body. *Pranayama* practices accompanied by *bandhas* then enable the *Kundalini* to be awakened finally leading to the state of Self-realization.

Hatha Yoga aims at balancing the two main energy-systems within the human being: the *pranic* energy and the *mansik* or mental energy (consciousness). The imbalance between these two energy systems result in lop-sided human beings, and their balance brings about wholesomeness and harmony. It is in this sense that we talk about Yoga or union of *Ha* (*bija mantra* representing *pranic* energy and *tha, bija mantra* representing *mansik* energy).

One of the corner-stone principles of *Hatha Yoga* is conservation of energy. Dissipation of energy in any form, be it in an undertaking of a pilgrimage, or in over-eating or in talkativeness, etc., are discouraged or rather prohibited.

Hatha Yoga adopts the “Middle Path” – for e.g., it propagates neither fasting nor over-eating, neither indulgence nor deprivation, neither introvertedness nor extrovertedness, neither over-adherence nor utter neglect of rules and regulations, etc.

Where Patanjali's Yoga starts with *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, *Hatha Yoga* starts with *asanas*.

*āsanam kumbbakam chitram mudrākhyam karamam
tathā
atha nādānusandhānamabhyāsānukramo hambe*

HP I-56

Yamas and *Niyamas* are to be followed after an individual becomes physically and mentally fit.

Though *Hatha Yoga* practices have their therapeutic benefits, they are not exclusively meant for therapy. It helps a fit person to progress towards the highest goal of life, i.e., self-realization.

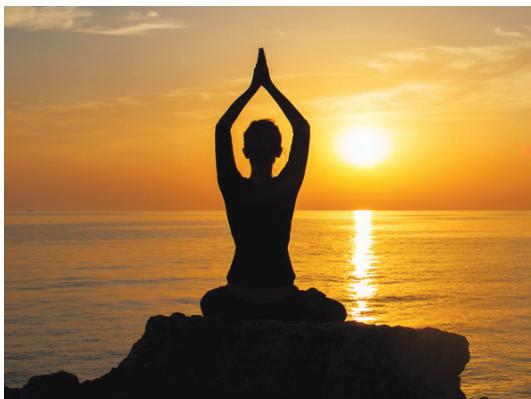


Fig. 2.2: *Yoga* and Spirituality

Aims and Objectives

In the Indian tradition, *Hatha Yoga* is one of the four main traditions of *Tantra Yoga*. The ultimate aim of *Hatha Yoga* is self-realization or *Moksha*, i.e., freedom from miseries and sufferings of human life. The movement towards this goal happens through a path that is physically-oriented. The theme of the *Hatha Yoga* practices can be said to be *Kundalini* awakening through *pranayama* practices. The first two practices, i.e., *kriyas* (*shat kriyas*) and *asanas*, by ensuring unimpeded flow of *prana* in the disease-free body act as preparatory steps for *pranayama* practices. *Pranayama* practices accompanied by *bandhas* or *mudras* lead to the

higher states of consciousness through the awakening of the *kundalini*.

In the process of achieving its ultimate aim, *Hatha* practices balance the energy systems in the body; make the body healthy, mind emotionally strong and conflict-free, intellect sharp, and spiritual aspirations fulfilled.

Kriyas bring about purification (*shodhana*) of the body, *asanas* make the body strong (*drdhata*) and disease-free (*arogyam*), *pranayama* practices make the body light (*laghavam*), of body, *mudras* and *bandhas* to steadiness (*sthairyam*), meditation to spiritual absorption or liberation.



Fig. 2.3: Performing *Pranayama*

Swami Swathmarama's *Hatha Pradipika* describes four important steps/limbs for the purpose:

1. *Āsanā*
2. *Prāṇāyāma*
3. *Mudras*, and
4. *Nādānusamdhāna*.

The *Gheranda Sambita* talks about *Saptanga Yoga* - the *saptangas* being *shodhana kriyas*, *asanas*, *pratyahara*, *pranayama*, *mudras*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. The effects of these seven *angas* are described as below:

*Sodhanam drdbatāschaiva sthairyā dhairyā cha lāghavam,
Pratyaksham chanirliptascha ghatasya saptasādhanam.*

Six cleansing process:

1. *Shatkarma* – Purification of the body
2. *Asanas* – Strength/firmness of the body
3. *Mudras* – Steadiness of the body
4. *Pratyahara* – Attaining courage
5. *Pranayama* – Lightness of the body (*laghima*)
6. *Dhyana* – Direct perception of the *atman*
7. *Samadhi* – Detachment/isolation.

To attain these conditions, one should adopt this practice of *Shatkarma*.

*'Shatkarmanā sodhanam cha ḍāsanaena bhavaed drdhām,
Mudrayā sthiratā chaiva pratyābhāraena dheeratā.'*

*Prāṇāyāmāllāghavam cha dhyānātrpatyakshamātmanah,
Sādhinā nirliptam cha muktiraeva na samsayah.'*

(Ghaeramda samhita 1.10.11)



Did You Know?

Patanjali (350-500 B.C.) was an Indian sage who recorded a series of aphorisms on how to practice yoga in his text *Yoga Sutras*. While Patanjali is typically considered as the father of yoga, yoga had existed long before Patanjali. He only compiled the *yogic* knowledge systematically.

2.2 Important Hatha Yoga Texts with Special reference to Hatha Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita

The four classical and popular texts of *Hatha Yoga* are as follows:

Hatha Pradipika

The *Hatha Pradipika* is a classical manual on *Hatha Yoga*. It is said to be written in the 15th century in Sanskrit by Swami Swatmarama, a disciple of Swami Gorakhnath. The *Hatha Pradipika* contains

instructions on the practice of postures (*asanas*), breathing exercises (*pranayama*), and purification techniques (*kriyas*), as well as a description of *mudras* and *bandhas*, the practices of which lead to a state of spiritual liberation.

The text is a sincere attempt to record the various practices of *Hatha Yoga* together with many benefits that may come from the practices. An important feature of the text is that *Hatha Yoga* and *Raja Yoga* are not considered separate entities, one is of a physical nature and the other is of spiritual. Both are together make an integrated whole, being dependent upon each other for the essence of yoga to be realized.

Swami Swatmarama's *Hatha Pradipika* propounds the *Chaturanga Yoga*-yoga with four limbs. These four limbs are *Asanas*, *Pranayama*, *Mudras* and *Bandhas*, and *Nadanusandhana*. The main contents of each of the four chapters describing the *Chaturanga Yogas* are as follows:

Chapter 1 - Asanas. This chapter lists the names and descriptions of the *asanas*, the concept of yogic diet, i.e., *mitahara*, the six factors that act as obstacles in the path of yoga practice, the six factors that facilitate yoga practice, the ten *yamas* and the ten *niyamas*, etc.

Chapter 2 - Pranayama. This chapter deals with the ten different types of *pranayama* and their techniques and effects. It also deals in detail with the six purification practices called *shatkarmas*, their techniques and effects.

Chapter 3 - Mudras. This chapter deals with the ten types of *mudras* and *bandhas*, their techniques and effects. It also deals with the *kundalini* and practices for its awakening.

Chapter 4 - Nadanusandhana. This chapter deals with the concept of *Nadanusandhana* (exploration into *nada*), the various stages of *Nadanusandhana*, the shambhavi mudra, descriptions of *Samadhi*, the relationship between *prana* and mind, etc.



Fig. 2.4: Essence of Yoga

Concept of Mitahara, Pathya/Apathya According to Hatha Yoga

Mitâhâra, the Measured Food

The food should be nutritious, sweet, lubricating and of one's liking. It should be easily digestible and should not contain substances that are irritating.

*Susnidhamdhurâhârah, chaturhâmsavivarjitah,
Bhuujyatae sivasampreetyai mitâhârah sa uchyatae.*

(HP 1.59)

Abstemious feeding is that in which $\frac{3}{4}$ of hunger is satisfied with food, well cooked with ghee and sweets, and eaten with the offering of it to Lord Shiva. (The fourth part should be kept empty. Only three parts should be had to satisfy hunger). This is called 'Mitâhâra', having limited food.

*Pushtam sumadburam snigdham pathyam
dhâtupraposhanam,
Manobhilashitam yogyam yogee bhojanamâcharaet.*

(HP 1.63)

A yogi should eat strength-giving food, well sweetened, lubricated (made with ghee), and full

of minerals, which strengthens the *dhatus* (tissues) like *rasa* (fluids), *rakta* (blood), etc., and food that is dear to the heart, milk, butter, etc., which may increase the humors of the body, according to his/her desire.

Pathya/Apathya - Prescribed and Prohibited Foods

*Godhuma-sâliyavapâstikasobbhannânam,
Ksheerâjya-khamdânavaaneetasitâ madhuni,
Sumreepatolaka-phalâdikapancasâkam,
Mudgâdi divya mudakam cha yameenrdapathyam.*

(HP 1.62)

The good grains: wheat, rice, barley and *swastika* (a special variety of rice), milk, ghee, sugar, butter, sugarcandy, honey, dry ginger, the patolaka fruit (a kind of cucumber), the five leafy vegetables, green gram, and rainwater collected when the Sun is in *magha* (the tenth lunar mansion), etc. are considered to be wholesome food for the advanced yogis.

*ataravamlateekshnalaranoshnahareetasâka
Sauveeratailatilasarshapamadya-matsyân,
Âjâdimâmsa-dadhi-takra-kulattha-kola
Pinyâkahimgulasunâdyamapathyamâbub.*

(HP 1.59)

Eating food which is bitter, sour, pungent, salty or hot, green vegetables, sour gruel, oil, mustard, and sesame, and consuming alcohol, fish, meat, curds, buttermilk, kulattha, berries, oil cakes, asafetida, garlic, etc. are said to be bad for a yogi.

*Bhojanamahitam vidyât punarapyushneekrtam ruksham,
Atilaranamamlayuktam kadasanasâkoikatam varjyam.*

(HP 1.60)

Food that is heated over again is dry, is excessively salty or sour and food with excess of vegetables is unwholesome and should be avoided

Importance of Vegetarian Diet

Physical Reasons for a Vegetarian Diet

Modern medical science has acknowledged that the high cholesterol, uric acid, additives and preservatives contained in meat all contribute to a multitude of diseases. A mainly meat-diet has been found to be a major contributor to such problems as high blood pressure, heart attacks, hardening of the arteries, arthritis and gout. Excess uric acid lodged in the joints contributes to arthritis, while arteries clogged with cholesterol and other fatty acid deposits decrease the flow of blood to the brain, contributing to senility and raised blood pressure. Other diseases generally associated with the consumption of meat are: strokes, constipation, cancer, arthritis, high blood pressure, allergies, migraine, headaches, ulcers, bad body odour, intestinal gases, kidney stones, hiatus hernia, gallstones, hypoglycaemia, diverticulosis, osteoporosis, kidney diseases, asthma and trichinosis.

Perhaps the realization that all energy originates from the sun is instinctive and there is an understanding that the closer our food is to the source the more potent the energy it contains.

Spiritual and Psychological Reasons for a Vegetarian Diet

It is said that when meat is eaten, we also absorb the hormones of fear and panic that are secreted by the animal just before it is slaughtered. Also, non-vegetarian food necessarily involves *himsa* in the form of killing of life forms. This *karma* of killing necessarily begets its unfavourable *samskara* according to the law of *karma*. Hence, non-vegetarian food is an impediment on the progress on the spiritual path.



Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga is mind-oriented, while in comparison *Hatha Yoga* may be said to be more physically-oriented.

Gheranda Samhita

Gheranda Samhita or ‘Gheranda’s Compendium’, was written in the 17th century and is one of the most popular texts of *Hatha Yoga*. This comprehensive work starts with *Shat Kriyas*, practices for cleansing the internal organs. The yoga propounded by Gheranda is called as *Saptanga Yoga* or *Ghatastha Yoga*.

Gheranda Samhita is a manual of yoga taught by Gheranda to Chandrakapali. As mentioned, the *Gheranda Samhita* speaks of a seven-fold yoga which is as follows:

1. *Shatkarma* for purification
2. *Asana* for strengthening
3. *Mudra* for steadyng
4. *Pratyahara* for calming
5. *Pranayama* for lightness
6. *Dhyana* for perception
7. *Samadhi* for isolation



Hatha Yoga texts have been sourced from *Tantra*, whereas Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* from the *Vedas*.

Hatharatnavali

Hatharatnavali is an important text of *Hatha Yoga* written by Srinivasa Yogi somewhere between 1625 and 1695 A.D. Among other things the text includes lucid conception of Yoga, reference to *ashtakarmas* (instead of the regular *shat karmas*), mention of 84 *asanas* and elaborate description of *mudras*. It also contains discussion on the concept of *panda* (microcosm) and *brahma* (macrocosm). The text gives a lot of information otherwise not known with regard to Yoga.

Siva Samhita

Siva Samhita, whose author is unknown, means ‘Siva’s compendium’ and it is written in the form 2.3 Concept of Diet according to *Hatha Yoga* Texts.

The philosophy of yogic diet does not believe in calorie count of foods or the amount of vitamins, minerals or proteins we get from the food. Instead, emphasis is laid on the type of food and its quality. Some of the yogis survive on a meager amount of food and still enjoy better health than all of us. They focus on nutrition available from food without bothering about its taste. Becoming a slave to taste buds is a temptation that yoga does not recommend. Also, moderation is recommended in whatever you eat and drink. As per yoga philosophy, self-discipline in choice of foods is critical for your health as well as for meditation and spirituality. Yoga diet principles are very easy to understand but difficult to follow.

The *Hatha Pradipika* very clearly tells what diet to take and what to avoid. Proper diet is very important if a person wants to maintain good health. Most of the problems people experience are due to bad eating habits. One needs to start eating properly and the right away.

If a person takes proper diet, it is like fasting. It is a discipline where the person is not overtaxing the system by putting in too many toxins. Food plays an important part in the functioning of the mind. If the food is impure, the mind also becomes impure. Therefore, diet is of primary importance. *Sattvic* foods are the best for a yogic practitioner.

They consist mainly of cereals, fresh and dry fruits, raw or freshly cooked vegetables, beans and legumes, ghee and pure organic milk. Light and nourishing food like this is easy to digest. It also increases vitality, strength, endurance and health. If you want to have a *sattvic* diet, remember that any change in diet should be done progressively.

It is not only important to have a healthy diet, but it is equally important to have a moderate diet. Overeating is the chief cause of most diseases. Yogis believe that food is our first interaction with the world around us, and if we do not eat with a sense of love, connection, and peace, all other facets of our lives tend to suffer.



Did You Know?

Srisa Chandra Vasu, a renowned scholar of the Hindu scriptures, wrote and interpreted sacred texts such as the *Upanishads*, *Ashtadhyayi* and the *Siva Samhita*.

2.3 Causes of Success (Sadhaka Tattwa) and Causes of Failure (Badraka Tattwa) in Hatha Yoga Sadhana

Yoga has been, for a long time, considered an art as well as a science. Ancient yogis were considered more as scientists who studied the body and our consciousness within it, rather than merely teachers. The ‘science’ of *Hatha Yoga* is stated to not only be a physical practice intended for health and fitness, but also for awakening ‘vital energies’ within us (such as *prana*, *chakras* and *Kundalini* energy). In this sense, *Hatha Yoga* is considered the foundation for all ‘higher yogas’, such as *Raja yoga*, meditation and the path to *Samadhi* or enlightenment.

Causes of Success (Sadhaka Tattwa) on the Path of Yoga

According to Yogi Swatmarama “The real purpose of *Hatha Yoga* is to open the gate to Self-realization”. So in this sense we can define the ‘goal’ of *Hatha Yoga* as ‘Self-realization’, and ‘success’ as the ability to unlock the gate which leads us there. In order to unlock something, though we need some keys, and luckily verse 16

of the *Hatha Pradipika* provides us with these six facilitators of success:

1. **Enthusiasm (Utsah):** “A positive attitude, constant inspiration and the idea of attaining perfection.” Every day should seem like the first day of practice. This spontaneously generates perseverance.
2. **Courage (Sahas):** “Courage to face the inner visions and realizations as they dawn”.
3. **Perseverance (Dhairya):** No matter what happens one should practice this regularly.
4. **Discriminative knowledge (Tattvajnana):** “Everything a person does in every aspect of his life should be conducive to his *sadhana*.”
5. **Determination (Nischaya):** “Resolve to carry on the practice under all circumstances.”
6. **Aloofness from company (Janasangha parityaga):** “It is better to stay away from social interactions and negative influences, but do not consider others to be inferior.”

Causes of Failure (Badraka Tattwa) on the Path of Yoga

Failure in Sadhana

Atyābhāra prayāsascha prajalpo niyamagrahabh,

Janasamgascha lolyam cha shadbhīryogo vinasyati.

(HP 1.15)

Yoga is destroyed by the following six causes: Over-eating, exertion, talkativeness, adhering strictly to too many like having rules, cold bath every morning, eating at night, or eating fruits only, company of common people, and unsteadiness.

1. *Atyābhāra* (Over-eating): Having more food than the appetite is called *atyābhāra*. A yogi should forfeit this habit.
2. *Prayāsa* (exertion): Exceeding certain limits in labour, whether it is physical or mental or oral. This should be avoided by a yoga practitioner.

3. *Prajalpa* (talkativeness): Exceeding the limit in speech is called ‘*prajalpa*’ or ‘*bahubhāshana*’.
4. *Niyamagraha* (adhering to rules): Adhering to some traditional rules and regulations is *niyamagraha*. One should not fasten oneself to certain rules and regulations. For example, wanting to take cold bath, bathing very early in the morning, stick to having only fruits or milk or any other particular food. If the condition is not fulfilled, then the practice of yoga is hindered. So this is also an impediment in the path of yoga.
5. *Janasāṅgha*: Being in people’s company is ‘*janasāṅgha*’. This disturbs a *Hatha yogi*, because the people’s company arouses feelings, like lust, anger, love, hate, misery, and ego, etc. in a practitioner and disturbs his practice. Hence, a yogi should avoid the company of common people.
6. *Lauhya* (fickle-mindedness): Capricious behaviour of the senses is called ‘*lauhya*’. There are ten senses in a human being. Having inconsistency in any one of the senses or in all of the senses is a cause for the disturbance of a yogi. That instability interrupts the intellect and the steadiness of a practitioner. This volatility definitely also poses impediments in the path of yoga.

2.4 Concept of Ghata and Ghata Shuddhi

In *Gheranda Sambhita*, which propounds the *Saptanga Yoga*, Sage *Gheranda* talks about seven angas of Yoga which ultimately lead the practitioner to the goal of Self-realization. The *saptangas* are *kriyas*, *asanas*, *pratyahara*, *pranayama*, *mudras*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. The human being (body along with the mind) is compared by Sage *Gheranda* to a ‘*Ghata*’ or ‘vessel’. This *ghata* needs to be tempered by the fire of yoga which is akin to purifying the psycho-physiological structure of the human being in

order to make it capable of reaching the heights and the climax of yogic practices. This process of purification can be termed as *Ghata Shuddhi*. This is effected or brought about by the practice of the *saptangas* of the *Saptanga Yoga*.

As the basis for all creation, including the physical body, is a group of five elements, the well-being of the body and mind can be established by purifying these five elements within the human system.



Note

The process of purification starts with *kriyas* and progresses to *asanas*, *pranayama*, etc. leading to meditation.

2.5 Purpose and utility of Shat Kriyas in Hatha Yoga

Shat Kriyas are the yogic techniques to cleanse the internal organs. According to *Hatha Pradipika*, there are six cleansing techniques called *Shat Kriyas*. *Shat* means “six” and *kriya* means “action”. Yogic *kriya* removes the waste materials of our internal organs which are not efficiently expelled normally. Therefore, the aims of *Hatha Yoga* and of the *Shatkriyas* are to cleanse the internal organs and thereby create harmony between the major *pranic* flows, *Ida* and *Pingala* and attain physical and mental purification and balance.

Shatkarma (six practices)

Maedahslaeshmâdhikah purvam shatkarmâni samâcharaet,
Anyastu nâcharaet tâni, doshânâm samabhâvata.

(HP 2.21)

If any practitioner of *Hatha Yoga* is obese or has excess of fat or phlegm in the body, the six kinds of *kriyâs* (duties) should be performed first. But others, not suffering from the excess of these, should not perform them.

Dhautivastistathâ Netisrtâtakam naulikam tathâ,
Kapâlabhâtischaitâni shat karmâni prachakshatae.

(HP 2.22)

Shatkarma (six practices)

Maedahslaeshmâdhikah purvam shatkarmâni samâcharaet, Anyastu nâcharaet tâni, doshânâm samabhâvata.

(HP 2.21)

An obese practitioner of the *Hatha Yoga* should first practise the six *kriyas* to remove excess fat and phlegm from the body. But others, not suffering from the excess of these, should not perform them.

Dhautivastistathâ Netisrtâtakam naulikam tathâ,
Kapâlabhâtischaitâni shat karmâni prachakshatae.

(HP 2.22)

The six kinds of *kriyas* are: *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Trâtaka*, *Nauli* and *Kapâlabhâti*.

The *shat kriyas* also help to maintain balance of the three *doshas* or humours in the body: *kapha* or mucous, *pitta* or bile and *vata* or wind. Both *Hatha Yoga* as well as *Ayurveda* believe that disease is caused when there is an imbalance of the *doshas*. *Shatkriyas* are practised before beginning *pranayama* and other higher yogic practices to ensure that the body is pure and free from toxins and one is able to venture successfully on the path of spirituality. The *shat* (six) *kriyas* commonly known to yogis are as follows:

1. *Neti* or the cleansing of the nasal passage
2. *Dhauti* or the cleansing of the digestive tract, upto the stomach
3. *Nauli* or the massaging of the abdomen
4. *Kapalbhati* or the purification of the frontal lobes of the brain and the lungs.
5. *Basti* or the cleansing of the colon by producing negative pressure by *Nauli*.

6. *Trataka* or the cleansing and strengthening of the eyes brought about by gazing without blinking.

1. *Dhauti*

A strip of cloth – roughly 3 inches wide and 15 cubits long – is first moistened with warm water and then coaxed down the gullet into the stomach as demonstrated by one's *Guru*, and then gently taken out. The process is called *Dhauti Karma* or *vastra dhauti*.

The practice of *Dhauti Karma* cures cough, asthma, enlargement of the spleen, leprosy and 20 different diseases that arise because of phlegm.

The three most common practices of *dhauti* are *vaman dhauti* (done with water), *danda dhauti* (done with a rubber tube), and *vastra dhauti* (as explained above).

In *vaman dhauti*, the water is made saline and is tepid to match the internal environment of the practitioner.

2. *Basti*

Draw water by middle *Nauli*. It draws the water in the colon.

The practice of *Basti Karma* cures disorders like colic, enlarged spleen and dropsy that arise due to the imbalance of *Vata* or wind, *pitta* or bile and *kapha* or phlegm.

The *basti kriya* corresponds to modern day enema. *Hatha Yoga* talks about two types of *basti* – *jala basti* (with water) and *sitala basti* (with air).

3. *Neti*

A smooth and oily cord made of threads and about six inches long, should be passed through the passage of the nose and the end taken out in the mouth. This is called by adepts the *Neti Karma* (*sutra neti*).

The *Neti* cleans the brain (*Kapāla*) and illuminates the divine sight. The practitioner can see upto long distances. It destroys all the diseases of the cervical and scapular regions.

The two most common practices of *neti kriya* are called as *jala neti* (done with salt water) and *sutra neti* (done with *sutra/rubber tube*). *Neti kriyas* are sometimes done also using milk or *ghee*.

Neti kriyas act as preparation for *pranayama* practices. The *neti kriyas* should immediately be followed by *kapalbhati* practices to remove the remnants of any salt water lodged in the respiratory passage.

4. *Tratakā*

Being calm, a practitioner should gaze steadily at a small mark (a small thing), till eyes are filled with tears. This is called '*Tratakā*' by *āchāryas*.

Tratakā destroys the eye diseases and removes sloth, etc. It should be kept secret very carefully, like a box of jewellery.

5. *Nauli*

Nauli is the only the important *Kriya* and *Hatha Yoga*. Exhale completely in standing position hands on the knee. Practice *adhiyan* and separate middle abdominal muscles is called *Nauli* try to take it right and left is called churning of *Nauli*.

It removes dyspepsia, increases appetite and digestion, and is like the goddess of creation, and causes happiness. It dries up all the disorders. This *Nauli* is a crest-jewel exercise in *Hatha Yoga*.

Nauli practices can be considered to be of four types, namely *vama* (left) *nauli*, *madhya* (middle) *nauli*, *dakshina* (right) *nauli*, and *nauli chalana* (rotation).

6. *Kapālabhāti*

When inhalation and exhalation are performed forcefully and rapidly, like a pair of leather bellows of a blacksmith, by the practitioner of *Hatha Yoga*, it dries up *Kapha* from the excess of phlegm. This method is known as *kapalbhati* by the ancient sages. This *kapalbhati* method has a great advantage. It destructs 20 kinds of *Kapha*, the phlegm-related diseases.

Hatha Pradipika talks about three types of *kapalbhati* – *vata karma*, *vyut karma* and *sheeta karma* *kapalbhatis*.

Generally, *kapalbhati* is understood as forceful, rapid exhalation. When inhalation and exhalation are both done forcefully and rapidly, it is referred to as *bhastrika* (*kapalbhati*).

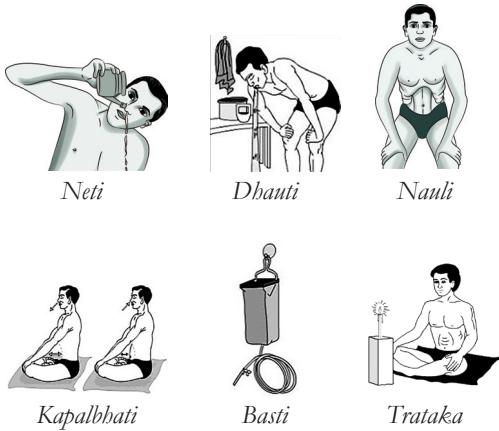


Fig. 2.5: *Shatkarma*

These practices are means of cleaning the throat and esophagus of phlegm, keeping the stomach free of excess acid, the bowels of faeces and the lungs, pores, and sweat glands free from waste and impurities.

General benefits of *Shatkarmas*:

1. *Shatkarmas* are very good to overcome a lot of diseases completely such as asthma, food allergies, reduces obesity, migraine, regulates entire digestive system.
2. The practice of *shatkarma* creates harmony in body and mind.
3. The different systems of the body are purified by this *shatkarma* practice, so the energy can flow through the body freely.
4. It's very good for general health; this increases one's capacity to work, think, digest, taste, feel, experience, etc.



Did You Know?

Unlike all other schools of *Hatha Yoga*, which provide the place of first *anga* to the *shatkriyas*, Swatmarama in *Hatha Pradipika* says that *shat kriyas* need to be practiced only by those who are have from excessive fats, phlegm and mucous. In the case of healthy people, *pranayama* practices are sufficient to bring about cleansing/purification.

2.6 Purpose and utility of Asana in Hatha Yoga

In Swatmarama Suri's *Hatha Pradipika*, *asanas* form the first *anga* of his *Chaturanga Yoga*. Swatmarama gives elaborate descriptions of fifteen *asanas* and their effects along with the methodology of performing them. These *asanas* are as follows:

1. *Siddhasana*
2. *Padmasana*
3. *Simhasana*
4. *Swatikasana*
5. *Veerasana*
6. *Matsyendrasana*
7. *Gaumukhasana*
8. *Bhadrasana*
9. *Mayurasana*
10. *Kukutasana*
11. *Koormasana*
12. *Utthanakoormasana*
13. *Shavasana*
14. *Dhanurasana*
15. *Paschimottanasana*

Swatmarama says that practice of *asanas* results in *arogyam* (good health), *sthairyam* (stability) and *angalagharam* (lightness of the body).



Note

Asanas teach poise, balance, strength and calms down the mind in preparation for meditation in the pursuit of enlightenment. The word *Asana* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root ‘*Aas*’ which means ‘state of existence’. The physical benefits derived by practicing *Asana* are incidental which comes with mental calmness.

range of motion and strength as well as enhance the balance, leaving a person with a higher fitness level and reduced risk of injuries.

Although practicing yoga poses doesn't burn as many calories as an intense activity, such as running, you can still lose weight with a regular yoga practice if it is combined with diet control and some form of aerobic exercises.

Health and Fitness Benefits

One of the most immediate health benefits of practicing *Hatha Yoga asanas* is that one gets a feeling of calmness. When a person focuses on his/her yoga practice, he/she may focus less on his/her worries or woes. Yoga can increase flexibility,

Therapeutic Benefits

Though yoga is basically a preventive discipline, practices of yoga particularly *Hatha Yoga*, definitely has its, therapeutic benefits. *Hatha Yoga asanas* can help heal or soothe a specific health ailment or condition. One can be relieved of chronic neck

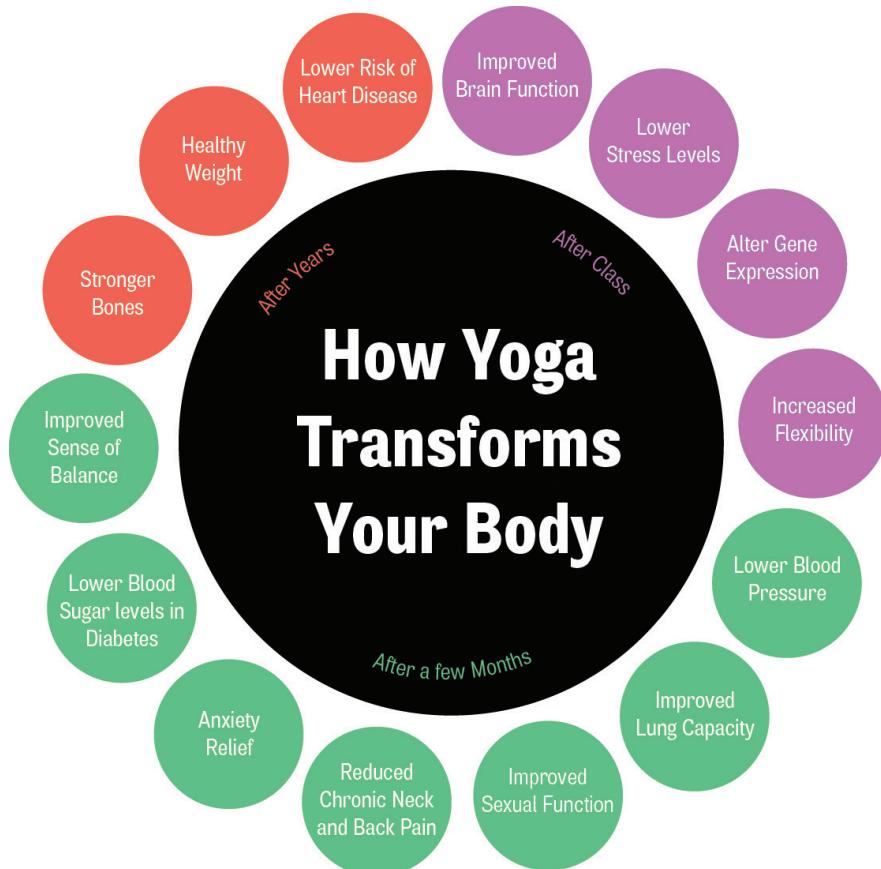


Fig. 2.6: Benefits of Yoga

pain with a series of poses that focus on gently stretching and elongating the spine. People can get relief from sinusitis with poses that focus on inversion, forward bends and poses that calm their mind. Other poses can help alleviate anxiety, asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, insomnia, sciatica and a host of other conditions. Still others poses may help with pregnancy, menstruation and infertility.

Practicing *asanas* helps to align one's body, breath and mind; a connection that takes your attention away from the chaos of the outside world into your inner being. With attention focused inwards, one can become more aware of the way one habitually thinks or reacts to situations, without judging if such thinking or reactions are necessarily good or bad. *Hatha Yoga* can help us in recognizing our behaviours and respond more effectively to our experiences.

Spiritual Development

Hatha Yoga's overall goal is to enhance the spiritual development, which it does by releasing the energy

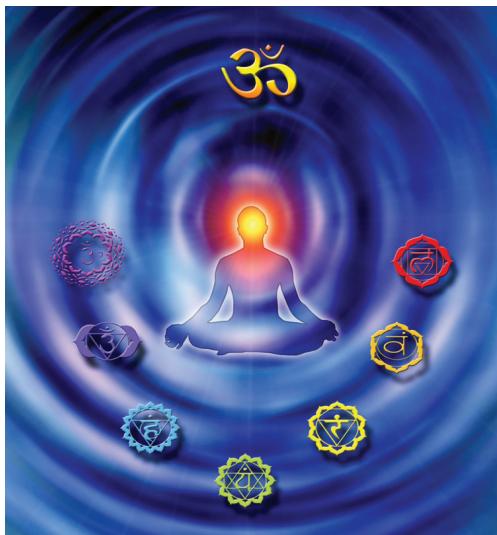


Fig. 2.7: Spiritual Development

that flows throughout your body and balancing the opposite aspects of your being. According to yoga theory, everyone has masculine and feminine aspects to one's being, referred to as the hot, active energy of the sun or "*ha*" and the cooling, receptive energy of the moon, or "*tha*." *Hatha*, which literally translates to sun-moon, balances these two opposites, while opening one's energy channels of the body. The main channel is in the spine, which holds the divine energy, or *Kundalini Shakti*, at its base. The object is to achieve balance so that energy streams freely through your body, ultimately facilitating a spiritual awakening.

General Notes for Asana Practitioners

1. *Asanas* can be practiced anytime but one's bowel and bladder should be empty or rather light at that time.
2. *Asanas* should be practiced in a well-ventilated place.
3. You may carry your own yoga mat to your class to avoid skin issues related to hygiene.
4. Always practice yoga by spreading a blanket or carpet on a leveled floor.
5. During yoga practice, keep unwanted thoughts at bay.
6. During illness, after surgeries, fractures, sprains, one should refrain from doing yoga. Resume practicing yoga only after consulting a physician.

2.7 Purpose and importance of Pranayama in Hatha Yoga

Prana refers to the life-force or the vital energy, which is responsible for all the functions, physical and mental, in the human being. *Ayama* refers

to the ability to control your body by stretching, expanding, and elaborating. Hence, *pranayama* refers to the control of *prana* by stretching it. Breathing is the means through which control of *prana* is brought about. While in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, breathing is emphasized in *pranayama* practices; in *Hatha Yoga*, retention or *kumbhak* is emphasized. In fact, Swatmarama in *Hatha Pradipika* refers to eight varieties of *kumbhak*, instead of *pranayama*. These eight varieties are as follows:

1. *Suryabhedana*
2. *Bhastrika*
3. *Ujjayi*
4. *Sheetali*
5. *Sheetkarni*
6. *Bhrambhi*
7. *Plavini*
8. *Moorcha*

In addition to these, Swatmarama also refers to *nadi shodhana pranayama* (alternate nostril breathing) or *anuloma viloma pranayama*. In one of the *shlokas*, Swatmarama says that all types of diseases can be eliminated by proper practice of *pranayama*; all types of diseases can be attracted by improper practice of *pranayama*. This fact brings to fore the importance of learning *pranayama* under proper guidance.

Pranayama involves three elements: *purak* (inhalation), *kumbhak* (retention), and *rechak* (exhalation). *Kumbhak* practices are accompanied by *bandhas* with the intention of awakening and raising the *kundalini*.

Swatmarama also emphasizes the invariable connection between *prana* (breathing) and the mind. When one works, the other also works; when one stops, the other also stops. In fact, looking at the breathing pattern of a person, one can infer the his/her state of mind.

Pranayama is considered in our scriptures as '*parama tapa*', i.e., 'the highest form of *tapas* practice'. *Pranayama* purifies all impurities in the body.

When we come to generic kinds of *pranayama*, we speak about *agarbha* (without chanting of mantras or prayers) and *sagarbha* (with chanting of mantras or prayers) *pranayama*.

Swatmarama talks of two types of *kumbhak*: *sabita kumbhak* and *keval kumbhak*. *Sabita kumbhak* refers to *antara kumbhak* (internal retention of breath) and *bahya kumbhak* (external retention of breath). *Keval kumbhak* is the *kumbhak* which can be performed by an adept yogi at will, and for any duration of time without there being any emphasis on inhalation or exhalation prior to the *kumbhak*.

Effects of Pranayama

Pranayama practices have effects on all dimensions of human personality. On the physical side, breathing practices directly affect the respiratory mechanism and the organs involved, and make them healthy and effective. Because oxygen intake is crucial for a healthy body, when breathing improves general health of all body systems improve. *Hatha Pradipika* asserts that proper practice of *pranayama* can eliminate all types of diseases. Also, the *Pancha Pranas* in the body enable all the functions - physical, physiological and mental – to happen in an optimum manner. There is an invariable connection between the mind and breathing. Every state of mind is reflected by a corresponding change in the breathing pattern. Hence, when breathing is controlled (lengthened and made rhythmic) the state of mind is also automatically controlled. *Pranayama* practices bring about a mental state of calmness and peace. The *bandhas* accompanying *pranayama* practices go a long way towards the spiritual dimension by enabling the raising of the *Kundalini*. Thus, *pranayama* practices have physical, physiological, mental and spiritual benefits as their effects.

Generally speaking, *pranayama* practices increase the store of *prana* thereby increasing energy levels and also increase awareness levels.

SUMMARY

- *Hatha* refers to the kind of yoga which bring balance between the sun and the moon, or the *pingala* and *ida* in us.
- *Hatha* practices are designed to align and calm your body, mind, and spirit in preparation for meditation.
- *Hatha Yoga* calls for all concentration in the beginning itself on the practice of postures (*Asanas*) and breath control (*pranayama*) to energize the subtle channels (*nadis*).
- *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyás* and *Sudrás* have the authority to practice *Hatha yoga*.
- The aim of *Hatha Yoga* is to control the body and mind because then only can the spiritual aspirations be fulfilled.
- The philosophy of *Yogic* diet does not believe in calorie count of foods or the amount of vitamins, minerals or proteins we get from the food.
- The *chakras*, which are mainly 7 in number, are connected by a dormant energy channel known as *Sushumna*.
- *Hatha Yoga*'s overall goal is to enhance the spiritual development, which it does by releasing the energy that flows throughout your body and balancing the opposite aspects of your being.

KEYWORDS

Hatha Yoga: It is a scientific system that integrates the various branches of yoga and brings about a harmonious development in the individual.

Ashtanga Yoga: *Ashtanga* means eight limbs or branches, of which *asana* or physical yoga posture is merely one branch, breath or *pranayama* is another.

Yogic Diet: A diet that is wholly conducive to the practice of Yoga and spiritual progress is called *Yogic* diet.

Sattva guna: *Sattva guna* being the principle of illumination, is responsible for knowledge, concentration, awareness, etc.

Rajas Guna: *Rajas guna* being the principle of activity, is responsible for all activities and undertakings of human beings.

Tamas Guna: *Tamas guna* being the principle of inertia, is responsible for laziness and lethargy.

Sattvic Foods: Foods that increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable are considered as *Sattvic* food.

Rajasic Foods: Any food which is stimulating and which goads you towards high per activity is considered as *rajasic* food.

Tamasic Foods: *Tamasic* foods include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, alcohol and other intoxicants including drugs which have the tendency of creating lethargy and laziness in us.

Chakras: It means “the wheel” which is rotating centres of energy symbolized as coloured lotus flowers with different number of petals or *nadis*.

Muladhara Chakra (The Root Chakra): Muladhara *Chakra* or the Root *Chakra*, as its Sanskrit name suggests, works as support to other *chakras*.

Svadhisthana Chakra (The Sacral Chakra): Svadhishtana *Chakra*, also known as the Sacral *Chakra*, or the Spleen *Chakra*, is located just below the navel near the abdomen.

Manipura Chakra (The Solar Plexus): *Manipura Chakra* has been so named because of its radiant lustre which makes it look like a jewel.

Shat Kriyas: *Shat Kriyas* are the *yogic* techniques to cleanse the internal organs.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. Write down the meaning of *Hatha Yoga*.
2. Name the benefits of *asanas* as per *Hatha Pradipika*.
3. Name the different texts of *Hatha Yoga*.
4. What is *yogic* diet referred to?
5. What is *Ghata* in *Ghata Shuddhi*?

Long Questions

1. Discuss the differences between *asanas* and physical exercises.
2. Explain the significance of *shat kriyas*.
3. Explain the significance of *pranayama*.
4. Explain the significance of *bandhas* and *mudras*.

5. Discuss the factors which bring success and failure in *Hatha Yoga*.
6. Discuss the prescribed (*pathya*) and prohibited (*apathyā*) foods in *Hatha Pradipika*.



FURTHER READINGS

Hatha Pradipika – interpretation by various authors

Patanjali Yoga Sutra – interpretation by various authors

The Bhagavad Gita – interpretation by various authors

Health and Hatha Yoga – by Swami Sivananda

Hatha Yoga: Or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Well-being, with Numberous Exercises, etc – by Yogi Ramacharaka

Hatha Pradipika – by Swami Muktibodhananda

Hatha Yoga for All – by Rajeswari Raman

Hatha Yoga: The Hidden Language: Symbols, Secrets & Metaphor – by Swami Sivananda Radha

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO PATANJALA YOGA





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 3.1 Definition, Nature and Aim of Yoga according to Patanjali
 - 3.2 Concept of *Chitta* and *Chitta Bhumis*; *Chitta Vrittis* and *Chitta Vrittinirodhopaya* (*Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*)
 - 3.3 Concept of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*
 - 3.4 *Chitta Vikshepas* (*Antarayas*) and their associates (*Sahabhuvas*)
 - 3.5 Concept of *Chitta Prasadana* and their relevance in mental well-being
 - 3.6 *Kleshas* and their significance in Yoga
 - 3.7 *Ashtanga Yoga* of Patanjali: its purpose, effects, and significance
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss the definition, nature and aim of Yoga according to Patanjali
- Understand the concept of *Chitta* and *Chitta Bhumis*
- Describe *Chitta-vrittis* and *Chitta-vrittinirodhopaya*
- Describe concept of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*
- Explain *Chitta Vikshepas*
- Understand the concept of *Chittaprasadana*
- Discuss significance of *kleshas* in yoga
- Illustrate the purpose, significance and effects of *Ashtanga Yoga*



Introduction

Yoga means union or integration of human personality.

Yoga literally means to yoke, from the root *yuj*, which means to join. It is the same as the absorption in the state of *samadhi*. *Sutra* means thread, and this thread, or multiple threads weave a tapestry of insights and direct experience. *Sutras* form a unique genre of Indian scriptures. “A *sutra* gives maximum knowledge in minimum words.” The core of Patanjali’s teachings lies in the eightfold path of yoga. This path shows the way to live a better life through yoga. In this chapter, you will learn about the definition, nature and aim of yoga according to Patanjali, concept of *Chitta* and *Chitta Bhumis*, and *Chitta-vrittis* and *Chitta-vrittinirodhopaya* (*Abhyasa* and *Vairagya*). You will also learn about the concept of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*, *Chitta Vikshepas* (*Antarayas*) and their associates (*Sahabhuvas*). Lastly, you will be able to understand the concept of *Kleshas* and their significance in Yoga, *Ashtanga Yoga*, of Patanjali: its purpose and effects, and its significance.

3.1 Definition, Nature and Aim of Yoga according to Patanjali

The term ‘yoga’ is derived from the root word ‘*yuj*’ which has two main meanings – union (*yujyati*) and concentration (*samadhan*). In the sense of union, it is understood the world over as the union of the individual soul with the universal soul. This meaning is found neither in Yoga philosophy nor in *Sankhya* philosophy, on which yogic practices are based. Yoga ideally can be understood as concentration. *Yogic* concentration is a quality of the mind wherever the mind goes, or it is the second nature of the mind. To be *yogic* means to be concentrated. This concentration gradually facilitates awareness and leads to pure awareness, which is the goal of Yoga. Incidentally, *Samadhi* in the sense of concentration is the means for reaching its goal, which is the ultimate *anga* of Patanjali’s *Ashtanga* Yoga.

In the sense of union, Yoga can be better understood as integration of the various elements of human personality (body, mind and spirit), leading to a wholesome, harmonious and holistic personality.

Patanjali defines Yoga in his second *sutra* as *yogaha chittaritti nirodaha*, which means, “Yoga is the stoppage of mental modifications”. These modifications of the mind or *chitta* are called as *vrittis*.

Every *vritti* (*kleshta*) generates *samskaras* (deep impressions) which in turn result in *karma*, which again generates *samskaras*. The chain of *vritti-samskara-karma-vritti* is unending, and it keeps a human being bound to life-death-rebirth cycle. Human life is full of sufferings and if one to free oneself from these sufferings, one has to liberate oneself from the chain of life-death-rebirth cycle. Therefore, it is essential to stop the *chitta vrittis*. That is why, Yoga is defined as *chittavritti nirodaha*.

In *Sankhya* philosophy, upon which Yoga is based, the sufferings of human beings arise from ignorance (*avidya*) of one’s true nature. According to *Sankhya*, the essence of human being is *purusa* or consciousness. Due to ignorance, human being falsely identifies with his unreal self, i.e., the *prakritik* self made up of the body-mind-ego-intellect complex. Because of this false identification, whatever happens to the body-mind-ego-intellect complex is appropriated by the human being as happening to himself. For example, when the body grows old, the man says “I’m old”. When the mind is sad, the man says “I’m sad”. Therefore, all the miseries and sufferings of life are because of this false identification. This identification inextricably happens at the level of the mind. So, for this misery to stop, the identification with the mind has to go. The mind comes into picture only when the functions of the mind arise. These functions are the *vrittis* or modifications of the mind. Only when these stop, the mind disappears and there remains no scope for the *purusa* or the consciousness to identify with it. It then gets established in its true nature – *tada drashtu swarupe awasthanam*. Therefore, Patanjali defines Yoga as *yogaha chittaritti nirodaha*, or stoppage of mental modifications.

Simply put, Yoga means controlling the thought waves in the mind, and preventing the mind from wandering.

This definition of yoga has three aspects

1. *Chitta* (the mind, intellect, ego)
2. *Vritti* or the modifications (of the mind)
3. *Nirodhah* or cessation/control (of thoughts in the mind)

Yoga Darshana, one of the six systems of Indian philosophy, is based on this aphorism.



Did You Know?

Speculations surround the origin of Yoga. The *Rig Veda* mentions Yoga as a pre-*Vedic* tradition. Yoga most probably developed around the sixth or fifth century B.C. during the periods of the ascetic and the *brahmana* movements in ancient India.

In trying to provide a discipline/model for achieving this goal, Patanjali propounds the *Ashtanga Yoga* or the *Raja Yoga* (the royal yoga).

Patanjali's Yoga can be considered as *Raja* or supreme Yoga because almost all other systems of Yoga (*Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Karma*, *Hatha*, *Mantra*, etc.) have their fundamental tenets incorporated in very subtle ways, in seed form in Patanjali's Yoga. Though, the *Hatha Yoga* emphasizes the physical aspects, and the *Ashtanga Yoga* emphasizes the mental aspects, both lead to the same goal which is self realization.

The western term 'mind' refers to *chitta* in Yoga when *chitta* is used in a comprehensive sense to include *manas* (synthesizing faculty), *buddhi* (decision-making faculty and store house of *samskaras*) and *ahamkar* (ego).



Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is a Hindu tradition. Yoga is a technology that any person who is willing can make use of.

Aim of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga

The aim or ultimate goal of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* is *Kaivalya*, a state wherein man attains freedom from miseries and sufferings of life forever. Patanjali's Yoga mainly deals with mind management to achieve concentration. This concentration brings awareness, finally leading to a state of pure awareness (*kaivalya*). This state

of *kaivalya* is a state wherein all the miseries and sufferings of human life stop once for all.

In the process of reaching the state of *kaivalya*, the Yoga practices lead to several benefits in the empirical world – physical and mental health being the most important of them.

Asanas or physical postures form one of the eight limbs of *Ashtanga Yoga*, whose purpose is to control the mind or *Chittavrittinirodah*. Patanjali's Yoga system lays more stress on the mind than on physical postures, needed mainly to maintain stability in the body so that the practitioner is able to sit in meditation for a long period of time.

One of the principal aims of yoga is the quietening of the mind (*chitta*). During some forms of meditation we can witness how thoughts and memories arise from the depths of our *chitta* and then subside into it. This understanding would help us gain control over our thought process and attain inner calm.



Caution

Remember, Yoga is not a competitive sport. It is a good physical, mental and emotional regimen, done within the limits of what your body and minds are capable of taking on any specific day.

3.2 Concept of Chitta and Chitta Bhumi; Chitta Vrittis and Chitta Vrittinirodhopaya (Abhyasa and Vairagya)

The *Upanishads* talk about four parts of the *antahkarana*, namely *chitta* (storehouse of *samskaras*), *buddhi* (decision-making faculty), *ahamkar* (the ego), and *manas* (the synthesizing faculty). In *Sankhya* philosophy, the *antahkarana* comprises only *buddhi*, *ahamkar* and *manas*. It does

not make any mention of *chitta*. Here, *buddhi* may be additionally considered as the storehouse of *Karma* and *samskara* (*Karmasheya*). In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, there is no mention of *buddhi*. Therefore, we may consider *chitta* of Patanjali to be the same as *buddhi* of *Sankhya* philosophy. The *chitta* in Patanjali is used a number of times to denote what the Western psychology denotes as 'mind'. When the *chitta* is thus considered as 'mind', the *chitta* is used in a comprehensive sense to include the functions of *buddhi*, *ahamkar* and *manas*. *Chitta* can be better understood as mind-stuff or mind-field.

Chitta, the mind is *Trigunātmaka*, three-qualified, i.e., *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*. Depending upon the domination of the *chitta* by these *gunas*, we can say that there are five states of the *chitta* *Kshipta* (disturbed), *mudha* (dull), *vikshipta* (distracted), *ekagra* (one-pointed), *nirodhah* (mastered).

1. **Kshiptam:** '*rajasā vishayaesvaraevavrttimat*' is the state of mind the called '*kshiptam*' which is always involved in those things that cause agitation and anxiety when provoked by the *Rajas* quality.
2. **Mudham:** '*tamasā nigrādivrttimat*' the state of mind is called '*moodham*' which is always involved in those things that are caused to stupid and moron, by the provocation of *tamas* quality.
3. **Vikshiptam:** '*kshitādvisishtam vikshiptam, satvādhikyaena samādadhadapi chittam Rajomātrayāntarāntarā vishayāntaravarvrttimad*' This state of mind is a little better than the state of *kshiptam* etc. In this state one can be immersed in *samādhi* (concentration) for sometime, but by the cause of battering of the *rajoguna*, emotional feelings, the mind darts along for other things. This state of mind is called '*vikshipta*'.
4. **Ekāgram:** *aekasminnaera vishayaegram Sikhā yasya chittadeepasyaetyaekāgram,*

Visuddhasattratayaikasminnaera vishayae Vakshyaānāradheekrtakālaparyantamachamchalam nirātasthadeeparvat, Tathā cha kshiptāditrayaepikimchidaikāgrya Sattvaepi tatra nātiprasamgah, In this state of mind the *satvika* *vritti*, the mood of entity remains engaged with any one thing. *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna* are in a suppressed state here. Hence, that state of mind is called '*ekāgrabhumi*', in which, the mood heads towards any one subject.

5. **Niruddham:** *niruddham cha niruddhasakalavrttikam samskāramātrasaeshamityarthab*. In this state, *satvik* moods along with the *tamas* and *rajas* ones are obstructed. This obstruction keeps lying there, which is called *niruddha bhumi*.

The first three levels of *chitta* are not considered in the category of yoga. But *ekāgra* and *niruddha* are considered under yoga category because only by passing through them states the state of *samādhi* can be attained.

Chitta is known as *antahkarana catustaya*, the four inner entities, viz., *Manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *Ahamkāra*. When all kinds of *samskārás*, like *prārabdhasamskārás*, which are the accumulated impressions of the so many previous births, and *rāsanā samskār*, etc., are restrained, then *nirodhā samskār* remains in *chitta*, only.

Notes

Chitta is the memory bank, which stores impressions and experiences, and while it can be very useful, *Chitta* can also cause difficulties if its functioning is not coordinated with the others.

Chitta Bhumis

The theory of *chitta bhumi*s originates from Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and is elaborated upon by sage Vyasa in his commentary on the said *Yoga Sutras*. *Chitta Bhumi* refers to the condition or a state of mind when it is in concentration. This

aspect defines itself differently in different people.

Sage Vyasa speaks about five *Chitta Bhumi*s or states of *Chitta* as follows:

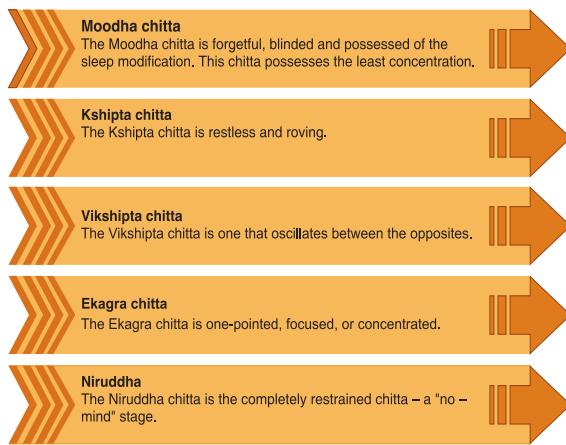


Fig. 3.1: Chitta Bhumi or Grounds of Chitta



Did You Know?

In the stage of *Kshipta*, the distracted mind, being overpowered by *Rajas*, is extremely unsteady, unable to concentrate or decide, and is the source of pain.

Chitta-Vrittis and Chitta-Vrittinirodhopaya

The modifications of the mind, i.e., *chitta vrittis*, are divided into five parts.

Chittavrittayah pancatayyah klishtaklishtah, (*yogadarsana* 1.5.) *chitta*; Patanjali says the five vrittis are either *kleshta*, i.e., accompanied by *kleshas*/ painful or *akleshta*, i.e., not accompanied by *kleshas*/not painful.

'*Pramāṇāvipyaryayavikalpanidrāsmatayah'* (*yogadarsana* 1.6) The five varieties of thought patterns (*vrittis*) are:

1. Direct cognition (*pramana*),
2. Wrong perception (*viparyaya*),

3. Fantasy or imagination (*vikalpa*),
4. The object of voidness that is deep sleep (*nidra*), and
5. Recollection or memory (*smriti*).

These *vrittis*, the moods, are named as painful and not painful. *Klishtavrittis* generate sufferings and they generate *Karma samskārás*. The action of *virodhini* (anti) *vrittis* of *vivekakhyāti*, etc., qualities are called *aklishta vrittis*.

The *Klishtavrittis* are painful because they generate *samskaras*, which keep man bound in the chain of life-death-rebirth cycle. These *kleshas* which accompany the *vrittis* are five in number, viz., *avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha*, and *abhinivesha*.

Vrittis are our mental responses to external stimuli. The mental responses are modifications in the form of waves. The stimuli comes from attractions, distractions, pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, etc. in the universe around us. The ego sense identifies with these thought waves. If the thought waves are pleasant, the ego sense says, 'I am happy.' If the thought waves are not pleasant, the ego sense says, 'I am unhappy.' This wrong identification of the ego sense with the 'I' (or the *purusa* or the indweller) is the cause of all miseries.

The *purusa* cannot be affected by thought waves. It is eternal, pure, enlightened and free.

As long as man's thought waves and ego identify with each other, man will never be able to know his real Self. Enlightenment is possible only if the thought waves are brought under control so that the ego sense falsely stops identifying with the 'I' altogether.

Chitta- Vrittinirodhopaya

Abhyasa (Repeated Practice) (1.13 and 1.14) and *Vairagya* (1.15 and 1.16) (Dispassion) are the means to stop the modifications of the mind. An integrated approach of practicing social and personal disciplines, healthy diet, *pranyama*, *asana*,

meditation, regularly and with an attitude of non-dependence learning to let go the attachments and aversions, helps to bring in the tranquility within. The practice should be for a long time, without interruption, with sincerity and firmly rooted.

sah tu dirgha kala nairantara satkara aseritah dridha bhumih (1.14)

3.3 Concept of Ishwara and Ishwara Pranidhana

Ishwara in theistic Indian philosophies mainly stands for God who performs the functions of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. The presence of such *Ishwara* makes the school of thought or philosophy religious. The concept of such a God is accompanied by forms of worship, rites and rituals, mythological stories, do's and dont's, and religious organization. None of the above are prevalent in Yoga of Patanjali *Yoga Sutras*. Hence, it is necessary to understand the concepts of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana* (complete surrender to *Ishwara*) in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

Patanjali defines *Ishwara* as a '*purusa vishesha*', a special kind of *purusa* (pure consciousness) – one who was never embodied, is not embodied, and who will never be embodied. In *Ishwara*, the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed. *Ishwara* is referred to as the teacher of all ancient teachers because *Ishwara* is unconditioned by time. The designator of this *Ishwara* is *Pranava* or *AUM*. Patanjali says that the japa of *AUM* should be performed with full involvement of the being and with full recognition of its significance. Such a japa will result in elimination of all obstacles in the path of Yoga and lead towards consciousness turning upon itself, i.e., leading to pure awareness. Obviously, in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, there is no description of any forms of worship or rites and rituals. Hence, it is essential to understand that

Ishwara in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is not a religious God, and yoga is not a religion.

Ishwara Pranidhana

Ishwara Pranidhana refers to complete surrender to *Ishwara*. This *Ishwara Pranidhana* is prescribed as a technique leading to the ultimate goal of kaivalya for all the three types of adherents (*adhama*, *madhyama* and *uttama adhikarins*). *Ishwara Pranidhana* is suggested as an optional technique to *abhyasa* and *vairagya*; it is a part of Patanjali's *Kriya Yoga* (*tapa*, *swadhyay* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*); it is one of the *niyamas* (*shaucha*, *santosha*, *tapa*, *swadhyay*, *Ishwara Pranidhana*).

Therefore, Patanjali gives tremendous importance to *Ishwara Pranidhana*. In this *Pranidhana* may be emphasized more. Surrendering oneself means surrendering one's ego, which is the most important hurdle in the path of Yoga.

Patanjali says *Ishwara Pranidhana* can lead to perfection in the state of *Samadhi*.

3.4 Chitta Vikshepas (Antarayas) and their Associates (Sahabhuvas)

Chitta-Vikshepas refer to distractions of the mind. Because Yoga can be considered as 'concentration', distractions of the mind can be considered as obstacles in the path of Yoga. Patanjali gives the term *antaraya* as distractions/obstacles in the path of Yoga.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1:30 vyadi styan samshaya pramada alasya avirati bhranti-darshana alabdha-bhumikatva anavarasthitava Chitta -vikshepa te anrarayah

Patanjali names nine obstacles (*antarayas*) which are as follows:

1. *Vyadhi* – physical diseases

2. ***Styan*** – mental languor (lethargy) or listlessness leading to lack of interest in *sadhana*
3. ***Samshaya*** – doubt or suspicion
4. ***Pramada*** – heedlessness or misplaced priorities
5. ***Alasya*** – physical laziness
6. ***Avirati*** – stubborn attachment to sense objects
7. ***Bhranti darshana*** – illusion or delusion or misunderstanding or wrong understanding
8. ***Alabdha bhumikatva*** – non-attainment of a firm ground
9. ***Anvastitatva*** – instability of mind

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* 1:31 *dubkha daurmanasya angam- ejayatva shvasa prashvasah Vikshepa sahabhuva*

As already mentioned, Patanjali prescribes *pranava japa* for getting rid of these obstacles. Patanjali also says that these antarayas are invariably accompanied by some signs and symptoms (*vikshepa sahabhuwas*). These accompaniments are as follows:

1. *Dukha* – unhappiness
2. *Daur manasya* – despair or bad state of mind
3. *Angamejayatva* – tremors in the body
4. *Shvas-prashvas* – erratic breathing pattern

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* 1:32 *tat pratisedha artham eka tattva abhyasah*

In order to deal with these accompaniments, Patanjali prescribes *ektattva abhyasa*, i.e., practice of one principle. This principle in very general terms can be understood as the *Ashtangas* of Patanjali's Yoga.

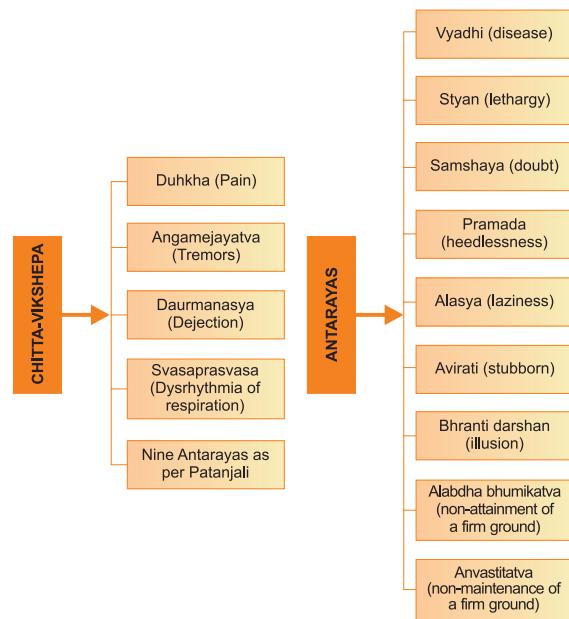


Fig. 3.2: Two Parts of *Chitta - Vikshepa*

3.5 Concept of Chitta Prasadana and their relevance in mental well-being

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* 1:33 *Maitreekarunāmudito-paekshānām sukhaduhkhapunyāpunyavishayānām bhāvanātāschittaprasādanam.*

Chitta Prasadana is not technique it is achievement of *maitri* and *karuna* prescribed by Patanjali for bringing about peace and calmness, serenity and tranquility, clarity, etc., of the mind. This technique involves taking four different approaches/attitudes towards four different types of people or qualities of people. Patanjali says develop friendship with happiness or happy people; develop compassion towards unhappiness or those who are suffering; take delight or joy towards virtues or virtuous people; be equanimous towards vices or people exhibiting negative qualities.

In our day to day life, the mind becomes disturbed because we invariably take exactly the opposite approach to what has been prescribed by Patanjali. For example, we shy away from friendship with people who are happier than us; we show friendliness rather than compassion towards those who are suffering; we start comparing ourselves with or become jealous of people who are endowed with virtues or good qualities; and we become emotionally disturbed when facing people who have negative qualities. Incidentally, this technique of *Chitta Prasadana* with its four approaches can be advantageously applied towards even the same individual with whom we are living when he/she goes through the four states: happiness, unhappiness, virtuous and vicious.

In addition to the above *Chitta Prasadana* technique, Patanjali also prescribes another *Chitta Prasadana* technique, wherein he says, “*prachbardana vidharanabhyam va pranasya*” – “Or, the mind becomes *Prasadana* when there is retention after forceful expulsion of breath”. This is the *Sutra* in which Patanjali for the first time in his *Sutras* brings about the connection between breath and mind. Exhalation and external retention are always relaxing and soothing.

3.6 Kleshas and their significance in Yoga

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* II-3 *Avidyásmitárāgadraeshábhinivaesâh pancaklaesâh*

Avidya, Asmita, Râga, Dvaesha, Abhinivaesa are the *panchakleshas*.

The word *klesha* is derived from the root word *klîsh*, which means pain. Therefore, *kleshas* are what generate pain in our experiences.

Kleshas can be understood as ‘inborn mental afflictions’. Man is born with *kleshas*; *kleshas* are mental in nature; man is afflicted by them.

Patanjali says there are five such *kleshas* as given in the *Sutra* above. Of these five, *avidya* or ignorance of our real nature can be considered as the mother *klesha*. *Avidya* is the ground/source of the other four *kleshas*. *Asmita* refers to ‘I-amness’ or ego, *raga* refers to ‘attachment or liking’, *dvesha* refers to ‘aversion or dislike’, and *abhinivesha* refers to ‘clinging to life or fear of death’. These *kleshas* invariably accompany our *vrittis* (mental modifications/experiences), thereby generating pain for us. If the *vrittis* are *aklishta* or not accompanied by *kleshas*, then they do not entangle us in the vicious cycle of *vrittis-samskaras-karma-vrittis-samskaras*.

By saying that *kleshas* are mental in nature, we understand that they are the natural tendencies we are born with.

Avidya is taking as eternal, pure, happiness and the Self that is non-eternal, impure, unhappiness and non-Self, respectively. Thus, *avidya* is false knowledge or contrary knowledge rather than ignorance in the sense of absence of knowledge.

Raga is attachment towards that which produces pleasure.

Dvesha is aversion towards that which produces pain.

Abhinivesha is clinging to life or fear of death which afflicts even the wise.

Patanjali says when the root of *kleshas* is present, the storehouse of our karmas fructifies into future lives. Also, due to the presence of these *kleshas*, the *karma samskaras* give rise to birth in specific life-forms, life-span and our bundle of pleasure and pain in that life.

It is not our experiences per se which are problematic. They become problematic only because of the presence of *kleshas*.

These *kleshas* manifest in human beings in four degrees: *prasupta* (dormant), *tanu* (weak

or enfeebled), *vibhina* (oscillating), and *udara* (abundant).

Patanjali prescribes the practice of *Kriya Yoga* (*tapa* – austerities, *swadhyay* – Self-study, and *Ishwara Pranidhana* – surrender to *Ishwara*) for making the *kleshas tanu* (weak or enfeebled) in us from an *udara* or *vicchina* state. He then prescribes *dhyana* or meditation and *pratiprasava* or involution for finally getting rid of the *kleshas*.

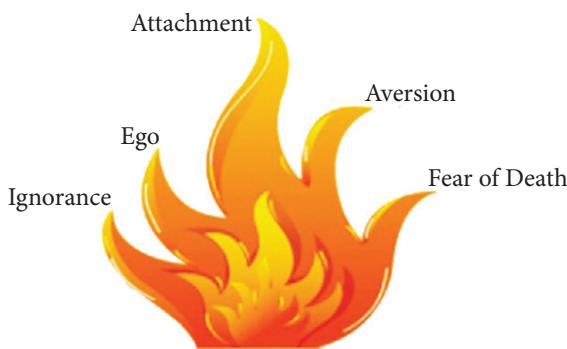


Fig. 3.3: Five Kinds of *Kleshas*



Example

When the water in a pot is disturbed, the moving water distorts any reflected object. Similarly, when the calm waters of a man's mind are stirred by likes and dislikes, he is unable to solve his problems and to make wise decisions.

3.7 Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali: its Purpose, Effects, and Significance

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* II:29

Yamaniyamásanápránâyá-mapratyâhárâdhárânanâdhyânaś amâdhayoshtâvamgani.

Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* propounds yoga with eight limbs, i.e., *Ashtanga Yoga*. These eight limbs as given in the above *Sutra* are as follows:

1. **Yamas:** *Yamas* refer to the observances and restraints that regulate our interaction with others. Hence, they take care of our social equation. The five *yamas* given by Patanjali are as follows:
 - i. *Ahimsa* (non-violence in thought, word and deed),
 - ii. *Satya* (truthfulness),
 - iii. *Asteya* (non-stealing of material as well as non-material things),
 - iv. *Brahmacharya* – in a very narrow context, this is understood as celibacy or sexual abstinence. However, it can be understood as moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures. Etymologically, it refers to walking on the path of Truth.
 - v. *Aparigraha* – non-possessiveness or non-hoarding.
2. **Niyamas:** *Niyamas* refer to observances and restraints which govern an individual's personal life. Therefore, they can be said to govern the personal equation. These *niyamas* are as follows:
 - i. *Shaucha* (physical and mental purity/ hygiene)
 - ii. *Santosha* (contentment – an ever-present happy state of mind),
 - iii. *Tapa* (austerities, penances, vows, etc.),
 - iv. *Swadhyay* – Self-study. This may comprise study of scriptures, following the Guru's dictates, listening to discourses of Saints/ wise people, *satsang* (company of truth or like-minded people), etc.
 - v. *Ishwara Pranidhana* (complete surrender to *Ishwara*).
3. **Asanas:** Patanjali devotes only three *Sutras* for *asanas* out of his 195 *Sutras*! He defines *asana* as '*sthira sukham asanam*' – '*asana* is a posture which is stable and comfortable'. Obviously,

Patanjali's emphasis is on *asanas* which should be stable and comfortable for carrying on meditation undisturbed for a decent period of time. As regards methodology of doing *asanas*, Patanjali says '*prayatna shaitilya ananta samapattibhyam*' – 'in the performance of *asanas*, efforts have to progressively reduce and the mind should be attuned to the concept of infinity'. In other words, *asana* performance should be graceful and mind should be concentrated. As regards the effects of *asanas*, Patanjali says, '*tataha dvandva anabhighata*' – 'from that (*asanas*) there is no assailment from conflicts'. In other words, the effect of *asanas* according to Patanjali is mental in nature, i.e., freedom from all kinds of conflicts.

4. ***Pranayama:*** The orientation of *pranayama* in Patanjali is more towards inhalation and exhalation rather than towards retention as is done in *Hatha Yoga*. Patanjali says that *pranayama* happens when there is a break in the pace between inhalation and exhalation. Accordingly, he talks about four types of *pranayama* – modification of inhalation, modification of exhalation, the stoppage of breath as a modification, and the fourth which transcends the subject matter of inhalation and exhalation. According to Patanjali, *pranayama* practices make the mind fit for *dharana*. Also, with *pranayama* practices, the shroud of impurities covering the spark of reality in us diminishes gradually to the point of disappearance.
5. ***Pratyahara:*** *Pratyahara* refers to the withdrawal of sense organs from their respective objects, like the tortoise withdrawing its limbs into the safety of its shell. *Pratyahara* forms the bridge between the first four limbs (*Bahiranga Yoga*) and the last three limbs (*Antaranga Yoga*). In other words, *pratyahara* marks the transition

of the mind from its extrovertedness to inward-going process.

6. ***Dharana:*** Patanjali defines *dharana* as '*desh bandha chittasya dharana*' – 'confinement of the *chitta* to one desh (place or object) is *dharana*'. *Dharana* means concentration. This is the first stage of meditation in Patanjali's Yoga. In an earlier *Sutra*, Patanjali says that mediation can be done on any object. The only condition is that the meditator should be favourably disposed towards the object of meditation, or like the object.
7. ***Dhyana:*** *Dhyana* means meditation. Patanjali defines *dhyana* as '*tattra pratyaya ektanta dhyanam*' – 'therein (in concentration) when there is stretchedness of only one experience it is *dhyana*'. In *dharana* or concentration, all the efforts are directed towards keeping the distractions away. When these efforts succeed and there are no distractions, that state of mind becomes the state of *dhyana*.
8. ***Samadhi:*** *Samadhi* refers to spiritual absorption. Patanjali defines *Samadhi* as '*tat eva artha matra nirbharam swaroopa shoonyam iva samadhibhi*' – 'that itself is Samadhi when the self-nature is as if not there and the object shines forth or reveals itself'. In both *dharana* and *dhyana*, there are three elements – the meditator, the object meditated upon, and the process of meditation. In the state of *Samadhi*, the meditator and the process of meditation as if disappear and only the object of meditation shines forth. Patanjali explicitly mentions three types of *samadhis*, namely *Sabeeja Samadhi*, *Nirbeeja Samadhi*, and *Dharma Megha Samadhi*. It is in the last named *Samadhi* that *kaivalya* happens, wherein *chitta vriuti nirodha* finally takes place.

The three *Angas* – *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* – together comprise meditation in Patanjali's Yoga and when they happen together, it is referred to

as *samyama* by Patanjali. It is this *samyama* which leads to the various *siddhis/vibhutis* (supernatural accomplishments) in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

The practice of *Ashtanga Yoga*, according to Patanjali, when done with fervour and determination, leads to the diminution of impurities to the extent of disappearance the illumination of knowledge develops to the point of *viveka khyati* (enlightened discrimination between *purusa* and *prakriti*).



SUMMARY

- Yoga is “*ChittaVritti Nirodhah*”, which means “yoga is the removal of the fluctuations of the mind”. *Chitta* is mind, *Vrittis* are thought impulses, *Nirodah* is removal.
- Yoga or Concentration is the confinement of the mind to one object.
- Patanjali's Yoga can be considered as Raja or supreme Yoga because almost all other systems of Yoga (*Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, Hatha, Mantra*, etc.) have their fundamental tenets incorporated in very subtle ways, in seed form in Patanjali's Yoga.
- One of the principal aims of yoga is the quietening of the mind.
- Chitta is one of the four aspects of the human mind, the other three being *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (synthesizing faculty) and *ahamkar* (ego principle).
- *Íśvarapra nidhana* is a Sanskrit compound word composed of two words *íśvara* and *pranidhāna*. *Íśvara* (sometimes spelled *Ishvara*) means “Lord.”
- The *Vikshepa* are accompanied by manifest symptoms, manifest accompaniments of their existence, such as suffering, depression, tremors and irregular respiration.

- *Kleshas* is a term from Indian philosophy and yoga, meaning a “poison”.
- *Ashtanga Yoga* literally means “eight-limbed yoga,” as outlined by the sage Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*.



KEYWORDS

Ashtanga Yoga: It literally means “eight-limbed yoga,” as outlined by the sage Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*.

Chitta Bhumi: It refers to the condition or state of mind in its aspect of concentration.

Chitta Vritti: It is a term that practically everybody is familiar with – if not in theory, definitely in practice.

Chitta: It is the sub-conscious mind.

Chitta-Vikshepa: It means distractions of the mind (*Chitta* = mind field; *Vikshepa* = distractions, diversions).

Ishvara: Patangali does not consider *Ishvara* as a personal God. He considers 'NADA' or sound as the *Ishvara*.

Ishwara Pranidhana: *Ishwara Pranidhana* refers to complete surrender to *Ishwara*.

Kleshas: *Kleshas* can be understood as ‘inborn mental afflictions’.

Nirodhah: It is made up of the roots “*ni*” and “*rud*.” *Ni* means “under” and *rud* means to “restrict or suppress”. Taken together however, they can mean “a process of ending, elimination, cessation, dissolution, etc.”

Vrittis: These are our mental responses to the stimuli we receive from the universe around us with all its myriad attractions, distractions, pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, etc.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. What is the definition of yoga in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*?
2. Name the *Ashtangas* of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.
3. Write down the five *yamas* and *niyamas* in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.
4. Name the five *kleshas* in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.
5. What are the five *Chitta Bhumi*s?
6. Name the four states of *kleshas*.
7. What are the different types of *Samadhi*?
8. Name the nine *antarayas* and four *vikshepa sahabhavas*.

Long Questions

1. Discuss the definition of Yoga in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.
2. Discuss the theory of *kleshas*.
3. Describe meditation in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.
4. Describe the concepts of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*.
5. Interpret the technique of *Chitta Prasadana* in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

FURTHER READINGS

The complete illustrated book of Yoga- Swami Vishnudevananda

Light on Yoga – Shri BKS Iyengar

Light on Pranayama - Shri BKS Iyengar

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras - interpretation by various authors

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN SYSTEMS, YOGA AND HEALTH





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 4.1 The Nine Systems of the Human Body
 - 4.2 Functions of different systems of the human body
 - 4.3 Introduction to Sensory Organs
 - 4.4 Neuromuscular Co-ordination of sensory organs
 - 4.5 Basic Understanding of Exercise Physiology
 - 4.6 Homeostasis
 - 4.7 The Benefits of various Asanas on different parts of the Human Body
 - 4.8 Limitations and Contra-indications of specific Yoga practices
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss the nine systems of human body and their functions
- Discuss sensory organs and neuromuscular coordination of sensory organs
- Define exercise physiology and homeostasis
- Develop various asanas and their benefits
- Understand the limitations and contraindications of yoga practices



Introduction

A hale and hearty life is often taken into account as a by-product of practising the various yogic techniques, as it has been found that the yoga practitioners are a lot healthier and have better skills to deal with the stressors than a normal individual. Yoga is practised and accepted all over the world. Therefore, it can be considered as a health-promoting tool in society. Both healthy individuals as well as the patients should take professional medical help before initiating regarding Yoga. Yoga is often called the experimental science. If the information about yoga brings about an interest in the medical professionals and if they practise it, it could open up new paths in bringing our traditional culture of yoga and the present objective knowledge of modern medical science together.

4.1 The Nine Systems of the Human Body

With the passage of time and scientific development, the view regarding the structure and function of the body became more objective and more analytical in nature. As per the modern view, human body shows a remarkable organizational unity, which helps in carrying out all its activities in a coordinated and integrated manner. For the specific function there are different types of cells, evolved specially to carry out that function. These cells when form separate specialised group, it is known as tissue. Different tissues come together to form various organs, and different organs come together to form various systems of the body. The functioning of all these systems collectively contributes in what is called body function. Thus it is essential to realise that the body function is ultimately a collective function of each and every cell which constitutes the body. The proper functioning of each individual cell, therefore, is the most important factor for the survival of the body as a whole.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

- Yoga therapy can help to cure diseases.
- Yoga is actually a preventive discipline but it does have therapeutic effects in some cases of diseases. It is not a panacea for all ailments.

There are essentially nine systems that are responsible for structure and function in the human body. The skeletal system and the muscular system are the principal systems responsible for the movement. The nervous system and endocrine system are principally involved in the organisation and control of the whole body. The respiratory system and circulatory system are responsible for making the oxygen and nutrients available for the whole body. The digestive system and excretory

system are responsible for making the nutrients available for the body as well as for expelling out the unwanted waste matter from the body. Ultimately, the reproductive system concerns itself with the propagation of the species.

4.2 Functions of different systems of the human body

The human body is composed of interactive systems. Most organs in the body are necessary, however a few like tonsils, are not. There are specific functions for each of the organs in the systems, but they cannot operate by themselves.

1. **Skeletal System:** The skeletal system is made up of bones, ligaments and tendons. It shapes the body and protects organs. The skeletal system works with the muscular system to help the body move. Marrow, which is soft, fatty tissue that produces red blood cells, many white blood cells, and other immune system cells, is found inside bones.
2. **Muscular System:** The muscular system is made up of tissues that work with the skeletal system to control movement of the body. Some muscles—like the ones in your arms and legs—are voluntary, meaning that you decide when to move them. Other muscles, like the ones in your stomach, heart, intestines and other organs, are involuntary. This means that they are controlled automatically by the nervous system and hormones—you often do not even realize they are at work. The body is made up of three types of muscle tissues: skeletal, smooth and cardiac. Each of these has the ability to contract and expand, which allows the body to move and function.
 - Skeletal muscles help the body move.
 - Smooth muscles, which are involuntary, are located inside organs, such as the stomach and intestines.

- Cardiac muscle is found only in the heart.
Its motion is involuntary.
3. **Nervous System:** One of the most important systems in your body is the nervous system which is made up of the brain, the spinal cord, and nerves. It works as your body's control system. It sends, receives, and processes nerve impulses throughout the body. These nerve impulses tell your muscles and organs what to do and how to respond to the environment. There are three parts of your nervous system that work together: the central nervous system, the peripheral nervous system, and the autonomic nervous system. The central nervous system consists of the brain and spinal cord. It sends out nerve impulses and analyses information from the sense organs, which tells your brain about things you see, hear, smell, taste and feel. The peripheral nervous system includes the craniospinal nerves that branch off from the brain and the spinal cord. It carries the nerve impulses from the central nervous system to the muscles and glands. The autonomic nervous system regulates involuntary action, such as heart beat and digestion.
4. **Endocrine System:** The endocrine system is made up of a group of glands that produce the body's long term responsive messengers, or hormones. Hormones are chemicals that control body functions, such as metabolism, growth, and sexual development. The glands, which include the pituitary gland, thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, adrenal glands, thymus gland, pineal body, pancreas, ovaries, and testes, release hormones directly into the bloodstream, which transports the hormones to organs and tissues throughout the body.
5. **Respiratory System:** The respiratory system brings oxygen into the body and removes carbon dioxide. It includes the nose, trachea, and lungs. When you breathe in, air enters your nose or mouth and goes down a long tube called the trachea. The trachea branches into two primary bronchi, which go to the lungs. The primary bronchi branch off into even smaller bronchial tubes, or bronchioles. The bronchioles end in the alveoli, or air sacs. Oxygen follows this path and passes through the walls of the air sacs and blood vessels and enters the blood stream. At the same time, carbon dioxide passes from blood vessels to air sacs of the lungs and is exhaled.
6. **Circulatory System:** The circulatory system (also known as cardiac system) is the transport system of our body. It is made up of a group of organs that transport blood throughout the body. The heart pumps blood and the arteries and the veins transport it. Oxygen-rich blood leaves the left side of the heart and enters the biggest artery, called the aorta. The aorta branches into smaller arteries, which then branch into even smaller vessels and travel all over the body. When blood enters the smallest blood vessels, which are called capillaries, and are found in body tissues, it gives nutrients and oxygen to the cells and takes in carbon dioxide, water, and waste. The blood, which no longer contains oxygen and nutrients, goes back to the heart through veins (with carbon di-oxide). Veins carry waste products away from cells and bring blood back to the heart, which pumps it to the lungs to pick up oxygen and eliminate waste carbon dioxide.
7. **Digestive System:** The digestive system is made up of organs that break down the components of food (proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, and fats) into their simplest form, which the body needs for energy, growth and repair. After food is chewed and swallowed, it goes down the oesophagus and enters the stomach, where it is further broken down by powerful stomach acids. From the stomach the food

travels into the small intestine. This is where food is broken down into nutrients that can enter the bloodstream through tiny hair-like projections. The excess food that the body doesn't need or can't digest is turned into waste and is eliminated from the body.



Swallowing is an important part of eating and drinking. If the process fails and the material (such as food, drink, or medicine) goes through the trachea, choking or pulmonary aspiration can occur.

8. Excretory System: The Excretory system is responsible for the elimination of wastes produced by homeostasis. There are several parts of the body that are involved in this process, such as sweat glands, liver, lungs and the kidney system. Every human has two kidneys. Each kidney is made up of three sections: the renal cortex, the renal medulla and the renal pelvis. The blood arrives at the

kidney via the renal artery, which splits into many afferent arterioles. These arterioles go to the Bowman's Capsules of nephrons, where the wastes are taken out of the blood by pressure filtration. Peritubular capillaries also surround the nephron so substances can be taken in and out of the blood. The renal cortex is the outer layer of the kidney and the medulla is the inner layer of the kidney. The renal pelvis takes urine away from the kidney via the ureter. Both of the ureters lead the urine into the body's only urinary bladder, which expands and sends nerve impulses when full. From there, urine is expelled through the urethra and out of the body.

9. Reproductive System: The reproductive system allows humans to produce children. Sperm from the male fertilizes the female's egg, or ovum, in the fallopian tube. The fertilized egg travels from the fallopian tube to the uterus, where the foetus develops over a period of nine months

Systems	Organs	Functions
Skeletal and Muscular	Bones, muscles	Protection and movement
Nervous	Brain, nerves, skin, eyes, tongue, nose, ears, spinal cord	Control over bodily functions and reacts to the stimuli
Endocrine	Pituitary gland, adrenal gland, thyroid gland	Production of hormones and body regulation
Respiratory	Lungs, bronchi, pharynx, trachea, bronchial tubes, nasal passages and diaphragm	Breaths in oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide from the body
Circulatory System	Blood, blood vessels, heart, lymph	Transportation of nutrients, metabolic wastes, water, salts, and fights diseased cells
Digestive	Stomach, liver, tongue, pancreas, intestine, oesophagus	Breaks down and absorbs food for use as energy
Excretory	Kidneys, bladder, ureters, skin	Controls water and salt balance
Reproductive System	For Females: Uterus (womb), Fallopian (uterine) tubes, Ovaries. For Males: The testicles (testes), Epididymis, Vas deferens.	Allows humans to produce children.

Table 4.1: Body System, Organs and their Functions

4.3 Introduction to Sensory Organs

Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC) is credited with the traditional classification of the five sense organs:

sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. In order to define what is "extra sensory" we need to define what is "sensory". Each of the 5 senses consists of organs with specialized cellular structures that have receptors for specific stimuli. These cells

have links to the nervous system and thus to the brain. Sensing is done at primitive levels in the cells and integrated into sensations in the nervous system. Sight is probably the most developed sense in humans, followed closely by hearing.

Sensory Organ: A bodily structure that receives a stimulus and is affected in such a manner as to initiate excitation of associated sensory nerve fibres which convey specific impulses to the central nervous system where they are interpreted as corresponding sensations.

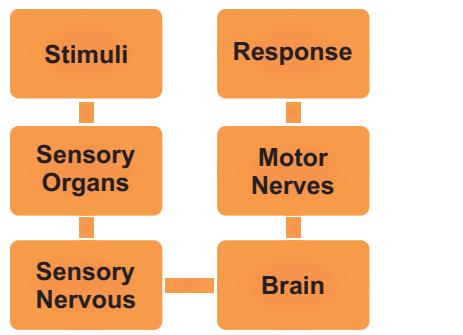


Fig. 4.1: Stimuli – Response Cycle

Eye (Sight, Stimuli: Light)

The eye is the organ of vision. It has a complex structure consisting of a transparent lens that focuses light on the retina. The retina is covered with two basic types of light-sensitive cells—rods and cones.

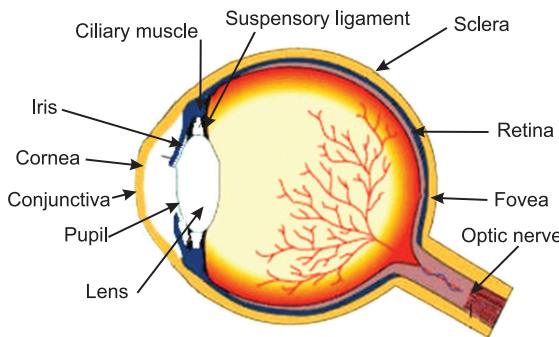


Fig. 4.2: Structure of an Eye

The cone cells are sensitive to colour and are located in the part of the retina called the fovea, where the light is focused by the lens. The rod cells are not sensitive to colour, but have greater sensitivity to light than the cone cells. These cells are located around the fovea and are responsible for peripheral vision and night vision. The eye is connected to the brain through the optic nerve. The point of this connection is called the “blind spot” because it is insensitive to light. Experiments have shown that the back of the brain maps the visual input from the eyes.

The brain combines the input of our two eyes into a single three-dimensional image. In addition, even though the image on the retina is upside-down because of the focusing action of the lens, the brain compensates and provides the right-side-up perception. Experiments have been done with subjects fitted with prisms that invert the images. The subjects go through an initial period of great confusion, but subsequently they perceive the images as right side up.

The range of perception of the eye is phenomenal. In the dark, a substance produced by the rod cells increases the sensitivity of the eye so that it is possible to detect very dim light. In strong light, the iris contracts reducing the size of the aperture that admits light into the eye and a protective obscure substance reduces the exposure of the light-sensitive cells. The spectrum of light to which the eye is sensitive varies from the red to the violet. Lower electromagnetic frequencies in the infrared are sensed as heat, but cannot be seen. Higher frequencies in the ultraviolet and beyond cannot be seen either, but can be sensed as tingling of the skin or eyes depending on the frequency. The human eye, is not sensitive to the polarization of light, i.e., light that oscillates on a specific plane. Bees, on the other hand, are sensitive to polarized light, and have a visual range that extends into the ultraviolet. Some kinds of snakes have special infrared sensors that enable

them to hunt in absolute darkness using only the heat emitted by their prey. Birds have a higher density of light-sensing cells than humans do in their retinas, and therefore, higher visual acuity.

Colour blindness or “Daltonism” is a common abnormality in human vision that makes it impossible to differentiate colours accurately. One type of colour blindness results in the inability to distinguish red from green. This can be a real handicap for certain types of occupations. To a colour-blind person, a person with normal colour vision would appear to have extrasensory perception. However, we want to reserve the term “extrasensory perception” for perception that is beyond the range of the normal.

Ear (Hearing, Stimuli: Sound)

The ear is the organ of hearing. The outer ear protrudes away from the head and is shaped like a cup to direct sounds toward the tympanic membrane, which transmits vibrations to the inner ear through a series of small bones in the middle ear called the malleus, incus and stapes.

The inner ear, or cochlea, is a spiral-shaped chamber covered internally by nerve fibres that react to the vibrations and transmit impulses to the brain via the auditory nerve. The brain combines the input of our two ears to determine the direction and distance of sounds.

The inner ear has a vestibular system formed by three semi-circular canals which are approximately at right angles to each other, and which are responsible for the sense of balance and spatial orientation. The inner ear has chambers filled with a viscous fluid and small particles (otoliths) containing calcium carbonate. The movement of these particles over small hair cells in the inner ear sends signals to the brain that are interpreted as motion and acceleration.

The human ear can perceive frequencies from 16 cycles per second, which is a very deep bass, to 28,000 cycles per second, which is a very high pitch. Bats and dolphins can detect frequencies higher than 100,000 cycles per second. The human ear can detect pitch changes as small as 3 hundredths of one per cent of the original frequency in some frequency ranges. Some people have “perfect pitch”, which is the ability to map a tone precisely on the musical scale without reference to an external standard. It is estimated that less than one in ten thousand people have perfect pitch, but speakers of tonal languages, like Vietnamese and Mandarin show remarkably precise absolute pitch in reading out lists of words, as pitch is an essential feature in conveying the meaning of words in tone languages. The Eguchi Method teaches perfect pitch to children starting before they are 4 years old. After age 7, the ability to recognize notes does not improve much.

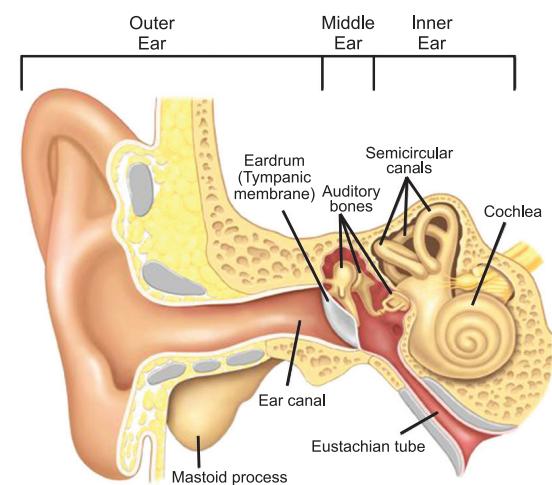


Fig. 4.3: Structure of an Ear

Tongue (Taste, Stimuli: Chemicals)

The receptors for taste, called taste buds, are situated chiefly in the tongue, but they are also located in the roof of the mouth and near the

pharynx. They are able to detect four basic tastes: salty, sweet, bitter, and sour.

The tongue also can detect a sensation from taste receptors sensitive to amino acids. Generally, the taste buds close to the tip of the tongue are sensitive to sweet tastes, whereas those in the back of the tongue are sensitive to bitter tastes. The taste buds on top and on the side of the tongue are sensitive to salty and sour tastes. At the base of each taste bud there is a nerve that sends the sensations to the brain. The sense of taste functions in coordination with the sense of smell. The number of taste buds varies substantially from individual to individual, but greater numbers increase sensitivity. Women, in general, have a greater number of taste buds than men. As in the case of colour-blindness, some people are insensitive to some tastes.

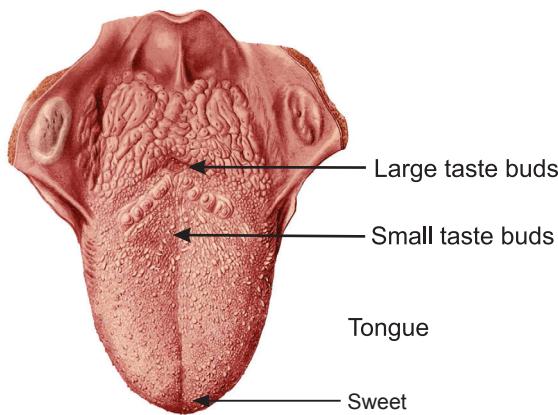


Fig. 4.4: Taste Buds on Tongue

Nose (Smell, Stimuli: Chemicals)

The nose is the organ responsible for the sense of smell. The cavity of the nose is lined with mucous membranes that have smell receptors connected to the olfactory nerve. The smells themselves consist of vapours of various substances.

The smell receptors interact with the molecules of these vapours and transmit the sensations to the brain.

The nose also has a structure called the vomeronasal organ whose function has not been determined, but which is suspected of being sensitive to pheromones that influence the reproductive cycle. The smell receptors are sensitive to seven types of sensations that can be characterized as camphor, musk, flower, mint, ether, acrid, or putrid. The sense of smell is sometimes temporarily lost when a person has a cold. Dogs have a sense of smell that is many times more sensitive than man's.

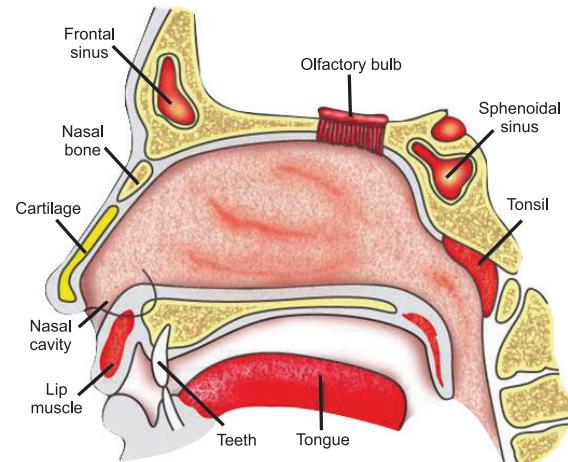


Fig. 4.5: Nose Structure

Skin (Touch, Stimuli: Pain, Cold, Heat, and Pressure)

The sense of touch is distributed throughout the body. Nerve endings in the skin and other parts of the body transmit sensations to the brain. Some parts of the body have a larger number of nerve endings and, therefore, are more sensitive.

Four kinds of touch sensations can be identified: cold, heat, contact, and pain. Hair on the skin magnify the sensitivity and act as an early warning system for the body. The fingertips and the sexual organs have the greatest concentration of nerve endings. The sexual organs have "erogenous zones" that when stimulated start a series of endocrine reactions and motor responses resulting in orgasm.

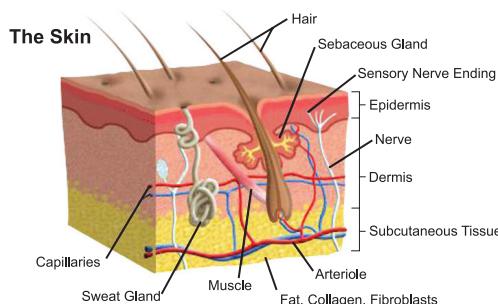


Fig. 4.6: Parts of Skin

Beyond the Five Sense Organs

In addition to sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing, humans also have awareness of balance (equilibrioception), pressure, temperature (thermoception), pain (nociception), and motion all of which may involve the coordinated use of multiple sensory organs. The sense of balance is maintained by a complex interaction of visual inputs, the proprioceptive sensors (which are affected by gravity and stretch sensors found in muscles, skin, and joints), the inner ear vestibular system, and the central nervous system. Disturbances occurring in any part of the balance system, or even within the brain's integration of inputs, can cause the feeling of dizziness or unsteadiness.

4.4 Neuromuscular Coordination of Sensory Organs

Muscles are controlled by the peripheral nervous system (PNS), an extension of the central nervous system. The central nervous system (CNS) includes the brain and spinal column. The PNS extends from the CNS, connecting the CNS to the limbs, organs, and other parts of the body. The PNS is divided into the somatic nervous system (SNS) and the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Skeletal muscles are controlled by the SNS, while

cardiac and smooth muscles are controlled by the ANS.

Controlling body movement often involves a complex interaction between sensory neurons, the brain, and motor neurons. For example, what is involved in catching a ball? You see the ball coming towards you. You also see and feel the position of your arms and hands. As your brain sends signals to move the arms and hands, it also receives sensory information feedback. As the ball gets closer, the brain uses visual information about the ball and sensory information about your body position, to move your arms and hands to the correct position. As the ball hits your hands, your brain signals your hands and fingers to close around the ball. You are not born with this ability. It must be learned through stages of motor development as you grow from a baby to a child and an adult.

When the brain decides to move part of the body and gives the command to the motor neurons to execute this movement, it is the muscles at the end of the chain of command that ultimately contract to move the body part concerned. To transmit this command, the axons of these motor neurons, emerging from the spinal cord, form a nerve that extends to the muscles. Where the tip of each axon comes into proximity with a muscle fibre, it forms a synapse with that fibre. This special form of synapse between a motor neuron axon and a muscle fibre is called a neuromuscular junction.

4.5 Basic Understanding of Exercise Physiology

Exercise physiology is a sub-discipline of kinesiology that addresses (1) the short-term biological responses to the stress of physical activity, and (2) how the body adapts to repeated bouts of physical activity over time.

Exercise physiology is the response to exercise at physical level which include an increase in the HR, BP, SV, cardiac output, ventilation, and oxygen consumption. The metabolism at the cellular level is also modulated to accommodate the demands of exercise. These changes occur temporarily during the exercise. Long-term changes also occur in the body metabolism and function.



Did You Know?

Advantages of practicing *asanas* are two fold: 1. Stretch of a muscle improve its control; 2. *Asanas* also work on the muscle strength through isometrics (weight bearing with constant length) and improve muscle performance. Hence for both muscle control and for muscle strength, *asanas* are recommended.

Exercise physiologists oversee the analysis, improvement, and maintenance of health and fitness; rehabilitation of heart diseases and other chronic diseases and disabilities; and the professional guidance and counsel of athletes and others interested in sports training.

Given here are the Group of muscles according to their actions which takes place at a given joint:

1. **Flexors:** Muscles which bend one segment upon another.

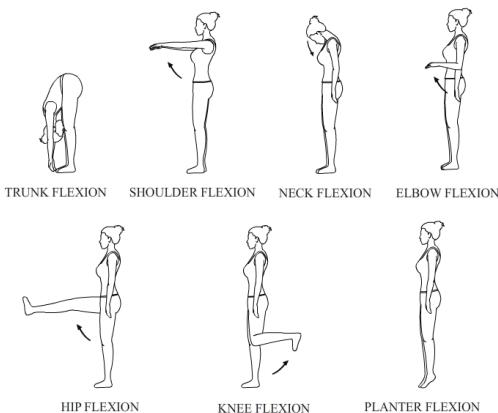


Fig. 4.7: Postures in Flexors

2. **Extensors:** Muscles that unbend (Opposite of Flexion).

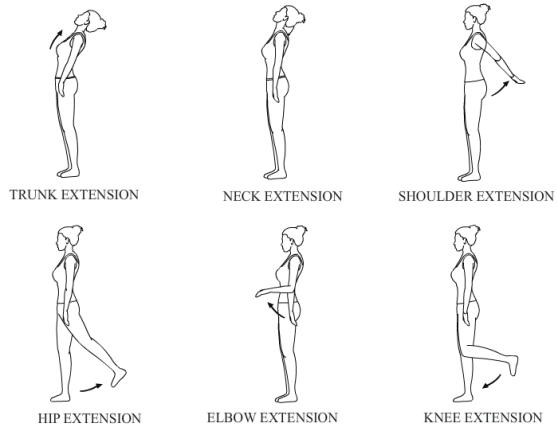


Fig. 4.8: Postures in Extensors

3. **Abductors:** Muscles that pull away from the midline of the body.

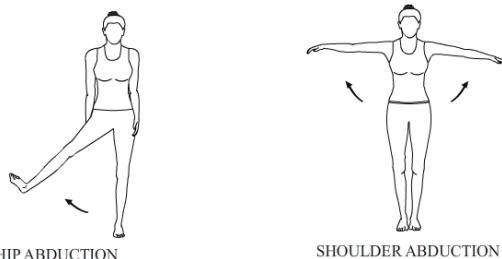


Fig. 4.9: Postures in Abductors

4. **Adductors:** Muscles that reverse Abduction.

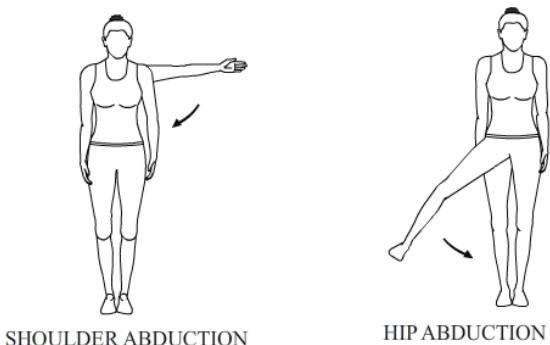


Fig. 4.10: Postures in Adductors

5. **Rotators:** Muscles which rotate a part.

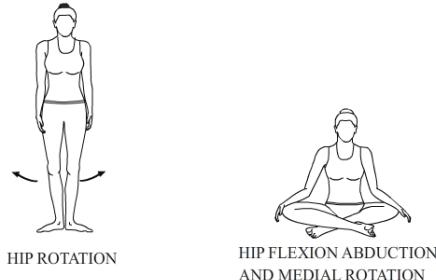


Fig. 4.11: Postures in Rotators

[8.4 Five Spinal Movements in Yoga – Please refer to page 153.]



Did You Know?

Exercise prevents modern lifestyle diseases, like cancer, high blood pressure and diabetes.



Consult with your gym instructor, coach, sporting association, exercise physiologist or physiotherapist for instruction on how to exercise safely.

4.6 Homeostasis

The concept of homeostasis is widely used, in physiology and psychology to identify what seems to be a general feature of living organisms: the tendency to maintain and restore certain balanced states or conditions of the organism. The systems of the body contribute in maintaining homeostasis, that is, the relative constancy of the internal environment despite external environmental changes. The internal environment of the body is tissue fluid, which bathes all cells making up the body. The composition of tissue fluid must remain constant if cells are to remain alive and healthy. Tissue fluid is nourished and

purified when molecules are exchanged across thin capillary walls. Tissue fluid remains constant only if the composition of blood remains constant.

In a broader sense, homeostatic theory says that energy is mobilized to take action that will restore and protect these steady states.

Examples of Homeostasis

Now that we have reviewed the basic contributions of the body's systems we will consider examples of how these systems cooperate in maintaining homeostasis in certain instances.

Control of Temperature

The nude body is capable of maintaining a normal body temperature somewhere between 37°C and 38°C even if the external temperature varies between 16°C and 54°C. The metabolic activity of cells in the body gives off heat as a by-product. When the body is at rest, body heat is generated primarily by the liver, heart, brain, and endocrine glands but when the muscles are active they generate many times the heat produced by these organs. Therefore, increased muscle activity by rubbing the hands or stamping the feet is used as a short-term measure to raise body temperature. On a long-term basis, the hormone thyroxin produced by the thyroid gland stimulates cells to a higher metabolic rate. Therefore, we would expect persons living in a cold climate to have a higher metabolic rate than those who live in a moderate climate.

The regulatory centre for body temperature, located in the hypothalamus is sensitive to temperature changes in arterial blood flowing through it. Depending on the body temperature, the regulatory centre brings about the adaptive responses listed in the following table and body temperature then increases or decreases accordingly.

Hypothalamic Regulatory Centre

Structures	When Body Cools	When Body Warms
Superficial blood vessels	Constricts	Dilates
Sweat glands	Inactivates	Activates
Muscles	Shivering	No shivering

Table 4.2: Hypothalamic Regulatory Centre

Control of Blood Pressure

Blood pressure, which is the pressure of blood against the walls of blood vessels, is created by the beating of heart. The mean arterial blood pressure averages about 100 mm Hg, although it increases progressively from birth to old age due to decreasing elasticity and narrowing of the arteries.

Arterial blood pressure will rise whenever blood volume increases or whenever there is a decrease in the cross-sectional area of the arteries. Sympathetic neurons under the control of regulatory centres (called cardiac and vasomotor centres) located in the medulla oblongata of the brain, can increase the heartbeat and constrict the arteries. A faster heartbeat temporarily increases the amount of blood within the arteries, and constriction of blood vessels, usually those of the skin and intestines, and reduces their cross-sectional area.

The kidneys are a powerful mechanism by which the pH may be regulated. The kidneys may form either acid or alkaline urine, bringing the hydrogen ion concentration back toward normal. When the kidneys form acid urine, they excrete H^+ , and when the kidneys form alkaline urine, they excrete the bicarbonate ion. However, the full effect of the kidneys is not realized for ten to twenty hours.

Notice that the pH of the body is regulated in three ways. Chemical buffers both within cells and

within body fluids react immediately to regulate the hydrogen ion and hydroxide ion concentrations. The pulmonary system requires a few minutes to bring about its effects while the kidneys take from ten to twenty hours. The kidneys, however, are the most powerful of the three.

4.7 The Benefits of Various Asanas on Different Parts of the Human Body

The *Asanas* benefit the human body in myriad ways. The primary *asanas*, their postures, their benefits and limitations are discussed in Chapter 8.

Effects of Hatha Yoga Practices on Different Body Parts

Exercise is generally beneficial for both body and mind. When deciding to become more active, it is important to consider that some exercises are healthier than others. When you compare yoga to other forms of exercise, such as running, aerobics, or other activities performed in a gym, the obvious difference one gets is that yoga works on the mind and spirit as well as the physical, self.

Hatha Yoga practices, when done properly (without strain), are easily the best system of physical activity beneficial to every cell, organ and system in the human body. The degree of flexibility one can gain for the tendons, muscles and spine is quite obvious when we watch someone perform *Hatha Yoga Asanas*, but the health benefits go far beyond flexibility. All *asanas* improve blood flow and oxygen supply to specific body organs, indeed to the entire body to some degree. *Hatha Yoga* also benefits the cardiovascular and lymphatic systems. Since the lymphatic system does not have a heart to help pump its loads of toxins, *Hatha Yoga* practices help to keep the lymphatic system

running smoothly by preventing the lymph nodes from becoming stagnant or obstructed.

Hatha Yoga practices are about controlling and forming perfect positions. There are no bursts or final jerks like weight lifting or sprinting.

Hatha Yoga practices improve joint mobility and flexibility of joints through the range of structured

poses within the asanas. It also tones and builds muscle strength.

One can correct bad postures and work out pains and knots causing problems with one's mobility. Bad joints, like knees and elbows can be worked on. Tight neck, shoulders, or other muscle groups can also be loosened.

List of *Hatha Yoga asanas* and *mudras* for their possible health benefits.

Asana	Their Benefits
Siddhasana (Adept's Pose)	The best position for meditation and <i>pranayama</i> , leisure, restless mind, attentiveness, strengthens lower areas of the spine, toning abdominal organs.
Padmasana (Lotus Pose)	Excellent pose for meditation and <i>pranayama</i> , relaxation, restless mind, concentration, strengthens lower areas of the spine, tones abdominal organs.
Baddha-Padmasana	Enhancing appetite, advantageous for several illnesses.
Savasana (Corpse Pose)	Relaxation, removing fatigue, calmness of mind.
Simhasana	Halitosis (bad breath), stammering and problems with speech, strengthens liver, regulates flow of bile, corrects the coccyx area, constructively affects the thyroid glands.
Bhadrasana (Auspicious Pose) (also called Gorakshasana)	A comfortable position for pregnant women, beneficial for several illnesses, fatigue
Svastikasana in combination with Pranayama	A comfortable pose for meditation and <i>pranayama</i>
Paschimottanasana (Sitting forward bending pose)	Strengthening various organs or parts of the body, like the spine, heart, kidneys, abdominal organs, beneficial for any illnesses and takes care of one's sex drive.
Mayurasana (Peacock Pose)	Overcomes food poisoning, various toxins, spleen, fever and trouble with the lower abdomen, advantages for diabetes and several illnesses. When it comes to toxins, the <i>dhauti</i> -techniques cleanse areas, like the intestinal tract.
Shirsasana (Headstand)/ Viparita-Karani (Half Shoulder Stand)	Increases the flow of blood and supply of oxygen to the brain, helps to think clearly and good memory, rejuvenates pituitary gland, pineal gland and thyroid, reduces symptoms of wrinkles and grey hair that often appear in old age.
Uddiyana Bandha (Abdominal Lift)	Reducing the fat around the waistline, the abdominal organs, glands and muscles become strong, improving the digestion and metabolism. It helps with constipation.
Nauli (Abdominal Practice)	Improves digestion and metabolism, strengthens abdominal organs, liver, glands and muscles.

Contd...

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)	Keeping spine flexible, reduces fat around waistline, strengthens the wrists, strengthens various glands and takes care of vitality, neck tension and urinary problems
Janu Shirasana (Knee-to-Head Pose)	Taking care of the kidneys and digestion problems, good for spine, reducing fat around waistline.
Matsyasana (Fish Pose)	Promoting good digestion and producing energy, stimulating the brain and thyroid.

Table 4.3: Some *Hatha Yoga* Practices with Health Benefits

4.8 Limitations and contra-indications of specific Yoga practices

Despite the immense mental, physical and spiritual benefits of Yoga, there are a few limitations.

These limitations are being shared below for the knowledge of the practitioners and aspirants:

1. Each and every practice of Yoga has its own limitations and contraindications. The practitioner of Yoga should be aware of these contraindications before he takes up the practice.
2. Yoga is basically a preventive discipline rather than a curative. But, in modern times, Yoga is used more as an alternative therapy than as a lifestyle.
3. Every individual has a different constitution and hence cannot practice all the *yogic* activities perfectly. Therefore, there is no point having comparison or competing with someone in *yogic* practices.
4. *Yogic* practices when used as therapy are more beneficial in functional disorders rather than organic disorders.
5. In the cases where therapy (cure) is not possible (eg., cancer), Yoga goes a long way in providing healing, thereby making the patient strong enough to bear the ailment.
6. Yoga is not a remedy for all ailments. Even in the case of obesity or excessive weight in

the body, yoga is helpful only along with diet restrictions.

7. Yoga as a therapy can advantageously be used as a complementary therapy to allopathy or other therapies.



- It is important to understand that the functions of the body are a collective function of each and every cell which constitutes the body, at the end.
- The skeletal and the muscular system are the principal systems that are responsible for the movement.
- The typical classification of the five sense organs is sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing.
- Blood pressure is created by the contraction of the heart and is the pressure against the walls of the blood vessels.
- Controlling body movement often involves a complex interaction between sensory neurons, the brain, and motor neurons.
- Exercise is beneficial for both the body as well as mind.
- Yoga is a science of mind. By controlling the mind, the goal of yoga practices is to transcend it and become pure consciousness, which is our true nature.

- *Pratyaksha* or direct perception is the modification of mind that arises when one of our five senses comes into contact with a real object.
- 2. Name the organs of the circulatory and the respiratory systems.
- 3. Why is *Siddhasana* important?
- 4. Write the most important benefit of *Mayurasana*.
- 5. Give one limitation of Yoga.



KEYWORDS

Autonomic Nervous System (ANS): The part of the nervous system liable for the control of the functions of the body is not consciously directed, for instance, breathing, heartbeat and digestive processes.

Buffer: It is a single chemical or a series of chemicals that soak up hydrogen ions (H^+) or hydroxide ions and hence preserve a fairly constant hydrogen ion concentration.

Central Nervous System (CNS): The complex nerve tissues that dominate the activities of the body. In the vertebrate, it consists of the brain and the spinal cord.

Neurons: It is a specific cell that transmits nerve impulses.

Palate: It is the roof of the mouth, separating the cavities of the mouth and nose in vertebrates.

Peripheral Nervous System (PNS): It is a part of the nervous system that includes the nerves and ganglia on the exterior of the brain and spinal cord.

Somatic Nervous System (SNS): It is a part of the peripheral nervous system connected to the skeletal muscle voluntary control of the movements of the body.

Long Questions

1. What is Homeostasis? Explain with suitable examples.
2. Discuss any two physiological systems in detail.
3. Write a short note on exercise physiology.
4. Discuss the limitations of yoga.
5. Write a note on sources of right knowledge according to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.



FURTHER READINGS

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hatha Pradipika – interpretation by various authors

Yoga Teachers' Training Manual by Sivananda

Patanjali Yoga Sutras – interpretation by various authors.

Anatomy and Physiology by various authors.

Swami Sivananda, "Yoga Asanas", Divine Life Society, India.

B.K.S Iyengar, "Light on Yoga", HarperCollins Publishers India, 2006

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga Asanas – Swami Kuvalayananda

Yoga Tree, Fundamental Principles of Yoga, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. Name the nine physiological systems in the body.

CHAPTER 5

YOGA FOR WELLNESS





Structure

→ Introduction

- 5.1 Health: Meaning and Definitions
 - 5.2 Concept of *Pancha Koshas*
 - 5.3 Yogic Conceptions of Health and Diseases
 - 5.4 Interdependency of physical (*Prakriti*) and psychological (*Triguna*) components according to Ayurveda
 - 5.5 Concept of *Panchamahabhutas*
 - 5.6 Yogic Principles of Healthy Living
 - 5.7 Introduction to yogic diet and nutrition
- Summary
 - Keywords
 - Self-Assessment Questions
 - Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Become aware about health and wellness
- Understand yogic concepts of health and diseases
- Discuss the interdependency of physical (*Prakriti*) and psychological (*Triguna*) components according to Ayurveda
- Understand the theory of *trigunas*
- Discuss the concept of *panchamahabhutas*
- Know about yogic principles of healthy living
- Describe yogic diet and nutrition



Introduction

Health and wellness are closely related to the lifestyle of an individual. Lifestyle in simple words means the way how people live their life and this tremendously influences their health or disease status. Lifestyle of a person is determined by many factors. An individual's economic status reflects the prevalence of obesity in the rich and under-nutrition in the poor. Diet preferences of a society's population are revealed by its cultural values. Coronary artery diseases are caused due to sedentary and lazy lifestyle. The personal habits of people, such as smoking and consumption of alcohol, cause cirrhosis of the liver and heart diseases. The main factors which are important for a healthy lifestyle are exercises, healthy diet, rest, and relaxation. Yoga is one of the important element which supports perfect health and wellness through its comprehensive and holistic nature.

Principles of yoga enable practitioners to develop and strengthen their health and to deal with stress in the most effective way. Through different yogic practices one can also achieve Yogic "health insurance" by changing their perception towards stress, improving the way of reacting to stress and effectively dealing with the repressed stress.

5.1 Health, its Meaning and Definitions

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the state of health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. It is clear from this definition that health and ill-health are not two discrete entities as commonly understood but health should be conceived as a continuous function indicating the state of well-being.

In Sanskrit, the word for health is “*Swasthya*”, which has a profound meaning. It is made of two root Sanskrit words – “*Swa*” or the Self and “*Stha*” meaning ‘abiding’. So *swasthya* can be roughly translated as “abiding in one’s own Self”. The Self, in Indian philosophy is generally described as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* or Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This is the true nature of every being. Any deviation from this state of well-being can be considered as a disease. Therefore abiding in one’s Self produces health (bliss).

Qualities of Physical Well-being According to Yoga

1. Relaxed muscles.
2. Loose joints to conserve energy.
3. Low metabolic rate.
4. Efficiency utility of energy by the body.
5. Coordinated functioning of organ systems even in the stressed state.

Strength

There are a number of *asanas* (e.g. supine *naukasana*, *utkatasana*, *bhujangasana*, etc.) in Yoga which develop the strength of muscles like in classic forms of exercises (push-ups, lunges or squats). Active forms of yoga directly improve your fitness levels by building strength, balance and joint mobility.

Balance

One of the vital elements of fitness is balance, which is generally ignored in the routine life of traditional gym. Yoga poses, like *Vrikshasana* (Tree pose) teaches practitioners how to stay firm only on one leg, while *Kakasana* (Crow pose) requires practitioners to learn to balance on their arms. Balance also helps you to keep fit for daily activities.

Joint Mobility

Many poses in yoga require you to move your joints in ways that may be different than the linear manner you are accustomed to with walking, swimming, biking or running. This improves the overall range of motions and discourages injury. Stiffness and pain can significantly diminish with a regular practice.

The *yogic* view of health is exemplified in *Shvetasvatara Upanishad* where it is said that the first effects of entering yoga are lightness of body, health, desirelessness of mind, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable odour and scantiness of excretions.

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* echoes these qualities when Yogi Svatmaram says, “Slimness of body, lustre on face, clarity of voice, brightness of eyes, freedom from disease, control over seminal ejaculation, stimulation of gastric heat and purification of subtle energy channels are marks of success in *Hatha Yoga*”.

In the Patanjali's *Yoga Darshan* we find an excellent description of the attributes of a perfect body (*kaya sampat*). It is said in *Vibhuti Pada* that perfection of body includes beauty, gracefulness, strength, and adamantine hardness. The effulgence that is characteristic of good health is also mentioned when it is said that deep concentration on resulting in mastery of *samana vayu* (energy of digestion) leads to radiant effulgence

Mental Well Being

- Conscious process of calming down the mind erases the weaknesses.
- Builds will power.
- Steadfastness becomes the core.
- Converts all the challenges into opportunities.

Yoga is not only concerned about one's physical health but also more importantly mental health. If a mentally healthy person can be considered as a *stitha prajna*, then his qualities are enumerated in The *Bhagavad Gita*.

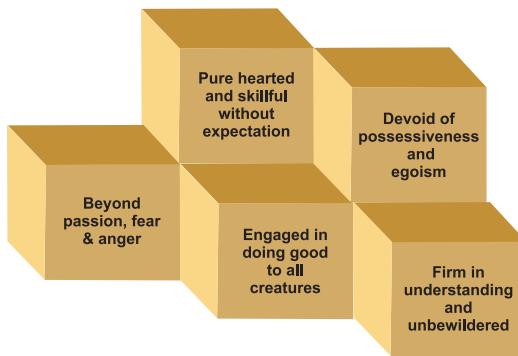


Fig. 5.1: Qualities of Mental Health According to Yoga

Emotional Well-being

- Overcomes his emotional conflicts, complexes, and turmoils.
- Systematically sharpens and sensitizes our emotions.

As it is understood through The *Bhagavad Gita*, our constant thinking about sensory objects is the main cause of our emotional instability. (BG 2.62 and 2.63).

*dhyāyato viśayān pūmīsaḥ
saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ
kāmaṭ krodhaḥ bhijāyate
krodhād bhavati sammohāḥ
sammohāt smṛti-vibhramāḥ*

smṛti-bhramāśād buddbi-naśo

buddbi-naśāt praṇāśyati

This invariable thinking gives rise to *kāma* (desires), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), and *moha* (attachment) with worldly things and causes stress in an individual.

According to Patanjali five types of wrong inborn mental afflictions (*kleśā*) which can be considered as intrinsic causes for producing uncontrolled emotional responses (distress) as given in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are:

Avidyāśmitā raga dvesābhinivesānū pañcakleśānū

|| pa yo sü | 2 | 3 |

(i) Ignorance about the true nature of the Self (*avidya*), (ii) heightened ego (*asmita*), (iii) strong likes (*rāga*), (iv) strong dislikes (*dveṣa*), and (v) fear (*abhinivesa*) are the five *kleśas*, the cause of distress.

5.2 Concept of Pancha Koshas

Many people have a limited understanding of yoga, thinking that it is restricted to the *asana* practice to increase flexibility, tones up muscles, relaxes the body, increases strength, improves balance and finds stress relief. While yoga does all of the above, it is a limited view of what yoga really has to offer us. The true purpose of yoga is to develop a relationship with the Self that exists deep within our core.

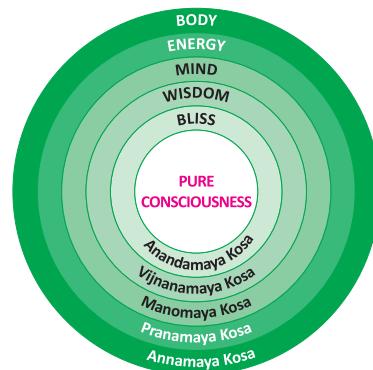


Fig. 5.2: Five Facets/Layers of Personality

The *Upanishads*, depict human nature, or *prakriti* as a combination of five different layers. These five layers or dimensions of *Prakriti* cover our Real Self (the *purusa* in yoga and the *atman* in Vedanta). The individualized temple soul that is individual's mortal body is expanded into more number of refined layers of energy around the spiritual center of the soul. Five different energy sheaths also known as “*kosas*” are contained in the body of human beings; this also surrounds *jivatman* or embodied self of human beings. The vibration level and speed of each *kosa* is different; they also overlap and interact with each other, and the level also ranges from gross to transcendental dimensions or levels.

Pancakosa (“five sheaths”) from root *panca*, “five” + *kosa*, “sheath or layer” — is the “five layers or sheaths,” or distinct “aspects” of human beings; this is organized consecutively from the grosser one to the increasingly more subtle one. The *kosas* are known for their distinct characteristics, such as

- *annamaya-kosa*, that is, the *kosa* of matter, which is basically the physical vehicle,
- *pranamaya-kosa*, that is, the *prana kosa* is one of the “vital” vehicles
- *manomaya-kosa* means the *manas kosa*; it is the mental vehicle
- the *kosa* of *vijnana* is *Vijnanamaya-kosa* (the vehicle of higher reason)
- the *kosa* of *anand* (joy or bliss) is the *anandamaya-kosa*.

The proper and well development of this vehicle leads to gradual self-realization and this is basically the ultimate experience of freedom from bondage which the practitioners experience.

Annamaya kosa (the physical body) also known as “gross body” (*sthula-sharira*). *Anandamaya kosa* (the blissful body) is also known as “causal

body” (*karana-sharira*). *Sukshmasharira*, “subtle body” comprises the *pranamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijnanamaya kosas*, along with the *pranamaya* shell which disintegrates at death of an individual.

A human body not only consists of noticeable physical form, it is also made up of four more subtle levels. Each individual is made up of five *KOSAS* or “bodies”. A better understanding of psychological and spiritual development is earned through following the road map of five sheaths or the “*panca kosas*”. These are shown in the table 5.1:

Many people have a limited understanding of yoga, thinking that it is restricted to the asana practice of increasing flexibility, toning up muscles, relaxing the body, increasing strength, improving balance and finding stress relief. While yoga does all of the above, it is a limited view of what yoga really has to offer us. The true purpose of yoga is to develop a relationship between the man with his Self that exists deep within our core.

According to the *Upanishads*, our human nature, or *prakriti* is comprises five different dimensions. These five layers or dimensions of *Prakriti* cover our Real Self (the *purusa* in yoga and the *atman* in the Vedanta). Our mortal body, (the temple of our individualized soul,) expands into more subtle layers of energy around our spiritual center. Human beings consist of five distinct energy sheaths called “*kosas*” that surround our embodied Self or *jivatman*. Each *kosa* vibrates at different speeds, and they interact and overlap with each other, ranging from gross to transcendental dimensions.

Panca Kosas (“five sheaths”) from root *panca*, “five”+ *kosa*, “sheath or layer” - is the “five layers or sheaths,” or discernible “aspects” of *m a n* , arranged successively from the grosser to the increasingly more subtle. There is *annamaya-kosa*, the *kosa* of matter, the physical vehicle. There is

the *pranamaya-kosa*, the *kosa* of *prana*, the “vital” vehicle. There is *manomaya-kosa*, the *kosa* of *manas*, the mental vehicle. There is the *Vijnanamaya-kosa*, the *kosa* of *vijnana*, the vehicle of higher reason. There is the *anandamaya-kosa*, the *kosa* of *anand* (joy or bliss). And when that vehicle is well developed it gradually leads to that self-realization which involves the ultimate experience of freedom from all bondage.

The physical body (*annamaya kosa*) is also called *sthula-sharira*, “gross body.” The blissful body (*anandamaya kosa*) is also called *karana-sharira*,

“causal body.” The *pranamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijnanamaya kosas* together comprise the *sukshma-sharira*, “subtle body,” with the *pranamaya* shell disintegrating at death.

Our body does not just consist of the visible physical form; we also possess four other subtle sheaths. Altogether each person has five “bodies” or *KOSAS*. The *panca kosas* (five sheaths) provide us with a road map for better understanding of our psychological and spiritual development. These are shown in the following table:

1	<i>Annamaya kosa</i>	Matter	Physical	Physical body and senses
2	<i>Prānamaya kosa</i>	Vital Air	Energy	Driving force behind the physical aspect of the senses and the operation of the physical body
3	<i>Manomaya kosa</i>	Mind	Mental	Processing, reason, logic and emotion
4	<i>Vijnānamaya kosa</i>	Ego and Intellect	Wisdom	Faculty which discriminates
5	<i>Anandamaya kosa</i>	Innermost	Bliss	Independent of any reason or stimulus

Table 5.1: *Pancha Kosa* and its Significance

Pancha Kosha or Pancakosâs

1. *Annamaya kosa*: This is first part of tangible body made of Five Fundamental elements or *Panchabuthas*. Each and every substance contains five primary elements in it, one of them being a principal element. Based on this importance of primary elements, the substances which contain the *Ākâsa* (sky) element are known as *Ākâsiya Dravya* (substance), the substances which contain the *Vayu* (air) element are known as *Vayavya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Agni* (fire) element are known as *Tejas Dravya*, the substances which contain the *jala* (water) element are known as *Āpya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Prithvi* (earth) element are known as *Parthiva Dravya*. We are introducing here the substances of the above said elements precisely.

- ❖ *Ākâsa dravya*: These substances are smooth, light, minute, flat, and have sound quality.
- ❖ *Vâyavya dravya*: These substances are lighter, cooler, dry and coarse in quality.
- ❖ *Taijasa dravya*: *Taijasa dravyâs* have properties of heat, pungency, lightness, dryness, greaseless and form.
- ❖ *Āpya/jala dravya*: These substances have qualities of fluidity, cold, heavy, oily, soft, blunt, dense and juice. These are called watery substances.
- ❖ *Pârthiva dravya*: These substances represent qualities of being massive, solid, heavy, gross, oil-free, hard and smell. One who has their substances get obesity and strength.

The sheath of *Annamaya kosa* is made of *sapta dhatus*, seven minerals (as named earlier). With a regular controlled diet and lifestyle, *Annamaya kosa* gets strength and becomes healthy.

2. *Prāṇamaya kosa*: Second sheath of the body of a human being is that of the *prāṇa*. *Prāṇa*, the vital breath which man lives by, is the bridge between the gross and subtle bodies. All the functions of wisdom are done by the *Prāṇamaya kosa*, which is built by *prāṇa*. Based on the functions performed *Prana* is named differently. There are 10 distinctly named *pranas* – 5 major *pranas* and 5 minor or *upapranas*. Five major *Prāṇas* are namely, *Prāṇa*, *Apāṇa*, *Udāna*, *Samāna* and *Vyāna*. Five *upa-Prāṇas* (minor) are: *Dhananjaya*, *Nāga*, *Kurma*, *Krikal* and *Devadatta*. The exclusive functions of *Prāṇas* are – ingestion, digestion, excretion, circulation and higher functions, like communication, analysis, feelings and emotions. With the regular exercise of *Prāṇmāya*, the work performance of *prāṇamaya kosa* is enhanced.
 3. *Manomaya kosa*: The first important acting part of the subtle body is *Manomaya kosa*. Mind, intellect, ego and conscience are the integral parts of *Manomaya kosa*, which are termed as the *catusṭaya*. *Manomaya kosa* is purified and strengthened with the wisdom and meditation. There are five *karmendriyās*, the means of action, and they are associated with the external world.
 4. *Vijnānamaya kosa*: This is referred to as Wisdom body or sheath of higher intellect (intuition). The second part of the subtle body (*sukshma Sarira*) is *Vijnanamaya kosa*. Intellect, and all the sensory organs, that work with wisdom fall in this category. The practitioner, who works under the guidance of *Vijnanamaya kosa* having a good understanding of it, attains ‘*ritambhara prajna*’ through incessant meditation and *Samādhi*, alienating all kinds of illusions, passions, interests, etc.
 5. *Ānamdamaya kosa*: This *kosa* is also known with other terms like, ‘*hiranyamaya kosa*’, ‘*hrdayaguha*’, ‘*hridayakāṣa*’, ‘*karanasarira*’, ‘*linga sarira*’, etc. This *kosa* is indicated as situated in our heart. It has an immense relevance to our inner realm and its relation with the external world is considerably very less. Human life, the existence of gross body of a human being, all kinds of worldly conduct is depended on this *kosa*. The practitioner achieves *nirbeeja* (seedless) *samādhi*, attaining the blissful state and forever he resides there.
- Chitte vidhūrīte dehaà saìkñobhamupayatî hi*
 ||yo rā||9||97||
- Saìkñobhātsāmyamutsâjya vahanti prāṇavāyavāù*
 ||yo rā||9||99||
- Kujérnatvamajérnatvamatijérnatvameva rā*
 ||yo rā||9||100||

When the mind becomes disturbed it reflects in the body. This results in disturbances in the flow of *prāṇa* in the *nadis*. This manifests as disturbed digestive function which becomes either excessive or irregular or ends up in indigestion.

5.3 Yogic Conceptions of Health and Diseases

In Yoga Vasishtha one of the best texts on Yoga, the essence of Yoga is beautifully portrayed thus, ‘*Manah Prashaman upaayah Yoga ityabhidheeyate*’ - Yoga is called a skilful trick to calm down the

mind. It is (*Upayah*), a skilful subtle process and not a mechanical gross effort to stop the thoughts in the mind.



Fig. 5.3: A Blend of Mind and Health with Yoga

In *Anandamaya Kosha* a man is healthiest with perfect harmony and balance of all his faculties. At *Vijnanamaya kosha* there are movements but they are channelized in the right direction. As such, it is in the *Manomaya* level the imbalances start, say the yoga texts. Likes and dislikes come to play at this level. The liking of *Gulab Jamoon* in a diabetic may lure him to eat the same against the doctor's advice. Thus, going against what is right causes imbalances. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called '*Adhis*'. At this stage there are no symptoms at the physical level. Prompted by the perpetual growth of desires these mental diseases concealed in us, begin to manifest themselves externally and gradually they percolate to the physical frame. Preponderance of *Ajama* (Ignorance about one's real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions, such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges in untimely hours, associating with the wicked, dwelling in evil thoughts, inflicting injuries, etc. These breed physical diseases called *Vyadhis* or the secondary diseases.

The *Adhis* (primary diseases) are two fold *Samanya* (ordinary) and *Sara* (essential). The former includes the diseases incidental to the body while the latter is responsible for rebirth to which all men are subject.

The *Samanya* are normally produced during the interactions with the world. These may be termed as psychosomatic ailments. When dealt with by suitable techniques and congenial atmosphere, *Adhis* of the ordinary type will vanish. Along with it are destroyed the physical ailments, i.e., the *Vyadhis* caused by these *Adhis* is called *Adhija Vyadhyah*. The subtler *Adhis* of the essential type (*sara*) which cause the birth of the physical body can be destroyed only by the realization of the causal states of mind and a corresponding ability to live in *Vijnanamaya Kosha* and *Anandamaya Koshas*. In that state, man transcends the cycles of birth and death. The second category of ailments are *Anadhija Vyadhyah* which are not originated by the mind. These would probably include the infectious and contagious diseases. The text says that *Anadhija Vyadhis* can be handled through conventional medicines (the chemotherapy of modern medicine and *Ayurveda*), *Mantras* with their natural vibrational characteristics and good actions. These bring about the purity of mind, the *Prana* flows freely in the body and the food gets digested better and assimilated properly allows the diseases to vanish.



Did You Know?

According to Maharishi Patanjali, physical disease (*Vyadhi*) is considered as one of the nine obstacles (*antarayas*) to integrative oneness of Yoga or *samadhi*. Patanjali also enumerates accompanying/evident symptoms namely, a state of mental or physical pain i.e. *dukkha*, a state of sadness or dejection, i.e., *daurmanasya*, anxious tremors in the body, i.e., *angamejayatra* and irregular/erratic breathing (*shrasra prashvasal*).

Potential cause of illness

Among the two types of *Adhis* described the *Samanya* (ordinary) type corresponds to the modern psychosomatic ailments. When the mind is agitated during the interactions with the world at large, the physical body also follows in its wake. These agitations cause violent fluctuations

in the flow of *prana* in the nadis. The *prana* flows in the wrong paths flying from one to the other without rhythm and harmony. The *nadis* can no longer, in this condition, maintain stability and steadiness, but quiver. Due to these disturbances of the *prana* and unsteadiness in the *nadis* the food does not get properly digested. These head to *Kujirnatvam* (wrong digestion), *Atijirnatvam* (over-digestion) and *Ajirnatvam* (non – digestion). When this improperly digested food settles down in the body amidst such commotion it results in psychosomatic ailments. Contained in this process of generation of psychosomatic ailments is the method for treating such ailments.

5.4 Interdependency of physical (Prakriti) and psychological (Triguna) components according to Ayurveda

In *Ayurvedic* medicine, health comes when the forces of the body and mind are in balance, and restoring balance begins with the knowledge of the person's mind-body type. The human body according to *Ayurveda* is made up of physical *doshas* (*Vata*, *pitta* and *Kapha*) and psychic components (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), body tissues (*dhatus*), and waste products (*malas*). The three physical *doshas* *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* corresponds to (sky, wind, fire, water and earth) respectively.

The solid material substrate referred to as *kapha*; chemical activity (metabolic factor) referred as *pitta* and an energy pool of motion and movement referred to as *vata*. These three *doshas* coexist in a preset proportion and function in a balancing manner to overall function of the total organism in spite of their opposite properties and functions. The imbalance or vitiation of *vata*, *pitta*, or *kapha* is considered a major factor in the causation of a disease. The three psychological components are *sattva guna*, *rajas guna*, and *tamas guna* which can

be correlated to balance, dynamic and lethargic personality traits respectively. *Sattva* is the quality of love and light, it imparts faith, honesty, modesty and truthfulness which lead to purification of mind and body, including our emotions.

Rajas give rise to change, disturbing equilibrium with passion and agitation giving rise to emotional conflicts. *Tamas* leads to dullness, inertia, heaviness and emotional clinging. A close interdependence among the physical and psychological components exists; if one component is out of balance, the others are also out of balance. Health care in *Ayurveda* is essentially aimed at balancing the *dosas* and *gunas*, bringing them into equilibrium. (Lakshmi, C. Mishra, 2003)

Three Mental Qualities: *Sattva*, *Rajas*, *Tamas*

The three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—are found in nature and in the mind, paralleling the three *doshas* of the body. *Sattva*, or purity, is the ideal state of mind because a person with this quality is calm, alert, kind, and thoughtful. A person whose mind is predominantly *rajasic* (too active) always seeks diversions (incessant activity). The *tamas*-predominant mind is a dull, lethargic mind.



Fig. 5.4: The Three Mental Qualities

The proper balance of the mind and the development of purity and peace help in the development of a *sattvic* mind. This is the first stage of *samadhi* or spiritual realization.

Sattvic influence creates comprehension, the need for unity and healing, and creates a positive mental outlook; creates clarity, intelligence, leadership, warmth and independence; creates calmness, peace, love, compassion, faith, nurturing, and forgiveness.

Rajasic influence creates indecisiveness, unreliability, hyperactivity, and anxiety; creates willfulness, ambition, anger, manipulation, vanity, impulsiveness and aggressiveness; creates greed for money, material luxuries, and comfort. They are sentimental, controlling, attached and lustful.

Tamasic influence creates fear, a servile attitude, dishonesty, depression, self-destructiveness, addictive behaviour, sexual perversions, animal instincts or suicidal thoughts; creates vindictiveness, violence, hate, criminality and psychopathic behaviour; creates dullness, lethargy, depression, lack of care and a tendency to steal.

While all individuals have mixed amounts of the three, the predominant *guna* determines an individual's *mansa prakriti*/personality. In equilibrium, the three *gunas* preserve the mind (and indirectly the body), maintaining it in a healthy state. Any disturbance in this equilibrium results in various types of mental disorders.

Satwa, characterized by lightness, consciousness, pleasure and clarity, is pure, free from disease and cannot be disturbed in any way. It activates the senses and is responsible for the perception of knowledge. *Rajas* is the most active of the *gunas*, has motion and stimulation as its characteristics. All desires, wishes, ambitions and fickle-mindedness are the result of the same. *Tamas* is characterized by heaviness and resistance. It produces disturbances in the process of perception and activities of the mind. Delusion, false knowledge, laziness, apathy, sleep and drowsiness are caused due to *Tamas*.

Satwa	Rajas	Tamas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pleasure and clarity ● Lightness ● Purity and conscience ● Free from disease ● Undistractable ● Activates the senses ● Knowledge is perceived 	<p>Result of all:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wishes ● desires ● ambitions ● fickle-mindedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disturbing element for the perception process and various intellectual activities. ● Heaviness and resistance ● Laziness ● Delusion ● False knowledge ● Apathy ● Dozing ● Drowsiness

Table 5.2: Three *gunas* with different characteristics

Rajas and *Tamas* can be unbalanced by stress and negative desires, as *kama* (lust), *irshya* (malice), *moha* (delusion and hallucination), *lobha* (greed), *chinta* (anxiety), *bbaya* (fear) and *krodha* (anger). Each of these three properties also comprises sub-types, and particularly the sub-type to which one belongs to, determine the qualities of that individual. *Satwika* individuals are usually noble and spiritual in character.

5.5 Concept of Panchamahabutas

Each and every substance contains five primary elements in it, one of them being a principal element. Based on this importance of primary elements, the substances which contain the *Ākāsa* (sky) element are known as *Ākāsiya Dravya* (substance), the substances which contain the

Vayu (air) element are known as *Vayavya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Agni* (fire) element are known as *Tajas Dravya*, the substances which contain the *jala* (water) element are known as *Āpya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Prithvi* (earth) element are known as *Parthiva Dravya*. We are introducing here the substances of the above-said elements precisely.



Fig. 5.5: Concept of *Panchamahabhutas*

Ākāsa dravya: These substances are smooth, light, minute, flat, and have sound quality.

Vāyavya dravya: These substances are lighter, cooler, dry and coarse in quality.

Taijasa dravya: *Taijasa dravyas* have properties like heat, shape, lightness, dryness, greaseless and form.

Āpya/jala dravya: These substances have qualities like fluidity, cold, heavy, oily, soft, blunt, dense and juice. These are called watery substances.

Parthiva dravya: These substances represent massiveness, solid, heavy, gross, oil-free, hard and smell. With these substances, one gets obesity, strength, increase in body weight.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is associated with the idea of the supernatural or linked with miracles. There are eight energy centers or “*chakras*” in the body through which humans absorb cosmic energy. Yoga can purify these and keeps the positive life energy flowing. From the base of the spine up to the crown. These *chakras* are named *mooladbara*, *sradhisthana*, *manipura*, *anahata*, *vishuddha*, *ajna*, *bindu*, and *sahasrara*, respectively.

5.6 Yogic Principles of Healthy Living

We have understood that through the primary cause (bad thought patterns) the disease of body is generated. If this primary cause be eradicated at its root then all diseases will be destroyed. Preponderance of *Ajnana* (Ignorance about one's real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions, such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges in untimely hours, association with wicked, evil thoughts, inflict injuries etc. These breed physical diseases called *Vyadhis* or the secondary diseases.

Yoga *Vasishta* suggests that if the mind becomes purified with true *Satvaguna*, then *Prana Vayu* will begin to circulate freely throughout the body, the food taken will be digested properly and hence no diseases will arise. This is also in line with *Yama* and *niyama* of Sage Patanjali described under *Asthanga* yoga. (Aiyer KN, 1975)

Achara Vichara

According to Yoga *Vasishta*, following actions must be avoided:

1. Eating of unwholesome food
2. Living in unhealthy places
3. Doing things at unseasonable hours

4. Association with the wicked
5. Longing after improper things
6. Evil desires and bad thoughts

Achara (Right Conduct), Vichara (Right Thinking) and Vyavahara (Right Behavior) according to other yogic texts

There is a saying in Sanskrit, ‘Yad bhavanam tad bhavati’ meaning ‘You are what you think’. In other words your thoughts translates into your actions. Hence developing the attitudes of *Maitri* (friendliness), *Karuna* (Compassion), *Mudita* (Happy for those who are happy), *Upeksa* (a non-judgemental attitude towards the wicked (PYS 1.33) would help to bring positive thinking, leading to pleasant disposition. The *Bhagavad Gita* also propounds that actions should be performed with a sense of detachment and duty. Patanjali also highlights *Kriya Yoga* consisting of *Tapas* (Austerity), *Svadhyaya* (Self analysis and Self Study) and *Ishwara Pranidhana* (Surrender to the Supreme).

This should be practiced regularly for a long period with faith.

Development of Satvaguna

In an ordinary man there is a mixture of the three *gunas* (*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*). *Tamas* and *Rajas* pull a man downwards; *Sattva* lifts a man upwards. *Tamas* and *Rajas* lead to bondage; *Sattva* helps him to attain salvation. Discipline yourself and develop *Sattva*. When the mind is *Sattvic*, there is calmness in it. Divine light can descend only when the mind is serene and cheerful.

The *Sattvic* man controls the senses, does selfless service, and practises *japa*, *pranayama*, concentration, meditation, self-analysis, and enquiry of “Who am I?” He has no attraction for sensual objects. He has a burning desire to attain *moksha* (salvation). He is humble, generous, merciful, forbearing, tolerant and pious. He destroys his little personality.

The *rajasic* man is proud, intolerant, egoistic, self-sufficient, lustful, hot-tempered, greedy and jealous. He works for his own glory and fame and self-aggrandizement. He develops his own little personality.

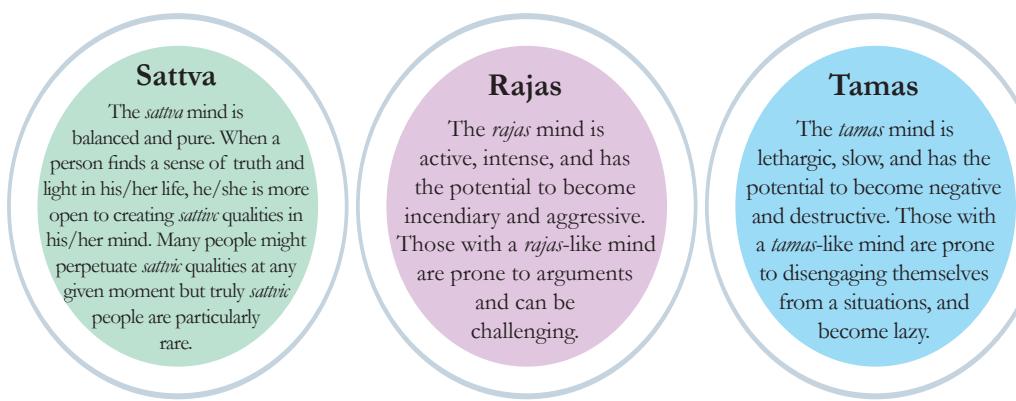


Fig. 5.6: Features of the Three *Gunas*

There is an intimate connection between the *gunas* and *karmas* (actions performed by men). The nature of the *karmas* depends upon the nature of the *gunas*. A *Sattvic* man will do virtuous actions. A

Rajasic and *Tamasic* man will perform non-virtuous actions. It is the *guna* that goads a man to do certain actions. The Self or *Brahman* is actionless. He is a silent witness.

Virtuous nature enables the aspirant to attain the highest state of super consciousness (*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*), wherein the seer and the seen are united in one; the meditator and the meditated become identical.

5.7 Introduction to Yogic Diet and Nutrition

Yogic Diet and the Three Gunas according to The Bhagvad Gita

In yoga philosophy, the mind is formed from the subtlest portion or essence of food. If the food taken is pure, the mind has the proper building materials for the development of a strong and subtle intellect and a good memory. A yogic diet is one that brings inner peace to the body and mind, and encourages spiritual progress.

All nature, including our diet, is categorized by three qualities, or *gunas*: *sattva* (pure), *rajas* (over-stimulating) and *tamas* (putrefied). A person's mental make-up may be judged from the type of food he/she prefers to eat. *Yogis* believe not only that 'you are what you eat' but also that you eat those foods which reflect your own level of mental and spiritual purity. As your life changes in a positive way, you will also see your food preferences improving. The yogic diet is based on *sattvic* foods.

Sattvic Foods

The foods which increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are dear to the *sattvic* people.

The Bhagvad Gita, XVII, 8

Pure foods that increase vitality, energy, vigour, health and joy, that are delicious, wholesome,

substantial and agreeable are *sattvic*. These foods render the mind pure and calm and generate equanimity, poise and peaceful tendencies. They promote a peaceful attitude and are conducive to the practice of meditation. Foods should be as fresh and natural as possible, preferably organically grown, not genetically modified, and kept without preservatives or artificial flavourings. They should also be eaten in as natural a state as possible, either raw, steamed or lightly cooked grains, such as corn, barley, wheat, unpolished rice, oats, millet and quinoa are considered as *sattvic* foods. Make sure you include in your diet coarse foods, such as porridge and whole grain breads. These are good for the teeth and jaws, and they stimulate the processes of digestion and elimination. Grains supply the necessary carbohydrates, the main source of energy for the body, and they also contain about half the amino acids that are needed to form protein.

Protein foods, such as pulses, nuts and seeds are also *sattvic* foods. Proteins are the 'building blocks' of the body. The key to a healthy vegetarian diet is to eat a good mixture of foods to ensure that it includes all the amino acids essential for making proteins.

Fruits, both fresh and dried, as well as pure fruit juices are also *sattvic* foods. Among the different foods, fruits are supposed to be of foremost importance in the yoga diet. The curative effects of fresh, juicy fruits are astonishing. They fill the body with vitalizing, life-giving minerals, vitamins and fibres. They contain alkaline matter that helps to keep the blood pure.

Vegetables are also *sattvic* foods. These are important in the diet because they contain a host of minerals, vitamins and fibres. The diet should include seeded vegetables (such as cucumbers and squashes), all leafy vegetables, and roots or tubers. These are best eaten raw or cooked as lightly as possible.

Rajasic Foods

Any food which is stimulating and goading towards activity is considered as *rajasic* food. All spicy foods are therefore *rajasic* in nature. Meat and meat products though they generate aggressive nature are also considered as *rajasic* foods.

Tamasic Foods

Tamasic foods, include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, alcohol and other intoxicants including drugs which have the tendency of creating lethargy and laziness in us. Foods that are over-processed, no longer fresh, and/or difficult to digest are also *Tamasic*. Foods that are prepared with an indifferent mind or while the cook is in a foul mood with negative thoughts are also considered *Tamasic*. A *Tamasic* diet benefits neither the mind nor the body. *Prana*, or energy, is withdrawn, powers of reasoning become clouded, and a sense of inertia sets in. The Body's resistance to disease is destroyed and the mind is filled with dark emotions, such as anger, jealousy and greed.

As discussed earlier *Satvik* diet increases vitality (*Ayuh*), and not sheer bulk; vitality supplies the energy for meditative purposes (*Veerya*) and increases and unfolds the secret strength (*Bala*) to resist temptations of sense-objects, provides good health (*árogya*) so that people may not fall ill and suffer a break in their regular *sádhana*. Such people will have a natural inclination to take food which will augment joy (*Preeti*) and inner cheerfulness (*Sukha*). In short, such creative men, by their own choice, enjoy only that food which is clean and wholesome.

Ahara vihara – key is moderation

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-cestasya karmasu
yukta-srapnavabodhasya yoga bhavati dukkha-ha*

He, who is moderate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practising yoga.

He who is moderate in his habits of eating, sleeping, working and recreation can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga.

Yukta-abara-viharasya, means one whose eating and movements are regulated- *ahara* (lit. food) means all that is gathered in the form of food, includes mental 'food as well' and the impressions we draw in through our sense organs, and the people whom we associate with. *Vihara* means moving around. *Yukta-cestasya*, refers to one whose efforts (*cesta*) are moderate, who does not over exert. *Karmasu*, refers to one who does work but it is not workaholics; similarly, *yukta-srapna-arabodhasya*, refers to one whose sleep (*srapna*) and wakefulness (*arabodha*) are moderate. Such a person can overcome all worldly pains and sorrows.

SUMMARY

- *Yoga* is considered as the most impeccable health and wellness segment due to its comprehensive and holistic nature.
- The principles of *Yoga* help an individual to develop and strengthen positive health and it also enables individuals to withstand stress in a much better way.
- The views of WHO (World Health Organization) present health as 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity'.
- Most of the *Asanas*, specifically the *Shatkarmas* (such as *Neti*, *Nauli*, *Basti*, etc.) known for working as effective detox methods, help in removing the toxins present in the body.
- The soul of a human being is covered by *Panca Kosás* (sheaths) or five bodies; it is noticeable that name of each *kosa* contains the word 'maya' and this simply means 'made of'.

- According to *Samkhya* philosophy all the objects in the universe, animate and inanimate comprise three *gunas* - *Satwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.
- 3. Write a short note on the *yogic* concept of diseases.
- 4. What are the benefits of *yoga*?
- 5. What is *aadhi*?
- 6. Name the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* of *Patanjali Yoga*.



KEYWORDS

Health: Health is defined in terms of overall mental and physical state of a person; the absence of disease.

Aadhi: It refers to mental ailments caused by amplified likes and dislikes in the *manomaya kosa*.

Prana: The vital energy in the body is called *Prana*.

Nadis: *Prana* flows in the body through conceptual channels called *nadis*.

Jivatman: It refers to the embodied soul. The true purpose of yoga is to restore this embodied soul (*purus*) to its pristine nature.

Long Questions

1. Explain the concept of *Pancha Kosha*.
2. Discuss the concept of *Triguna*.
3. Elaborate the concept of *Panchamahutas*.
4. What are the various *yogic* principles of healthy living? Explain.
5. Describe your understanding of *Yamas* and *Niyamas*.



FURTHER READINGS

Light on Yoga – Shri BKS Iyengar

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Prana and Pranayama – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hatha Pradipika – interpretation by various authors

Patanjali Yoga Sutras – interpretation by various authors Sapitati con reperis de dus peror alibuscia



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. Define health.
2. How does health differ from wellness?

CHAPTER 6

YOGA AND STRESS MANAGEMENT





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 6.1 Human psyche: Yogic and modern concepts, behaviour and consciousness
 - 6.2 Frustration, conflicts, and psychosomatic disorders
 - 6.3 Relationship between mind and body
 - 6.4 Mental hygiene and role of Yoga in mental hygiene
 - 6.5 Mental health: a Yogic perspective
 - 6.6 Prayer and meditation for mental health
 - 6.7 Psychosocial environment and its importance for mental health (*Yama* and *Niyama*)
 - 6.8 Concept of stress according to modern science and Yoga
 - 6.9 Role of Yoga – Stress and Life Style Management
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Introduction

Stress and anxiety have become an integral part of modern life with their physical and emotional effects on us. Most of the time they have negative effects on us, but sometimes they can be positive too and can create positive or negative feelings. As a positive influence, stress can compel us to act, but as a negative influence, it can result in feelings of disruption, rejection, anger, and depression, which in turn can lead to health problems, such as headache, upset stomach, rashes, sleep disorder, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease and sometimes stroke. In most severe case, it may also cause suicidal tendency.

In this chapter, you will explore about stress – what is it? How it degenerates different system and the type of damage it can cause to the body. Also you will be able to gain information regarding the psyche of the human mind; his frustrations, conflicts, psychosomatic disorders, relationship between mind and body, mental hygiene etc. You will also learn the role of yoga in mental hygiene; prayer and meditation for mental health, psycho-social environment; concept of stress according to modern science and yoga; and finally, you will wind up this chapter with the positive role of yoga in stress and life management.



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss the concept of human psyche
- Explain the concept of frustration, conflicts and psychosomatic disorders
- Describe the meaning and concept of mental hygiene and role of yoga in mental hygiene
- Discuss the concept of mental health in a *yogic* perspective
- Explain the concept of prayer and meditation for mental health
- Understand the concept of stress according to modern science and yoga
- Identify the role of yoga in stress management and life management

6.1 Human Psyche: Yogic and Modern Concepts, Behaviour and Consciousness

Psychology is an analytic and scientific study of mental process and behaviour. Psychologists study such phenomena as perception, cognition, emotion, personality, behaviour and interpersonal relationship. Psychology also refers to the application of such knowledge to various spheres of human activity including issues related to daily life, e.g., family, education and work, and the remedy for the problems of health.



Fig. 6.1: Human Psyche



Note

Mind is defined as conglomeration of thoughts. According to Yogic lore it has four functions *Manas* (perception), *Chitta* (Memory), *Abhankara* (Ego) and *Buddhi* (discriminative faculty).



Most-common Mis-conceptions

People generally believe that Yoga is ineffective for injuries or chronic body aches. However, recent studies in people with chronic low-back pain suggest that a carefully adapted set of yoga poses may help reduce pain and improve various functions, including the ability to walk and move. Studies also suggest that practising Yoga, along with other forms of regular exercise, may have health benefits, such as reducing heart rate and blood pressure, relieving anxiety and depression.

Behaviour and Consciousness

Psychology is a science of activity of people which leads to an understanding of the nature of human behaviour. Behaviour is the action or reaction of a person in response to external or internal stimile.

A psychologist analyzes behaviour from two points of view: Overt and Covert. The behaviour that is visible and what occurs outside of human being is called overt behaviour, while covert behavior pertains to mental phenomenon.

In Indian psychological thought the term ‘personality’ has not been used in a strict sense, instead the concept of *Swabhaava* referred to in scriptures, covers all aspects of personality. *Swabhaava* is the essential quality. It manifests itself as the essential quality in all beings. “*Dharma*, says the *Gita*, is action governed by *Swabhaava*, the essential law of one’s nature. And this *Swabhaava* is at its core the pure quality of the spirit in its inherent power of conscious Will, and in its characteristic force of action.” (Srivastava, Kalapana, 2012)

Consciousness

Consciousness is a fundamental entity, which is non-physical, inactive, placid, indescribable and non-associative, (“*Nirajanam Nishkriam Shantam Niradyam Nirajanam*”) (Shvetashwar, 6/19) but endowed with self-directed will power (Swasankalpa Shakti) to create, retain and annihilate all concepts of knowledge of Self and the Universe.



Fig. 6.2: Consciousness

In the normal state of consciousness, an individual is unaware about his full potentialities and depends on the knowledge gained through the sensory perception for the expansion of the field of consciousness of knowledge. The field of consciousness can be expanded by the development of the capability of non-sensory intuitive cognition of knowledge through Yogic techniques, so as to reach the super-conscious state, in which an individual has direct intuitive revelation of knowledge. The final state of Yogic attainment is to have individual consciousness join the Super Consciousness which is verily Yoga or Self Realization.

Sri Aurobindo emphasized on simultaneous activity of the concentric system and a vertical system. The concentric system is like a series of rings or sheaths. The outermost circle comprises awareness of the physical body, of vital (*pranic*) body or sheath, and awareness of mental sheath. These three types of consciousness are interconnected. The inner circle is composed of inner mind which is in touch with the universal Mind or Supreme Energy. The innermost core is called Psychic being which is a spark of the Divine (Supreme Energy) presence in all of us and in everything. It is also called *Atman*. (Srivastava, Kalapana, 2012)

Behaviour

The *Upanishads* are a storehouse of psychological material. The nature of mind and its functions and different psychological phenomena—normal, abnormal, pathological, paranormal, and spiritual—are explained in the *Vedas* and *Upanishadas*. The core themes, according to the ancient philosophical tradition are centered around self, soul, human nature, human existence, and human experience.

The ancient Indian model of “Personality”, given in the *Upanishads*, consists of the ‘five’ sheaths. They are ‘*Annamaya*’ (food sheath),

‘*Pranamaya*’ (vital air sheath), ‘*Manomaya*’ (mental sheath), ‘*Vijnanamaya*’ (intellectual sheath), and ‘*Anandamaya*’ (bliss sheath). ‘*Annamaya*’, a segment of human system is nourished by ‘*anna*’, which is, food. ‘*Pranamaya*’ is that segment which is nourished by ‘*prana*’, which is, ‘bioenergy’. ‘*Manomaya*’ is the segment nourished by ‘*pratyāhāra*’. ‘*Vijnanamaya*’ is nourished by ‘*dhyāna*’ and ‘*Anandamaya*’ is the segment nourished by ‘*samadhi*’.

The concept of *Guna* dates back to the Atharva Veda, it was discussed in the *Bhagavad Gita* and is a core concept in *Sankhya Darsana*. The concept of *Triguna* has been utilized to explain the concept of personality in modern era as well. Indian researchers have also deliberated on this concept of *Triguna* in their writings. The development of consciousness is apparently rooted in this concept of *Triguna*. These are known as (*sattva*) called as stability; *rajas* called as activation and *tamas* called as inertia. *Manas* has been ascribed the functions which are mental functions and mental processes (*Mnaovritti manopravrtti*). They are considered to be manifestations of *Triguna*.

The Triguna and its dimensions

The *Bhagavad Gita*, at different places gives the models of highly developed human potential in its totality. It also describes three *gunas* and says that we all are combinations of these *gunas* (characteristics), which are *Tamas*, *Rajas*, and *Sattva*. The *jīva*, *svabhava* and *prakrti*, *ahamkara*, and *Atman*, and *Purusa* are considered as the most important concepts related to personality and self, which can help in developing indigenous personality theories. Following are explanations given about the three attributes of human personality. These three *gunas* lead to different kinds of temperament. They are primarily influenced by both physiological and psychological parameters. (Kalapana Srivastava, 2012)

We have understood that the *Gunas*, the driving force behind our thoughts, words and deeds, in fact formulate our personality, so states the *Gita*. The idea of the *Gunas* (constituents of matter) is fundamental in Indian philosophy. The minds in ancient India dwelt as much on the physical aspect of the Universe as the psychic and spiritual aspects. They found that the multi-dimensional universe is held together with strand-like substances (albeit extremely subtle). Thus, one of the meanings of the word *Guna* is strands.

Sattva, rajas and *tamas* are the three primordial forces through which *Prakrti* or nature creates all objects and products in the universe. According to our tendencies and lifestyle, one guna predominates in each individual. Thus we each have what might be referred to as a *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic* personality.

Sattva is purity and holiness; *Rajas* is to do with action and drive, and *Tamas* symbolizes laziness and inertia. In other words, every human being's mind-stuff is made of a mixture of these three basic qualities in different proportions. All words, actions, temperaments, aspirations, conduct and character of every individual person are reflected by the proportion in which these three qualities exist in his/her mind.

No individual's conduct, character, aspirations, values and drives are same as another person's. Why is it so? It is purely because the ratio in which these three qualities are built in the psyche of each person is different.

To understand these qualities better, let us see what each of these qualities represents more elaborately.

Sattva (Purity and holiness):

*sattvād sukhe sajjayati rajañ karmaē bhārata
jīānam āvātya tu tamañ pramāde sajjayat utsa*

(BG 14.9)

O son of *Bharata*, the mode of goodness conditions one to happiness; passion conditions one to fruitive action; and ignorance, covering one's knowledge, binds one to madness.

A person in the mode of goodness is satisfied with his work or intellectual pursuits, just as a philosopher, scientist or educator may be engaged in a particular field of knowledge and may be satisfied in that way. A man in the mode of passion may be engaged in fruitive activity; he owns as much as he can, and spends for good causes. Sometimes he tries to open hospitals, gives charity to institutions, etc. These are the signs of the one in the mode of passion. And the mode of ignorance covers knowledge. In the mode of ignorance, whatever one does is good neither for him/her nor for anyone.

Love, compassion, devotion to God (*Bhakti*), *ahimsa* (non-injury), truthfulness, non-stealing, discrimination (*viveka*), dispassion (*vairagya*), *daya* (compassion), *tyaga* (sacrifice), kindness, soft-speak, control over senses, honesty, non-covetousness, patience, forbearance, mercy, humility, guilelessness are the attributes which reflect a pure person.

Rajas (Action and Drive):

*rājo rāgātmakaà viddhi tāñēä-saṅga-samudbhavam
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam*

(BG 14.7)

The mode of passion is born of unlimited desires and longings, O son of *Kunté*, and because of this the embodied living entity is bound to material fruitive actions.

Activeness, boisterousness, hurry, action, impatience, passion, drive, ambition, power-mongering, manipulation, desire for leadership, domination, self-promotion, rule-breaking, pushy, love for coterie, love for subjugating others, love for grandeur, competitive instinct, workaholism,

exhibitionism, strenuous effort, fighting spirit, strong belief in self-will, love for spending and extravaganza, materialism, loud mouth, assertiveness, avarice, authoritativeness, pride are embeded in the character of a Rajasic person.

Tamas (Laziness and Inertia):

*tamas tv ajiāna-jaà viddhi mohanaà sarva-dehinäm
pramädälasya-nidräßbis tan nibadhnäti bhärata*

(BG 14.8)

Krishna says:- O son of *Bharata*, know that the mode of darkness, born of ignorance, is the delusion of all embodied living entities. The results of this mode are madness, indolence and sleep, which bind the conditioned soul.

The mode of ignorance is just the opposite of the mode of goodness. In the mode of goodness, by development of knowledge, one can understand what is what, but the mode of ignorance is just the opposite. Everyone under the spell of the mode of ignorance becomes mad, and a madman cannot understand what is what. Instead of making advancement, one becomes degraded.

Laziness, dullness, sloth, greed sans effort, lack of motivation, fatalism, negativism, excess sleep, jealousy, envy, miserliness, pessimism, perverted desires, hatred, lust, obsession, deceit, vengeance, day dreaming, bashfulness, covetousness, gluttony, stealth, treachery, possessiveness, aversion, rumor mongering, back biting, dishonesty, laxity are reflected in the character of a Tamasic person.

The Human Mind being a matter is a Mixture of Trigunas

In any human being though all these three qualities will be present in varying proportions, generally one of these qualities will be more predominant than the other two. For example, Saints and sages are predominantly sattvic. A politician or a sports star will be predominantly rajasic. People who

easily get hooked to drinking or drugs will be predominantly tamasic.

How do these qualities fundamentally find their place in a human psyche?

One of the foundation stones of Hinduism is the concept of *karma* and rebirth. Every human being takes birth in this world and engages in action i.e., *karma*. Actions are driven by aspirations and desires; Aspirations and desires are propelled by vasanas, literally meaning smells, that you acquire based on the imprints of your past experiences (also known as *samskaras*).

The relationship amongst Self, mind, intellect and ego is beautifully brought out in the following sloka of *Kathopanishad*:

*Atmanam rathinam vidhi shariram rathmer tu
Buddhi tu sarathim vidhi manah pragrhamer cha!*

Know the Self/soul as the rider, the body as the chariot, the intellect as the charioteer, and the mind as the reins; the organs are the horses and the sense objects, the roads; the soul with the body, organs and mind is designated by the sages as the one which relishes the experience.

6.2 Frustration, Conflicts, and Psychosomatic Disorders

Thinking is the function of the mind. Mind is defined as conglomeration of thoughts. Thought is one unit of mind. Different thoughts are arranged in a meaningful sequence and are continuously on the flow like the incessant movement of waves in an ocean. The type of thoughts decide the nature of mental activity. For example, if you solve a problem of laws of motions the thoughts are all related to that topic and you call it intellect. If they are on the topic of intense feeling about a disaster, you call it an emotion and so on. You may assign different names to different types of thoughts, such as intellect, memory and creativity. The *yogis* described the sequence of events in the

manomaya *kosha* as follows. The information that has to be gathered from the external world is perceived by the mind which flows out through the doors of perception called the indriyas. After this the meaning is analyzed (intellect) and interpreted in relationship with earlier experiences stored in the memory. After this processing, we play our emotions which is the most important modification of the mind. The type of emotional reaction a situation evokes varies from person to person depending on previous life experiences. All emotions are initially in the form of either 'likes' or 'dislikes'. This initial wave of activity proceeds on with several chain reactions of thought processes that could be named as positive or negative emotions. Negative emotions are all destructive violent emotions characterized by distress and unhappiness, which may be manifest or not manifest (suppressed). Examples are anger, fear, jealousy, hatred, tension, depression, frustration, etc. These violent negative destructive functions of the *manomaya kosha* is what we call as stress that is recognized to be the root cause of many of the psychosomatic illness including diabetes. Examples of soft positive ones are contentment, satisfaction, peace, bliss, etc., which are constructive and rejuvenating. Examples of violent positive emotions are excitement, thrill, joy, love, etc.

In the second chapter, Lord Krishna explains how suffering arises through the activity of the senses. By constantly thinking of sense objects, man becomes attached to them. Attached thus he develops a strong desire to possess it. Disappointment in not possessing leads to anger. From anger comes delusion, and from delusion arises confusion of memory. From confusion of memory arises loss of intelligence or discriminative power which leads to devastation.

*dhyāyato vishayan pumsah sangas teshupajayate
sangat saijayate kamah kamat krodho 'bhijayate*

(2.62)

When a man thinks of the objects, attachment for them arises; from attachment desire is born; from desire anger arises.

*kroḍhād bhavati sammohaù sammohāt smāti-vibhramaù
smāti-bhraṇyād buddhi-nāqo buddhi-nāqāt praēcyati*

(2.63)

From anger comes delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory the destruction of discrimination; from the destruction of discrimination he perishes.

The senses are so strong, impetuous and restless that they forcibly carry away the mind of even a wise person striving for perfection. One develops attachment to sense objects by thinking about sense objects. Desire for sensuous objects comes from attachment to them.

Anger comes from unfulfilled desires.

Delusion or wild idea arises from anger.

The mind is bewildered by delusion.

Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered.

One falls down from the right path when reasoning is destroyed.

The Bhagvat Gita emphasizes the importance of withdrawing the senses from the sensuous objects and transcending them through self control to experience inner peace and supreme happiness. Since the senses are responsible for the instability of the mind and thereby delusion, they need to be actively disengaged from the sense objects to which they go habitually so that the mind can fully concentrate upon the inner Self. By withdrawing the senses completely from the material objects (*pratyahara*) the way tortoise withdraws its limbs, a yogi gains mastery over his senses (2.58).

How do We Attain Peace?

Patanjali says: *sukhanushayi ragah* i.e., 'attachment is that which dwells on pleasure'. He also says : *dukhānushayi dveshah*, which means, 'aversion is that which dwells on pain'. This is a natural tendency as

we all know that our mind runs after things which are agreeable or produce pleasant sensations. we try to avoid anything that is disagreeable, or which produces unpleasant sensations. This attribute is present not only in humans but in animals as well.

We also notice that different feelings, like anger and hatred, when arise in our minds they remain dormant in our subconscious mind for the time being, and afterwards they become aroused by certain conditions which would produce provocation of some kind. For instance, if somebody says unkind words instantly we fly into rage, and want to take revenge. That is the natural tendency of the human mind. At first that feeling of anger rises very slowly, and then it produces a wave in the mind substance. That wave again overpowers us and we lose the sight of our conditions and relations. We lose memory and become violent. All these things first rise slowing in a minute form, as in the form of bubbles, and then gradually take the form of waves. All these different feelings are described as the waves of the mental ocean they are all sources of bondage and sufferings in the end. It has been said before that when any disagreeable feeling as like those of hatred, jealousy, anger, or any other passion arises, we can overcome them by holding opposite mental modifications, or by rousing opposite feelings.

*raga-dvesha -vimuktais tu vishayan indriyaischaran
atma-vashyair vidheyatma prasadam adhigachhati*
(2.64 BG)

But the self-controlled man, moving among the objects with the senses under restraint and free from attraction and repulsion, attains to peace.

6.3 Relationship Between Mind and Body

As discussed earlier likes and dislikes start governing our actions; often they are in the wrong

directions. Going against what is right causes agitations. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called '*adhis*' or stress. Further, this agitation causes violent fluctuations in the flow of *prana* in the *nadis*. The *prana* flows in wrong paths flying from one to the other without rhythm and harmony. The *nadis* can no longer, in this condition, maintain stability and steadiness, they begin to quiver. Due to these disturbances of the *prana* and unsteadiness in the *nadis* the food does not get properly digested. This leads to *Kujirnatram* (no digestion), *Atijirnatram* (over-digestion) and *Ajirnatram* (non – digestion). When this improperly digested food settles down in the body amidst such commotion it results in psychosomatic ailments. Contained in this process of generation of psychosomatic ailments itself lies a method for its treatment. Thus long standing *Adhis* get pushed into *pranamaya* and *annamaya kosha* causing *Vyadhis*. Preponderance of *Ajnana* (ignorance about one's real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions, such as eating unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges at untimely hours, associating with the wicked, having evil thoughts, inflicting injuries on others. etc. These breed physical diseases called *Vyadhis* or the secondary diseases. (Aiyer K.N., 1975).

We have understood that through the primary cause (bad thought patterns) the disease of body is generated. If this primary cause is eradicated from its root, then all diseases will end.

Yoga Vasistha suggests that if the mind becomes purified with true *Satvaguna*, then *Prana Vayu* will begin to circulate freely throughout the body, the food taken will be digested properly and hence no diseases will arise. This is also in line with Yama and niyama of Sage Patanjali as described under *Asthanga yoga*. (Dr. Nagendra, H.R., & Dr. Nagaratna, R., 1998).

6.4 Mental Hygiene and Role of Yoga in Mental Hygiene

Mental Hygiene

Hygiene refers to the series of rules and regulation practiced for preservation of health and healthy living. The concept of mental hygiene is related to intra – personal or awareness of things happening within the individual mind. It is the attitude which helps to attain peace and harmony in life.

Definition

There are many definitions of the term mental hygiene. According to Klien, “Mental hygiene is an endeavour to aid people to ward off trouble as well as to furnish ways of handling trouble in intelligent fashion when it cannot be warded off.”

Objectives of Mental Hygiene

The main objectives of mental hygiene can be summarized as follows:

To help realize one's potentiality: Every individual possesses certain potentialities. Mental hygiene tries to help each individual to develop his/her potentialities.

To develop self-respect and respect for others: Loss of self-respect is one of the factors for the great majorities of emotional disorders. A person who likes himself can like others and one who dislikes himself cannot like anybody. Hence, the main aim of mental hygiene is to make one to respect oneself.

To understand one's limitations and tolerate the limitations of others: Mental hygiene helps one to understand one's own limitations as well as to tolerate others' limitations.

To cause harmonious development: Mental hygiene aims at the harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual capacities of the individual so that he can adjust himself in the environment.

To create happiness: Another objective of mental hygiene is to develop a positive attitude towards life so as to create a sense of happiness in a person who can live happily in this world.

To enable one to make effective adjustment: Mental hygiene also prepares an individual for effective adjustment in all spheres of life and all situations, such as in school, at home, within the society, at work and also with one's self.

To enable one to know his/her self: Many of us do not know our own self. We are not at all aware about our potentialities, weaknesses, limitations, etc., for which many individuals suffer from different types of confusion. Mental hygiene helps an individual to know himself.

Yogic Attitude for attaining Mental Hygiene

These are the yogic attitude for attaining mental hygiene:

(a) *Pratipaksha Bhavana*

Whenever we think that feelings of hatred, jealousy, revenge, anger, or any other passion is arousing within us, which we do not want to indulge in, and if we want to control and conquer them, we can easily do so by arousing the opposite feelings. At first it may be a very difficult task to do so, but through practice we can easily achieve it. Yoga trains us to disregard such disagreeable and negative feelings and passions, which ensnare us in shackles and make us their slaves. For instance, when a big wave of anger disturbs the mind, think of love, because love is the opposite of anger. If a feeling of revenge comes up, think of forgiveness. If a feeling of hatred comes, think of love. In this way, when we have subdued all our obstructions, we become free from all limitations, and then we are ready to attain the infinite. (Swami Abhedananda, 1967)

*Charaka Sambita Samanya Vishesha Siddanta (Sutra stana Chapter 1 sutra 44- 46) emphasises this. Patañjali Yôga Sûtra [1:33]. **Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha-duhkha punya-apunya vishayanam bhavanatash chitta prasadanam.*** The fourfold attitude as described in the above sutra, is conducive to the peace of mind while facing life's vicissitudes and gives one a peace of mind. It also enables one to overcome the distractions of the mind. They are: (1) Friendliness toward those who are pleasantly disposed to oneself (friends), (2) Compassion for the sorrowful and for one in a painful condition, (3) Rejoicing in the happiness of others or sharing transpersonal happiness, (4) Neutrality or non-judgmental mindset towards the wicked.

(b) *Anitya Bhavana*

Anitya Bhavana accepting that everything associated with body and woedly things are impermanent. When we have such feelings that everything in the world : wealth, status, relationship, body etc. is perishable it creates *vairagya* or detatchment for wordly things.

(c) *Sakshi Bhavana*

Is the attitude where the acts are performed as a witness. One should be a silent witness to the activities (*vrittis*) of the mind without being involved. This leads towards Self Analysis.

6.5 Mental health: A Yogic Perspective

Concepts of mental health include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and recognition of the ability to realize one's intellectual and emotional potential. It has also been defined as a state of well-being whereby

individuals recognize their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to communities. Mental health is about enhancing competencies of the individuals and communities by enabling them to achieve their self-determined goals. (Basavanhappa, B.T., 2007).

A Yogic Perspective

The yoga psychology of Patanjali discloses the secret of bringing under control the divergent modifications (*vrittis*) of the mind, and thus, realize the transcendental Atman, which is the fountainhead of all knowledge, intelligence, and bliss.

Yoga system teaches how to reduce the mind substance into its simplest form, by the method of transcendence (*nirodha*), which means to reduce the mind into consciousness (*chaitanya*).

Patanjali has said that the mind can be restrained by practice and detachment (*abhyasa* and *vairagya*). The practice (*abhyasa*) means the repeated sustained efforts (*yama*) for securing the state of steadiness and calmness, and when steadiness is once attained, the mind goes back to its pure state, and is transformed to pure consciousness.

Patanjali says: '*tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayorgativicchedah pranayamah*'. *Pratyahara* is making the mind introspective: '*sva-vishaya-sam-prayoge chittasya svarupanukara ivendriyanam pratyaharab*'. Then comes *dbarana* which means concentration. *Dharama* happens when *chitta* is localized (inside or outside the body) steadfastly '*desavandhaschittasya dbarana*'. Next comes *dhyana* or mediation: '*ta-atra pratayaikatanata dhyanam*'. Then comes *Samadhi* or super-conscious state of the mind, which is known as god consciousness. Patanjali says: '*tadevarthamatra-nirbharam svarupa-sunyamiva samadib*'. (Swami Aabhedananda, 1967).

6.6 Prayer and Meditation for Mental Health

Surveys indicate that nearly 90% of patients with serious illness will engage in prayer for the reduction of their suffering or disease. Among all forms of complementary medicine, prayer is the single most widely-practiced healing modality.

The following explanations have been offered as to how prayer helps improve health:

- **The relaxation response:** Prayer elicits the relaxation response, which lowers blood pressure and other conditions heightened by stress.
- **Secondary control:** Prayer releases control to something greater than oneself, which can reduce the stress of needing to be in charge.
- **The placebo response:** Prayer can enhance a person's hopes and expectations, and that in turn can positively impact health.
- **Healing presence:** Prayer can bring a sense of a spiritual or loving presence and alignment with God or an immersion into a universal consciousness.
- **Positive feelings:** Prayer can elicit feelings of gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, and hope, all of which are associated with healing and wellness.
- **Mind-body-spirit connection:** When prayer uplifts or calms, it inhibits the release of cortisol and other hormones, thus reducing the negative impact of stress on the immune system and promoting healing.

Patanjala Yoga Sutra emphasises on Om Meditation:

'Pranavasya japah pranavabhidheyasya cha ishwaryasya bhavana'

The mind of the *yogi*, who constantly repeats the pranava, and habituates the mind to the constant manifestation of the ideas it carries, becomes one-pointed. And so it has been said: 'Let the yoga be practiced through study, and let study be affected through yoga. By yoga and study being together, the highest self shines.'

The contention of vachaspati mishra is the 'repeated thinking or understanding' (*bharana*) means making it enter the mind over and over, until it becomes the very substance of the mental existence. The mind feels bliss in the one lord alone. And so it has been said: 'Lord then becomes gracious to him up to his attaining the faculty of trance (*Samadhi*) and its fruit.'

The ancient practice of meditation is integral part of yoga. To meditate is to become acutely aware of what's going on within you; it's about learning to tame your mind so that you can focus all your energies and awareness on the task at hand.

Meditation is especially beneficial for reducing stress. Studies show it can also reduce depression and anxiety, and help people manage chronic pain. Meditation can benefit people who have mental health conditions, as well as those who do not.

When you meditate, you clear away the information overload that builds up every day and contributes to your stress.

As stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Meditation is the tool to achieve Self-realization. In a secluded place, establish a posture with a straight back. Concentrate between the eyebrows or on the tip of the nose. Fix the mind on the Self (*atman*). Develop one pointed concentration called *dhyana* and achieve Self-realization (or Union with God) in the state called *samadhi*. Observing moderation in everything, with strict celibacy, one overcomes the lower self in order to gain the higher self. Thus, the *yogi* no longer relishes the pleasures of the senses. He cannot be deluded any more. He abides in the self. Needless to say

that many modern organizations and individuals are practicing meditation to tackle emotional upsets, such as frustrations, conflicts, inferiority complexes, stress and burnout.

6.7 Psychosocial Environment and its Importance for Mental Health (Yama and Niyama)

The psychosocial environment refers to the culture and climate of the workplace. Problems that occur in one's psychosocial functioning can be referred to as "psychosocial dysfunction" or "psychosocial morbidity." This refers to the lack of development or atrophy of the psychosocial self, often occurring alongside other dysfunctions that may be physical, emotional, or cognitive in nature.

Stress occurs when we have difficulty in coping with it. Biologists explain stress as a negative feeling one experiences when one's body does not appropriately respond to a threat. The psychosocial stress refers to a specific kind of stress one experiences that originates from any type of interaction with people. Stress may manifest itself in different ways, such as high blood pressure, sweating, rapid heartbeat, dizziness and feelings of irritability or sadness. Causes of psychological stress, called psychological stressors, can be classified as chronic or acute.

All of these threats can lead to a stress response in the body. There are several ways to manage psychosocial stress because it involves factors on the outside (what we're dealing with), and the inside (our thoughts about it) can affect multiple areas of our lives. Yoga is a natural and readily available approach for maintaining wellness and treating psychosocial stress issues.

Psychologists are also examining the use of yoga with survivors of trauma and finding it may even be more effective than some psychotherapy techniques. Practicing yoga personally and

adopting a stance based on yoga principles such as non-judgment, compassion, spirituality and the connection of all living things can help you relieve stress enhance compassion and potentially make yourself a better therapist. If you can make peace with yourself, there may be more nurturing that you exude toward your patients.

Importance of Mental Health (Yamas and Niyamas)

Just as the animal body needs food to sustain, the human mind needs *Yamas* and *Niyamas* to function in balance and uplift itself.

Yama, the 1st step in *Ashtanga Yoga*, lays the foundation. It is yoga of social conduct. There are 5 *Yamas* and 5 *Niyamas*.

1. **Ahimsa:** It is the highest virtue. *Ahimsa paramo dharmah*. Practice of *Ahimsa* is not just refraining from physical violence or abuse; that could be a way of civilized social conduct. Beyond this, *Ahimsa* addresses health of the mind. Criticism, sarcasm, cynicism, backbiting, offensive language, comparison could be verbal forms of not practicing *Ahimsa*. Further even the body gestures of denial and disregard have to be monitored for all as these are expressions of unhealthy mind. It can only lead to unhappy relations and disturbance.
2. **Satya:** The second *Yama* is the practice of truthfulness. No one wants to speak a lie outright. Rather one chooses to speak half or partial, may be deceitful, inarticulate lie or one uses words that can be interpreted differently. It may not be false as a common understanding... but it is NOT THE TRUTH. Why? What are you trying to hide? What is it mirroring you?
3. **Asteya:** The third *Yama* refers to not stealing. It is not good to take a thing, or use a facility or service that is not offered by its owner. *Asteya* also means receiving that to which one

is not entitled. At mental level, it is having no desire to possess others belongings as well as to resist taking anything of others.

4. **Brahmacharya:** In a narrower sense, *Brahmacharya* is understood as celibacy or sexual abstinence. In a wider sense, it is understood as moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures. Etymologically, *Brahmacharya* refers to “walking on the path leading to Reality”. It would mean not to give into one’s weaknesses and indulgences related to excess of food, sleep, or exercise; it could be a craving about a relationship, objects and addictions.
5. **Aparigraha:** The fifth *Yama* means non-hoarding or non-covetousness. *Asteya* is regarding what belongs to others but *Aparigraha* is to do with one’s own. Any possession, relationships, objects, ideas, situations, etc., are for a purpose of experience. If one feels like continuing the experience with one’s possessions one is most likely to hold on to these ‘I, me, mine’ things. Once established these can not only increase sense of possessiveness but can also become ideologies and bring in stagnation or limitedness.

The *Yamas* are the guidelines for social behaviour, and are very relevant in today’s scenario, where exposure to anyone anytime demands sensitive responding, and issues related to social behaviour require mature handling.

Niyamas, the 2nd step in *Ashtanga Yoga*, is related to personal conduct. *Niyamas* are the observances – the ‘To Do’ list of every day.

1. **Shauca (Purity):** It means to observe cleanliness and purity of thought, word and deed. Here the attempt is to look beyond attending daily personal hygiene and attire. If the mind is not willing to be structured, it will give the reasons for shirking it. So be aware of

the excuses of the mind. These are generally similar however small or big activity you want to do or not to do. Spending 2-3 minutes early morning with the elements (open lawns, grounds, seashore, sunrise, space, fresh air, and holy place) gives a positive stroke at the beginning of the day.

2. **Santosha (Contentment):** It means to feel happy and contented. *Santosha* is being happy unconditionally. It is experiencing steady state of joy that does not fluctuate with external limitations or abundance. It is internal feeling of completeness.
3. **Tapa (Austerity):** *Tapa* has to do with austerities, penances and vows taken upon oneself voluntarily. It refers to the commitment, discipline and consistent actions. It leaves no room for lethargy and a laid-back attitude. Make a beginning by taking up small commitments in household activity or impersonal goals. It’s a way to catch the mastermind and make it to follow the commands. If it’s not following, it indicates the rigidity/past programming of the mind that perhaps feels limiting or binding. And if the mind is readily following, it is positive energy; the milestone on the way to self-growth.
4. **Swadhyaya (Self-study):** It is the study of one’s self, the pure self. *Swadhyaya* practices involve study of scriptures, learning under a living Guru, learning from a Saint/Scholar, *Satsang* (company of truthful or like minded people), listening to spiritual discourses, etc.
5. **Ishwarapranidhana (Surrender to Ishwara):** It means to surrender to the Supreme. The actions, which we perform, bear the fruits as per the law of *karma*. We are here for playing the role we are subjected to, and while doing so, progress towards the fulfillment. On this journey holding on to our ego, attachments,

possessions, cannot take us beyond pain, misery and suffering. *Ishwarapranidhana* helps us to realize our limitedness. By surrendering we are able to take a step back and accept the higher direction.

6.8 Concept of Stress According to Modern Science and Yoga

Definition of stress

Selye and Levi have defined stress as a non-specific, conventional and phylogenetic basic response pattern, the primary function of which is to prepare the body for physical activities such as resistance or flight (called Eustress). If, however, the subject lacks the means of restoring either to fight or flight, i.e., of relieving the stress reaction, it gives rise to distress which manifests itself in the form of psychosomatic symptoms or disorders.

Eustress and Distress

There are two kinds of stress that are distinguished by Selye and Levi. Eustress is synonymous with healthy essential stress produced. Sometimes we have a positive impulse of joy and happiness, for example while watching our favourite sport, etc.

Distress is synonymous with morbidness, a stress that has to be controlled, e.g., continuous mental or physical strain of any kind, anger, frustration, a state of tension seemingly without any hope, etc. However, even high and prolonged Eustress can turn dangerous in certain cases as in Ischemic Heart Disease due to excessive excitement one may have Eustress. Thus, is the reaction to a demanding situation in the human physiology. It can occur at two levels-Physical and Psychological. Physical stress occurs when we face incidents, like accidents, burns, major surgery and infections. Psychological stress can occur independently or as a reaction to some physical stress. Examples of psychological stress are fear, anxiety, tension,

worry, jealousy, hatred, anger, excitement, emotional conflicts, etc. It may be a temporary stress, demanding only an immediate adaptation process; or, it may be a long-standing one, leaving deep-seated subconscious impressions leading to prolonged tension. In modern society with fast moving vehicles, rapid industrialization and with a highly sophisticated lifestyle, there could be hundreds of stimulations which can produce both these types of stress. Accordingly the incidence of physical trauma has increased steeply (today accidents cause the highest number of deaths in day to day life).

Stress Reaction

What happens in your body due to stress reaction?

- Stored sugar and fats pour into the blood-stream to provide fuel for quick energy.
- The breath rate shoots up, providing more oxygen.
- Red blood cells flood the blood-stream, carrying more oxygen to the muscles of the limbs and brain.
- The heart speeds up and blood pressure soars, ensuring sufficient blood supply to needed areas.
- Blood-clotting mechanisms are activated to protect the body against any injury, muscles become tense in preparation for strenuous action.
- Digestion ceases, so that blood can be diverted to the muscles and brain.
- Perspiration and saliva increase.
- Triggered by the pituitary gland, the endocrine system steps up hormone production.
- Bowel and bladder muscles loosen.
- Cortisone pours into the system, as do the hormones epinephrin and norepinephrin.
- The pupils dilate, allowing more light to enter.
- All senses are heightened.

Stress according to Yoga is imbalance which ultimately causes misery. Both the mental and physical levels, comes a demanding situation which causes pain, and leads to ailments. Imbalance at the emotional level manifests as an upsurge which is caused by strong likes and dislikes. At the psychological level the imbalance leads to inner conflicts and often manifest themselves as petty and narrow egocentric behaviour. Lack of holistic knowledge and a balanced outlook at the subtle level are responsible for imbalances found at the gross level. Thus, while understanding stress, a holistic concept of man has to be kept in view rather than merely his physical existence. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* has presented this holistic concept of man systematically as having five major sheaths of existence. Stress is studied and understood at the physical level by modern medical systems as an imbalance of the neuro-endocrine systems at the neuro-transmitter level. Emotional imbalances in the form of strong likes and dislikes bring about imbalances in *Prana* (the vital energy) in the *Pranamaya Kosa* which percolates to the *Annamaya Kosa* causing stress symptoms and hazards. Origin of desires and action guided by strong likes and dislikes (and not by what is right and wrong) will be the expression of imbalance at *Manomaya Kosa*. In *Vijnanamaya* goes on reducing until in *Anandamaya Kosa* it is all bliss. This state is the totally stress-free state.

Thus, in the *Upanishads*, a more fundamental and generalized concept of stress is presented. The great sage Patanjali uses the term *Klesha* which aptly describes stress. In his text '*Yoga Sutras*' (Yoga aphorisms) the *Klesha* have been described thus:

avida-yā-asmitā-rāga-dvesa-abhinivesāḥ klesāḥ (PYS 2-3)
In our original state we are totally stress-free. We are blissful. That state, devoid of any tension and pressure, (even) thinking or feeling, is the source of all bliss, knowledge, creativity and freedom. We may call it perfection. *Patañjali* calls it *Svarūpa* i.e. Self.

Stress is a fact of modern life. Learning to live and get ahead today is not possible without stress. Anything that brings on feelings of stress is called a stressor. There are some people who thrive under stress and there are others who have a hard time handling stressful situations. An individual's reaction to the stress-causing event will determine whether the stress is positive or negative. When stress levels surpass mental, emotional, and physiological limits, stress becomes distress (stress which increases productivity and efficiency is referred to as Eustress) and interferes with physical as well as mental activities.

The main reasons that cause stress in modern life are the following:

- **Too many obligations:** The chronic stress we are experiencing daily, like the stress caused by a bad marriage or by a dissatisfying job as it is too demanding causes health problems. It is clear and proven that when facing chronic stress, the autonomic nervous system is affected, thus causing stress.

The stress in turn causes overwork, overwork causes exhaustion, exhaustion causes depletion, and depletion makes us collapse, and becomes the cause of various diseases. The first symptoms are relatively mild, chronic headaches and increased sensitivity to cold.

An estimated 90% of doctor visits are related to stress. Most of the common diseases are associated with a chronic form of the insomnia, depression, mental disorders, muscle pain, hair loss, diabetes, sexual dysfunction and cancer.

- **When the enemy is ourselves:** Sometimes we sabotage ourselves by being impatient with others or causing undue tension due to psychological pressure. Some of the more common ways we undermine ourselves and in effect create more stress are as follows:

- **Negative thoughts:** Sometimes the enemy exists in our mind. The way we talk to ourselves is generally set in childhood and follows us throughout our lives, and plays a significant role in forming all our experiences. If we are accustomed to thinking and speak negatively then it would prove to be a major source of stress. Fortunately, it is never too late to learn the power of positive thinking.
- **Poor skills to deal with conflicts:** The occurrence of conflicts with others is a part of life, and we need to know how to properly handle such situations and do so that our relations become stronger and do not become a source of stress. And this does not mean that we must be aggressive towards others, or to let them treat us badly because we cannot say 'No'.
- **Pessimism:** Pessimistic people see things worse than they are in reality and that prevents them from seeing the possible solutions and opportunities presented before them.
- **Too many commitments:** Everyone reacts differently to stress. Some can withstand pressure more while others can withstand them less. The undertaking of more responsibilities than one can handle becomes a source of stress.

Yogic Concept

As discussed earlier likes and dislikes come to play at this level. They start governing our actions; often they take the wrong perception. Going against what is right causes agitations. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called '*Adhis*' or Stress. Preponderance of *Ajñana* (Ignorance about one's real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions, such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges at untimely hours, association with the wicked, dwelling evil thoughts, inflicting injuries, etc.

6.9 Role of Yoga – Stress and Life Style Management

Role of Yoga in stress management

According to The *Bhagavad Gītā*, we constantly think about sensory objects this becomes the main cause of emotional instability. (BG 2.62 and 2.63). This invariable thinking gives rise to *kāma* (desires), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), and *moha* (attachment) with worldly things and causes stress in an individual. In modern terms, the continuation of life depends on the ability of an organism to maintain a state of dynamic equilibrium or homeostasis. Unwanted forces, the stressors, constantly disturb homeostasis; the state of a threatened homeostasis is called stress. A complex set of behavioural and physical reactions, the adaptive response, is employed by the organism to re-establish balanced physiological conditions. (George, Fink Ed., 2010) Severe and chronic stress may cause several problems like the lowering of work-efficiency, lowered resistance to new stressor, and poor concentration and memory. This may cause various psychosomatic disorders too. However, yogic remedy for stress is to adapt yogic principles in our day to day living. These *yogic* principles are related to *ahāra* (food), *vibhāra* (relaxation and recreation), *acāra* (conduct and attitudes), and *vicāra* (thinking) and *vyavahāra* (actions). In other words, one should have right *yogic* food, right activities for recreation, right attitudes and emotions and right thinking and right actions. This can make a person stress-free and overall healthy. Specific *yogic* practices have proven to help in stress management. One of such techniques, is Cyclic Meditation, popularly known as Self Management of Excessive Tension (SMET).

Cyclic meditation consists of alternating cycles of practicing yoga postures interspersed with periods of supine rest. The basis for this practice is an

idea drawn from the ancient text the *Mandukya Upanishad*. The key features of cyclic meditation are (i) postures interspersed with relaxation, (ii) slowness in movements, (iii) continuity, (iv) inner watchful awareness, (v) feeling of changes in breathing, heartbeat, blood flow and the resonance of sound, and (vi) recognition of linear, surface, three-dimensional and all pervasive awareness (Dr. Nagendra, H.R., and Dr. Nagaratna, R., 1997). The underlying idea is that for most persons the mental state is routinely somewhere between the extremes of being ‘inactive’ or of being ‘agitated’; hence, to reach a balanced, relaxed state the most suitable technique would be one which combines ‘awakening’ and ‘calming’ practices. In cyclic meditation, the period of practising yoga postures constitutes the ‘awakening’ practices, whereas periods of supine rest comprise the ‘calming practices’. An essential part of the practice of cyclic meditation is being aware of sensations arising in the body (Dr. Nagendra H R and Dr Nagaratna R, 1997). The practice begins by repeating a verse (0:40 min) from the yoga text, the *Mandukya Upanishad* (Chinmayananda, 1984), followed by isometric contraction of the muscles of the body, ending with supine rest (1:00 min.); slowly coming up from the supine position, and then standing at ease (called *tadasana*) and ‘balancing’ the weight on both feet, called centering (2:00 min.); then the first actual posture, bending to the right (*ardhakaticakrasana*, 1:20 min.); with 1:10 min. in *tadasana* for instructions about relaxation and awareness; bending to the left (*ardhakaticakrasana*, 1:20 min.); 1:10 min. in *tadasana* as before; forward bending (*padahastasana*, 1:20 min.); another 1:10 min.; backward bending (*ardhacakrasana*, 1:20 min.); and slowly coming down in the supine posture with instructions to relax different parts of the body in sequence (10:00 min.). The postures were practiced slowly, with awareness of all the sensations felt. The total duration of the practice was 22:30 min. (Sarang & Telles, 2006). Whole-

night polysomnographic measures has showed that practising cyclic meditation twice a day appeared to improve the objective and subjective quality of sleep on the following night. (Patra, S., and Telles, S., 2009). Cyclic Meditation brought about a greater improvement in performance in cognitive task, which requires selective attention, concentration, visual scanning abilities, and a repetitive motor response. (Sarang S.P., and Telles, S., 2007). Intervention contributed significantly to the enhancement of emotional competence level of the managers. (Kumari, S., Nath, N.C.B., and Nagendra, H.R., 2007). CM reduces the energy expenditure (Sarang, S.P., and Telles, S., 2006). It also reduces Oxygen consumption (Sarang, P. S., and Telles, S., 2006) has been shown by parasympathetic activation indicative of relaxation. (Vempati, R. P., and Telles, S., 2000). A cyclical combination of yoga postures and supine rest in CM improved memory scores immediately after the practice and decreased the state of anxiety. (Subramanya, P., and Telles, S., 2009).

Effect of Yoga on Positive Health

The benefit of yoga on individuals’ glucose levels, suffering from diabetes, and other chronic health conditions is immense. The symptoms of mental illness as well as of anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder are highly relieved by effective benefits of yoga. On making a comparison between results of studies related to the effects of yoga, and exercises on both healthy and disease segments of population, yoga gives much better positive results as compared to other physical exercises, and it also improves a variety of health-related outcome measures, which includes HRV (Heart Rate Variability), blood glucose, blood lipids, salivary cortisol, and oxidative stress. The subjective measures of fatigue, pain, and sleep in both healthy and ill populations improve more with the practice of yoga.

Research findings

A single month of integral yoga practices consisting of *Yogasana*, *Pranyama*, Meditation and lectures imparts significant benefits to healthy volunteers in all psychological and health variables. It improves sustained attention and the Emotional Quotient. It improves the personality of the healthy person by increasing sattva and decreasing rajas and tamas. It also improves all dimensions of general health. (Sushil, S.Khemka, Nagendra, Hongasandra Ramarao, and Alex Hankey, 2011). Yoga increases quality of life and spinal flexibility better than physical therapy exercises. (Tekur, P., Chametcha, S., Hongasandra, R.N., and Raghuram, N., 2010). The results suggested a possible role of yoga in improving the quality of life and in giving relief to the patients suffering with breast cancer. (Vadiraja, H. S., et al. 2009). Yoga reduces perceived stress and improves adaptive autonomic response to stress in healthy and pregnant women. (Maharana, S., Nagendra, H. R., Nagarathna, R., and Padmalatha, V., 2009). Breathing through the left nostril increased performance in a spatial cognitive task (Joshi, M., and Telles, S., 2008). Long-term yoga practice (for 1 year or more) is associated with increased insulin sensitivity and attenuates the negative relationship between body weight or waist circumference and insulin sensitivity. (Chaya, M.S., et. al. 2008). A significant improvement in the yoga group compared to the physical training group was speculated to be related to lower anxiety levels which have been proven to be associated with better visual perception. (Raghuraj, P., and Telles, S., 2003).

Role of Yoga in Life management

The golden rule according to The *Bhagavad Gita* is *niyatam sanga-rabitam arāga-dreshataḥ kṛtam aphala-prepsunā karma yattat sātvikamucyate* (BG 18.23)

The four *karma yoga* rules as discussed in The *Bhagavad Gita* 18. 23.



Fig. 6.3: *Upanishad*

niyatam – regulated practice

sāṅga-rabitam – without attachment

arāga-dreṣṭataḥ kṛtam – with equilibrium

aphala-prepsunā – detachment to the fruits of action.

Everyone in the world seeks pleasure, but it is strange to see that the majority has never cared to go into this secret of life. Happiness is never in any object, achievement or person in life. It is the subjective essence of all. It is extremely important to open the inner gates of joy, thereafter there will be a subjective revolution in life. Further, we learn from the *Bhagavad Gita* that the essence of one is the essence of all. Know that each soul is potentially divine and free from all sense of limitations. The experience of knowing one's self is the experience beyond description. It is verily total contentment. The cancer of selfishness and egocentric existence is rooted out completely thereafter. Any person who sees the above facts of life, and also assimilates this knowledge, shall certainly root out the very cause of stress. Any other methodology is a compromise; it is only a temporary cure, or a first aid.

The thrust in most of the stress workshops is only in facilitating the release of 'pent-up emotions' and not to provide any plan of action to guarantee that the emotions will not be repressed in the first place. The *Bhagavad Gita* provides a holistic approach

in this regard. Before facing the situation, charge your mind with positive thoughts and emotions, know your stress symptoms and stressors. Learn the ways to release emotional and how to lead an intense life; learn to 'let go' and relax; cultivate positive qualities such as not getting swept away by the surge of an emotion, not losing your cool because of someone else's fault, or see all egocentric actions to be the cause of all negativities etc. Yet another emotional competency to learn is Self - Realization. It further means emotional maturity, which constitutes evaluating one's emotions, identifying and expressing feelings and balancing the states of heart and mind. This is a state where an individual recognises his inner self and responds accordingly.



SUMMARY

- Psychology in the light of Yoga is rooted in philosophical studies. Psychology began as the study of soul, then mind, then consciousness, and then turned to the study of observable behaviour. Today, it is the science of both behaviour and mental processes.
- To the ancients, yoga was a complete system of which the postures were a small, though quite useful part.
- Behaviour is the action or reaction of a person in response to external or internal stimuli.
- Psychologists analyze behaviour from two points of view: *Overt* and *Covert*.
- Consciousness has been defined as a state or quality of awareness. It has emerged as a field of psychology only in recent times though some of its concerns have their roots in religion, mysticism and occultism.
- Stress imposes certain demands on the individual which he/she finds difficult to deal with. Consistent failure in meeting these demands of the stressors creates mental stress in the individual.
- Psychosomatic disorders originate in the psyche or mind, and result in ailments in the soma or the body. Most often, psychosomatic diseases are caused by stresses. The interconnection between the mind and body was proposed by several ancient healing methods.
- Mental health and mental hygiene are related to each other. Mental hygiene is the means and mental health is the end. Mental health to a great extent depends on a sound physical hygiene.
- Criteria of mental health differ from society to society. Consistency in behaviour is one of the important characteristics of sound mental health. The fulfilment of four basic needs, like physical security, emotional security, achievements and status is essential for having good mental health. "Know thyself" is sound mental hygiene.
- Prayer is important in a healthcare context simply because it is used so widely.
- The psychosocial environment refers to the culture and climate of the workplace. Problems that occur in one's psychosocial functioning can be referred to as "psychosocial dysfunction" or "psychosocial morbidity."
- Stress is a fact of modern life. Learning to live and get ahead today is not possible without stress. Anything that brings on the feelings of stress is called a stressor. Yoga has recently been found to have beneficial effects on blood glucose levels in individuals with diabetes, and other chronic health conditions.



KEYWORDS

Stress: Stress is defined as a response of the individual when he/she finds that the demands made upon him/her are greater than his/her resources to handle the same.

Behaviour: Behaviour is an activity which can be observed, recorded and measured; this includes first what living beings or organisms do – that is their movement in space.

Psychosomatic Disorders: Psychosomatic disorders are diseases caused by stress or they are somatic symptoms and signs that are not linked to any specific physiological dysfunction.

Mental Hygiene: It is a science which deals with the process of attaining mental health and preserving mental health in the society.

Santosha: *Santosha* means to feel happy and contended.

Tapa: *Tapa* is voluntarily accepted austerities, penances and vows.

Shauca: *Shauca* means to observe cleanliness and purity of thoughts, words and deeds.

Swadhyaya: *Swadhyaya* is the study of one's Self, the pure Self.

Ishwarapranidhana: *Ishwarapranidhana* means to surrender to Ishwara.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. Define stress. Identify the major stressors in life and the usual responses to them.
2. “Frustration and conflict pervade human living”. Explain.
3. Write down the types of conflicts. Explain how conflicts and frustration lead to stress.
4. What is the relationship between mind and body?
5. Mention the desirable ways of coping with stress.

Long Questions

1. What is mental hygiene? Write down the role of yoga in mental hygiene.
2. What is mental health? Explain the characteristics of mental health.
3. Discuss the ways in which yoga will lead to mental health.
4. Prayer and meditation are helpful for mental health. Discuss in detail.
5. Explain the relevance of *Yamas* and *Niyamas* in the context of mental health.



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CHAPTER 7

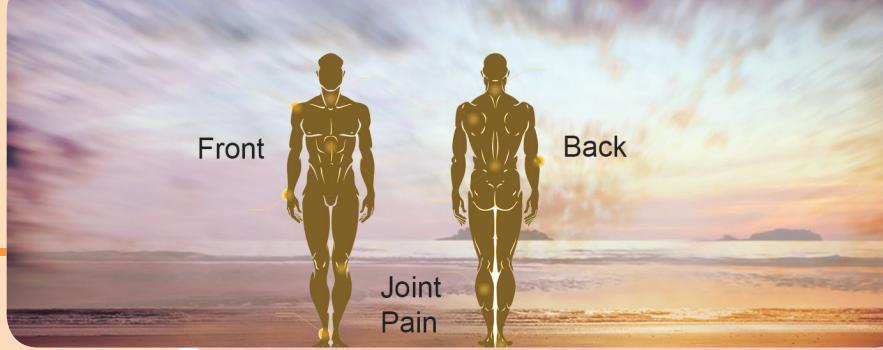
FAMILIARITY WITH BODY JOINTS AND VYAYAMA





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 7.1 Movement of Key Joints
 - 7.2 *Sukshma Vyayama*
 - 7.3 *Shat Kriyas*
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Reading



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the movement of key joints of the body while doing *yogasanas*
- Discuss the importance of *sukshma vyayama*
- Understand the details of *shat kriyas*



Introduction

Movement of joints in an individual's body is useful for learning yoga. Human body has various joints which require movements and lubrication. Lubrication is supplied by the food that we consume every day and movements in joints are provided by yoga, and other activities. In our day- to-day life, some of the joints in our body are rarely used and some of them are overused which may result in creating problems at the later phase of life. Therefore, basic movements in joints are essential in order to maintain them in healthy and proper condition.

Doing yoga does not make any changes in our fluids but it helps in circulating our fluids around all the joints in the whole of our body. This helps in keeping the joints supple, healthy and strong. As blood in our body circulates in veins, arteries and lymphs around all cells through the spaces, they help in cleansing it of metabolic by-products the blood gets replenished with nutrient and oxygen. The practice of yoga helps in developing the mind and body as a whole, though it is not a substitute for any medicine.

As a daily practice, adoption of yoga makes the body mentally and physically fit. It is a way of living a healthy life, which is natural and free from all side effects. It improves the quality of life and restores strength and energy in the body.

7.1 Movement of Key Joints

In the joints of our body two or more than two bones are connected with one another etc. they which help us to swing, turn and bend our head, torso and limbs. These movements in our body help us in making the various poses of yoga. But these joints are vulnerable to many injuries. Hence, it is important to understand the benefits of performing yoga so as to prevent and heal the joint injuries.

By improving flexibility and toning the muscles, yoga makes sure that joints work smoothly in all our movements and activities. *Yogasanas* help in maintaining the balance of strengthening and stretching which lengthens ligaments, tendons and muscles. Regular routine of yoga helps in preventing conditions, such as osteoarthritis in which the cartilage protects the joint to deteriorate. Repetition of exercise will help in squeezing nutrients and blood in the cartilage in order to be healthy and compresses body joints.

One of the first and foremost advantages of yoga is that it improves flexibility. The body continuous practice of yoga loosen the muscles as well as connective tissues which are adjacent to the joints and bones. This is the main reason why yoga helps in reducing pains and aches. Yoga assists in maintaining the strength of the muscles and building the muscle mass which help in protecting them from conditions, like back pain, osteoporosis and arthritis. According to various studies, meditation and *asana*, or a combination of these two help in reducing pain in chronic conditions, back pain and arthritis.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is universal and same for everyone.

This is yet another popular misconception. Each body is different, so are the needs of every individual. All the *asanas* can be modified, to a certain extent, keeping in mind the requirements of each person.

Bones

The most essential part of our body that forms the structural framework is the bones, which consist of blood vessels, cells, connective tissues, and calcium salts. These have different sizes and shapes and are acted upon by the muscles. Thus, the shape of the bones reflects their respective functions. There are different kinds of bones in our body which are as follows:

Flat Bones

- These bones have a protective function. For example the bones of the skull.
- They give wide surfaces for muscular attachment as the shoulder blades.

Long Bones

- These bones are found in the limbs.
- These bones act as levers for locomotion and support.
- Short bones function for compactness and strength.

Daily practice of yoga helps in strengthening of bones as it involves weight-bearing exercises in different directions.

Joints and Ligaments

Bones are connected with one another with the help of joints. Few joints are unbending like the sacroiliac joint which have either little movement or no movement at all. While other joints may allow bones to form levers and move freely that pivot or hinge with one another. Such joints are known as synovial joints as they have synovial fluid that permits them either to move or glide against one another, and lubricates the opposite surfaces. There are various types of synovial joints, such as:

- Hinge joints

- Ball as well as socket joints (bi-axial and multi-axial)
- Gliding joints
- Pivot joints
- Saddle joints

The place where bones articulate, in fact they do not touch one another. Cartilage covers the articulating surfaces which allow the movement in joints and helps in protecting the bone. Also, cartilage absorbs the fluids which lubricate the body joint. Thus, this helps in keeping the fluid from dissipating.



Example

Following are the examples of various kinds of joints:

- **Hinge**
 - ❖ Elbow, knee.
 - ❖ This type of joint permits a wide range of movement in only one plane.
- **Multi-Axial Ball and Socket**
 - ❖ Shoulder and Hip joint
 - ❖ This joint permits movement in all planes that it allows a wide range of movement and rotation.
- **Bi-Axial Ball and Socket**
 - ❖ Wrists, jaws and fingers that are among the proximal row and radius of the carpal bones
 - ❖ This joint permits movements without any rotation in two planes.
- **Gliding**
 - ❖ Spine, wrists carpal bones
 - ❖ This joint allows less gliding movement where bones glide past with one another.
 - ❖ This bone joint is characterized by the two flat bony surfaces that butt against one another.
- **Pivot:**
 - ❖ Top of the neck (rotation of the radius at the radioulnar joint)
 - ❖ This joint allows rotational movement around a long axis.
 - ❖ Here bones can twist or spin around other bones.
- **Saddle**
 - ❖ Thumb
 - ❖ This joint allows ball as well as socket movement with very less rotation, that is from side to side and back and forth.



Caution

Postures that involve excessive bending of the knee can be hard on the joints and aggravate a knee condition.



Did You Know?

An exercise helps in strengthening the joints by keeping the muscles resilient around body joints in order to build strong joint stability. Thus, strengthening of joints refers to strengthening of the muscles that support the joints.

All joints in our body are bound together through muscles and ligaments which connect one bone to another ligaments get torn because of too much stress on joints occurring in case of sometimes due to ankle and knee injuries. Muscles in our body are attached to cartilage and bones through ligaments or tendons. Muscles make movement by contracting. Therefore, muscles may function as motors, and bones as levers. A tendinous fibre which connects underlying structures and skin to the muscles is called Fascia. The terms “origin” and “insertion” indicate the place where the bones are attached by muscles for the most common joint movement.

- “Origin” of the muscle is on the bone which is relatively stationary.
- “Insertion” of the muscle is on the bone which most often moves.

For example: In the flexion of the elbow, forearm is mostly moved. Therefore, biceps as well as the triceps mostly take their origin from the upper shoulder and arm, then insert on the forearm.

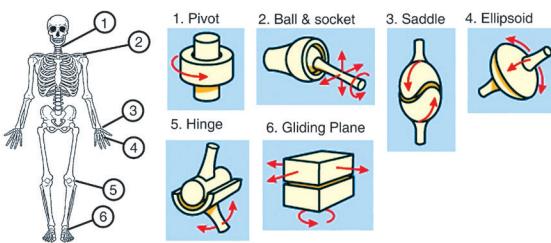


Fig. 7.1: Various Body Joints

Neck Joint

The part of the spine which is found inside the neck is known as the cervical spine. This is more susceptible to injury. Other parts of the spine are protected from every injury as they are surrounded by the torso. Cervical spine is enclosed with a few ligaments and muscles, but it is essential to have a wide range of motion. Many people experience neck strain because of prolonged or repetitive neck flexion or extension which mainly occurs due to:

- Wrong posture while standing or sitting
- Cradling a mobile/phone between ear and shoulder
- Awkward position while sleeping

You can minimize the strain by gradually stretching and strengthening the muscles of the neck. While doing this, it is important to note that you should not roll your head while stretching your neck.

Shoulder Joint

The body's most movable joint is the shoulder.

Each of these contributes to shoulder and arm movement via a process known as joint “coupling.”



Caution

Shoulder joint is considered as a ball and socket joint but the socket part of the joint, Glenoid Fossa, is not as deep as that of the hip joint. This puts the joint at a greater risk for acute and severe injuries.

Shoulder work is a foundation for nearly all poses of *Hatha Yoga*. Pain in upper portion of the back stems from the tendency to slump in the spine and also around the shoulders. This slump may cause the blades of the shoulder to slide away from the spine which may causes weakening of muscles. Ultimately, these muscles get harden into tough bands in order to protect them from such continuous strain.

The pain in the upper portion of the back is reduced marginally by having common shoulder stretches. But sometimes this can make the problem worse. This happens when we focus on pain without addressing its main causes. Main cause of slumping is usually found in the front part of our body which lies in the upper chest of the shoulder area.

Stiffness in the muscles of the upper chest pulls the shoulders both down as well as forward, through rotating the upper portion of the arms inwards. Thereby, the most insistent reason of chronic back pain in the upper portion can be lessened through releasing the tension in muscles.



Notes

Most of the problems in the shoulder are due to a rupture in soft tissues. Excessive use of shoulder can break the soft tissues faster as we get older.



Did You Know?

The purpose of warming up is to increase the temperature and improve circulation of joint structures and muscles so as to make movement of the body easier, less stiff along with minimizing the injury risk. The body will feel relaxed and somewhat warmer, if a person is successful in doing a warm-up. A person can do stretching after every session of an exercise to cool down. Many people like to do stretching only after their warm-up.



Did You Know?

Vyayama can be broken up into three or four 10-minute sessions per day. *Vyayama* (moderate intensity), if it is done on most days of the week, is proved to be one of the most effective exercise. However, doing *vyayama* once or twice per week is better than doing no *vyayama* at all.



Notes

Most symptoms of sciatica can be alleviated and usually, entirely prevented by a consistent, safe, intelligent and therapeutic yoga practice.

Trunk Joint

The body where the femur, the thighbone, meets pelvis, the hip bone, makes a hip joint of a person.

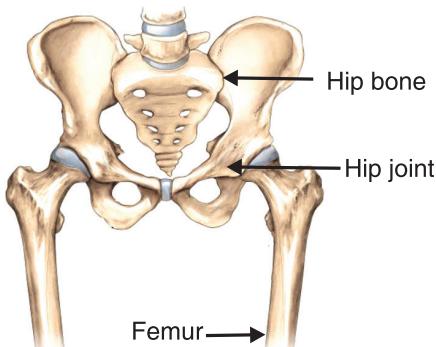


Fig. 7.2: Joints between the Verebrae and the Hip Joints

The hip joint is a movable and flexible part of the body. Motion takes place at the hip point where both the pelvis and femur move in relation to one other. You can find many movements at hip joint which includes:

- **Hip extension:** In *shalabhasana*, when you move the thigh behind you

- **Hip flexion:** When you dive forward from *tadasana* to *uttanasana*.
- **Hip abduction:** Moving thigh out to the side such as back leg in warrior 2.
- **Hip adduction:** Moving the thigh towards your midline and when you make the pose of an eagle.
- Rotation both internal as well as external.

Ideally most of the motions are fluid. Sometimes, the movement of the hip joint is limited to one or more planes which makes us experience a “tight” hips.

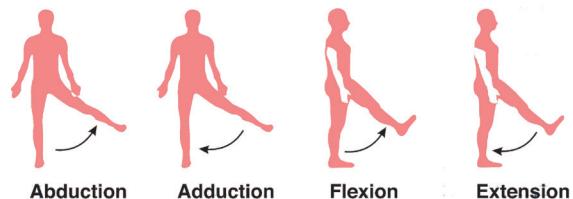


Fig. 7.3: Hip Joint Movement I

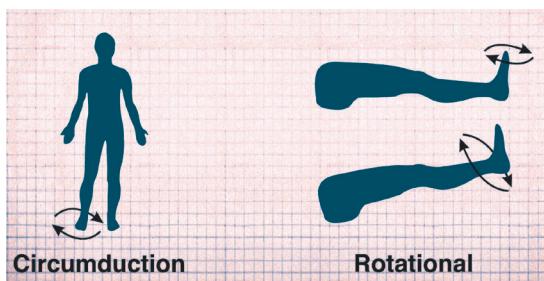


Fig. 7.4: Hip Joint Movement II



Notes

While standing when you bend forward, you are bending from your waist and this will contract your abdominal muscles only. And if you are bending from your hips then both your erector spinal muscles and abdominal muscles will contract (strengthen/use).

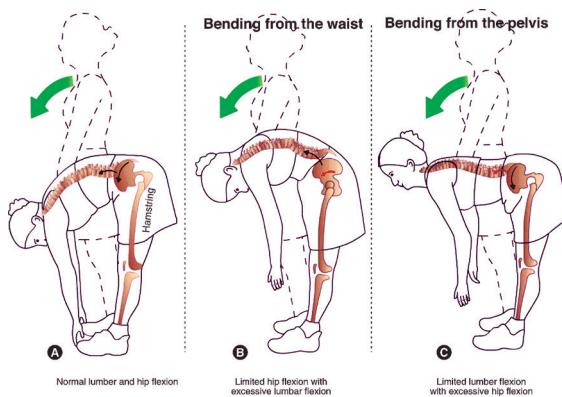


Fig. 7.5: Hip Joint Movement III

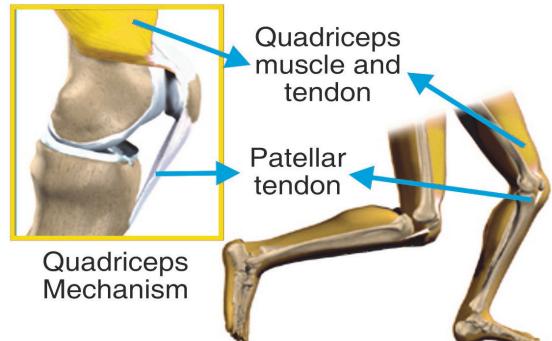


Fig. 7.7: Knee Joint II

Knee Joint

The main function of the kneecap in the femur is to slide along with a groove. So, in order to perform better, it has to move well and smoothly within that groove. In case, it is moving on “off track”, as it sometimes does, then it destabilizes the knee along with grinding away the cartilage underneath. This results in knee replacement surgery where many people think that its essential cartilages are “gone.” The fact about cartilage is that it can grow back and albeit slowly. In this, the major problem is that if imbalance pulls of muscles on the kneecap and is not corrected timely then it will continue to grind the cartilage down faster than the time it takes for the body to replenish it.

The reason why the kneecap goes off track is that it mainly lies in the quadriceps. Quadriceps is the group of 4 muscles which join above the knee into a single quadriceps tendon. Kneecap is attached and surrounded by this tendon. It continues down below the kneecap as the patellar ligament and is attached to the shin bone which is called tibia. The kneecap is passed by the quadriceps tendon just like a rope over a pulley. Like a pulley, kneecap enhances the quadriceps strength so as to straighten the leg by 30%. Kneecap is regarded as having one of the most significant mechanical functions. For leg straightening, both the kneecap and the quadriceps form the “extensor mechanism”. Misalignments arise where the “rope” of quadriceps exerts a sideways pull on the kneecap “pulley” which creates friction in this mechanism.

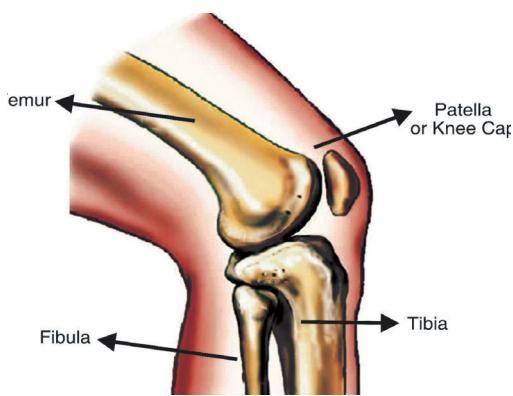


Fig. 7.6: Knee Joint I

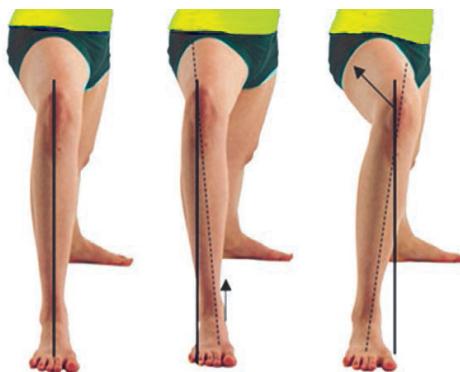


Fig. 7.8: Knee Joint III

Misalignment is get corrected by doing *Hatha Yoga* wherein standing poses are specifically effective. Misalignments in several *asanas* can increase the chance of imbalances which may result in an injury. It can sometimes worsen prevailing problems rather than improving them. Good alignment as well as accurate tracking is easy to attain once you are aware of what consideration has to be taken care of.

Ankle Joint

There are three bones which are involved while articulating the ankle -

- Tibia
- Fibula
- Talus

The longest bones are tibia and fibula which are found in the lower leg. The bone which is lateral to tibia and relatively thinner is fibula. Both these bones are tied together by the interosseous membrane and ligaments. The bone which is wedge-shaped is talus which fits into the mortise created by the tibia as well as fibula. The articulation of tibia, fibula and talus bones is maintained by muscular attachments, multiple ligamentous attachments, and a fibrous capsule.

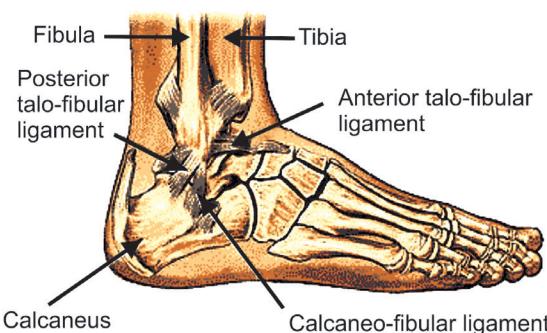


Fig. 7.9: Ankle Joint

Lateral part of the ankle joint is stabilized by three separate ligaments which are:

- Anterior talofibular
- Calcaneofibular
- Posterior talofibular ligaments

Mainly, the deltoid ligament is a ligament where most of the support derives from a collective group of ligaments.

7.2 Sukshma Vyayama

Sukshma Vyayama is the system of the physical and breathing exercises which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body, to warm it up. This system has a strong purifying effect on the energy of the body.

In this world, the oldest element in yoga which is unknown to many yoga schools today is *Sukshma Vyayama* which was propagated, designed and developed initially by *Maharshi Karthikeyaji Maharaj* of the Himalaya. He had great compassion and empathy for humanity and taught Swami Dharendra Brahmachari (1924-1994), who in turn propagated it across the modern world.

However, literature of the *Hatha Yoga* is full of references to the philosophical importance which is attached to the *Mudras* and *Bandhas*. Both in India and abroad, many of the yoga schools in the modern era have ignored comfortably this aspect maybe because of their own unfamiliarity with and ignorance of this particular subject. *Mudras* and *Bandhas* in fact are very complex. This can only be practiced by the modern yogis in the original form which is prescribed in the texts of yoga, such as *Siva Sambita* and *Hatha Pradeepika*.



Did You Know?

In *Sukshma Vyayama*, every little activity or movement releases the stress. A person can start understanding and experiencing the *prana* (energy) movement mechanism within himself/herself.

In the world, the most important and beautiful facet of *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is that it is the only system of exercises in which every body part, every muscle, joint and organ is taken into consideration. Here a specific exercise or even a set of exercises which is linked with a particular kind of breathing in a particular kind of position having particular point of mental concentration is recommended.

Therefore, firstly we cover the head which is at the top, then:

1. The neck
2. The shoulders, elbows, wrists, arms, fingers and toes
3. The trunk
4. The hip joint
5. The knees, ankles, foot and toes

Hence, the sequence mentioned above which actually covers from top to toe is something which is very exceptional in the whole world (past, present and perhaps the future too).

Thus, by its name *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is only applied to the subtle body (*Sukshma Sarira*) which is prescribed to the gross body (*Sthula Sarira*). One of the separate exercises which is successful in gross body is *Sthula Vyayama*.

Sukshma Vyayama is same as other gross exercises, like running and swimming, several cultural and physical exercises. However, *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is at a different footing. According to Indian traditional philosophy, it is only meant for those human beings who have a subtle body.

Following are the important components or features of *Sukshma Vyayama* –

1. Breathing
2. Concentration point
3. Actual exercise including motion (many times, yet not always)

Different kinds of breathing include - very deep, very light or even very fast, mostly through nose or at times through mouth. Thus, it is just a brief of *Sukshma Vyayama*.

Notes

There is no preparation or time required for *Sukshma Yoga*. Such less exercise accelerate subtle channels of energy. For example, in a session of 7 minutes, a person can feel an extremely palpable change.

The benefits of *sukshma yoga* are immense, direct and immediate. The following are some noteworthy points about *sukshma yoga*:

1. Preferably it must be carried out twice a day, that is both morning and evening, or can be done once a day in the morning
2. Can be done after bath if one takes a cold water bath, or before bath if one would take a warm water bath
3. Can be done before the intake of any type of food
4. Can be done on a comfortable surface
5. Can be done either indoors or in open air
6. Can develop extraordinary levels of faculties and capabilities both at the physical and mental levels for different traits of personalities.

For those who have maladies and problems of different kinds, *Sukshma Vyayama* alone is capable of curing and preventing maladies without taking the help of *kriyas*, *asanas* or *pranayama*. It enhances and improves the energy (*vigour*) level and different systems and organs in the human body strong.

Therefore, *Sukshma Vyayama* is nonetheless a minor exercise, which is done from toes to head. Whole series of joint movements is mentioned below.

Sukshma Vyayama from Head to Toe¹

A person must practice joint movements before doing any *asana* so as to make the body flexible and fit.

Greevasanchalana (Neck Movements)

Aim: To increase the flexibility of neck joints.

Precaution: A person who has problems in the neck, such as spondylitis must avoid bending forward.

Procedure: Following are the steps which need to be followed:

For *Greevasanchalana I* –

- Stand or sit in a relaxed posture
- Keep your neck straight
- Then gradually without jerk, bend your neck forward as much as you can
- Then come back to your normal and relaxed posture
- Then bend your neck backward
- Then back to normal
- Then to the right and to the left

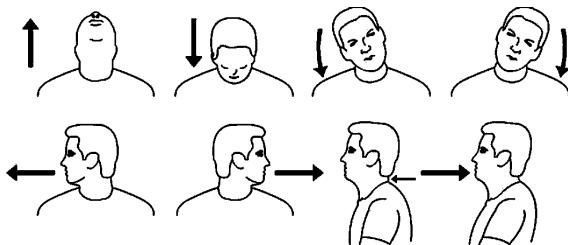


Fig. 7.10: *Greevasanchalana I*

For *Greevasanchalana II* –

- Keeping the neck straight
- Gradually without any jerk, rotate your neck clockwise from left shoulder to backwards and then to the right shoulder and to front

¹ Part of the information has been sourced from "Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar".

- Beginning from your right shoulder, start repeating this in anticlockwise direction

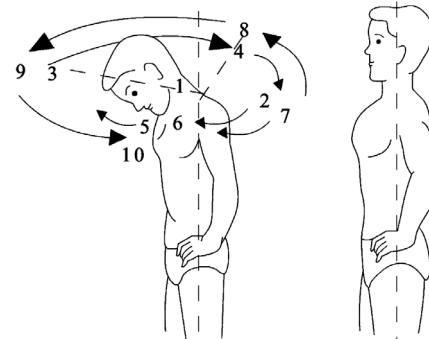


Fig. 7.11: *Greevasanchalana II*

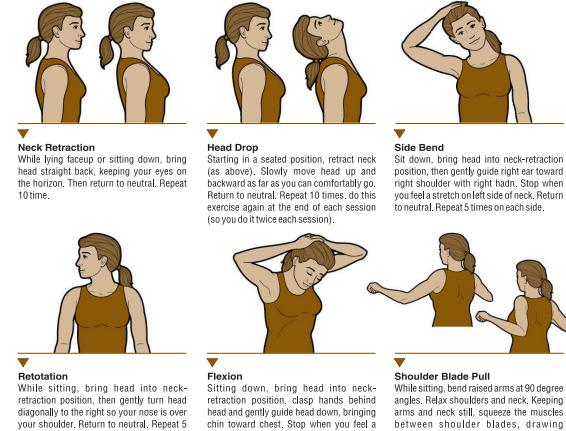


Fig. 7.12: Common Neck and Shoulder Stretches

Neck and Head Movements

1. Head

- ❖ Keep one hand on forehead while the other on the back.
- ❖ Then press your head five times.

2. Neck

- ❖ Firstly, your fingers must be interlocked. Then, place your fingers on the back of your neck. After that, push your neck in forward.
- ❖ Sit straight and take the neck first towards the right shoulder and then towards the

left shoulder. Subsequently, bend your neck forward so as to touch your chest with your chin. Then bend backwards as far as possible. Finally, rotate the neck in both directions.

- ❖ Placing the palms against the respective ears, press the head in between the palms 4-5 times.
- ❖ Interlock the fingers of the hand such that the palms are against the sides of the head, and the fingers are on top of the head. Now, press the head and release the same 4-5 times.

Skandhasanchalana (Shoulder Movements)

Aim: To increase the flexibility of shoulder joints.

Procedure: Following are the steps which need to be followed:

For *Skandhasanchalana I* –

- Stand or sit in a comfortable and relaxed posture
- Then, straighten your body with arms by your side
- Then, gradually without any jerk, lift both of your shoulders upwards, near your ears, as much as you can
- Finally, come back to your normal and relaxed posture

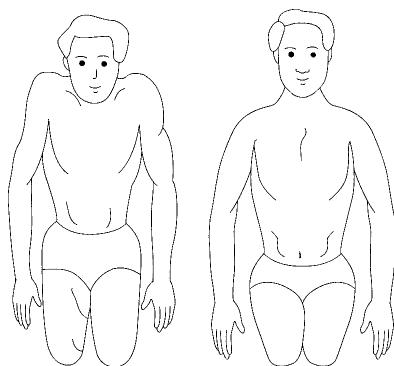


Fig. 7.13: *Skandhasanchalana I*

For *Skandhasanchalana II* –

- Firstly, your body must be straight
- Then, fold your hands. Place your left fist on your left shoulder and right fist on your right shoulder
- Then, bring together your elbows near your chest
- Then, gradually without any jerk, rotate both the arms in opposite directions that is left arm anticlockwise and right arm clockwise
- Now repeat this in reverse order Rotate the right arm anticlockwise and the left arm clockwise

Benefits: This position is effective for people suffering from back problems.

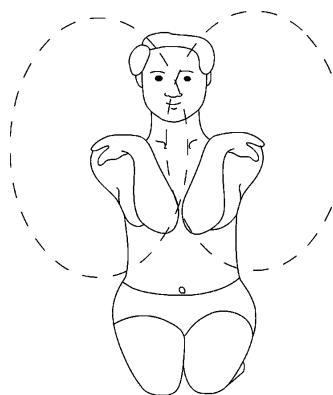


Fig. 7.14: *Skandhasanchalana II*

Elbow Movements

Place the palms on the shoulders and bring the elbows together in front of the chest. Now, separating the elbows, rotate each elbow separately so that the chest expands and contracts, the shoulder joints are completely exercised, and the neck muscles are also equally exercised.

1. Finger movements

- ❖ Make the hands into a fist form, hold tightly and then release.

- ❖ Bend and straighten each finger separately at the finger joints.



Fig. 7.15: Finger Movements

2. Wrist movements



Fig. 7.16: Wrist Movements

- ❖ With hands in fist form, thumb inside; rotate each wrist clockwise and anti-clockwise 5-10 times.

3. Elbow movements

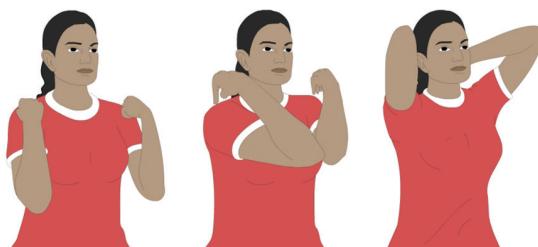


Fig. 7.17: Elbow Movements

- ❖ With both the hands stretched straight in front, slowly bend hands at your elbows and bring the fingertips to the shoulders. Repeat 5-10 times. This can be done keeping the hands separate or together.

4. Hand movements

- ❖ Place the hands straight in front of you with fingers in fist form and slowly rotate the hands keeping the elbows straight. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Hold the hands straight in front, palms facing downwards and slowly raise the hands up above your head and bring them down. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Holding the hands on the sides in line with each other, palms facing upwards, fold them at the elbows to bring the fingers touching the shoulders. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ By holding your hands in front place the palms facing each other. Now, breathe in and take the hands away from each other, in the process expanding the chest and taking the hands as much back as possible. Repeat this 5-10 times.
- ❖ Interlock the fingers of your hands at the back of your neck, elbows in line with each other. Now, breathe in and twist to the left side, elbows remaining in a straight line. Breathe out and revert to the starting position. Repeat it on the right side. Repeat 5-10 times.

Waist Movements

Stand with legs slightly apart. Place the palms on the respective waist and slowly start rotating the waist in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. Repeat 5-10 times in each direction.



Fig. 7.18: Waist Movements

Knee Movements

Stand comfortably with both the legs together. Now place your palms on the respective knees and slowly bring the buttocks slightly down. In this position, slowly rotate the knees together. A slightly different version involves the rotation of the knees with the knees going apart in opposite directions and then coming together.



Fig. 7.19: Knee Movements

Leg joint movements

- For the toes.
- Stretch one ankle and stretch the foot toes also. Now, bend the toes downwards and then take them upwards. Repeat with both feet.

Ankles and the total leg:



Fig. 7.20: Ankles and the Total Leg

- Press the soles of the feet and release while sitting.
 - Then, sit with both the legs stretching out in front. Fold your right leg at your knee and put your right ankle on your left thigh. Now hold your toes and the heel of your right leg and rotate your right ankle. Similarly, hold with one hand your right knee and your right ankle with another hand, and try to rotate the lower leg from the knee to the ankle. Do similarly with the left leg folded at the knee.
 - Sit down and stretch both your legs as wide apart as possible. Now raise both the hands up, upper arms touching the ears. Slowly turn towards the left side and bringing the trunk down, try to hold the left toes with both the hands, the forehead coming as close to the left knee as possible. Similarly, repeat this on the right side.
 - This involves rotation of the ankle joints one at a time either standing or sitting. The rotation should be done both, clockwise as well as anticlockwise. Further, the ankle joint can also be exercised by simultaneously stretching the toes as far away from the ankle joint as possible and bringing the toes as close to the shin as possible.
1. **For the legs:**
 - ❖ Stand comfortably with your palms at the respective waist sides. Now raise slowly your right leg up as much as you can by keeping your knees straight, then bring it back. Repeat the same with the other leg.
 - ❖ Stand comfortably with your palms at the respective waist. Now raise the right leg up and keeping the knees straight, rotate the right leg clockwise and anticlockwise. Repeat the same with the other leg.

2. For the knees:



Fig. 7.21: For the Knees

- ❖ First, sit down on the floor. Bring the soles of your feet together. Hold the toes with both the hands. Now make the movements of the knees up and down like the flapping of the butterfly wings.
- ❖ Stand comfortably with both the legs together. Now place your palms on the respective knees and slowly bring the buttocks slightly down. In this position, slowly rotate the knees together. A slightly different version involves rotation of the knees with the knees going apart in opposite directions and then coming together.
- ❖ The complex of *Sukshma Vyayama* exercises can be performed as a separate self-sufficient practice lasting one and a half or two hours, allowing the whole body to work out, or as a warm-up which will help loosen up the muscles and joints before the performance of *asanas*, and will make *Hatha Yoga* practice more effective.
- ❖ Uniqueness of *sukshma vyayama* is that it saves you from traumas and it is available to different categories of people, both for the young as well as for the elderly. Despite its simplicity, *sukshma vyayama* is

very effective and can be performed by both healthy and sick.



Example

If the condition of health does not allow a person to practice *asanas*, he can start with regular practice of *Sukshma Vyayama*, which can gradually help him to get rid of many illnesses. *Sukshma Vyayama* is an excellent practice for the beginners who will prepare themselves for more difficult practices, and also for experienced yogis who can raise efficiency of their practice.

Benefits of regular *Sukshma Vyayama* practice:

- Removes blocks and tightness of the muscles and strengthens them
- Increases flexibility of ligaments
- Increases body mobility and makes it flexible
- Develops coordination and equilibrium
- Improves blood circulation and metabolism
- Strengthens immunity
- Increases vital lung capacity
- Increases endurance
- Facilitates cleaning of *nadis*
- Activates energy centers (*chakras*)
- Prepares for the practice of more complex *asanas* and *pranayamas*



Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yet another misconception is that women who are pregnant must refrain from practising yoga. There are various *asanas* that have a specific assistance for a pregnant woman. Yoga helps to keep the mind and body of a pregnant woman comfortable and relaxed. So, it is important for any pregnant woman to take advise from a yoga instructor before doing any form of exercise.

7.3 Shat Kriyas

Shat Kriyas are designed to make human body both healthy and strong. In *Hatha Yoga*, they are also known as the six purification techniques.

- ‘*Shat*’ refers to six
- ‘*Kriya*’ refers to a technique or a method

Shat kriyas are regarded as the preliminary steps towards advanced practices of meditation, *pranayama* and *asanas*. The ancient Rishis identified the significance of healthy body for each and every activity whether spiritual or worldly. The main aim of *Hatha Yoga* is to make both mind and body fit for higher practices of the *Raja Yoga* (as explained in the text *Hatha Pradipika*).

There are six techniques in *Shat Kriyas* which while making body strong and clean, improve concentration, eliminate toxins and help in keeping our body free from diseases. Also, it can improve the movement of *prana* into the organs and that of the *pranic* meridians or *nadis* too. Following are the six techniques: –

- *Dhauti*
- *Basti*
- *Neti*
- *Trataka*
- *Nauli*
- *Kapalbhati*

All of the above techniques must be learned from a knowledgeable and an experienced instructor. Now, we will discuss each of these techniques briefly one by one.

1. ***Dhauti/Kunjal:*** *Vaman dhauti*, *danda dhauti* and *vastra dhauti* are the three popular *dhauti/kunjal kriyas*. They are practised in early morning with an empty stomach so as to clean the stomach. It is a technique of eliminating undigested food particles from the previous

day’s meal that stick to the stomach lining. They cause digestion problems. The person practising *kunjal* must drink about 1-1½ litres (In 1 litre of water adds one table spoon of salt approximately) warm saline water. Then he/she has to throw up the entire quantity of water. The best position to vomit is to bend over along with putting his/her 3 fingers at the tongue root. The vomit reflux is made by stimulating the tongue root which throws the salt water containing the impurities out of the stomach. This has to continue until all water has been thrown up.



Fig. 7.22: *Vaman Dhauti*

- ❖ Practitioner 1st boil the tube.
- ❖ Slowly drink saline water upto easy capacity.
- ❖ Insert tube in to your mouth upto stomach.
- ❖ Slowly inhale put pressure on abdominal ball.
- ❖ Bend forward, when pressure is created water will start flowing through tube as sifan will be created.
- ❖ When water stop, coming out take out tube washed fully in air out.

In *vastra dhauti*, a cotton cloth around 22 feet long is dipped first in the saline water. This is then carefully swallowed. After that, it is slowly pulled out. In this manner, it cleans the inner linings of both food pipe and stomach. All this must be done under the supervision of an expert.



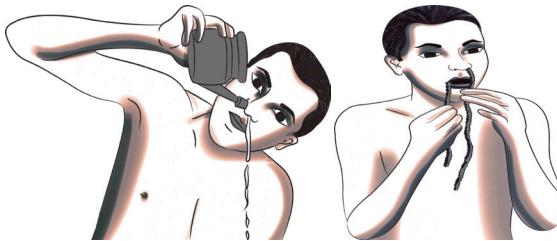
Fig. 7.23: *Vastra Dhauti*

2. **Basti:** *Basti* basically signifies the cleaning of the bowels (intestines). It nowadays corresponds to enema. While practising it, usually water is drawn in from the anus into the colon by contacting with abdominal muscles. In this process, the help of a rubber tube can also be taken. After that water has to be thrown out of the anus, thereby cleaning the colon of particles which may stick for a long period of time in the large intestine of human body. This is known as a yogi's "enema" method.

Another method in yoga of cleaning the intestine is known as '*Sankha Prakshalana*', which involves drinking slightly warm saline water, around 5 litres. This saline water does not get absorbed in the intestine. It rather pulls out toxins and waste from the intestinal walls and throws it out with the help of the rectum. Today, the most common practice is to perform the smaller

version of *Shanka Prakshalana* known as *Laghu Shanka Prakshalana*. In this, only 2 litres of saline water is taken. A person has to go to the toilet many times for example, 3 – 5 times until plain water is released from the rectum. Therefore, this helps in completely cleaning the intestinal tract.

3. **Neti:** *Jala neti* and *sutra neti* are the two common forms of *neti* practices. *Jala neti* is the procedure of cleaning the nasal by taking a small pot called *Neti* pot which has a long spout on one side, and is filled with warm saline water. Then the spout is put in the left nostril. The person who is practising it bends his head towards right side and allows the water from the left nostril into the nasal cavity, which is then released out from the right nostril. Again the pot is filled. This procedure is repeated by putting the spout in the right nostril and then tilting head towards the left side. This procedure cleans the sinus cavities and the nose. Therefore, this help in relieving sinusitis, allergies, migraine and mild headaches. With the help of a rubber catheter (*sutra*), *Neti* can also be performed which is known as *Sutra Neti*. In this, the catheter is put into one nostril and then it is pulled out from the throat as well as out of the mouth. The nostril passage is cleaned by using gentle motion of to and fro of the catheter tube. Same is repeated with the other nostril. Thus, both methods of *Neti* have the effect of desensitizing on the membranes in the nose, hence relieving rhinitis, allergies, and so on. Also, *Neti* stimulates few nerve centers in the upper passage of nasal. *Neti kriya* is performed as a *pranayama* practices preparation. *Jala neti kriya* must also be followed by the *kapalbhati*. It is done so that there is no remnant of saline water in the nasal cavities.

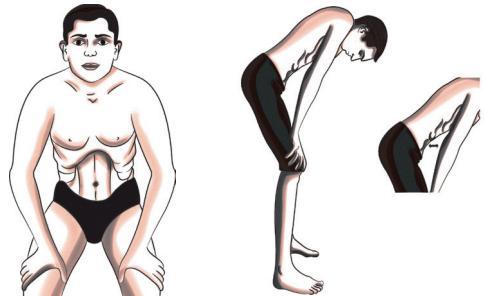
Fig. 7.24: *Jal Neti*Fig. 7.25: *Sutra Neti*

4. **Trataka:** Steady gazing on any object is called *trataka*. The two basic types of *trataka* are *antar trataka* and *bahya trataka*. It eradicates mental disturbances and develops memory power and concentration. It includes gazing steadily at a point. On a steady candle flame, Gazing is performed without blinking of eyes. Such practice helps in steadiness of mind and improves eyesight.

Fig. 7.26: *Trataka*

5. **Nauli:** The practice of churning the abdominal muscles by taking the 3 bulks of abdominal muscles in a sequence that is right, center and left and giving the impact of the abdomen being churned is called The *Nauli*. Also, rotation of the muscles is practiced both clockwise and anti-clockwise. This helps in removing digestive disorders along with toning up the entire organs in the abdomen. This practice may take a few

months for someone to become its master as it is regarded as a difficult practice for the beginners. This procedure includes isolating the abdominal muscles which is also known as the rectus abdominus muscle which is done on both sides of the abdomen and then using it to move and churn the organs internally. Thus, it helps in improving the functions of each and every organ of the abdomen. Four kinds of *Nauli* which should be practiced are *Vama Nauli* that is using left abdominal muscles, *Dakshina Nauli* that is using right abdominal muscles, *Madhya Nauli* that is using both left as well as right abdominal muscles and churning that is rotating of abdominal muscles both clockwise as well as anti-clock wise.

Fig. 7.27: *Nauli* (Front View) Fig. 7.28: *Nauli* (Side View)

6. **Kapalbhati:** *Kapalbhati* is technically known as frontal brain cleansing. It involves forceful rapid exhalation. In *kapalbhati*, we reverse the natural breathing pattern in which inhalation is active and exhalation is passive. However, many take *Kapalbhati* as a kind of *pranayama*. In the *Hatha Yoga* texts, its classification comes under the *Shat Kriyas*. *Kapalbhati* is regarded as one of the most powerful processes of cleansing, where the air is expelled forcefully from the lungs by taking out stagnant CO₂ (carbon dioxide) accumulated in the lower parts of the lungs. This procedure is

repeated for some rounds. *Kapalbhati* is one of the healing practices for several diseases. *Kapalbhati* is said to be an effective technique for reducing weight because it results in raising the Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) in the body.

Though *Kapalbhati* is considered as a *Kriya* in *Hatha Yoga* texts, but as it involves breathing, therefore it may be considered as a *Pranayama* practice. Incidentally, *Pranayama* is considered as *parama tapa*, i.e., the highest form of purification practice.



Fig. 7.29: *Kapalbhati*

The *Shat Kriyas* must be practised with the help of an experienced and knowledgeable yoga teacher/instructor. Daily practices can aid in maintaining good health. It can also purify the whole body.



Caution

While performing *Kunjal/Dhauti*, drink water in sitting posture. Lukewarm water with a little salt added to it should be preferred. *Kunjal* should also not be practised by persons suffering from high blood pressure, and any kind of heart disease.



SUMMARY

- The practice of yoga helps in developing the mind and body as a whole, though it is not a substitute for any medicine.
- *Yogasanas* help in strengthening and stretching ligaments, tendons and muscles.
- Joints are the places in our body where two or more than two bones are connected with one another joints help us to swing, turn and bend our head, torso and limbs.
- Bones are connected with each other with the help of joints.
- All joints in our body are bound together through muscles and ligaments which connect one bone to another bone.
- Shoulder joint is considered as a ball and socket joint but the socket part of the joint, Glenoid Fossa is not as deep as that of the hip joint.
- The movable and flexible part of the body is a hip joint.
- The main function of kneecap in the femur is to slide along with a groove.
- There are three bones which are involved while articulating the ankle – Tibia, Fibula and Talus.
- *Sukshma Vyayama* is the system of the physical and breathing exercises which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body, to warm it up.
- *Shat kriyas* are regarded as the preliminary steps towards advanced practices of meditation, *pranayama* and *asanas*.
- There are six techniques in *Shat Kriyas* - *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli* and *Kapalbhati*.



KEYWORDS

- **Asana:** A posture in *hatha yoga*.
- **Ligaments:** Ligaments are bundles of connective tissue that connect one bone to an adjacent bone.
- **Shat kriyas:** This includes six purification techniques in *Hatha Yoga* designed to make the body strong and healthy.
- **Sukshma vyayama:** It is a system of the physical practices which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body, to warm it up. This system has a strong purifying effect on energy body of a human.



3. What do you understand by *Greerasanchalana*?
4. Name the six purification practices in *Hatha Yoga*.
5. What is *neti kriya*? Write down its procedure.
6. Name the three popular *dhauti kriyas*.

Long Questions

1. Discuss the significance and benefits of *sukshma vyayama*.
2. Explain some *sukshma vyayama* for shoulder joints.
3. Discuss the significance and benefits of *shat kriyas*.
4. Discuss the benefits of *kapalbhati*.
5. Name the types of *trataka* and discuss the benefits of *trataka*.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS



Short Questions

1. What is the difference between bones, joints and ligaments?
2. Mention *sukshma vyayama* for neck joint.



FURTHER READING



Hatha Yoga texts – various authors

CHAPTER 8

SURYANAMASKAR AND ASANAS





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 8.1 Introduction to *Suryanamaskar* (The Sun Salutation)
 - 8.2 Technique of *Suryanamaskar* Practice
 - 8.3 *Asanas*
 - 8.4 Five Spinal Movements in Yoga
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the esoteric importance of *suryanamaskar*
- Learn the technique of *suryanamaskar* practice
- Grasp the technique of practising yoga *asanas* and identify their benefits
- Understand the different spinal movements related to *yoga asanas*



Introduction

Suryanamaskar and the *yoga asanas* are a blessing bestowed to mankind by the ancient sages who devised practical methods to tame the body and mind for higher spiritual and material pursuits. According to the sages, body and mind are interrelated. An unhealthy body will house an untamed mind. Hence, it makes sense to keep the physique healthy so that the mind is fit enough to succeed in all its good undertakings. *Yoga asanas* make that possible in a very scientific manner. Although it is important to learn the *asanas*, the practitioner must know the right technique and contra-indications of *asana* practice as well. This chapter discusses the advantages of doing *Suryanamaskar* and then it goes on to describe different *asanas* and movements of the spine.

8.1 Introduction to Suryanamaskar (The Sun Salutation)

The *Suryanamaskar* or offering salutations to the Sun, is practised in early morning or evening, facing the Sun. The Sun is the revered and celebrated deity for a healthy and long life. Being immensely radiant, and a life-giving force on Earth, the Sun is the representation of the invisible Supreme Power that nurtures and sustains the universe.

A well-balanced growth of the body and mind alone is an essential prerequisite for a human being to live in the world in peace, and fulfil his or her aspirations. According to the sages of ancient India, a sickly body makes it impossible for the mind to reach the higher realms. In other words, a diseased body is a serious obstacle in the path of spiritual development. A healthy and strong body, housing an undeveloped or diseased mind, is not helpful either. A healthy body and a keen mind, with the inner spirit in deep slumber are like a castle of sand prone to destruction by the gushing waves of the sea. What is ideal is to strive for balanced development of the body, mind and spirit to achieve perfection. *Suryanamaskar* is a great tool to realize this goal.

Suryanamaskar is a well-devised mixture of *yoga asanas* and breathing practices. Before practitioners undertake the practice of advanced yogic postures and breathing exercises in *pranayama*, the spine and body muscles should be flexible enough. The series of postures in *Suryanamaskar* reduce visceral fat, bring flexibility to the spine and limbs, and also enable the practitioner to breathe right.

All in all, there are twelve postures each stretching various ligaments and giving different movements to the vertebral column. The vertebral column is bent forward and backward alternately with deep inhalation and exhalation of breath and a little of retention of breath in some cases. Whenever the body is bent forward, the contraction of

the abdomen and diaphragm, throws out the breath. When the body bends backward, the chest expands and deep inhalation occurs automatically. In this way the body becomes flexible and the lungs begin to function which results in correct breathing. In addition, the mild but effective postures boost circulation of blood. At the same time, the sun's life-giving rays play on the man's body, sucking away the toxins along with perspiration invigorating circulation and imparting life to the human organism – the life which the sun alone can give. The life-giving *Suryanamaskar* exercises renders the inflexible muscles and spine of a person devoid of any stiffness.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is believed that *Suryanamaskar* should be practised only during day time facing the sun but the fact is that it is not mandatory to practice *Suryanamaskar* before the morning sun. Busy office-goers and other people can also practise it at any time of the day, or in the evening on an empty stomach.

Thus, *Suryanamaskar* is a boon for the mankind to attain perfect harmony between the body, mind and spirit.



Did You Know?

In different schools of yoga, *suryanamaskar* is practised differently.

8.2 Technique of Suryanamaskar Practice¹

It is customary, though not mandatory, for every practitioner to offer a prayer to the Divine before commencing the *Suryanamaskar* practice;

¹ The 12 poses mentioned to be verified.

because as the wise ones say, it is the Divine Grace that makes any positive endeavour a success.

Prayer to the Sun

*“Om Suryam Sundaralokanathamamritam
 Vedantasaram Sivam,
 Jnanam Brahmmayam Suresamamalam
 Lokaikachittam Svayam;
 Indradityanaradhipam Suragurum
 Trailokyachudamanim,
 Brahmavishnusivasvarupahridayam Vande Sada
 Bhaskaram.”*

Meaning: I always adore *Surya*, the Sun, the bright Lord of the World, the Immortal, the auspicious, the absolute knowledge, of the form of *Brahman*, the Lord of the gods, ever-pure, the one who is true consciousness of the world itself, the Lord of *Indra*, the gods and men, the preceptor of the gods, the crest-jewel of the three worlds, the very heart of the forms of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, the giver of light.

Besides, the practitioner should mentally chant the *mantra* associated with every *asana* of *Suryanamaskar*.

Note: Chanting of mantras is not mandatory in the performance of *Suryanamaskar*.



Caution

While practising *Suryanamaskar*, one's movements should be slow and not jerky. The breathing should be steady and rhythmic. Forceful inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath strains the lungs and should be avoided.

Posture No. 1: If working out in the morning, stand at the edge of your mat facing the sun with folded hands in the prayer pose. Keep the legs together and stand straight. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.1: *Pranamasana*

Chant: *Om Mitraya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is affectionate to all)

Posture No. 2: Keeping the palms in the prayer position, slowly inhale and raise the arms above the head. Stretch the arms backwards as much as you can. The inhaling and raising of hands should be in unison. As you progress, tilt the pelvic slightly forward. Make sure that you are reaching up with your fingers when you bend backwards. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.2: *Hastottanasana*

Chant: *Om Ravaye Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the cause of all changes)

Posture No. 3: Slowly exhale and bend forward till the palms are kept flat in line with the feet. Touch the knees with your head keeping the legs straight without bending. In the beginning, you may bend the knees to bring the palms down to the floor, or you may touch your feet with the finger tips in the final posture. But after practising for a few days, make a gentle effort to keep the legs straight. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.3: Padahastanasana

Chant: Om Suryaya Namah (Prostration to Him who induces activity)

Posture No. 4: After slow and deep inhalation, push your right leg back in a long backward step and gently place your right knee on the floor. Keep the hands and the left foot firmly on the ground without moving sideways; raise the head, and look upward. The left knee should be between the hands in the final Posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.4: Vama Asvasancalanasana

Chant: Om Bhanave Namah (Prostration to Him who diffuses Light)

Posture No. 5: Exhale, lift the hips and the tail bone up, chest downward in an ‘inverted V’ posture. Try as much as possible to keep your heels in contact with the floor. Look towards the navel or your knees in the final Posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.5: Parratasana

Chant: Om Khagaya Namah (Prostration to Him who moves in the sky)

Posture No. 6: Exhaling slowly, lower the body and let eight limbs of the body—two toes, two knees, two hands, chest and chin—touch the floor. The abdominal region is to be kept slightly raised. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.6: Sashtangaasana

Chant: Om Pushne Namah (Prostration to Him who nourishes all)

Posture No. 7: While inhaling, slowly raise your head and bend the spine backward as much as possible. You may keep the elbow bent for a few days of practice. Look up toward the sky or the ceiling in the final posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.7: *Bhujangasana*

Chant: *Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who contains everything)

Posture No. 8: Exhale, lift the hips and the tail bone up, chest downward in an ‘inverted V’ posture. Try as much as possible to keep your heels in contact with the floor. Look towards the navel or your knees in the final posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 8.8: *Parvatasana*

Chant: *Om Marichaye Namah* (Prostration to Him who possesses rays)

Posture No. 9: Inhale and bring the right foot along the level of the hands. The right foot and knee should touch the ground. Look forward (Same as Posture No. 4).



Fig. 8.9: *Dakshina Aśvaśāñcalanāsana*

Chant: *Om Adityaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the son of *Adithi*)

Posture No. 10: Exhale, bring the right leg also forward and come back to Posture No. 3.



Fig. 8.10: *Padahastanasana*

Chant: *Om Savitre Namah* (Prostration to Him who produces everything)

Posture No. 11: Inhale and raise the hands overhead and bend backwards as in Posture No. 2.



Fig. 8.11: *Hastottanasana*

Chant: *Om Arkaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is fit to be worshipped)

Posture No. 12: Slowly bring your hands as in the first posture. Exhale and relax in *Pranamasana*.

Fig. 8.12: *Pranamasana*

Chant: *Om Bhaskaraya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the cause of all lustre)



Notes

Suryanamaskar prepares the body for *asana* practices. Hence, it should be performed by the practitioner before the *yoga asanas*.

These 12 poses repeated twice make one round of *Suryanamaskara*.

After completing *Suryanamaskar* practice, lie down flat on the ground on your back and relax each and every limb one by one from the toes to the crown of the head. This is called *Shavasana* (the corpse pose). If one feels tired or nauseous after a few rounds, the practitioner may stop with that and increase the number gradually (one every day or every two days), while ensuring that the body does not undergo any discomfort during the practice. The number may be increased according to each one's capacity. Advanced and physically fit practitioners are capable of doing 108 rounds of *Suryanamaskar* at a stretch without much strain.



Caution

Generally, *Suryanamaskar* should not be practised by people suffering from acute case of high blood pressure, hernia, heart diseases, and those who have had a stroke. People with back problems should practise it after consulting a yoga expert. It should not be practised during fever and inflammation. *Suryanamaskar* should be avoided during menstruation as well.

8.3 Asanas

The practice of *yoga asanas* purifies, heals and strengthens the psycho-physiological structure. It enables grasping the subtle truths about life and the realm beyond. For the ardent spiritual aspirant, *asanas* make the practice of *yama* and *niyama* easier. It prepares you to deal well with the modern day lifestyle problems. It sharpens the intellect and enhances the memory. Words cannot describe the glory of *yoga asanas*. It is for the sincere practitioner to realize it for himself herself.



Did You Know?

Sarvangasana, *Shirshasana* and *Paschimottanasana* are a few of the *asanas* propagated by the seers and *yoga gurus* as the ultimate *asanas* for keeping perfect health. They are more than enough to save your doctor's bills. They offer benefits which no modern exercise can bestow.

Following are the different type of *asanas*:

1. ***Sarvangasana* (The Shoulder Stand):** The word *Sarva Anga* in Sanskrit means “the whole body.” Since, this *asana* works on the entire body, it is named *Sarvanga asana*. This is an important *asana* and a highly beneficial one. The Shoulder Stand is also known as the Queen of *Asanas*.

How to Perform

- ❖ Lie down on your back on the yoga mat.
- ❖ Slowly raise the legs lifting the trunk, hips and legs vertically.
- ❖ Support the back with two hands.
- ❖ Rest the elbows on the ground. Press the chin against the chest and form a chin-lock firmly known as *Jalandhara Bandha*.
- ❖ Allow the back, shoulder portion and neck to touch the ground closely. Do not allow the body to shake from side to side.
- ❖ Keep the legs straight.



Fig. 8.13: Sarvangasana

- ❖ Hold this posture for 30-60 seconds in the beginning and gradually increase the duration to 3 minutes.
- ❖ Breathe normally in the final position.
- ❖ Once you finish, bring the legs down very slowly in a graceful manner, without any jerks.



Notes

This *asana* can be done every morning and evening. It should immediately be followed by *Matyasana* (the fish posture). This will relieve pain in the back part of the neck and enhance the benefits of *Sarvangasana*.

Benefits

- ❖ Stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands and normalizes their functions.
- ❖ Preserves the youth by keeping the spine elastic.
- ❖ Helps the yogis who strive to achieve sexual continence.
- ❖ Improves circulation of blood to the brain.
- ❖ Stretches the heart muscles by returning more venous blood to the heart.
- ❖ Cures constipation, indigestion, diabetes, visceroptosis, varicose veins and menstrual disorders.
- ❖ Awakens *Kundalini* and stimulates the digestive fire.
- ❖ Helps in achieving perfect health.

Contraindications: Practitioners suffering from abnormal blood pressure, glaucoma, detached retina, chronic thyroid disorders, neck or shoulder injuries, must consult a trained yoga expert before performing the shoulder stand. Menstruating women should not do this *asana*.

2. **Holasana (The Plough Pose):** In Sanskrit, *Hala* means plough; hence, this pose is called *Holasana*.

How to Perform

- ❖ Lie flat on your back on the mat.
- ❖ Keep the hands at the side of your body with palms facing downward.

- ❖ Keep your feet together and lift them very slowly without bending the legs.
- ❖ Do not raise the arms or the trunk.
- ❖ Draw your legs up to make a 90 degree angle.
- ❖ Now slowly lower the legs to bring them on the ground above the head; try touching your toes to the ground.
- ❖ The knees should be kept straight while holding the posture.
- ❖ The legs and thighs must be in one straight line.
- ❖ Press the chin against the chest.
- ❖ Breathe slowly through the nose.
- ❖ Hold this position for 5-10 seconds.
- ❖ After finishing the practice, slowly bring your legs down to the mat.



Fig. 8.14: *Halasana*

Variations

- ❖ Practitioners who find it tough to lift their waist can practise by placing pillows under it.
- ❖ Those who are unable to touch the floor with their toes can use a chair or a stool to place their big toes on it for a few days of practice.
- ❖ Advancing practitioners can slowly bring their hands to catch hold of the toes.
- ❖ Beginners may feel pain in the lower back while practicing *Halasana*. However, they

need not worry as the pain will go away after a few days of practice.

Benefits

- ❖ Prevents degeneration of bones, thus promoting longevity and youth.
- ❖ Nourishes spinal nerves, bones and muscles of the back due to the flow of blood.
- ❖ Treats *myalgia* (muscular rheumatism), sprain and neuralgia.
- ❖ Renders the vertebral column or *Merv Danda* soft and elastic.
- ❖ Keeps the practitioners agile, alert and nimble.
- ❖ Tones the abdominal, rectal and thigh muscles.
- ❖ Cures obesity, chronic constipation, congestion, spleen and enlargement of liver.

Contraindications: People suffering from lumbago, neck pain, spondylitis and high blood pressure are not advised to practise *Halasana*. Menstruating women should not do this *asana*.

3. ***Matsyasana* (The Fish Pose):** *Matsya* in Sanskrit means “fish”. By assuming this posture, the practitioner floats like a fish on water. Therefore, this *asana* has been named *Matsyasana*. This *asana* is best performed immediately after *Sarvangasana*.

How to Perform

- ❖ Sit in *Padmasana* on a mat spread on the floor.
- ❖ Slowly move back by resting the elbows on the mat.
- ❖ Arch the back by lifting the chest and trunk and bend the neck backwards.
- ❖ Draw the head back and rest it on its crown.

- ❖ Catch hold of the big toes and gradually increase the arch by pressing further back the position of the crown of the head and pulling the toes by the hands.
- ❖ Focus on the heart *chakra*, the throat *chakra*, the crown *chakra* and the rear end of the spine. Breathe normally.
- ❖ Retain the posture for 20 seconds to one minute. Release the toes by resting on the elbows and rest the back of your head on the ground. Slowly get up and sit in *Padmasana* and release the legs one by one.
- ❖ The duration of the posture may be increased as one progresses in practice.



Fig. 8.15: *Matsyasana*

Variation

Beginners can stretch their legs and keep their palms under the hips and practise this *asana*, in case they are unable to sit in the pose of *Padmasana*. The palms may also rest on the thighs during the practice.

Benefits

- ❖ Stretches the chest and dorsal portion of the spine is expanded well and breathing becomes better.
- ❖ Removes spasms from bronchial tubes.
- ❖ Helps the patients who are suffering from asthma.
- ❖ Tones the thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary and pineal glands.

- ❖ Improves flexibility of pelvic joints.

Contraindications: People with high or low blood pressure can avoid this *asana*. Migraine and insomnia patients should also refrain from doing the Fish Pose. Those who have had serious lower-back or neck injuries, cervical problems, etc. are strongly recommended not to practice this pose.

4. **Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend):** *Paschimottanasana* is so called because *paschim* refers to the back and *uttana* means stretching. Hence, *Paschimottanasana* means stretching of the back. There are many benefits of this posture; the main and most obvious one is to provide a complete stretch of the entire backside of the body from the back of the head through the heels.

How to Perform

- ❖ Sit on the mat with legs stretched out in front of you.
- ❖ Keep the spine erect and legs flexed toward you.
- ❖ Catch the toes with the thumb, index and middle fingers and bend the upper body forward.
- ❖ Exhale and slowly bend to touch your forehead to your knees; try bending as much as possible.
- ❖ Draw your belly button towards your spine as your exhale and bend.
- ❖ Stretch the arms out in front of you. Hold the pose for 5-10 seconds to begin with and gradually increase the time duration.
- ❖ Inhaling, come back up to the sitting position.
- ❖ Breathe out and lower the arms.

Fig. 8.16: *Paschimottanasana*

Variation

Beginners can keep the face between the knees while bending forward.

If you find it tough to do the full *Paschimottanasana*, perform the partial pose with right leg and right hand and then with the left leg and left hand.

Benefits

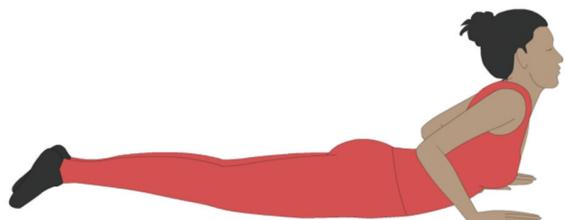
- ❖ Helpful for weight-watchers in reducing abdominal fat.
- ❖ Cures enlargement of the spleen and liver.
- ❖ Stimulates endocrine glands, kidneys, liver and pancreas.
- ❖ Increases the peristalsis of the bowels.
- ❖ Diabetes and piles are cured, and the back muscles are rendered flexible.
- ❖ It is said that in *Paschimottanasana*, the *anahat nada* can be heard by an expert practitioner.

5. ***Bhujangasana* (The Cobra Pose):** The Hindi meaning of *Bhujang* is “cobra.” When this posture is demonstrated, the raised trunk and head of the practitioner resembles the raised hood of a cobra. Hence, this posture is known by the name of *Bhujangasana*.

How to Perform

- ❖ On a mat, lie flat on your stomach.

- ❖ Relax your muscles.
- ❖ Place the palms firmly on the ground just below the shoulders.
- ❖ Raise your elbows pointing them towards the sky.
- ❖ Now inhale and using the strength of your arms and the back, raise the head and the upper body just like a cobra.
- ❖ Let the body from the navel downwards to the toes touch the ground.
- ❖ Stretch the spine backwards vertebra by vertebra. Tilt your head is backwards and look towards the sky.
- ❖ Hold this pose for 5- 10 seconds.
- ❖ Now exhale and slowly return to the original position. Relax.
- ❖ Repeat this process 3-4 times, if you are a beginner. Advanced practitioners can repeat it for 6-7 times.

Fig. 8.17: *Bhujangasana*

Points to Remember

- ❖ It is important to keep the shoulders relaxed while holding the pose. Beginners may keep the elbows bent slightly. Advancing practitioners can keep the arms straight to deepen their practice.
- ❖ Keep your feet close to each other. Breathe and smile to reap in the full benefits of the *asana*.

Benefits

- ❖ Helps in straightening hunchback, back pain, lumbago, myalgia of the back and constipation. Makes the back spinal column flexible like the snake.
- ❖ Awakens the *Kundalini Shakti* that is sleeping dormant in the *Muladhara Chakra* or the *Root Chakra*.
- ❖ Improves the appetite by rousing the digestive fire.
- ❖ Helps women in toning their ovaries and the uterus.
- ❖ Cures amenorrhoea (absence of menstruation), dysmenorrhoea (painful or difficult menstruation), leucorrhoea (white discharge), and various other utero-ovarian diseases.
- ❖ Makes delivery easy and normal in women.

Contraindications

- ❖ *Bhujangasana* should not be practiced by pregnant women, or those with fractured ribs or wrists.
- ❖ People recovering from abdominal surgeries must avoid practising this posture till full recovery.

6. ***Shalabhasana (The Locust Pose)***: *Shalabb* in Sanskrit means “locust.” When this *asana* is demonstrated, the body looks like a locust. Hence, we call it *Shalabhasana*, or the locust pose.

How to Perform

- ❖ Lie on the mat on your stomach.
- ❖ Make sure you rest your chin on the ground.

- ❖ Your toes should be in contact with the floor.
- ❖ Now place your hands on the ground below your inner thighs.
- ❖ Now lift up your head a little. (You can inhale or breathe in and then lift the legs. This pose can also be maintained by holding the breath.)
- ❖ Using the strength of your arms, raise the legs in the air and hold them in that position.
- ❖ Rest your body on your abdomen.
- ❖ Hold for 5 seconds and then bring down the legs on the mat.
- ❖ This completes one round of *Shalabhasana*. You can repeat it 6-7 times.



Fig. 8.18: *Shalabhasana*

Benefits

- ❖ Tones the muscles of the abdomen, thighs and legs.
- ❖ Clears the intestines of the accumulated decaying faecal matter.
- ❖ Works on the abdomen and back to make them stronger.
- ❖ Burns visceral fat, i.e. fat surrounding the liver, pancreas, kidneys, etc.
- ❖ Cures sluggishness of liver and hunchback.
- ❖ Removes lumbago and dyspepsia.
- ❖ Improves appetite.

Contraindications: Pregnant women and those recovering from abdominal surgery must avoid performing this *asana*.

7. **Dhanurasana (The Bow Pose):** *Dhanurasana* has been named so because in Sanskrit, *Dhanur* stands for “bow”. This posture makes a wonderful combination with *Bhujangasana* and *Shalabhasana*. These three *asanas* beat sloth and inertia like nothing else. They can be performed as counter poses after *Holasana* and *Pashchimottanasana* (forward-bending poses).

How to Perform

- ❖ Lie on your stomach with the face downward.
- ❖ Keep the arms at the sides.
- ❖ Gently fold your legs so as to bring them towards the hips.
- ❖ Raise your hands backwards and catch hold of the ankles with the hands (and not the toes).
- ❖ Raise the head and chest.
- ❖ Now try to stretch the upper body and the legs as much as possible.
- ❖ See to it that the body weight is on the abdomen, not on the pubic bone.
- ❖ Keep the arms and forelegs straight.



Fig. 8.19: *Dhanurasana*

- ❖ Make sure your body forms a convex arch in the final position.
- ❖ Breathe normally and repeat this process for 5 or 6 times.

Benefits

- ❖ Benefits the abdominal region by curing indigestion and other gastro-intestinal diseases.
- ❖ Cures chronic constipation, dyspepsia and sluggishness of liver.
- ❖ Removes hunchback, rheumatism of legs, knee-joints and hands.
- ❖ Reduces body fat, energises digestion.
- ❖ Alleviates congestion of blood in the abdominal viscera and tones them.
- ❖ Prevents premature ageing of bones.
- ❖ Relieve menstrual disorders.

Contraindications: *Dhanurasana* should not be practiced by persons suffering from high or low blood pressure, hernia, neck injury, pain in the lower back, headache, migraine or a recent abdominal surgery.

Women should avoid practising this posture during pregnancy.

8. **Ardh Matsyendrasana (Half Spinal Twist Pose):** In Sanskrit, *Ardha* implies “half.” This pose has been named after the great Rishi Matsyendra, who first taught this *asana* to the students of *Hatha Yoga*. Matsyendra was a blessed disciple of Lord Shiva. *Ardha Matsyendrasana* is half as compared to *Matsyendrasana*. This pose bends and twists the spine from side to side, and thus renders it perfectly flexible. Menstruating women should not do this *asana*.

How to Perform

- ❖ Sit up with the legs stretched out before you in front of the mat, keeping the feet together and the spine erect.

- ❖ Now bend the left leg and place the heel of the left foot beside the right hip (optionally, beginners can keep the left leg straight).
 - ❖ Take the right leg over the left knee.
 - ❖ Place the left hand on the right ankle and the right hand behind you (preferably at the left waist).
 - ❖ Twist the trunk, shoulders and neck in this sequence to the right and look over the right shoulder.
 - ❖ Keep the spine erect.
 - ❖ Hold and continue with gentle long breaths in and out.
 - ❖ Breathing out, release the right hand first (the hand behind you), release the waist, then chest. Finally release the neck and sit up relaxed but straight.
 - ❖ Repeat with the other side.
 - ❖ Breathing out, come back to the front and relax.
- ❖ Benefits those suffering from constipation and dyspepsia.
- ❖ Tones the nervous system and the vertebrae of the spinal column.
9. **Kakasana or Bakasana (The Crow Pose):** *Kakasana* has been named so as in Sanskrit the name implies “the crow.” When *Kakasana* is demonstrated, the body resembles a crow.

How to Perform



Fig. 8.20: *Ardh Matsyendrasana*

Benefits

- ❖ Cures lumbago and other muscular pains of the back.
 - ❖ Improves the elasticity of the spine.
 - ❖ Massages the muscles and organs of the abdominal region.
 - ❖ Benefits those suffering from constipation and dyspepsia.
 - ❖ Tones the nervous system and the vertebrae of the spinal column.
9. **Kakasana or Bakasana (The Crow Pose):** *Kakasana* has been named so as in Sanskrit the name implies “the crow.” When *Kakasana* is demonstrated, the body resembles a crow.

- How to Perform*
- ❖ Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
 - ❖ Keeping the knees bent, bend down and place the hands on the floor directly below the shoulders. Spread the fingers well on the floor.
 - ❖ Flex your elbows and keeping your weight on the maunds of the feet, take the knees towards the upper arms, close to the armpits.
 - ❖ Contract the leg muscles and press the legs towards the sides of the body. Contract the pelvic muscles and the hips together and feel the compactness and lightness on your feet.
 - ❖ Maintaining the posture thus, tilt the pelvic slightly forward. The head and the torso also move forward and the feet feel even lighter.
 - ❖ Pressing the palms firmly on the floor, focus on a point in front of your hands.
 - ❖ As you are balancing on your toes, the feet feel light as there is hardly any weight on them.
 - ❖ Squeeze the hips and the legs inwards and contract the abdomen.
 - ❖ Adjust the weight on the hands by lifting or lowering the pelvis so that you are comfortable.

- ❖ Keeping the knees high on the arms and the thighs and legs close and well aligned, focus your attention on your breathing. This will help to stabilize the body and maintain balance.
 - ❖ As breathing becomes smooth and rhythmic, the body will begin to feel stable, alert and light.
 - ❖ With the abdomen held firmly and the body weight distributed equally on both hands, shift the torso forward so that the feet are towards the buttocks.
 - ❖ Lift one foot at a time so that you don't lose your balance and hit your nose on the floor.
 - ❖ Lift the chin up so that the head is also so as to keep up prevent any a disaster.
 - ❖ Once you are able to balance your body, try to straighten the arms as much as possible and then lift the head, trunk and legs up keeping the lower part of the body firm. Breathe normally as you hold the pose for 4 to 5 seconds.
 - ❖ To come out of the posture, first bend the elbows and then slowly lower the toes onto the floor.
 - ❖ Go back to squatting position and then release the posture.
- ❖ Tension in the wrists can be relieved by rotating them.
 - ❖ Stand up, close your eyes and become aware of the energy flowing through the arms, shoulders, chest and pelvis.

Variation

Beginners can keep a folded blanket on the floor in front until they have mastered the pose.

Benefits

- ❖ Increases physical and mental balance.
- ❖ Develops mental tranquillity.
- ❖ Strengthens the wrists and forearms.
- ❖ The working of the energy systems in the body get for time been get changed because the body stands on the hands instead of on the legs.

Contraindications: Persons with wrist or arm injuries are not advised to practise this pose. Consult a yoga expert before practising it.

10. ***Padahastasana (Standing Forward Bend):*** In Sanskrit, *Pada* means “feet” and *Hasta* means “hands”. Since this *asana* is demonstrated by touching the feet with the hands, it is known as *Padahastasana*. It is similar to *Pashchimottanasana*. The only difference between the two *asanas* is that *Padahastasana* is performed while standing.

How to Perform

- ❖ Stand straight with your hands down close to the body.
- ❖ Keep the heels close and toes apart.
- ❖ Now inhale and raise the hands above the head.
- ❖ Slowly exhale and bend the body downwards bringing the hands down to catch hold of the toes.



Fig. 8.21: *Kakasana*

- ❖ Make sure you draw the belly in as you exhale while bending.
- ❖ Keep the knees stiff and straight.
- ❖ Keep the forehead between the knees.
- ❖ Try using the strength of your trunk to get closer to the knees.
- ❖ Hold the pose for 2 to 10 seconds.
- ❖ Come back slowly to position one.



Fig. 8.22: *Padahastasana*

Variation

People with inflexible bodies or who are obese may find it difficult to touch the toes with their hands due to abdominal fat and stiffness of muscles. In such cases, bend the knees slightly and then catch hold of the toes. However, straighten the knees after catching hold of your toes.

Benefits

- ❖ Dissipates *Tamas* or laziness.

- ❖ Eliminates excess fat around the abdomen and thighs.
- ❖ Purifies and strengthens *Sushumna Nadi*.
- ❖ Lengthens the legs after three months of practice.

Contraindications: Forward-bending is strictly prohibited for people with lower back problems.

11. ***Trikonasana* (The Triangle Pose):** The Sanskrit meaning of the term *Trikona* is triangle. When *Trikonasana* is demonstrated, the body appears like a triangle. It is a very easy *asana* and can be done by novice practitioners as well.

How to Perform

- ❖ Stand straight keeping your legs wide apart as seen in the picture, with the right toes pointing outwards (Fig. 8.23).
- ❖ Now stretch your arms wide horizontally in line with the shoulders and parallel to the ground.
- ❖ Slowly, bend toward your right keeping the left knee straight.
- ❖ Touch the right toe with the fingers of the right hand.
- ❖ Bend the neck slightly to the right. It is alright if it touches the right shoulder.
- ❖ Now raise the left arm toward the sky.
- ❖ Fix your gaze upward.
- ❖ Remain in this pose for a minute. Breathe slowly.
- ❖ Come back to the original position and repeat with the other side.
- ❖ Do this *asana* for 3-6 times with using each side.



Fig. 8.23: *Trikonasana*

Benefits

- ❖ Renders the *Meru Danda* or the spine flexible.
- ❖ Reduces anxiety, stress, back pain and sciatica.
- ❖ Increases peristalsis of the bowels and improves appetite.
- ❖ Stretches and opens the hips, groins, hamstrings, and calves; shoulders, chest, and spine

Contraindications: This pose should not be practiced by those suffering from migraine, diarrhoea, low or high blood pressure, or neck and back injuries. Persons with high BP can practice this pose without raising the head toward the sky.

12. **Tadasana:** *Tadasana* gets its name from the Sanskrit words *tada* meaning a palm tree and *asana*, meaning posture. One resembles

a palm tree in this *asana*. By practising this *asana* regularly, one's posture improves. It also helps to increase height in children. *Tadasana* stretches the arms, the chest, the abdominal muscles, the spine and the leg muscles along with giving a sense of balance.

How to Perform

- ❖ Stand with your feet planted firmly on the ground. See that your feet and legs are touching each other.
- ❖ Straighten the hands by the sides of your body and focus your attention to a point in front of you.
- ❖ Raise your toes, balancing yourself on your heels. Remain thus for 5 to 10 seconds.
- ❖ Then, slowly bring the toes back to the floor, tilting the pelvic bone slightly forward.
- ❖ Lift the entire trunk up from the sides and let the chest open out.
- ❖ Hold the head erect so that the crown of the head is parallel to the ceiling. Lift from the base of the skull so that the neck gets lengthened in the process.
- ❖ Then pressing your toes firmly on the ground, raise the legs up – first the ankles, then the calves, the thighs and finally the entire torso from the hips upwards.
- ❖ Maintain the posture for 1 to 2 minutes focussing your attention on your breath, which should be steady. As you inhale, feel as though the breath is rising from the floor and travelling up your legs to your stomach all the way up to your head.



Fig. 8.24: Tadasana

- ❖ As you exhale, feel as though your breath is travelling down from the head through your stomach, down to your feet.
- ❖ Relax the body and repeat the process once again.
- ❖ In the next attempt, as you raise your legs, lift your arms up over your head and bring your arms down along with the legs as you exhale.

Benefits

- ❖ *Tadasana* improves the posture of the body.
- ❖ It improves the flexibility of the ankles, knees and the hip joints.

- ❖ The regular practise of this *asana* will make the spine supple.
- ❖ One's balance improves and the height with regular practice.
- ❖ It is beneficial to those suffering from visceroptosis or pain in the backbone.
- ❖ Respiration, digestion and elimination of waste from the body improve with regular practice.
- ❖ The practitioner gets proper control over his muscular movements.
- ❖ Over a period, the entire nervous system gets strengthened with this practice.
- ❖ Modified *Tadasana* is one of the poses used during the practice of *Shankaprakshala* or the cleaning of the stomach and intestine. This quickly moves the saline water which one drinks during the process to the lower intestine and rectum, thereby quickening the cleansing process.



Notes

Ensure that your breathing is in rhythm with the raising and lowering of your arms.

Contraindications: *Tadasana* should not be performed if you experience giddiness, or suffer from vertigo, low blood pressure or have a severe headache.

13. ***Utkatasana:*** This *asana* is also known as Chair Pose, Fierce Pose or Powerful Pose. The term *utkata* means intense or powerful. *Utkatasana* is an intense or powerful pose. The practitioner performing this *asana* looks like he is sitting on a chair. This intense pose is so powerful that it strengthens the body.

How to Perform

- ❖ Stand erect as in *Tadasana*.
- ❖ Keep the big toes and heels of the feet slightly apart.
- ❖ Suck the abdomen in towards the spine – this will give support to the spine. Open out the chest by pushing the dorsal vertebrae forward. Take the shoulders and the upper arms down.
- ❖ Then, with a deep breath, lift the arms above the head. The arms can either be kept facing each other with the palms joined or they can be kept parallel to each other.
- ❖ Then bend the body, taking the lower ribs close to the pelvis. Exhale, bend the knees and try to make the thighs parallel to each other as much as you can. See that the feet are behind the knees and the torso is leaning slightly over the thighs so as to make a right angle with the upper part of the thighs. Keep the inner thighs parallel to each other and press the top of the thigh bone firmly into the heels.



Fig. 8.25: *Utkatasana*

- ❖ Fixing the shoulders firmly in their sockets, bring the tailbone down towards the ground and the pubis. This will elongate the lower back.
- ❖ Maintain the pose from 30 seconds to one minute. Release the pose by straightening out the knees with an inhalation and with an exhalation as bring the arms to the sides of the body in *Tadasana*.

Benefits

- ❖ The muscles of the spine, hips and chest get exercised.
- ❖ The muscles of the torso and the lower back get strong.
- ❖ The muscles of the thighs, knees, calves and ankles get toned.
- ❖ It keeps the body in a state of balance and the mind, resolute.
- ❖ Reduces symptoms of flat feet
- ❖ Stimulates the heart, diaphragm, and abdominal organs



Notes

A tip for beginners: Practice a few inches away from a wall so that when you get into the pose, the tailbone will get the support of the wall.

Contraindications: This *asana* should not be performed if from chronic knee pain or problems concerning the knees, arthritis, sprained ankles, damaged ligaments, headache or insomnia (sleeplessness). In case you are going through your menstruation cycle or you have some lower back pain, you may do *utkatasana*, but very carefully.

14. ***Ushtrasana:*** *Ushtra* means camel in Sanskrit, and this pose resembles a camel. It is known to open up the heart *chakra*, and increase strength

and flexibility. *Ushtrasana* is performed on the knees. This *asana* gives the body a good backward bend and hence, it is used as a preparatory pose for deeper backbends.

How to Perform

- ❖ Begin the *asana* by kneeling on your mat and placing your hands on your hips.
- ❖ You must ensure that your knees and shoulders are in the same line, and the soles of your feet are facing the ceiling.
- ❖ Inhale, and draw your tailbone in towards your pubis. You must feel the pull at the navel.
- ❖ While you are doing that, arch your back. Gently slide your palms over your feet and straighten your arms.
- ❖ Keep your neck in a neutral position. It should not be strained.
- ❖ Hold the position for about 30 to 60 seconds before you release the pose.



Fig. 8.26: *Ushtrasana*

Benefits

- ❖ This *asana* helps improve digestion as it massages the internal organs.
- ❖ It opens up the chest and frontal portions of the torso.
- ❖ It strengthens the back and the shoulders.
- ❖ It helps alleviate pain in the lower back.

- ❖ It makes the spine more flexible and also helps in the betterment of your posture.
- ❖ It relieves menstrual discomfort.

Contraindications: *Ushtrasana* is not advisable for those suffering from low blood pressure, insomnia or migraine. Don't do it even if you have problem in the lower back or an injury in the neck. Remember to exercise always within your capacity, if you have any medical problem, discuss them with your doctor before beginning to start practising yoga.



Notes

When you begin to perform this *asana*, you may find it difficult to reach for your feet with your palms, without causing a strain in your back or neck. Turn your toes, and elevate your heels. If you still can't reach for your legs, use a wooden block and place both your hands on them. Make sure you do not hold this pose for more than 20 seconds when you are a beginner.

15. **Pavanamuktasana:** *Pavanamuktasana* is also known as Wind-Releasing Pose. It is beneficial to cure gas problems and poor digestion. Regular practice of *Pavanamuktasana* helps to stimulate bowel movements which is very necessary for removing the waste material.

How to Perform

- ❖ Lie flat on your back and keep the legs straight and breathe deeply and rhythmically.
- ❖ Inhale slowly and lift the legs and bend in the knees. Bring the knee upwards to the chest till your thigh touches the stomach. Hug your knees in place and lock your fingers.
- ❖ Try to touch the knee with your nose tip. This is not easy when you do it the first time. But with regular practice you can do etc.

- ❖ Hold this position for 20 to 30 seconds. You can extend it till 1 minute as per your capacity.
- ❖ Now exhale slowly and come back to the original position that is *Shavasana* (Lie straight).
- ❖ This is very beneficial for stomach functions. The results are very impressive. Practise 3 to 5 cycles each day.



Fig. 8.27: *Parvamuktasana*

Benefits

- ❖ *Parvamuktasana* cures acidity, indigestion and constipation.
- ❖ *Parvamuktasana* is an excellent practice to strengthen the abdominal organs.
- ❖ All kinds of gastrointestinal problems can be cured with regular practice of this *asana*.
- ❖ People who have problems with passing the gas, acidity, arthritis, have pain in the waist, and suffer from heart problem get good relief by doing this *asana*.
- ❖ It not only strengthens the back muscles but also relieves back pain.
- ❖ It helps to remove flab around the abdomen.
- ❖ This *asana* is good for the reproductive organs and gives good relief if one has menstrual problems.

Contraindications: Anyone who has undergone abdominal surgery should not do this *asana*. Even people suffering from hernia or piles should avoid this *asana*.

Pregnant women are advised not to practise this *asana*. Those who suffer from pain, stiffness or injury in the neck any time should have to do the *asana* keeping the head on the floor.

16. ***Vrikshasana* (Tree pose):** *Vrikshasana* is also known as the Tree Pose. *Vriksh* in Sanskrit means tree. The posture resembles a strongly rooted tree, and hence the name. When one does this *asana*, one's body looks steady, balanced and graceful like a tree. The *asana* warms up the body and prepares it for more difficult poses.

How to Perform

- ❖ Stand in *Tadasana*. Lift the right leg up and place the sole of the right leg on the inside of the left thigh close to the groin with the toes pointing down.
- ❖ Now, raise your hands up, and at the same time give a good upward stretch to your body by lifting it up from the sides. Then join the palms on top.



Fig. 8.28: *Vrikshasana*

- ❖ Stretch up the hands as far as possible. Hold as long as you can while breathing deeply.
- ❖ Fixing your eyesight on some fixed point in front of you will help you in maintaining the balance.
- ❖ Then slowly, bring the hands down and then bring down the right leg on the floor next to your left leg.
- ❖ Now lift up the left leg and place the left foot on the inside of the right thigh.
- ❖ Lift both hands and join the palms above your head.
- ❖ Hold the pose as long as you can.
- ❖ Bring the arms down and put the leg down and relax.



Notes

While doing all balancing poses, eyes should be kept open.

Contraindications: Those who suffer from high blood pressure should not raise their arms above the head for a long period of time. They can be held at the chest in the '*anjali mudra*' (hands folded in prayer). It is best that you avoid practising this pose if you suffer from insomnia or migraine.



Notes

In the beginning, you might find it difficult to bring the left foot above the right knee. In such cases, you can place your foot below the knee. But, as mentioned earlier, never place the foot on your knee. Also, initially, it might be hard to stay steady and keep your balance. You could practise this *asana* by holding a wall for balance.

To enhance and aid concentration, take several deep breaths before the practice and also fix your gaze on an object right in front of you.

8.4 Five Spinal Movements in Yoga

Yoga addresses the five different movements of spine: it flexes, extends, bends to the side, rotates and lengthens—also called Axial Extension. To achieve good health, practise yoga poses that focus on the back and neck, and perform the five movements of the spine.

Flexion

Bend forward and touch your toes. That is flexion, a movement of the spine that boosts circulation of blood in your brain and vital organs, and stretches your legs and back muscles. Yoga poses that emphasize flexion include *Padahastasana*. To enter the child's pose, kneel on the floor sitting on your heels with your big toes together and your knees separated about the width of your hips. Reach your arms in your front, palms facing down, and lay your torso in between your thighs, with your forehead resting gently on the ground. Exhale and inhale several times, expanding wide your rib cage and back throughout.

Extension

Extension is a movement of the spine that involves reaching your spine upwards while your spinal discs expand in the front and compress in the back. Yoga works extensions with backbend postures, such as *Bhujangasana* and *Ushtrasana*. These extension postures stretch and strengthen the secondary curve of the cervical and lumbar spines, and are natural stress-reducers. *Bhujangasana* protects against injury and relieves stubborn back pain as well. (This *asana* has already been explained above).

Lateral Flexion

Your spine is in lateral flexion whenever you bend to your right or left side. Your spinal discs expand

on your left and compress on your right when you bend to the right, and vice versa. Bending to the side also strengthens your oblique muscles, improves your balance, and encourages a flexible spine. *Trikonasana* is one of the poses that works in lateral flexion.

Axial Rotation

Axial rotation involves twisting, or rotating your spine. You twist and turn your body throughout the day, and if the spine is not kept in great shape, a quick movement, such as a look behind you, could bring about a disastrous injury. Yoga implements different twisting postures that lubricate the spine and increase your range of motion. *Ardhamatsyendrasana* is the *asana* which involve axial rotation.

Axial Extension

Axial extension is a movement of the spine that straightens and lengthens your spine, allowing you to expand your breathing, stretching your back muscles and lengthening your spine upwards. *Tadasana* is an example of axial extension.



Learning ACTIVITY

Maintain a diary about the changes you observe in your body and mind after *asana* practice. Track your progress every month.



SUMMARY

- The *Suryanamaskar* or offering salutations to the Sun, is preferably practised in the early morning or evening, facing the Sun.
- A well-balanced growth of the body and mind alone is an essential prerequisite for a human being to live in the world in peace and

fulfil his or her aspirations. *Suryanamaskar* is a great tool to realize this goal.

- There are twelve postures in *Suryanamaskar* each stretching various ligaments and giving different movements to the vertebral column.
- The life-giving *Suryanamaskar* turn the inflexible muscles and spine of one flexible.
- Suryanamaskar* reduces visceral fat, brings flexibility to the spine and limbs, and also enables the practitioner to breathe right.
- Suryanamaskar* is a boon for the mankind to attain perfect harmony among the body, mind and spirit.
- Suryanamaskar* practice should ideally begin with a prayer to the Sun God.
- Sarvangasana*, *Shirshasana* and *Paschimottanasana* are a few of the *asanas* propagated by the seers and yoga *gurus* as the ultimate *asanas* for keeping in perfect health.
- Halasana*, *Chakrasana* and *Ardha Matsyendrasana* are ideal for keeping the spine flexible.
- Shavasana* should be performed at the end of *yogasana* practice.



KEYWORDS

Kundalini: The coiled up serpent-like divine energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine is called *Kundalini*. *Kundalini* can be awakened by *Pranayama*, *Asanas* and *Mudras* by *Hatha yogis*; by concentration and training of the mind by *Raja yogis*; and by devotion and perfect self-surrender by *Bhaktas*.

Matsyendra Nath: The *Vedic* sage who was turned into a human from a fish by Lord Shiva after the former overheard the Lord revealing the secret divine knowledge of Yoga to his consort Parvati.

Suryanamaskar: Salutation to the Sun, or prostration to the Sun.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. How many steps are there in one round of *Suryanamaskar*?
2. Name two visible and subtle benefits of *Suryanamaskar* practice.
3. Write down any two conditions under which *Suryanamaskar* should not be done.
4. Name any four postures that keep the spine elastic and supple.
5. Which posture is performed at the end of *asana* practice?
6. Name the tough *asanas* and easy *asanas*.

Long Questions

1. What is the importance of *Suryanamaskar*?
2. Write about any five yoga *asanas* and their important benefits.

3. Write down the significance of contraindications and complementarity in performing of *asanas*.
4. Discuss the significance of *asanas* in curing modern day lifestyle problems.
5. According to the science of yoga, what are the five spinal movements? Explain briefly with suitable example.
6. Explain the contraindications of *Shirshasana* and *Mayurasana*.



FURTHER READINGS

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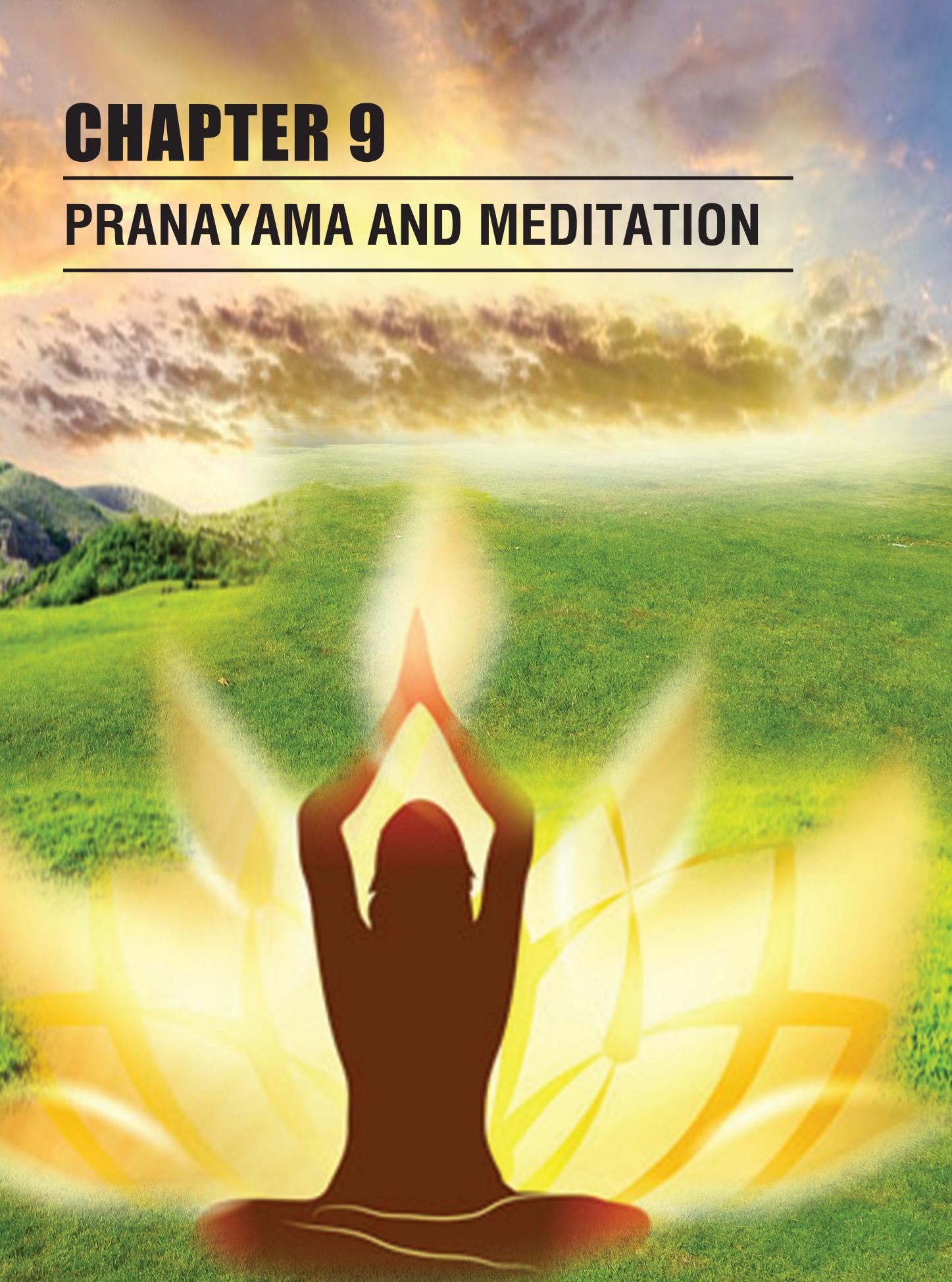
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CHAPTER 9

PRANAYAMA AND MEDITATION





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 9.1 Introduction to *Pranayama*
 - 9.2 Meditation – The Concept
 - 9.3 Practical Techniques of Meditation
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Define and understand the concept of *pranayama*
- Comprehend the concept and ability of full *yogic* breathing
- Understand the importance of meditation
- Appreciate the benefits of meditation
- Appreciate the concepts of *Mudras*, *Mantra* and *Japa*



Introduction

Accessing your inner power with the help of breath is a useful tool. It will help you live life to its fullest. *Pranayama* is the control and extension of the breath, which awakens *Prana*, or the life force. Practicing the way you inhale and exhale can help you manipulate your vital energy to successfully activate or soothe your mood.

It may be interesting to note that only sixty seconds of intentional breath work can help you shift your mood dramatically. Simple controlled breathing exercises can allow you to channelize and redirect your energy in the positive direction, and help you achieve results you never imagined possible. In this chapter, we will discuss the correct methods to perform breathing exercises, along with understanding the significance of *pranayama* and meditation in improving our daily lives.

9.1 Introduction to Pranayama

Breathing is a vital process that starts at the time of birth and stops when a person dies. During breathing, the life sustaining oxygen is provided to all parts, organs and cells of the body. *Pranayama* is the formal practice of controlling the breath, which is the source of our *prana*, or vital life force. The word *prana* represents the vital energy responsible for life or life force, while *ayama* means “control (by stretching/expanding)”. Hence, *pranayama* translates to “control of the life force”. This is accomplished by manipulating breathing. One can control the rhythms of *pranic* energy with *pranayama* and attain a healthy body and mind.

When we breathe, we take in vital energy and remove waste products or toxins out of the body and mind. Breathing includes inhalation and exhalation, which is called *Puraka* and *Rechaka* in *yogashastra*, respectively. *Pranayama* or breath control involves retention of breath (known as *Kumbhaka* in Sanskrit), wherein air is retained internally or externally. The halt of breath or retention of air after inhaling is called *Abhyantara* or *Antara Kumbhaka*; while that after exhaling is called *Bahya Kumbhaka*. Retention of air increases the level of *prana* (energy) in the body, and also regulates the flow of *pranic* energy throughout the body. *Pranayama* is thus a means to channelize energy in the body, thereby curing ailments and slowing down the aging process of the body.

In Patanjali *Yoga Sutras*, *pranayama* lays emphasis on breathing (inhalation, exhalation and retention), whereas in *Hatha Yoga*, *pranayama* is equated with *kumbhak* or retention.



Did You Know?

In his *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali mentions *pranayama* as a means of becoming fit for doing *dharana* (concentration) practice, as also for removing the shroud of impurities covering our inner light.

Sitting Postures for Pranayama

Pranayama and meditation can be performed in five classical sitting positions or postures. The order of the poses should be as follows:

- *Siddhasana*
- *Padmasana* and *Ardha Padmasana*
- *Swastikasana*
- *Sukhasana*
- *Vajrasana*

***Siddhasana* (The Accomplished Pose):** Sit with the legs straight. Bend the right leg and place the heel of the right foot touching the perineum region. Now bend the left leg and place the left foot on top of the right calf such that the small toe and the fourth toe are in between the calf and thigh muscles of the right leg. Now, bring the big toe and the second toe of the right foot between the calf and thigh muscles of the left leg. In this position, the ankles of both the feet are placed one over the other. If it is difficult to keep the body upright or the knees do not rest on the floor, then sit on a cushion, at an appropriate height.



Siddhasana is given a place of the pride among all the *asanas* in *Hatha Yoga*. As a meditative pose, it provides the widest base of support; hence, it provides maximum balance and stability. The heel touching the perineum region stimulates the *muladhara chakra*, thereby facilitating the awakening of *kundalini*. In the case of females, this *asana* is referred to as *siddhayoni asana*.



Fig. 9.1: *Siddhasana* Pose


Notes

The movements during breathing are no longer separated. One Full Yoga Breath includes one, smooth, continuous flow of breath in and out, involving non-jerky movement of the abdomen, chest and collarbone.

Padmasana (The Lotus Pose): Spine erect, legs outstretched on the floor or on a mat, bend the right knee and place the right foot on the left thigh. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on the right thigh. This pose can be performed with either knee first, then the other knee to follow. The soles of both feet should face the ceiling and the heels should be brought close to the abdomen. With both the feet firmly planted on the opposite thigh in a cross, place your hands on the knees in *chin mudra*. You can also adopt *padma mudra*, with the right palm placed on the left palm rested on the heels, thumbs in contact with each other. Head, back of the neck and spine must be in one straight line. Chin parallel to the floor.



Fig. 9.2: *Padmasana*

Ardha Padmasana (The Half Lotus Pose): Sit erect, bend the right knee and place the right foot close to the left thigh on the floor. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on top of the right thigh. Try to bring the left heel as close to the abdomen. Alternately, the left knee may be bent first. Both the knees should be grounded. You

may even place a folded blanket under the bottom to give the spine a lift. Hands in *chin mudra* or *padma mudra*. This pose may be adopted by those who cannot do *Padmasana*.

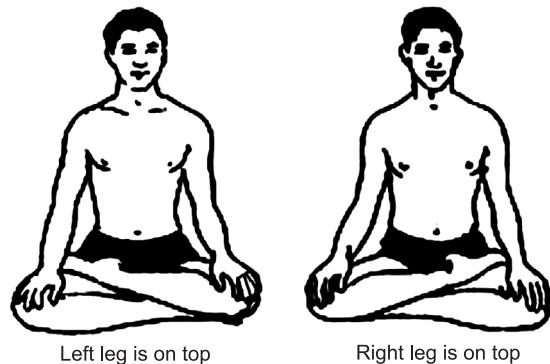


Fig. 9.3: *Ardha Padmasana*

Swastikasana (The Auspicious Pose): Sit on the floor, bend the left knee and bring the sole of the left foot in contact with the inside of the right thigh. Bend the right knee and place the right foot between the left thigh and calf muscle. Ensure that both the heels do not touch the pubis. The toes of the left foot must be pulled up slowly to rest in between the right thigh and calf. Place your hands on the knees in *chin* or *jnana mudra*. Spine must be erect. Close the eyes and observe the breath.



Fig. 9.4: *Swastikasana*

Sukhasana (Simple comfortable cross-legged pose): Sit down on a mat and place the right foot under the left thigh and the left foot under, or in front of the right calf on the floor. If it is difficult to keep the body upright then sit on a cushion at an appropriate height. This posture is recommended for those who have difficulty in sitting for a long period of time in *Siddhasana*, *Vajrasana* or *Padmasana*.



Fig. 9.5: *Sukhasana*

Vajrasana (The Adamantine Pose): Fold both the legs, keeping your hips on the heels. Let your toes point out behind you; the big toes should be touching each other. Sit over the gap formed by the parted heels. Keep the head, neck and spine in a straight line. Place the palms on the thighs.



Fig. 9.6: *Vajrasana*

Notes

Check list for *Pranayama* practitioners

- The eyes should be closed during *Pranayama* practice.
- The upper body should be straight and erect.
- The head, neck and back should be aligned.
- The shoulder and abdominal muscles should be relaxed.
- The hands should be resting on the knees in a comfortable *mudra*.
- The body remains motionless during the practice.
- The mood should be tranquil and relaxed.

Full Yogic Breath – Concept and Demonstrated Ability

A normal breath is distinguished by three phases – inhalation, exhalation and pause after exhalation. These three put together is referred to as respiration. One phase follows the other. The inhalation forms the active part of the breath. The exhalation is the passive part of the breath – the phase of relaxation. The pause in breathing arises naturally at the end of the exhalation phase and lasts until the impulse to inhale occurs of its own accord.

Notes

The exhalation in *Pranayama* practices should last approximately twice as long as the inhalation.

Quiet, rhythmic and deep breathing is decisive for our health. It has a harmonizing and calming effect on body and mind. On the other hand, breathing that is too rapid and shallow has a negative influence on us, as it can intensify nervousness, stress, tension and pain. Therefore, all exercises in Yoga, including breathing exercises, should

be performed gently with full awareness. Avoid breathing through the mouth, instead breathe through the nose. The nostrils act as a passage for filtration, moistening and warming the air.



Caution

A frequent mistake made with regard to breathing is to draw the abdomen. Sucking in the abdomen during inhalation hampers deep breathing. Comfortable clothing must be donned during practice

What is once normal and rhythmic breathing during the infancy, gets vitiated, over a period of time, due to habitually incorrect breathing without awareness. The Full Yogic Breath can help us restore healthy breathing practice. In fact, the Full Yogic Breath has become more of a fundamental requirement to improve our breathing than merely a corrective health technique. The Full Yoga Breath involves three types of breathing, namely abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing, chest or thoracic breathing, and collarbone or clavicular breathing. Let us understand each of these individually, along with the correct method to perform them.

Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing or vertical breathing is the natural way of breathing, in line with the structure of our organic body. Inhalation pushes the diaphragm down, thereby releasing the abdominal organs outwards. There is a resultant expansion of the belly. Exhalation pulls the diaphragm upwards, flattening the abdomen. While inhalation is dynamic, exhalation is passive. Abdominal breathing optimizes the capacity of lungs and makes the breath rhythmic and relaxing.

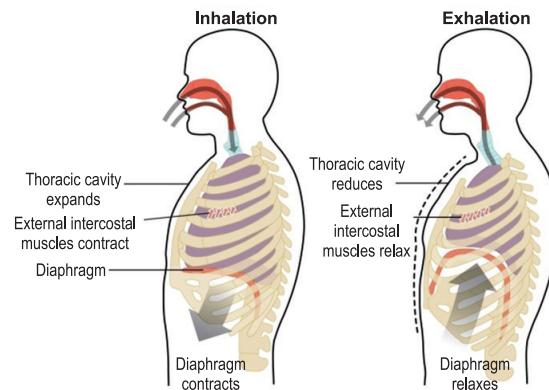


Fig. 9.7: Movement of the Diaphragm during Breathing



Notes

The functioning of the diaphragm must be optimal, since it is linked to vital organs, like the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, pancreas and stomach. Correct movement of the diaphragm results in better intake of oxygen without exertion.

Steps by Step Guide to Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Either lie down or sit on a chair with feet firmly grounded or sit in across-legged position. While lying down, place the hands in line with the shoulders, palms facing the ceiling. Gently close your eyes.



Caution

Just like in a seated position, in a supine position also, the head, neck and the spine must be in a straight line. When lying down, lift your head and take a look at your feet to check that the head, neck and the back are in a straight line.

2. Relax your body and place the palms of your hands on the abdomen with your fingers pointing towards your navel. Place your

stretched out fingers on either side of your abdomen with the middle fingers at the navel.

3. Inhale and allow your diaphragm to move downwards. Feel the expansion of your abdomen. Do not put any pressure on your abdomen muscles; let them expand naturally.
4. When you are ready to exhale, simply repeat the movement in your mind. Your abdomen will deflate as the air is expelled. Ensure that your exhalation is as slow as possible. This will help you to breathe rhythmically.
5. Once you start breathing in a natural flow, start deepening, lengthening and extending your breathing. In simple words, let the abdomen expand fully as you inhale and deflate it completely as you exhalation.
6. Practice this until you feel that your abdomen is expanding without any force or effort.



Keep the chest still during this entire process of breathing; move only the abdomen.

Chest or Thoracic Breathing

In thoracic breathing, there is a heaving of the chest or rib cage. The rib cage expands in all directions with an inhalation. With an exhalation, the ribs revert to their original position. The intake of oxygen is lower than abdominal breathing and the breath tends to be fast. In moments of stress and worry, our breathing becomes heavily chest-oriented instead of the more relaxing abdominal breath. The unconscious use of this more rapid form of breathing creates a heightened state of tension. To break this unfavourable cycle, slow and deep abdominal breathing is of great assistance. Thoracic breathing is a powerful breath technique for healing respiratory ailments.

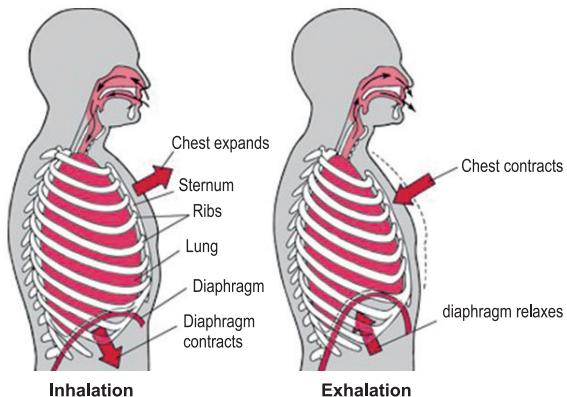


Fig. 9.8: Chest Movement during Breathing

Steps to Perform Thoracic Breathing

1. Take the same position as the one during abdominal breathing and stay relaxed.
2. Place the palms of your hands lightly on your ribcage with your fingers stretched out. Your little fingers should touch the lower part of ribcage, while your fingertips should be holding your ribcage. The thumbs should be facing the armpits at the top of the ribcage.
3. Do not keep your shoulders lifted or tense; they must be completely relaxed.
4. Start breathing normally. You will observe that your chest moves slightly up with inhalation and down with exhalation. Observe this pattern for a few moments.
5. Remember to keep the abdomen still, moving only the chest while breathing.
6. Once the desired pattern of breathing is set, begin to deepen, lengthen and extend that movement. On inhalation, expand and lift the ribcage, filling the lungs completely with air. Then on exhalation, let the lungs collapse fully.
7. Practice this till the time you feel relaxed and confident about breathing through the chest.



Did You Know?

With thoracic breathing, you will feel having more power in your breathing, when it is done correctly. This expands the entire chest cavity, fills the middle of the lungs with air, and frees the heart from pressure. There is more resonance to the voice when the ribcage is open and relaxed, which is an invaluable technique for singers and speakers.

Collarbone or Clavicular Breathing

This is the last step before the One Complete Yoga Breath. With this type of breathing the air flows into the top of the lungs. With inhalation, the upper part of the chest and collarbones gets lifted, and with exhalation, they come lower. The breath is very shallow and rapid. This type of breathing occurs in situations of extreme stress and panic, or when one is having there is great difficulty in breathing.

Steps to Perform Clavicular Breathing

1. Take the same position as during abdominal and thoracic breathing and keep your body relaxed.
2. Place your fingertips gently on the part of your collarbone where the bone juts up and out.
3. Inhale and let your chest expand and rise at the same time as your collarbone rises. The centre of the collarbone (in the area of the larynx) will create an “indentation” in your throat if you are doing it right.
4. Slowly exhale and let your chest and collarbone return to their normal position.



Caution

Prevent your shoulders from rising up and down; only the collarbone should rise while breathing.

In a healthy and natural breath, all these three variations, i.e., diaphragmatic breathing, thoracic breathing and clavicular breathing occur. Each is united with the other into a flowing wave, which proceeds from the bottom to the top of the lungs with ‘the inhalation, and from the top to the bottom with the exhalation. With the inhalation, the abdomen extends forward and the chest is expanded. With the exhalation the chest and the abdomen return to their original position. When one practises this type of breathing utilizing the full lung capacity naturally and without any force, one is said to be practising the Full Yoga Breath.

The Full Yogic Breath

The Full Yogic Breath is a wonderful combination of the three types of breathing exercises discussed above.

1. Take the position that you followed in above breathing exercises. Check the position of your head with the rest of your body to be sure that it is in centre and straight.
2. Begin slowly by inhaling through the nose, while keeping the mouth closed. Let the air fill your lungs without stopping the movement.
3. Continue to inhale smoothly until your ribcage has expanded sideways.
4. Without stopping the breath, continue until your chest has expanded and your collarbone has risen.



Notes

The movements during breathing are no longer separated. One Full Yoga Breath includes one smooth, continuous flow of breath in and out, involving non-jerky movements of the abdomen, chest and collarbone.

5. Feel the air filling your chest. Retain your breath, but only for as long as you feel completely relaxed and comfortable.

6. Now start exhaling slowly in exact reverse motion. Allow the breath to flow out and your abdomen to sink.
7. Continue to exhale as slowly as you can, fully focus on your breath which is being expelled upwards and is reaching your ribcage. Feel the energy of your breath move through the ribcage as you continue to exhale and expel the energy from your ribcage into your larynx.
8. Continue to exhale, and feel how all the energy of your breath has left your body. Your chest and collarbone are now fully relaxed.
9. It is completely normal if you feel slightly dizzy or lightheaded after practising the Full Yoga Breath. In fact, this indicates that your brain is being filled with more oxygen than usual, and is a sign that you are doing it right.



Yogic breathing must be practised in a physically and mentally relaxed state. It is essential to be in a physically relaxed state as then only the body muscles can stretch and relax properly without creating any kind of tension. A mentally relaxed state is necessary for full concentration, relaxation and proper breathing. By exhaling consciously, one can considerably assist in the relaxation of the muscles.

Different Types of Pranayama –Knowledge, Benefits and Precautions

This section discusses different types of *pranayama* along with the correct method of their practice, benefits and precautions.

Anulom Vilom or Nadi Shodhan (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

This practice is also considered as a *kriya* (*nadi shodhana kriya*) particularly when it is not accompanied by *kumbhak* or retention.

Anulom Vilom pranayama is one of the most excellent breathing exercises. While performing this *pranayama*, it is recommended to keep the right hand in *Pranava Mudra*. In this *mudra*, the first two fingers of the right hand are to be fully bent and last two fingers are to be kept straight and held together. Now straighten the thumb and bending the right hand at the elbow, place the curved fingers in such a way that they come near the lips. Keep the hand from shoulder to elbow slightly away from the chest. Keep the right hand thumb on the right nostril and last two fingers on the left side of the nose.

To perform *Anulom Vilom pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit comfortably on a mat.
- Close the right nostril with right thumb and breathe from left nostril. Now, close the left nostril with the small and ring finger. Hold the breath up to your limit. Then breathe out from right nostril.
- Now breathe in deeply with right nostril and then close the right nostril and breathe out deeply with the left nostril.
- Repeat the exercise for 10 times to begin with.



Fig. 9.9: *Anulom Vilom Pranayama*



Did You Know?

The right nostril represents *Pingala nadi* (principal Sun principle or energy), whereas the left nostril represents *Ida nadi* (principal Moon or mind). According to *Hatha Yoga*, many adverse health conditions occur due to imbalance between the *Ida* and *Pingala nadis*. Alternate nostril breathing balances these two forces.

Health benefits of *Anulom Vilom pranayama*:

- Equalizes breathing through both the nostrils, thereby creating a wholesome personality conducive to meditation.
- Facilitates proper supply of oxygen in the body; and carbon dioxide is effectively removed.
- Allows deep breathing and improves lungs-functions. More oxygen is made available per breath, making the breathing most efficient.
- Improves blood circulation and purifies blood. This is useful for patients with heart-related problems.
- Helps in managing stress. Regular practice offers energy in the body and releases stress and anxiety.
- Calms the mind and reduces anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses. It also reduces hyperactive disorders related to the mind.
- Balances *Ida* and *Pingala*, removes all blockages in the *pranic* energy channels, which may lead to spiritual awakenings.
- Cleanses, strengthens and tones the nervous system, which also helps in improving concentration.
- Prevents diabetes or keeps it under control.
- Removes blockage of arteries, and relieves hypertension.
- Increases the glow of the skin.

- Benefits the patients suffering from asthma, headache, migraine, neurological problems, depression, and gastric problems.

Some precautions to be followed during *Anulom Vilom pranayama*:

- This breathing exercise should be ideally practiced in the morning in fresh air with empty stomach.
- People who have undergone heart surgeries, abdominal surgeries, or brain surgeries take advice from their medical consultants before starting the practice.
- It should be practiced after emptying the bowel and bladder.
- Beginners, particularly young children, pregnant women or elderly people should practise *Anulom Vilom* only under expert guidance.
- Overstraining of chest muscles should be avoided. Under no circumstances should the breathing be forced.
- Set the duration of inhalation and exhalation as per your physical strength and fitness.



Example

Start with a duration you are most comfortable with, for example 4 seconds of inhalation and 4 seconds of exhalation. Later, it can be increased up to 20 seconds or even more.

Bhastrika Pranayama (Bellows Breath)

Bhastrika in Sanskrit means ‘bellows’; hence, *Bhastrika pranayama* literally means a breathing exercise that resembles the blowing of bellows. It is an excellent breathing exercise that can be practised slowly or fast as per our convenience. In this *pranayama*, the body gets maximum amount of oxygen due to complete inhaling and exhaling.



Notes

Traditional *bhastrika pranayama* involves two steps: *Kapalbhati* and *Pranayama*. There are several varieties of *Kapalbhati* and *Pranayama*, thereby giving rise to several varieties of *Bhastrika*. What is described below is the most popular practice of *Kapalbhati*, also known as *Bhastrika*.

Bhastrika Pranayama as given in *Hatha Pradipika* is a unique form of *Pranayama* which has two parts to it (one – forceful inhalation and exhalation with both nostrils accompanied by corresponding stomach movements and second, *Suryabhedana Pranayama*). It is performed as follows:

- Sit in a meditative posture say *Padmasana* as in the figure given
- Take a short breath and then forcefully exhale through both nostrils (with stomach/ abdominal region naturally going in). Immediately inhale forcefully with both the nostrils (with stomach/ abdominal region moving naturally outwards). Repeat this rapid inhalation – exhalation continuously 20 to 40 times. Then stop.
- Now perform *Suryabhedana pranayama* i.e. inhale through the right nostril and hold the breath (*kumbhaka*) up to your capacity (with or without bandhas) and then exhale through the left nostril.
- Repeat the entire process 10 to 12 times depending upon your practice schedule.



Caution

In *Bhastrika pranayama*, the force has to be applied while breathing in and breathing out. You can determine how much force to apply while inhaling and exhaling respectively, keeping your health and endurance in mind.



Fig. 9.10: *Bhastrika Pranayama*

Health benefits of *Bhastrika pranayama*:

- *Bhastrika* as described above is the most energizing practice of *pranayama*. It raises the BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate) thereby increasing the calorie consumption in the body.
- Rhythmic inhalation and exhalation stimulates circulation of cerebral fluid, creating compression and decompression in the brain.
- Rhythmic diaphragm movements stimulate heart and lung muscles, thus improving blood circulation and strengthening of lungs.
- Accelerated blood circulation and rate of gas exchange in each cell produces heat and washes out gases.
- Relaxes the body and mind and improves concentration.
- Relieves stress, depression and hypertension.
- Increases appetite and provides effective cure for obesity.
- Provides cures against health ailments, such as asthma, headache, migraine, neurological problems, gastric problems, arthritis, and throat infection.
- Increases warmth in the body and helps to prevent common cold.
- Flushes out toxins from the body and cures illnesses of respiratory track.
- Imparts glow to the skin.

Some precautions to be followed while doing *Bhastrika pranayama*:

- Patients with high blood pressure or heart disease should not practise *Bhastrika pranayama*.
- People with low stamina should avoid doing this *pranayama* too often.
- This *pranayama* should be practised under expert guidance.

Chandrabhedan or Chandrabhedi Pranayama

This *pranayama* is called *Chandrabhedi* as its practice stimulates the cooling process brought about by the stimulation of the para-sympathetic nervous system. It is also called left nostril breathing. While doing this *pranayama*, one should breathe in through the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. To perform *Chandrabhedi pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.
- Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Close your right nostril and inhale slowly through the left nostril. Fill up your lungs to their maximum capacity.
- Hold the breath up to the limit.
- Close the left nostril and exhale slowly through the right nostril.
- This completes one round of *Chandrabhedi pranayama*.

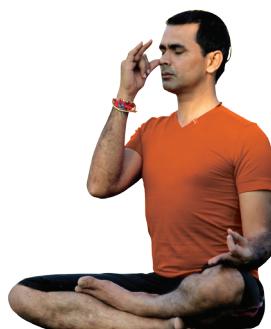


Fig. 9.11: Chandrabhedi Pranayama



Caution

Those suffering from heart disease or asthma should not practise holding of the breath in any *pranayama* for long durations.

Health benefits of *Chandrabhedi pranayama*:

- Reduces the flow of gall.
- Cools the body and reduces body heat.
- Gets rid of heart burn and laziness.
- Is beneficial in cases of mental tension, agitation, high blood pressure, heart disease, etc.

Some precautions to be followed during the *Chandrabhedi pranayama*:

- This *pranayama* should not be done during winters. It must be practiced only in summers.
- Right nostril should be pressed with thumb of right hand, while left nostril should be pressed with ring finger of right hand.

Suryabhedana Pranayama

This *pranayama* is also called right nostril breathing. While doing this *pranayama*, one should breathe in through the right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril. To perform *Suryabhedana pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.
- Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Inhale slowly and deeply from the right nostril. Fill up your lungs to their maximum capacity.
- Open the left nostril and exhale slowly.
- This completes one round of *Suryabhedana pranayama*.

Fig. 9.12: *Suryabhedan Pranayama*

Health benefits of *Suryabhedan pranayama*:

- Boosts the nervous system, especially the sympathetic nervous system.
- Helps in regenerating the lungs tissues and enhances their capacity.
- Strengthens the immune system and increases the efficiency of digestive system.
- Soothes and invigorates the nerves, and cleans the sinuses.
- Purifies the brain and destroys intestinal worms and diseases arising from excess of wind (*Vayu*).
- Cures rhinitis and various sorts of neuralgia.
- Provides relief to people suffering from asthma, cold, low blood pressure and gastric problems.
- Increases the body temperature and provides warmth; hence particularly useful and effective for people with cold hands and feet.
- Removes the *Kapha* (mucus) imbalance in the body.
- Helps in weight loss and is very effective against obesity.
- Beats anxiety, depression, low energy, stress management other mental illnesses.

Some precautions to be followed during *Suryabhedan pranayama*:

- The eyes, temples, eyebrows and the skin on the forehead should remain completely passive and show no sign of strain.

- Persons suffering from high blood pressure or heart trouble should not hold their breath after inhalation.
- It should not be performed if you are suffering from any kind of fever as it increases the heat in the body.
- Avoid *Suryabhedan pranayama* if you are suffering from high *Pitta* or acidity, or have recently recovered from diarrhoea.

Ujjayi Pranayama (Victorious Breath)

The prefix '*Uj*' means upwards or superiority in rank. The word *Jay* in Sanskrit means "conquest, victory, triumph or success". In *Ujjayi pranayama*, the lungs are fully expanded and the chest is puffed out like that of a proud conqueror. It involves shallow breathing aimed at flexing the diaphragm.

Fig. 9.13: *Ujjayi Pranayama*

To perform *Ujjayi pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit erect in a comfortable position.
- *Ujjayi* involves partial closure of the glottis both while inhaling as well as exhaling. This is done by tightening the throat region properly.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils with the generation of a hissing/whispering sound. Fill the lungs to their maximum capacity.

- Exhale slowly, deeply and steadily again generating the same sound, until the lungs are completely empty.



Notes

Ujjayi pranayama, when performed without the retention of breath and in a reclining position, is ideal for persons suffering from high blood pressure or coronary problems.

Ujjayi is the only breathing practice which is prescribed to can be performed in any position sitting, standing as well as lying down.

Health benefits of *Ujjayi pranayama*:

- Aerates the lungs, removes phlegm, gives endurance, soothes the nerves and tones the entire system.
- Reduces the risk of diseases caused by accumulation of bile, wind or phlegm.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland.
- Eases diseases of the lungs, chest and throat.
- Improves oxygenation needed in many body functions.
- Clears the lungs and nasal cavity and strengthens the vocal cord.
- Helps alleviate indigestion and irregular bowel movements.
- Proves effective in pain reduction, insomnia and migraine.

The precaution to be followed for practising *Ujjayi pranayama*:

Avoid it if you suffer from cardiac problems.

Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Breath)

The original Sanskrit word for *Bhramari* is *Bhramar*, or humming bee. This *pranayama* involves creating a sound similar to that of the humming bee. It is an excellent breathing exercise that helps release agitation, frustration and anger, and is one of the best exercises for calming the mind.



Notes

The traditional *Bhramari* breathing involves generation of the humming bee sound both during inhalation and exhalation.

To perform *Bhramari pranayama* as it is commonly understood and performed:

- Sit erect in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Raise bent arms to the shoulder level and close the ears with your thumbs.
- Place the index finger gently on your eyelids; the middle finger lightly on your nostrils.
- Inhale slowly and deeply to fill the lungs completely.
- Exhale slowly through the nostrils.
- Produce the sound of a humming bee (“*hmmmm*”) through larynx (sound box) while exhaling.

Hatha Pradipika describes *Brahmari Pranayama* to involve generation of male bee sound while inhalation and female bee sound while exhalation. ‘As a result of practising rapid inhalation, producing a sound resembling the hum of a male bee, (and after performing Kumbhaka) slow exhalation, producing the very low hum of a female bee, an indescribable blissful experience fills the minds of eminent Yogis.’



Fig. 9.14: *Bhramari Pranayama*



Did You Know?

For best results, this *pranayama* should be practised at night or in early morning.

Health benefits of *Bhramari pranayama*:

- Makes voice sweet and melodious and helps in clarity of speech.
- Calms the body, and relieves stress, tension, anger and anxiety.
- Cures hypertension and depression.
- Helps in controlling high blood pressure.
- Strengthens the vocal cords.
- Increases concentration.
- Very helpful for pregnant women for an easy and trouble a free childbirth.

Some precautions to be followed while doing *Bhramari pranayama*:

- *Bhramari pranayama* should be done on an empty stomach.
- If you feel dizzy while practising it, stop the exercise and start normal breathing.

Sheetali Pranayama

The word *Sheetali* means “cooling” in Sanskrit.



Fig. 9.15: *Sheetali Pranayama*

To perform *Sheetali pranayama*:

- Start inhaling through the mouth by rolling the tongue out of the mouth.
- After inhalation, close the mouth and slowly exhale through the nostrils.

Some precautions to be followed during *Sheetali pranayama*:

- This *pranayama* can lower blood pressure. Therefore, necessary precautions must be observed during its practice.
- You may feel little cold or tingling sensation in the throat due to cold air, but this is normal.
- Under no circumstances the breathing should be forced.
- Stop the practice if you feel dizzy and continue to breathe normally

Health benefits of *Sheetali pranayama*:

- The practice of *Sheetali Pranayama* calms the mind, reduces the stress. It cools the body and mind and controls the blood pressure. This *pranayama* is very effective in hyperacidity or even ulcers.
- *Sheetali Pranayama* reduces the body temperature. This may have positive effect on the endocrine glands and nervous system.
- In the ancient text of *Hatha Pradipika*, Swami Swatmaram says that its practitioner becomes young and attractive. Further, he says that this *pranayama* removes excess heat accumulated in the system, reduces excess bile, corrects the disorders of spleen and cures fever.
- *Sheetali pranayama* gives control over hunger and thirst. It has a calming effect on the entire nervous system, and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system which induces muscular relaxation and is very effective in stress management.

Sheetkari Pranayama

In *Sheetali pranayama* and *Sheetkari pranayama*, we breathe through the mouth just like python, hen and an offspring of a deer.

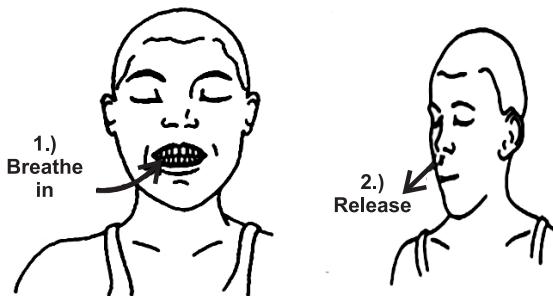


Fig. 9.16: *Sheetkari Pranayama*

The practitioner of *Sheetkari* can alleviate his or her thirst in the absence of water. *Sheetali* and *Sheetkari pranayama* are similar; the only difference between them is the technique of breathing used to practice them. In *Sheetali*, we breathe by folding the tongue, and in *Sheetkari* we inhale through the teeth.

To perform *Sheetkari pranayama*:

- Sit in any comfortable yogic posture.
- Fix the tongue on the upper or lower layer of teeth and inhale slowly through the mouth, generating a hissing sound. This breathing is similar to the saliva generated in the mouth when we eat anything hot and spicy.
- After inhaling, close your mouth and breathe out through the nose.

Health benefits of *Sheetkari pranayama*:

- Cools down the body temperature.
- Helps curing spleen and indigestion.
- Effective in dental problems like pyorrhoea.
- Controls body temperature.
- Calms the mind.

- Reduces emotional excitement and stress.

- Beneficial in case of depression.

Some precautions to be followed during *Sheetkari pranayama*:

- If you are suffering from cold and cough, asthma or other respiratory problems or tonsillitis you should not practice *Sheetkari* and *Sheetali pranayama*.
- Those suffering from low blood pressure are strictly advised not to perform this *pranayama*.



Notes

Sheetkari pranayama is the variation of *Sheetali pranayama*. People who are not able to fold the sides of the tongue in *Sheetali pranayama* can perform *Sheetkari pranayama*.

Benefits of Pranayama

As a technique for the control of *prana*, *pranayama* practices result in increasing the stock of *prana* in the body. The frequency of *pranic* vibrations too increasing. The first brings about an increased energy level and the second an increased awareness level.

Pranayama practices have benefits at all levels for human beings – physical, physiological, mental and spiritual. Some of these benefits are described below.

Every organ in the body, including heart, brain, lungs, digestive organs, endocrine glands, and excretory organs have rhythms. Breathing, too, has a specific rhythm. *Pranayama* gives the breath a natural rhythm by controlling the process of inhalation, exhalation and retention. Breathing influences almost all the systems of the body. Hence, it helps to maintain the natural rhythm of all body organs, and allows their functions to go a long way.

With *pranayama*, one can master the process of breathing though slowly but deeply. Reduced breathing rate has multiple benefits for the body, like slowing down the heart rate, minimizing the wear and tear of internal organs, improving blood circulation lowering blood pressure, and slowing down the aging process.

Pranayama increases lungs capacity. It is actually helpful for those suffering from respiratory disorders such as asthma and emphysema that they can overcome the fear of the shortness of breath.

Pranayama controls the fluctuations of mind and prepares it for meditation. The combination of *Pranayama* and meditation makes the body feel light. It provides inner peace, improves sleep, sharpens the memory and refines concentration.

Pranayama helps in increasing oxygen supply to the brain and provides complete relaxation to the nervous system. A fitter and calmer mind is a path to deep relaxation, which also increases the mental and physical powers of endurance.

Research suggests that manipulating the breath can alter how we feel. Breathing has a significant impact on our emotions, like anger, fear, joy or sadness. Right breathing not only calms the body and mind down but also helps to control negative emotions, such as anger, depression, jealousy, hatred, greed and arrogance.

Yogic breathing practices increase the levels of leptin, a hormone produced by fat tissues that signals the brain to inhibit hunger. Intensive yoga practice may benefit health by altering leptin and adiponectin production in the body. Leptin has a pro-inflammatory role, while adiponectin has anti-inflammatory properties.¹

By combining *asanas* with *pranayama*, intense relaxation and meditation, we can maintain the balance of our stress-regulation systems in our brain and our body. Practising various Yoga techniques including *pranayama* affects the activity of our genes, lowers our heart rate and blood pressure and decreases the production of “stress” hormones, which reduce the symptoms of mental and physical distress.²

Practising *pranayama* on a daily basis can benefit those suffering from respiratory or heart problems, insomnia, nervous disorders, migraines, or any disorder which occurs due to absence of proper relaxation.

9.2 Meditation – The Concept³

According to the *Astanga yoga* of Patanjali, ‘*Dhyāna*’ is seventh rung of the *yogangás*. *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Prāṇayama* and *Pratyāhāra* are five *Angás* which are considered to be *bahya*, external *Angás*, whereas *dharana*, *dhyana* and *Samadhi* are *antarik*, the inner *Angás*. To enter into the grandeur inner kingdom and build a bridge between the inner and outer worlds, *dharana* works like a bridge, whereas *dhyāna*, the meditation is equal to a gateway to the inner world. There may be so many traditions and paths in this world and all of them may have different kinds of practices to follow to reach ultimate goal. But all of them have no differences about meditation. Therefore, meditation is the most essential part of the practice. According to *yoga sūtrás* of Patanjali, following *Yama*, *Niyama* etc. great steps, mastering the *Asanas*, practising different kinds of *prāṇayama*, one becomes able to get rid of the impurities and gets control of the senses. Then only one can attain Concentration or

¹ Janice K. Kiecolt-Glaser, Lisa M. Christian, Rebecca Andridge, Beom Seuk Hwang, William B. Malarkey, Martha A. Belury, Charles F. Emery, and Ronald Glaser, “Adiponectin, Leptin, and Yoga Practice”, PubMed Central, 2012.

² Sat Bir Singh Khalsa and Jodie Gould, “Your Brain on *Yoga*”, Harvard University, 2012.

³ Part of the information has been sourced from “*Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principle of Yoga, Patanjali Yogeeth, Haridwar*”.

Dharana, which is the process of holding or fixing the attention of mind onto one object or place:

desabandhascittasya darana

(yogadarsana 3.1)

Tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam'

(yogadarsana 3/1-2).

The concept of meditation is the most misunderstood or inadequately understood in modern times. Basically, all meditation techniques are related to the mind. They involve the controlling of the mind which finally transcends. This state of transcendence is referred to in *Hatha Yoga* as *unmani* or *manonmani awastha*. In the wake of practising meditation, several benefits ensue as by-products, such as efficient functioning of the body, a general state of well-being and an overall equanimity.

Meditation is commonly associated with practices to still the mind. There are various forms of meditation to suit different levels of practitioners. Interchangeably referred to as contemplation, meditation practices typically involve breath observation, auto suggestion, visualization, *mantra* chanting, rotation of beads in *japa*, concentration on an object of choice and non-judgemental awareness of thoughts. These practices entail training of the senses and the mind to disassociate from the object and stand apart as a witness. Thoughts are viewed without any identification, analysis, judgement, resistance or verbalizing. Mediation practice helps in developing concentration or of the state of being single pointed.

Meditation, in its truest sense, is a state of being. What starts off as a technique of practice, slowly evolves into a state of being. The softness and tranquillity of the 30 minutes of practice carries itself forward through the rest of the day. Once perfected, the meditative stance percolates and permeates through all our thoughts and deeds, 24/7.

Naturally once the mind is meditative, the fluctuations of the mind lose their power to overwhelm and sway the individual. There is greater clarity and sharpness in seeing things as they are without the pre-conditioned colouring of memory and judgement. The reflecting medium of the mind becomes clearer and purer to reveal the light of intelligence. Muddy waters cannot reflect the brilliance of the sun, only pure and placid waters reflect the sunlight. Therefore, a mind which has been cleared of its dross through the technique of meditation, is tuned to reflect the light of awareness.

Scriptures lay great importance on meditation. They consider it as the highest vocation for mankind. Training the senses and the mind is a pre-requisite to being meditative. Buddhist monks are known to practice mindfulness in their day to day activities. Mindfulness is referred to being aware of what you are doing at the time of doing, no matter what you are doing.

9.3 Practical Techniques of Meditation

For a novice to sit in meditation without any thoughts is an uphill task. Therefore, practitioners are advised to begin with a support such as the breath or a deity of choice. By using a support, the vagrant mind is given a limited field within which it is allowed to meander, like a farm animal tied to a pole has a fixed radius for wandering.

Concentration Meditation

The mind needs something to get attached to. Concentration and meditation entails focusing the mind on a single point, such as the breath, or a mantra, a candle flame, rotation of beads in *japa*, auto-suggestion for visualization of an object of choice preferably, a deity or *ishta devta*. Concentration and meditation practices take time to build up, it is advisable to practice for a few

minutes initially and continue the practice with fervour and determination.

The mind will wander but try to refocus the mind and bring it back to the object of meditation. Involuntary thoughts will occur, but over a period of time, the mind gets channelized and remains focused on the object of meditation for longer durations. You will notice that this practice helps in developing our ability to concentrate in our daily activities as well.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindful meditation practice entails a free flow of thoughts as and when they come. The practitioner is required to simply stand apart from the thoughts and not identify with or judge them.

Through this practice, the practitioner slowly realizes that the thoughts by itself have no power, it is the unnecessary identification with the thoughts that causes any agitation. The mind is a continuous flow of thoughts. By being mindful of the thoughts that occur, their value judgement is withheld, leading to a correct evaluation of the thought. Through mindfulness meditation, you realize that thoughts tend to flow in preconditioned patterns. Continuous practice helps in the development of a state of internal harmony and balance.

You can practice a combination of both concentration and mindfulness meditation.

Simple Meditation Techniques for Beginners

- Make a firm resolve that 'I will meditate daily'. Start off with a daily target of two minutes of sitting still. Gradually, keep increasing the time.
- Try to meditate at a fixed time and a fixed place. The body will slowly get into a groove of meditating and will naturally veer to the spot of meditation at the given time. Ideally,

one must meditate in the morning, when the cosmic rhythm is conducive to silence and stillness. The place for meditation must be kept clean and away from noise. If it is not possible to meditate at a fixed time and a fixed place, choose any time of the day that works best – try not to skip any single day of practice. It's only two minutes – you owe it to yourself.

- If you forget to meditate, set a reminder either on the phone or stick a post-it near your bedside.
- Please do not worry about where to sit, what mat should you use, how should you meditate. You need not sit on the floor – sit comfortably on a chair or on your couch, keeping the back erect. Ensure that there are minimal external disturbances. Wear comfortable clothes.
- Once you are comfortable for two minutes, then start optimizing on the posture. Keep the head, neck and back in one straight line. As you progress, you will notice that you can stay longer and longer in your practice.
- Observe the state of the mind – is it restless, agitated, oscillating? How is the breath – is it smooth, interrupted, deep, shallow? Simply watch and do not try to change anything yet.
- If you feel drowsy, then take a deep breath and forcefully exhale – repeat this a couple of times.
- Gradually increase the time spent in practice. You will enjoy these moments of stillness and want to practice more and more – a self-stroking cycle.
- When your mind wanders, get rid of the futile thoughts immediately.

The Difference between Dharana and Dhyanā

This difference is beautifully brought out in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. Here, *dharana* refers

to confining the mind to one object and in this process, all the efforts are expended in bringing the mind again and again to the object from its continuous distractions.

When the individual becomes successful in the above process and can hold his attention continuously on the one object without any distraction, he is said to be in a state of *dhyana* or meditation.

Incidentally, when this *dhyana* becomes prolonged and intense, wherein the self nature of the meditator is as if not there, and the process of meditation is as if it is not there, and only the object of meditation shines forth, it is said to be the state of *Samadhi*.

Each time the mind evades you, runs here and there and you bring it back that is called concentration. Concentration is trying to fix the mind on one thing – single-mindedness. Meditation is when you have tried concentration and are successful.

Performance of Mudras, Mantra and Japa

There are various types of *mudras*. These *mudras* can be classified as *hasta mudras*, *maan mudras*, *kaya mudras*, *adbara mudras*, and *bandhas* (*mudras* used in *pranayama*). Some important *mudras* practiced in Yoga are *ashwini mudra*, *khechari mudra*, *vipritakarani mudra*, *drona mudra*, *padma mudra*, *shambhavi mudra*, *simha mudra*, etc. A brief description of some examples of *mudras* are given below.



Notes

Mudra is defined as *mudam anandam dadati iti mudra* that which provides delight or joy is *mudra*.

The physical body is made up of five elements, namely – Sky or space (*akash*), Air (*vayu*), Fire (*agni*), Water (*aap*), and Earth (*prithvi*). Imbalance of these elements disrupts the immunity system

and causes disease. The imbalance can be removed by connecting one part of the body with another in a particular manner through *Mudras*.

When a finger representing an element is brought into contact with the thumb, that element is brought into balance, and the disease caused by that imbalance is cured. *Mudras* stimulate electromagnetic currents within the body which balance various constituting elements and restore health. The joining of fingers creates an effect on the human body.

Five fingers for balancing the five elements:

Thumb	Fire
Index	Air
Middle	Sky or Space
Ring	Earth
Little	Water

Mudras for Health Benefits

Jnana Mudra

Method: Join the tips of the index finger and thumb and keep the other 3 fingers stretched and joined. The same *mudra* when performed with the palms facing downwards is called *chin mudra*.



Fig. 9.17: *Jnana Mudra*

Benefit: *Jnana Mudra* is very effective in cases of mental ailments; it imparts happiness, develops the intellect and sharpens the memory.

Prana Mudra

Method: Join the tip of the thumb with the tip of the little and ring finger. Keep other two fingers straight.



Fig. 9.18: *Prana Mudra*

Benefit: Helps in pumping the life force into your body. Beneficial for all types of diseases. Imparts special power to the eyes.

Khechari Mudra

Method: *Khechari mudra* is a yoga practice where the tongue is rolled up to touch the soft palate initially and then with due practice it is inserted into the nasal cavity behind the palette.

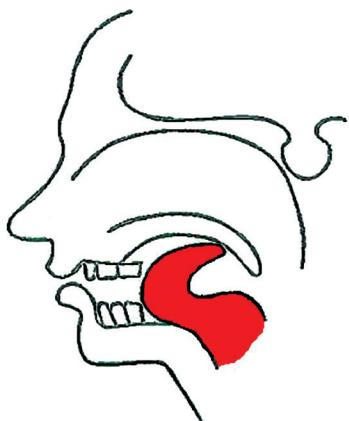


Fig. 9.19: *Khechari Mudra*

Benefit: Helps to overcome thirst, hunger, decay and delay death.

Shambhavi Mudra

Method: *Shambhari mudra* essentially involves gazing at the eyebrow center.

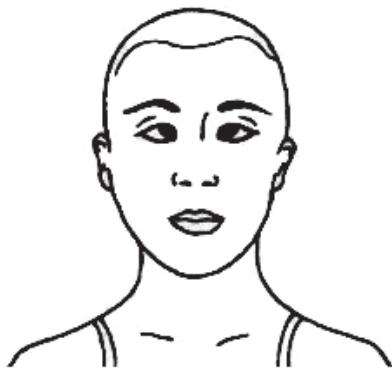


Fig. 9.20: *Shambhari Mudra*

Benefit: Helps to transcend the mind and reach the higher states of consciousness. It can help one reach the state of *Samadhi*. *Shambhari* helps to strengthen the eye muscles. By constant practice, the muscles can sustain the position for a long period of time for prolonged meditation. *Shambhari mudra* activates the *Ajna chakra*.

Ashwini Mudra

Method: *Ashwini Mudra* is done by contracting the anal sphincter muscles in a rhythmic manner.



Fig. 9.21: *Ashwini Mudra*

Benefit: *Ashwini mudra* gives control of the anal muscles just like a horse. It helps to remove constipation. According to *Gheranda Sambhita*, the practice of *Ashwini mudra* can awaken the dormant *Kundalini Shakti*. It also removes all diseases of the rectum.

When to practice Mudras

Mudras can be practised at any time – while waiting, sitting, standing, talking or walking. The effect of the *mudras* can be felt only after a long duration of practice. That is the reason why *mudras* are not so popular as compared to other practices of yoga like *asanas* and *pranayama*.

Japa

Japa is the repeated chanting of a mantra or a name of a deity. *Japa* can be practised in a meditative posture or while performing daily activities. *Japa* practice makes the mind single-pointed. A mind trained in *japa* can reach higher states of consciousness easily. The more one thinks of an object, the more one gets attached to it. *Japa* practice brings about a closer connect with the object of meditation. Start today, start now. *Japa* is the easiest *sadhana* to perform, given our busy lives.

Mantra chanting or *japa* of *mantras* can be done in four ways:

1. *Vaikhari* – loud, audible chanting
2. *Upanshu* – whispering chanting, audible only to the person who is chanting
3. *Mansik* – mental chanting
4. *Likhit-japa* by writing

Japa becomes effortless when practised continuously. *Ajapa japa* is the continuous resonance of a mantra in one's being resulting from fervent practice over a prolonged, uninterrupted period of time. It is like an earworm that plays in the background constantly.

Varieties of Japa

Mental Repetition

One method of *Japa* is mental repetition of a *mantra* (or “*mantram*”).

Beads

In order to aid concentration, a support in the form of a string of rosary beads may be used. The *japa mala* may be made of *tulsi* beads or *rudraksha* beads. It usually contains 108 beads or 51 beads. The off-head of the *mala* is called the *meru*. The *mala* must be placed at the conjunction of the ring finger with the thumb. Turn each bead with the thumb and middle finger and repeat the mantra with every turn, keeping the index finger apart.

The index finger is typically used in an accusatory manner pointing to the ‘other’. The index finger represents the ego, duality, separateness. Thus the index finger is kept apart in *japa*.

Complete one round of 108 times, do not cross the *meru*. Turn the *mala* at the *meru* and re-start the next round of *japa*. The *meru* is a symbol of the Supreme and as such, must not be crossed before the next round. The *mala* may be kept around the neck or in a cloth bag.

Mantrachakras

Another form of *japa* practised by Buddhist monks involves the rotation of prayer wheels.

Mantra

Mantra means the combination of two words “*man*” and “*tra*”. *Man* represents mind and *tra* comes from *trayati*, which means “to protect”. Therefore, *mantra* is that which protects the mind – *mananat trayati iti mantra*.

Most of the *Vedic mantras* have seers/rishis who have given them to the world. For example, Maharsi Vishwamitra became the recipient of the *Gayatri Mantra* and shared it with the world for its spiritual welfare.

Mantras may be pure sounds (*bija mantra*) or prayers to God. *Bija mantras* bring about their effect due to the vibrations generated by their chanting, whereas *mantras* which are prayers lead to the blessings from God.

There are *Vedantic Mantras* like –

Tat Tram Asi – That Thou Art

Aham Brahma Asmi – I am Brahman

Sivoham Sivoham – I am Shiva

There are *Pauranic mantras* such as –

Om Namah Shivaya

Om Namo Narayana

Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Rama

Hare Rama Hare Krishna

Japa must not be performed mechanically by merely rolling beads or muttering mindlessly. Mantra chanting must be done sincerely with intense fervour and a spirit of surrender and devotion. Mantras have the power to bring about a transformation in one's personality. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna proclaims "I am, among the Yogas, the *japa yoga*".

Some Important Vedic Mantras

Gayatri Mantra

The *Gayatri mantra* is one of the oldest available divine hymns from the *Rig Veda*. *Gayatri mantra* chanted with the right understanding of its sacred meaning can remove negative tendencies in the mind. This *mantra* is not chanted for the purpose of material gains but it is an appeal to the Pure Consciousness to illuminate our intellect, i.e., a prayer to unveil the light of the Self within. The uniqueness of *Gayatri mantra* is that the vibrations generated by chanting *Gayatri mantra* bring about the same effect as when the *Gayatri mantra* as a prayer is fulfilled.

The *Gayatri mantra* constitutes three lines of eight syllables each.

"*Om Bhuh Bhuvah Svaha* (this line represents the *shlokas* or fields of consciousness as *vyahrti* and is technically not a part of the mantra)

Om Tat Savitur Varenayam

Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi

Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat"

"We meditate upon the auspicious light of the Lord Sun, may thy heavenly light illumine our intellect."

Shanti Mantra

"*Om. Sahana varatu. Saha nau bhunaktu.*

Saha veeryam karvavahai.

Tejasvinar adhitam astu; ma vidvishavahai.

Om. Shantib! Shantib! Shantib!"

"*Om.*

Om, May we all be protected

May we all be nourished

May we work together with great energy

May our intellect be sharpened (may our study be effective)

Let there be no animosity amongst us

Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation stimulates the *para sympathetic nervous system* which results in relaxation of the body and mind. The following physical benefits have been noticed –

- Controlled blood pressure
- Better blood circulation
- Normalised heart rate
- Slower respiration
- Less anxiety
- Delay in onset of mental ailments, such as depression and alzheimer's disease

These benefits are by-products of the practice of meditation and not the goal of meditation. The goal of meditation is to enable the practitioner sharpen his awareness so that he may discover his true essence i.e., the Divinity within, which is shrouded by a veil of impurities. Meditation practice is about being in the present moment, away from regrets of the past and worries of the future. A seasoned meditator tends to be poised through ups and downs and maintains a sense of balance. He/she is not enslaved by his senses and is relatively free from attachment.

Obstacles and Ways to Overcome Them

In Patanjali Yoga, *Antarayas* or obstacles in the path of Yoga are so because they are distractions of the mind. These obstacles don't allow the practitioner concentrate. Concentration being the first stage in Patanjali Yoga Meditation, these *Antarayas* can be considered as obstacles in the path of meditation. The nine *antarayas* or obstacles are as follows:

- i. *Vyadhi* (Physical illness),
- ii. *Styan* (Mental languor or listlessness),
- iii. *Samshaya* (Doubt),
- iv. *Pramada* (Heedlessness or misplaced priorities),
- v. *Alasya* (Physical laziness),
- vi. *Avirati* (Stubborn attachment to sense objects),
- vii. *Bhranti Darshana* (Illusion or misunderstanding),
- viii. *Alabha Bhumikatva* (Non-attainment of firm ground), and
- ix. *Anvasti Tattva* (Non-maintenance of firm ground).

In The *Bhagavad Gita*, the 6th Chapter is has the titled *Dhyana Yoga*. It explains the obstacles on the path of meditation. Meditation is like walking on the razor's edge of awareness. External obstacles that come in the path of meditation are generally caused by a lack of preparation. This

includes inappropriate lifestyle wherein food, sleep, recreation and work are not taken care of. Also, for meditation to be successful, the place of meditation should be such that it is quiet, comfortable, clean, undisturbed and uncluttered. The seat of meditation should not be too high nor too low nor a bad conductor preventing the flow of energy from/to earth. The posture (*asana*) adopted for meditation should be comfortable enough for the practitioner to remain steady for the duration of practice.

The internal obstacles to meditation pertain to the expectations from meditation, agitated mind, worldly fears about meditation, holding to our identity even while meditating, focusing on objects other than the object of meditation, non-regularity in meditation, lack of sustained enthusiasm, etc.

The two most common initial obstacles in meditation are *Laya* (sleep) and *Vikshepa* (agitations or distractions), either the mind dozes off to sleep or restlessly moves from one object to another.



SUMMARY

- *Pranayama* is the control and extension of *Prana* (life force energy) through breathing.
- *Pranayama* brings the breath in natural rhythm by controlling the process of inhalation, exhalation and retention.
- By combining physical postures and exercises (*asanas*), with *pranayama*, deep relaxation and meditation, we shift the balance of the stress regulation systems in our brain and our body.
- In *pranayama*, one should utilize the diaphragm efficiently to get more oxygen without making more efforts.
- A frequent mistake done in breathing is drawing the abdomen in as the chest expands, rather than relaxing the abdomen forward. Drawing in the abdomen considerably impairs

deep breathing. Often tight clothing inhibits this natural movement.

- *Siddhasana* is given the pride of place among all the *asanas* in *Hatha Yoga* and is best suited for *pranayama* and meditation.



KEYWORDS

Pranayama: It is the formal practice of controlling the breath, which is the source of the *prana*, or vital life force.

Diaphragmatic Breathing: It is also called vertical breathing that utilizes the diaphragm and considered as an efficient way to inhale air.

Chest or Thoracic Breathing: It is also ribcage breathing, since the ribcage quite literally moves in and out sideways like an accordion and the lower ribs float out with each breath.

Collarbone or Clavicular Breathing: This is the last step before the One Complete Yoga Breath. With this type of breathing the air flows into the top of the lungs. With an inhalation, the upper part of the chest and collarbones get lifted and with an exhalation, they lower down again.

Anulom Vilom or Nadi Shodhana Pranayama: This is one of the excellent breathing exercises that is performed by inhaling from one nostril and exhaling from the other, thus it is also called Alternate Nostril Breathing.

Bhastrika Pranayama: *Bhastrika* in Sanskrit means “bellows”; hence, *Bhastrika pranayama* literally means a breathing exercise that resembles the blowing of bellows.

2. Is it normal if one feels a little dizzy after practicing the full yogic breath?
3. Define *Siddhasana*.
4. Define the concept of meditation.
5. What are the practical applications of meditation?
6. What is unique about *ujjayi* breathing?

Long Questions

1. Define *Pranayama* and its benefits.
2. What is the right way to perform full *yogic* breathing? Discuss.
3. Explain *Vajrasana*, *Ardha Padmasana* and *Padmasana*.
4. Describe any three different types of *Pranayama*.
5. Describe the significance of meditation.
6. Explain *mudras*, *mantras* and *japa* in your own words.



FURTHER READINGS

The complete illustrated book of Yoga - Swami Vishnudevananda

Meditation and Mantras—Swami Vishnudevananda

Light on Yoga – Shri BKS Iyengar

Light on Pranayama - Shri BKS Iyengar

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Prana and Pranayama - Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Yoga Nidra - Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Pranayama by Swami Kuvalayananda

Hatha Pradipika – interpretation by various authors

Patanjali Yoga Sutra - interpretation by various authors



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. What are the steps to perform diaphragmatic breathing?

CHAPTER 10

TEACHING PRACTICE





Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
 - 10.1 Teaching Yoga
 - 10.2 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants
 - 10.3 Teaching Yoga in a Group-Setting
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of practising yoga
- Explain the objectives, nature and scope of teaching yoga
- Appreciate the importance of teaching principle
- Analyse teaching principles
- Describe the benefits of teaching yoga in a group-setting



Introduction

The purpose of teaching is to induce change in the students. The basic aim of teaching is to make someone learn. The teacher/instructor merely arranges the environment for learning and stimulates and guides the students' activities in that environment. It is the teacher who teaches, and it is the responsibility of the student to learn by making honest efforts and grasping the facts revealed by the teacher. Teachers can simply bring the student into a learning environment, and enhance the efficiency of the learning process.

Teaching is a science in the sense that it involves logical and systematic arrangement based on certain principles. It is an art, which means that it cannot be reduced to a formula. It is an art that requires sensitivity to factors affecting the student and his/her environment for learning, which must be suitably modified according to his/her needs.

The entire educational process of teaching and learning revolves around the most important factor – the student. Teaching practice generally focuses on development by adding something new to one's experiences. There are two phases involved in the educational process, namely teaching and learning. Teacher/instructor is a person who stimulates learning in the students by organizing and guiding certain experiences of the individuals under his leadership. He is essentially an educator who 'brings out' all that is best in the student.

10.1 Teaching Yoga

The teaching Yoga transmits dual benefits apart from its wonderful concepts of learning. The person who teaches yoga to others benefits learners by making a contribution of good health and ultimately happiness in their lives. Yoga teachers themselves are benefited in the form of their self-confidence building, development in communication skills, and getting an advantage of the opportunity to step out of their own mind by focusing their energy on learners. The thought that one can easily get rid of his/her own tensions and can discover happiness and joy in life by serving others is given by great Siddhartha Gautama one's.

As yoga practitioners and educators, one of our main task is to create a zone of respectful silence, in which others can explore and express their thoughts and feelings, and learning and teaching happen most effectively. The ancient yoga texts are replete with teachings of the essential role of inner and outer silence as necessary for *svadhyaya* (self-study), and the cultivation of inner peace.

The word ‘silence’ is defined in the *Maitri Upanishad* by many names. According to it silence is “tranquil, soundless, fearless, sorrowless, blissful, satisfied, steadfast, immovable, immortal, unshaken, and enduring.

It is from there that we bring our best selves into the world, acting from places of wisdom, clarity, and self-awareness rather than self-interest. Practising silence allows us to become attuned not only to our inner wisdom, but also to the presence of others and that is what they need from us.

In other words, instead of filling the space, we pause, wait, and listen. This does not mean that we are not participating in conversation—rather we are allowing our interactions with others to flow freely without imposing our needs, agendas, or anxieties. We learn to pause rather than push. This can be remarkably challenging if our tendency is to help out, or fix things.



Fig. 10.1: Yoga Practice

The practice of *shavasana*, which lasts for a few minutes at the end of a yoga practice in which participants are asked to lie on their yoga mats in “corpse pose,” offers an exceptional opportunity to play with our capacity to pause and create space. Although being still in a state of relaxation sounds appealing, it can be incredibly challenging, particularly in the context of a hectic, life.



Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is believed that only slim people can practice yoga. But the fact is yoga can help a practitioner lose weight and live a healthier lifestyle irrespective of his/her body type. Different forms of yoga are available for different people to avail their benefits. Do not be discouraged.



Notes

Yoga has a long rich history, its emergence could be traced back to some 5,000 years ago. Some eminent researchers take its emergence back to over 10,000 years ago. Innovation, practice and development are the three key parts in which yoga history is divided.

Environment of Training¹

The atmosphere of class should be clean and no foul smell should be there.

1. It is appropriate to take yoga classes in an atmosphere where there is no pollution, and the air is fresh and clean.
2. For every practitioner 6×3 place is needed to sit and lie on the floor while doing *asanas* or practices..
3. Mats should be placed in the classroom or the practitioner should bring them along with him.
4. Mat should be made of cotton or of a bad conductor (electrically non-conductive material).
5. In the environment there are several key points:

For example, heat, social harmony, classification on the basis of intelligence and financial sources. If all are alike, it is most appropriate for conducting the class.

Yoga Teaching Steps

The whole yoga teaching process centres round the most important principle and that is ‘to feel natural and calm’.



Fig. 10.2: Teaching Yoga

¹ Part of the information has been sourced from “yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga, Patanjali Yogeeth, Haridwar.”

The following are some tips for teaching yoga. They will help you feel calm and ready for action in both favourable and unfavourable conditions.

1. **Be prepared:** Be thoroughly prepared as regards the yoga practices, as also the theoretical subjects which you propose to teach. It is a good practice to prepare yourself adequately irrespective of the level of practitioners you are teaching.
2. **Start with enough time while going for the class:** There is nothing worse than getting caught in traffic or missing a bus and arriving out of breath – or in worst case getting late unless there is something urgent to deal with do not pre-plan anything before your class. Don’t rush. Arrive well in time and look composed.
3. **Introduction:** It is a nice practice to introduce yourself as well as take brief introductions of the students in the first session.
4. **Starting the Class:** It is preferable to start each session/class in silence, and with a meditative practice. This creates the necessary atmosphere for yoga teaching and learning. This is as much necessary for you as it is for the students.
5. **Be pleasant:** It is always good to maintain pleasantness in your demeanour and speech. This inspires and comforts the students.
6. **Laugh off mistakes:** Did you mix up left with right? While performing warrior techniques or postures did the side of the body get skipped by you? Do not feel awkward because it is natural to do so just laugh it out and admit the error you have made. One should acknowledge his/her error and must do whatever is required to fix it up, with the intention of not repeating it in the future and getting the job done in a right way.

7. **Express thanks to students:** The instructor should thank his/her students at the end of the class or session, it doesn't matter how the instructor feels about expressing thanks to students. One should show the gratitude and grace towards the students for sharing their space with you.
8. **Accept the situation:** In case the class gets messed up by you and in reality the class is not going well, forget the bad thing as soon as possible otherwise it will be tough for you to come back in the same form of teaching and with more confidence. Learn from the good and bad situations aroused in the class and accordingly strategies your class.
9. **Keep teaching:** The more a teacher teaches the better he/she gets. The teacher will be able to build up more confidence with his/her better performance and this would result into good teaching. Always recall the main reason and purpose what made you to choose teaching yoga, this will help you to be on the right track. One should always remember the passion which brought one to yoga in the first place and work on that to let that passion shine.



Preparation is a must for teaching.

The Scope of Practicing Yoga

1. Training of yoga has a wider scope. Once a person chooses to become a yoga instructor/teacher, he/she is benefited himself/herself more than the others. A yoga instructor can experience a growth in his/her personality. The recent popularity in the field of yoga has provided many new opportunities for yoga professionals to work as instructors in

resorts, gym, schools, health centres, tourist resorts, housing societies and also in large organizations. TV channels act as a source to add values to their viewers' lives by hiring proficient yoga instructors and broadcasting their yoga sessions. Self-employment is one more opportunity available to yoga instructors by opening self owned yoga classes/centres. Now-a-day's a number of famous people, such as many film stars, hire their personal instructors for practicing yoga.

2. As far as the remuneration part is concerned, it is usually good as the employers vary from middle class individuals to the wealthy one. On the other hand, it is also depends on the teacher's/instructor's expertise.

The Need for Referral to Other Professional Services

The yoga instructor/teacher will find the need for referring prospective aspirants of yoga to other professionals in a number of situations which are as follows:

1. When the teacher has enough students and is not capable of devoting sufficient time to the prospective aspirant.
2. When the prospective aspirant is approaching for a purpose which the teacher is incapable of fulfilling.
3. When an aspirant has reached a plateau in his progress with a teacher, the latter can direct the aspirant to another teacher.

Yoga can Make You Work Faster

Mind of yoga practitioners becomes calm and focused, if they practise it on a regular basis.

This results into an increased level of productivity and efficiency at work, and it also shoots up the success rates. One might be surprised to see how he/she is able to finish some work in minimum

possible time about one to two hours, which took more time when performed earlier. And the effort which you make to achieve this in just 30 minutes of yoga practice in the morning time. One has to begin with stretching his/her body with active yoga postures, and then follow it up with *pranayama*, and after that get into the depth of meditation for a blissful experience.

Observed Capacity for Well-Developed Communication Skills

Some of the essential qualities include attention, awareness, self-examination, intention, and skilful action. Behaving mindfully involves communicating from a place of awareness, while maintaining an intention to hold space for others. But when we feel stressed, excited, threatened, triggered, or defensive, it can be very difficult not to react in ways that serve our immediate needs or interests rather than considering how our responses might best serve our relationships.

Listening

The instructor/teacher should have the obvious quality of deep listening.



Fig. 10.3: Listening

While this may seem simple enough, it is one of the most difficult and most essential traits in the teaching profession.

How to Speak and Communicate

Express yourself in a Right Manner: Always convey what you exactly mean and must mean what you had conveyed. One should be concise, to the point and clear.

Always Explore and to Explain: Always be prepared to provide relevant and appropriate information required by your partner to make him\her better understand your view point. Never expect that others can read your mind without view point.

Never Speak Arguably: This simply means here that never give such statements which may provoke arguments. Consider the example, revealing that how to present your fear to your partner without passing arguable statement, one may say: "I feel tensed and scared when you pull me too fast." This simply conveys that when your partner pulls you during a specific yoga pose with a speed, this gives you a feeling of tension and fear, and since what you had said was true so it couldn't be argued.

Concentrate on Appreciation: It has been found in the studies of psychological theories that a ratio of 5:1 for the appreciation to complaint is recommend. One should always focus on the positive aspects of the students and encourage them by appreciating for it.

Turn your Criticisms into Requests: The instructor/teacher can be critical about the student's performance in a way that it stimulates the student to perform better. The instructor/teacher can turn his/her criticisms into polite advice for better performance.

Never Blame: Whenever listeners are blamed, they come forward to defend themselves and put a stop on their listening. Doing communication without pointing out the faults and blames in each other is vital. Always try to understand the situation and communicator rather than using the overpower tactic.

Make a Shift from Blame to Wonder: Analyse yourself and find out that whether any contribution to the communication problem arising is made by you. Think over the problems and situation because this will shift mind from critical thinking to creative thinking which helps in developing a healthy relationship rather than being in a state of ‘I am Right’.

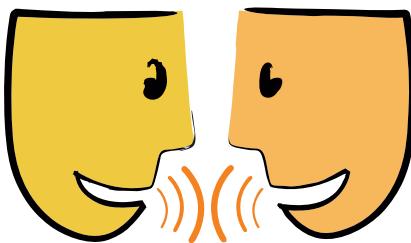


Fig. 10.4: Speaking and Communicating

How to Listen?

Be Attentive: When a person pays attention and avoids distractions this shows that he/she is interested in listening to the person who is speaking to him/her. It is not possible for a person to express his/her opinions and thoughts in anticipation what the speaker would say.

Body Language: Your body language should show that you are listening to the speaker, always maintain proper eye contact with the speaker, be in the habit of nodding to make sure that you are attentively listening and never cross your arms while listening or talking to some body.

Be a Generous Listener: One should react in a proper manner on what the speaker said with accuracy. One must also express respect to the feelings of person. Listen in such a way that you able to listen what the speaker didn't able to convey, it simply means to listening the emotions of speaker.

Complete Understanding: Always check whether you are able to understand the message properly. One can check this by converting the

message in his/her own words such as “Do you mean...?” “Are you saying ...?” Be attentive and focus at every angle. All these will help you to discover that are you able to understand the same, what student is saying.

Open and welcoming Attitude as well as Respect for What the Other is Saying: One must agree to the fact that expressing willingness to hear what the speaker is saying is vital. This determines the listeners' respect towards the speaker. Giving respect to each other's view point rather than getting into of what is right or what is wrong.

Response is must rather than an answer: Give a hint to the speaker that you are further interested in listening to his/her point of views. Express this by saying, “Please tell me more about that.”

If required touch and express reassurance: Communication becomes quite difficult when the presence of strong emotions is felt. One may show his/her support to the speaker just by a touch or a hug, if required, when one doesn't know what exactly to say.

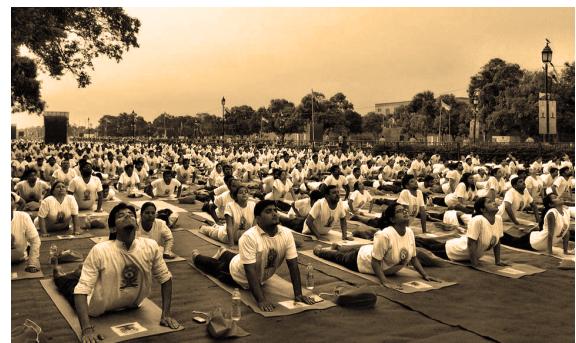


Fig. 10.5: Yoga Aspirants Performing Yoga

Presence

The sign of an accomplished and matured yoga teacher is revealed by his/her ability to communicate realistically and authentically. The communication should be from heart revealing

the main purpose. A skillful communication is a combined package of the usage of words used by the speaker, the tactic of speaker to show his/her presence, touch (if and when) required and vision. An expert teacher of yoga has full knowledge of how to do effective communication for telling the beauty and depth of yoga teachings to students by using skills of verbal and non-verbal communication. All this is done keeping in mind that class a comfort zone for all levels of participants. Now-a-days advance teaching methods and skills are used to make teachers understand how to serve their students, best by accepting them as they are and meeting them as per their convenience; and last but not the least connecting with them conscientiously.

Healthy and effective touch has the power to encourage insight at all levels of experience and to cultivate deep presence. As yoga teachers, we use touch to communicate with our students, and invite them to feel the moment and all that it offers physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The teachers derives sense of holding space in from a thoughtful and sensible understanding of both qualities of touch, i.e., the physical and energetic touch, as well as the powerful experiences that result from his/her connection with the world. As we become more fluent holding space for our own experiences, we gain skill and confidence to hold space for others.

Directive and Non-Directive Dialogue

The dialogue is probably the most pressing issue for the training because everyone could never be a master of memorization.

What is non-directive dialogue? For example, if someone asks, why do you love yoga? It means he uses non-directive and non-judgmental dialogue. This always comes easily to a person who wants to learn this art. It is something that one should tend to do naturally in life. It feels much more

supportive when someone really listens to what the other person is saying rather than trying to think of what he/she is going to say next, or to spit out some pre-conditioned mechanical response that he/she is supposed to say. It feels supportive to have someone say, 'I hear that you are upset, and I am still here supporting you....I see that you are angry, or depressed, or fearful, and I am not going to tell you to "look at the bright side", to "focus on the positive", or to "let it go"?' In essence, this is what a skilled yoga instructor does in his/her classes. He see genuinely listens and offers his/her students support. The teacher does not judge them by what they are saying or feeling. She does not tell them how to "fix" their problems. He/She does not suggest that they should look at things differently, or be different. So, how does this work in sessions? The process is actually very simple, and from a practitioner's standpoint, it involves two main phrases: "What's happening now?" and "tell me more."



Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is a general belief that there is no risk involved in practising yoga. But the point to note here and pay attention to is that the low-impact form of yoga practice is safe for almost all the people practising it, only when it is performed correctly. Although risk due to injuries from yoga is less, but in some exceptional cases they may be there. The key to a risk-free and injury-free yoga is to practise it in a proper way and style, be hydrated, modified postures as per knowledge and skill, and by paying proper attention to your body.

Handling of Different Aspirants

Practitioners of yoga are categorized into three levels/degrees: (1) *Adhama Adhikarin*, one who has just been initiated into yoga practice, (2) *Madhyam Adhikarin*, one who has been practicing yoga for a few year, and (3) *Uttama Adhikarin*, one who is an adept at yoga.

Students are able to learn properly and improve their postures when teachers do demonstration of yogic poses. Injuries can be prevented when detailed and accurate instructions are given. Practising yoga awakes and realigns the whole body and also helps in building up the strength of the body and movement in the stiff areas.



Fig. 10.6: Demonstration of *Sukshma Vyayama*

Demonstrations from teachers help students learn and improve poses. Accurate and specific instructions also help prevent injuries. Yoga encourages weak parts of the body to strengthen and stiff areas to release, thus bring about an awakening and realigning the whole body.

Vital Need for Moral Strength and Courage

In general a spiritual person has to be prepared to handle and face misunderstanding, calumny and misrepresentation in a bold manner. Any spiritual aspirant who wants or tries to achieve better than his/her fellows has to go through such situations. To cope up with such a situation courage and enough moral strength is required. This will help aspirant to sustain his/her position as per his/her integrity and thoughts of what is right and what is wrong. Competitors and non-competitors both will try to pull down the person growing in professional life. If any aspirant who want to grow spiritually he/she has to work according to his/her own principles.

Yoga can be made accessible according to the level of student ability. The size of yoga classes should be kept small so that proper attention can be paid to all the aspirants. The primary aim should be to help the aspirants to find peace and stillness in their work.

10.2 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants

Teaching is a complex and multifaceted activity. Effective teaching is about helping the students/aspirants to achieve the best results. It requires an instructor to juggle multiple tasks and goals simultaneously and flexibly.

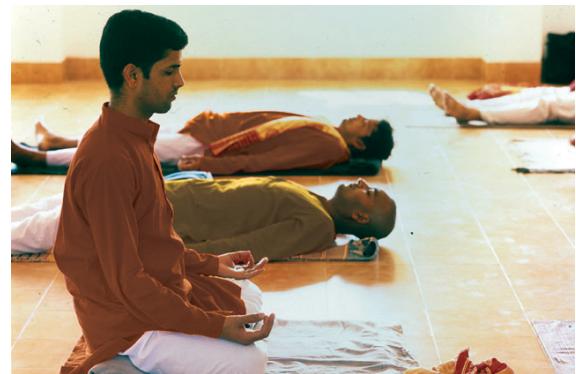


Fig. 10.7: Yoga Instructor

Role of yoga instructors/teachers is not restricted only to teaching aspirants. Different yoga poses and their roles are many in numbers, which are listed below:

- Leading group of yoga aspirants/students in a comprehensive and approachable sequence related to breathing exercises, postures, contemplations and meditations.
- Creating a space which is safe, and nurturing in a manner that encourages students/aspirants to participate in yoga class.

- Responsibility to give proper, safe and understandable demonstration and guidance to aspirants/students for a series of postures.

Principles followed for Educating Aspirants

The principles mentioned below make teaching effective and more efficient:

- Three vital elements of instruction, i.e., learning objectives, instructional activities and assessments must be aligned.
- Skills and knowledge segment chosen to focus on must be given priority.
- Implementing teaching as an important task must go with the subject matter knowledge of the teacher.
- Students' involvement and motivation depend on the students and teacher's interaction.
- Development of reciprocity and cooperation among students/aspirants should be in place.
- Students/aspirants should relate what they are learning to something in real life.
- Teachers/instructors should set up problem solving activities in small groups.
- Teachers/instructors should use a wide variety of intellectually challenging teaching procedures.
- Assessment should be promoted as part of the learning process.

Skills Required for Educating Aspirants

A yoga teacher's/instructor's role scope also encompasses the creating, developing and implementing such training sessions of yoga which are fit and appropriate as per the level of students in the class. A yoga teacher/instructor should also possess the ability to explain, illustrate, modify and give demonstration of *asanas* in such a way that is understandable to all participants present in that particular session. An expert yoga

instructor on his/her individual base should be able to change the postures as per the requirement of aspirant/student.



Fig. 10.8: Yoga Training Session

During the training session if instructor notices that some aspirant/student is really finding it tough to get into a certain posture, then it is his/her responsibility to quickly modify and adjust the alignment of the aspirant/student to build up a trust and safe feeling in the aspirant/student for the teacher/instructor. This will help the participant to feel relaxed and attentively attend all the sessions.

Teaching Principles

Effective teaching depends on the knowledge of important principles of anatomy, physiology, psychology, pedagogy and yoga so that the teacher is flexible in modifying the method. These principles also provide sound base for selection and formulation of methods.

Yogic Principles

Let us discuss the yogic principles:

- Yogic practices should not be misunderstood with 'exercises'. Vigorous physical movements are generally applied in exercises. As in practice of yoga no vigorous movements are involved, so any type of violent action must not be included in yogic practice.

- Yoga practices are of diverse nature and encompass various mechanisms which help in achieving and obtaining results from different yogic practices. Same channels are not used by meditation, *Asana*, *Bandhas*, *Pranayama*, *Mudras* and *Kriyas* for achieving results from the yogic practices.
- The ‘static stretching procedures’ which are known for the vital and best yogic practices are known as *Asanas*. In order to influence than toning system of body rather than the physical, the *asanas* should be practised slowly.
- One should maintain a particular *asanas* position for a certain time by using less effort. The main feature of *asanas*’ technique is to perform effortlessly and attain maximum relaxation in the final position.
- ‘Breathing exercises’ are quite different from *pranayamic* practices in terms of purpose and technique. Unlike breathing exercises, *pranayama* practices involve controlling and manipulating of *prana* in the body.
- Practice of Yoga should not be done in such a way that it leads to unnecessary exhaustion and tiredness. In case fatigued is felt then one should get into *Shavasana* pose.
- The performance of yoga by individuals must be performed as per the *yathashakti* (the own capacity) of practitioner’s .
- Practitioner peace of mind must be the main aim of person practising yoga.
- A routine of yoga should start with relaxation in terms of psychophysical or by reciting some prayers actually or centering attention as done in the prayers. This will generate the necessary silence conducive for the class.

Psychological Principles

- Interest is the best motivation for learning. The teacher should teach in such a way that students maintain their interest and motivation to learn.
- Activity is necessary for learning. Learning is a process of experience. Unless the student is involved in the experience of activity he/she may not be able to learn. Therefore, practice is essential, especially for motor-learning or skill-learning. Again it is not mere the practice but the correct practice that is important. Complex motor skills require more repetitions of correct practice.
- All learning has a neural basis. Unless proper neuromuscular coordination is formed one cannot expect further developments in any motor skills.
- For efficient learning the material to be learnt must be within the range of experience and abilities of the learner. Learning is highly individualized and results in progressive changes in behaviour. The ability to learn depends upon the innate capacity and previous experiences of the student. All individuals do not learn at the same rate.
- Learning of motor-skills is hastened if the performer is able to grasp an intellectual understanding of the nature of the task before beginning the practice.

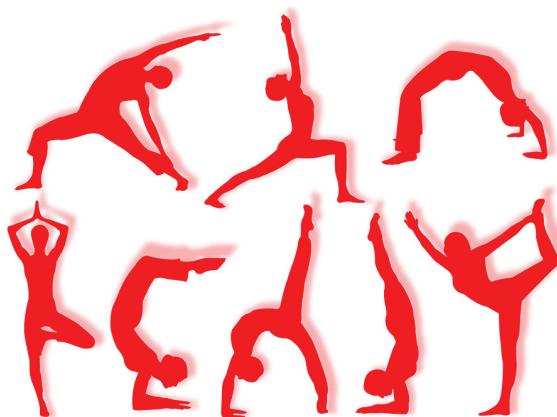


Fig. 10.9: Yogic Routine with Psycho-physical Relaxation

- Regular practise of an activity resulting in pleasure and satisfaction contributes to the most effective learning.
- Occasional short periods of rest between the practice periods produce superior results in learning motor skills. Brief rest period prevents fatigue in the muscles without decreasing the efficiency of the muscles. is not decreased.



Did You Know?

The centre of gravity in female bodies is lower than that of in males. This should be taken into consideration in practices involving stability and balance.

Teaching Methods

During the process of teaching several methods have been tried over many years and we find that they fall into two main categories:

- (i) Instructional methods used in the classroom for teaching theoretical subjects.
- (ii) Methods used for teaching practical skill.

The classroom methods are variously named as the lecture method, the recitation method, the project method, the laboratory method, the dramatic method and the group discussion method. The methods for teaching skills or physical activities, however, have not been properly categorized. Each method used in the classroom situation has many implications for teaching physical activities and skills, but they cannot be directly applied to teaching physical activities and skills. Even in respect of classroom teaching, no single method or pattern could serve as the best method for all teaching situations. The method of teaching yogic practices comes closer to that of physical activities rather than that of theoretical subjects.

Traditionally, there have been two approaches towards successful teaching: the first is a teacher-

centered approach and the second a student-centered approach.

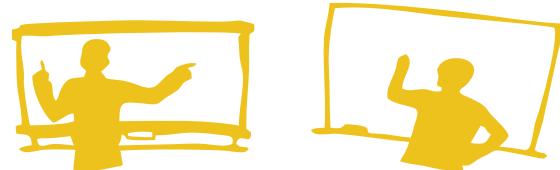


Fig. 10.10: Classroom Method of Teaching

The teacher-centered approach was the main method in the past, even in yoga. But today scientific thought focuses its attention on, and emphasizes upon the student-centered approach. So naturally, the principles and concepts which underlie the methods are expected to involve this student-centered approach, the main emphasis of which is due consideration to the needs of the students.

Methods of teaching must be compatible with the goals sought or the outcomes expected. The purpose of any method is to create learning in the student. The teacher should know how a particular method he uses would affect the student's learning abilities.

The following are some of the basic methods of teaching:

- (a) **Lecture Method:** It is perhaps the oldest method used for formal teaching. It is valuable in organizing large fields on material, separating a particular type of information for immediate use, presenting new information and synthesizing information from a wide variety of sources.

It is more useful with mature students who have a high degree of auditory perception since it involves problems of attention, voice level, clarity, use of rest period and vocabulary level.

The lecture method has considerable use in teaching yogic practices. It may be used in

presenting any type of information related to a particular activity in the perspective of yoga in general. When extensive lecture is necessary for the achievement of a specific goal, the students should be able to hear the teacher clearly. A lecture can be stimulating, interesting and motivating to the students if the teacher prepares it properly.

The lecture method proves of greater advantage when combined with other methods. The use of visual materials is of considerable help in aiding students, to retain the contents of the lecture.

When using the lecture method the teacher should also be aware of the limitations of this method, which are mentioned as follows:

- (i) It is a teacher-centered activity and may encourage lack of participation on the part of the students.
- (ii) Many student lack ability to learn by this method.
- (iii) It may lead teachers to ignore more effective methods.

The attention span of more immature students is too short to benefit from a long lecture.



Fig. 10.11: Lecture Method

(b) **Response-to-Instruction Method:** In this method the teacher gives precise instructions which precede, follow or are concurrent with a demonstration, and all students respond to the instructions in the same way.

There is very little attention paid to the individuals. The emphasis is on the subject matter of activity that is introduced. This method has a formal approach. An information approach with this method is more favourable in teaching such activities where there is some variation in the performance of individuals. This method can be profitably used after paying due attention to the problems faced by the individuals.

(c) **Individualized Instruction Method:** It is based on the principle that learning is highly individualized. In this method attempts are made to provide by different means for individual differences within the pattern of the group structure.

Directed-Practice Method

Assignments for extra practice of selected yogic practices out of class hours enhance skill and performance levels of the students. Necessary introduction along with the preliminary practice of selected yogic exercises like *Sirshasana*, *Uddiyana*, *Kapalabhati*, and *Nauli*, Purificatory processes, etc., may be done in the class and the efficiency could be developed through out-of-class practice. The students should be encouraged to do out-of-class practice and the teacher may check the results during subsequent classes and give additional suggestions for further practice. Obviously, the success of this method depends upon the motivation the students get and the rapport they build with their teacher.

(a) **Project Method:** The aim of this method is to enable the students to put into practice

what they have learned in the class. It may also be of help for students to learn related information. When the time is short in the regular schedule the projects, such as preparing note-books on the yogic practices undertaken, collection of related material from various sources, preparing models, and the exhibits of the yogic practices, planned observations of seminars, conferences, as well as visits to different well-known yoga centres represent valuable help to teaching under this method.



Fig. 10.12: Yoga Demonstration in Class

(b) **Demonstration Method:** Demonstration refers to non-competitive type performances with emphasis on skill and form. Demonstrations are of value, if properly directed to both performer and viewer. Demonstration Method as a technique for the use of the class has some disadvantages. The scope of learning is restricted. It utilizes existing talent rather than developing new skills. However, the Demonstration Method serves as an excellent group method.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no simple formula for selecting the best method. This depends on the conditions available, such as time, space and equipment. The teacher should have the skill to use a particular method and adapt it to the prevailing conditions so that the students

receive proper orientation and understanding of the technique and purpose of the method. In other words, a method should always be considered as a means to an end and not the end in itself. The method should allow for individual differences and stimulate both creativity and independent thinking in the students. In yoga, the teaching method has to be eclectic, drawing upon useful vital contributions from several existing methods.

10.3 Teaching Yoga in a Group Setting

[Please refer Appendix I for Teaching Techniques of Āsana Through Eight-Stepped Method to page 203.]

Teaching yoga in groups is a different ball game. The focus a private yoga teacher can have in a group-yoga setting can still be intentional and mindful of the independent needs of the person with regards to individual sequencing. Sequencing of the individual is possible in a group-yoga setting. It is not as effective as one-on-one sessions, and it is certainly not easy to address the needs of many at once. You cannot customize a group lesson to please everyone, but you can begin to develop skills of teaching many at one time.

Demonstration ability in a group depends upon precise instructions by the teacher. Formal instructions are best suited during the initial stage of practice. Instructions could be divided into parts: one that are given verbally before the beginning of the yogic practice; two that accompany performance of the activities individually or by the group; three that are extended by way of information or corrections after the completion of the activities. Initial instructions prevent the student from adopting incorrect habits which they might have to unlearn later. Practical instructions guide the students for correct and efficient performance.



Fig. 10.13: Yoga in Group Setting

The following guidelines in a group setting can help the teacher convey instructions clearly:

- Be sure that you have the attention of everyone in the class before any instructions are given.
- When a long explanation is needed it is better to make the learner sit down and it will be even better if they sit close to the teacher.
- Ideally, explanations can be best provided in the relaxation phase between two *asanas*.
- Make your instructions brief, perfectly clear and your voice must be audible to the learners.
- The instructions should be given for only one thing at a time.
- Try to use different words and expressions to catch the attention of the students. For example, if students do not understand your vocabulary in the first attempt, use different words while repeating the instructions.
- Describe the technique and procedure of any activity before the students are actually asked to practice.

If students are provided with suitable lesson content in a competent and stimulating fashion, they will take interest in learning and rarely cause trouble. One essential step which can be taken to reduce the problem of control is to create an atmosphere of natural freedom, friendliness,

mutual help and understanding. These qualities in a class should emanate from the leadership of the teacher. This develops social consciousness in students and makes them aware about their responsibility to the group.

The students or participants of yoga may be grouped under the following headings:

- **Beginners' Group:** This group may involve persons of all ages, males and females, young and old and special individuals who are making their first acquaintance with yoga. They need a general background of yogic discipline and motivation to continue with yoga.



Fig. 10.14: Group Programs

- **Experienced or Advanced Group:** This group may consist of persons who have some experience of yoga and wish to advance further to gain more varied and deeper experience. Their expectation is to acquaint themselves with a greater number of yogic practices and indulge in subtler and higher practices intensively.
- **School Children:** This is a select group ranging from the age of 6 years to 16 years. School children need exposure in the field of yoga based on their immediate needs of their age and temperament.
- **Special Attention Groups:** These individuals can vary on the basis of age, like children and adults, on the basis of gender, on the basis of

individual problems of health, abnormality or handicaps. Such individuals need special attention which is possible in a homogeneous group but not in a heterogeneous group.

Designing and Implementing Group Program

Yoga training program controlled in a group setting is as powerful as the one managed exclusively, in view of both the subjective perception of the aspirant and objective measurement of performance. One clarification for the comparable results is that every program approach has its own that actuates constructive outcomes on the potential ability. While individual-based program is ventured to give the most extreme chance to rehearse with negligible waiting time and diversions from other individuals, group-based yoga training may have its own advantages.

To begin with, the group setting gives chances to social interaction. Besides, practitioners are essentially competitive, and this inspires them for better performance. In a group, a stronger sense of proficiency can be established if a practitioner can effectively exhibit the procured skills in front of his/her peer. Moreover, this apparent skill may facilitate and support the practitioner's involvement in physical activities influencing their fitness and in the training of yoga.

It has been found that the group setting may give extra social benefits, as group interaction encourages practitioner's motivation to achieve goals and to succeed.

Communication Skills, Time Management, Priorities and Limits

A proficient yoga instructor/teacher should be competent to explore the mind of each student and one should be a good communicator. The yoga student who learns predominantly by

listening will be able to verbally communicate the finer techniques to others in the future.



Fig. 10.15: Communication

Not all yoga students have the same ability and grasping power. There are numerous learning ways, such as listening attentively to teachers' cues, learning by assistance from demonstration teacher and learning just by copying the teacher's through which different students learn. It is important for a good yoga instructor to be a good listener when the students ask questions.

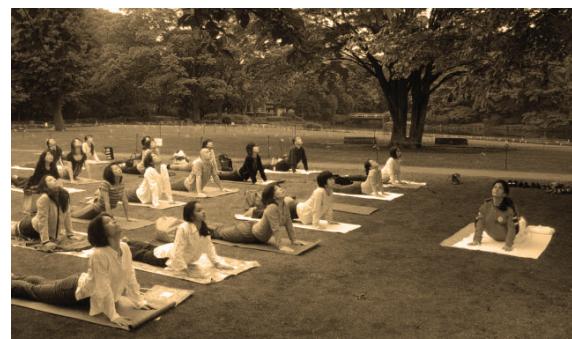


Fig. 10.16: Visual Demonstration of Yoga Postures

There are individual differences related to the manner in which various kinds of sensory information are effectively used by the students. Some students have remarkable ability to quickly organize visually presented information. It is desirable that the teacher himself should give the demonstration of a particular yoga practice.

The teacher can communicate with his/her students better through the demonstration staged by him/her. At the same time he/she should verbally explain clearly the fundamental principles underlying the yoga practice. Any practice by the students must be preceded by visual demonstration to be more effective.

Yoga offers some great insights and reminders. Yoga can help with time management in the following five ways:

- 1. Be Focused:** Remember to be focused. Suppose one is practising balancing in *Vrikshasana* or the Tree Pose, then at that point of time do not even try to think anything else because this will cause you to lose your balance and you may fall. Similarly, one would not be able to get work done or practise well the yoga postures if he/she stops every five minutes to check on the social networking sites or emails. So remember to do one thing until that work is finished, and then focus on another task.
- 2. Be Disciplined:** Meditation or yoga practice on a daily basis requires a lot of discipline in the practitioner's life.
- 3. Giving Priority:** One should prioritize the most significant things to be done on their to-do list and then start with those things which always help in achieving a balanced life. The things which make one satisfied and relaxed such as practising yoga, eating healthy food, going on long walks, and enjoying and laughing with friends and family, should be given priority, as this will make the person feel happy and have a balanced life.
- 4. In need ask for help:** It is not easy for any practitioners to learn the yoga postures without somebody's help, *asanas* integrity and subtle nuances.

- 5. Living life as per yoga *asanas* practised:** It is appreciable for yoga practitioners to do yoga in their own way and avoid any kind of comparisons with anybody else.



Learning ACTIVITY

Assume that you are a yoga instructor. Some students are not able to do some yoga *asanas* as per your instructions. What will you do in such a situation?

Question-Answer Session

A small question-answer session is very helpful at the end of the unit to evaluate the effectiveness of the session and remove any difficulties/doubts of the students.

The following hints will be useful in conducting a question-answer or discussion session:

- Encourage the students to ask their questions or address their comments to the group for discussion.
- Never discourage or ridicule any student's questions or contribution howsoever small it may be.
- Try to draw all students into discussion rather than those few who are always ready to talk.
- It is wise to limit the discussion to a few important points.
- The teacher is expected to know more than the students about the points of discussion. If the teacher is not prepared to answer any question or does not know about a particular point, he should not hesitate to say so. Instead he should say that he would find out the answer and explain that in the next class.
- Remember that young children are not mature enough to participate in a group discussion so a different approach is necessary to encourage them to share their experiences.

- Exercise some control over the time spent on questions. Steer the discussion to important and relevant questions. Do not sacrifice valuable time on those points that are not important.



SUMMARY

- Teaching Yoga transmits dual benefits apart from its wonderful concepts of learning. The person who teaches yoga to others benefits learners by making a contribution to their good health and for bringing about ultimate happiness in their lives.
- A yoga instructor can experience a growth in his/her personality. The recent popularity of yoga has provided many new opportunities for yoga professionals to work as instructors in resorts, gym, schools, health centres, tourist resorts, housing societies and also in large organizations.
- Activity is necessary for learning. Learning is a process of experience. Unless the student is involved in the experience of activity he/she may not be able to learn. Therefore, practice is essential, especially for motor-learning or skill-learning. Again it is not mere practice but the correct practice that is important. Complex motor skills require more repetitions of correct practice.
- Observing capacity is a way of emphasizing attention, awareness, self examination, intention, and skilful action. Behaving mindfully involves communicating from a place of awareness, while maintaining an intention to hold space for others.
- Visual demonstration of the practice is one of the most effective way to enhance the learning of a motor-skill. However, the learning is hastened if the student is able to grasp an intellectual understanding of

the nature of the task before the beginning of the practice and is given sometime to integrate the initial cues from observing the demonstration and listening to instructions. Brief, clear descriptions of the activity with repeated demonstrations and pointing out likely faults bring good results in yoga.

- An effective teaching depends on the knowledge of important principles of anatomy, physiology, psychology, pedagogy and yoga so that the teacher may be flexible in modifying the method. These principles also provide sound base for selection and formulation of methods.
- The lecture method proves to be of greater advantage when combined with other methods. The use of visual materials is of considerable help in aiding students to retain the content of the lecture.
- In response-to-instruction method the teacher gives precise instructions which precede, follow or are concurrent with a demonstration and all students respond to the instructions of the teacher in the same way.
- The aim of project method is to enable the students to put into practice what they have learned in the class.
- In group of settings, there may be persons who have some experience of yoga and wish to advance further to gain more varied and deeper experience. Their expectation is to acquaint themselves with a greater number of *yogic* practices and indulge in subtler and higher practices intensively.
- The progress of science in various fields has developed techniques that have made knowledge widely available. These radically alter our systems of communication. The use of computers for example, has reduced the need for man-power in the area of teaching.

- The teacher is expected to know more than the students on the points of discussion. If the teacher is not prepared to answer any question or he is not sure on any point, he/she should not hesitate to say so. He/she should instead say that he/she would find out the answer and explain it in the next class.
- 3. Justify in brief the need of demonstration for a yoga teacher.
- 4. Differentiate between directive and non-directive dialogue.
- 5. What are the benefits of group classes?



KEYWORDS



Aspirants: A person who aspires to do or to be something.

Demonstration: It is the act of exhibiting the yoga practice as a method of teaching.

Discipline: It is a system of rules of conduct or a method of practice.

Principles: A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour.



SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS



Short Questions

1. Write down the difference between a lesson and a session.
2. Name the different methods of teaching yoga.

Long Questions

1. Explain the factors that go into well-developed communication skills.
2. Discuss the various methods of teaching yoga.
3. How do the methods of teaching help students get good classes? Elaborate.
4. Describe sitting arrangement in terms of yoga-teaching classes.
5. How can a yoga teacher deal with difficult students? Discuss.
6. Discuss ‘good listening’.
7. Yoga teaching can be a successful career option. Discuss.



FURTHER READINGS

- Teaching Practices – published by Kaivalyadham
- The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice – T. K. V. Desikachar
- The Yoga of the Yogi: The Legacy of T. Krishnamacharya - Kausthub Desikachar

Appendix

10.3 Teaching Yoga in a Group Setting (Page no. 197)

Teaching Techniques of Āsana Through Eight-Stepped Method

Step I

1. Name of the *Āsana* which is being taught. It should be given in English, Sanskrit and the local language.
2. Meaning of the *Āsana*. e.g. *Tadasana*, 'tada' in Sanskrit is palm tree.
3. Justification: Final position will be like that of a palm tree.
4. Category: Whether the *Āsana* is cultural, meditative or relaxing posture.
5. Complementary for the *Āsana*.
6. Type of the *Āsana*: whether the *Āsana* is Prone, Supine, Standing or Sitting.
7. Counts: 4 or 8

Step II

Demonstration

First tell about 'Sthiti' (initial posture) and *Shithila* (relaxing posture).

1. *Sthiti: Tadasana*
Relaxation: *Shithila Tadasana* – legs apart, hands hanging Loosely
(For Standing *Asanas*)
2. *Sthiti: Dandasana*
Relaxation: *Shithila Dandasana*
(For Sitting *Asanas*)
3. *Sthiti*: Lying on stomach with hands stretched above your head and legs together.
Relaxation: *Makarasana* (For Prone *Asanas*)
4. *Sthiti*: Lying on your back with hands stretched above your head and legs together.
Relaxation: *Shavasna*
(For Supine *Asanas*)
Breathing is normal for all *sthiti* positions.
 - ❖ Silent Demonstration
 - ❖ Demonstration with counts.
 - ❖ Demonstration with counts, breathing and explanation.

Step III

Limitations and Benefits of the *Asana*.

- a) Teacher must emphasize on Limitations and ensure that a person does not perform a posture contra-indicated to him or her.
- b) Benefits (Physical, Therapeutic and Spiritual) to be told to the students.

Step IV

Individual practice: The class will follow the instructor and the demonstration and practice of the *Asana*. Correction can be done by the instructors.

Step V

Practice in pair: Class will be divided into two groups A & B. When 'A' group is performing, 'B' group will be watching; make corrections if necessary and vice versa. The teacher and the demonstrator can also make corrections.

Step VI

Key points: Demonstrator again performs the *Asana* according to the instructions from the teacher, with subtle points (like bending of knees, closing eyes, breathing etc.) involved in the practice and proper explanation at every stage.

Step VII

Whole group practice

- a) Teacher instructs, while all the students will perform.
- b) Teacher must emphasize on synchronization of body, mind and on stretching position and compression position.

Step VIII

Questions and Answers session with closing prayer.

The teacher will clarify the queries of the student if any.

Closing prayer saluting Patañjali:

Yogena chittasya padena Vaachaam malam Sharirasya cha vaidyakena

Yo paakarottam pravaram muninaam Patanjalin Praanjaliranatosmi ||

Meaning: We salute the sage Patanjali, who has given Yoga for healthy mind and body, medicine for physical ailments, grammar for the speech.

INITIAL POSTURES FOR ALL ĀSANAS

***Sthiti* (initial) and *Shitila* (relaxation) postures for all *shitilikarana Vyayama* and *Yogasana*.**

Sthiti: Initial standing posture – *Tadasana*

1. Stand erect with feet close together.
2. Place the hands along the thighs with fingers stretched out.
3. The legs, trunk and the head are aligned in a straight line.
4. Close the eyes and observe the balance.

Śithila Tadasana – Standing Relaxation Posture

1. Stand erect with legs about six to twelve inches apart, hands hanging freely by the side of the body with the shoulders collapsed.
2. Make sure that the body is completely relaxed.
3. Gently close the eyes.

Śthiti Initial Sitting Posture – Dandasana

1. Sit with both legs stretched with heels together.
2. Place the palms on the floor by the side of the buttocks.
3. Keep the spine, neck and head erect.
4. Close the eyes.

Śithila Dandasana – Sitting Relaxation Posture

1. Sit with legs stretched apart and relax.
2. Slightly incline the trunk backwards, supporting the body by placing the hands behind.
3. Fingers point backwards.
4. Let the head hang freely behind or rest on either side of the shoulder.
5. Gently close the eyes.

Sthiti Initial Prone Posture

1. Lie down on the abdomen with legs together toes pointing outwards, the soles of the feet facing up and chin touching the ground.
2. Stretch the hands straight above the head, biceps touching the ears and palms resting on the ground.
3. Close the eyes.

Prone Relaxation Posture – Makarasana

1. Lie down on the abdomen with feet wide apart, heels touching the ground and facing each other.
2. Bend both the elbows and place the right palm on the left shoulder and the left palm on the right shoulder.
3. Rest the chin at the point where the forearms cross each other.
4. Gently close the eyes.

Initial Supine Posture

1. Lie down on the back with legs together.
2. Stretch the hands straight above the head, biceps touching the ears and the palms facing the ceiling.
3. Close the eyes.

Supine Relaxation Posture – *Shavasana*

1. Lie supine on the ground with hands and feet apart.
2. Slightly stretch the body and allow the whole body to relax completely with eyes gently closed.
3. Become aware of different parts of the body starting from toes to head. Feel the spread of relaxation in all parts of the body progressively.
4. With regular long practice, the relaxation will become deeper, natural and spontaneous. Then the whole body is relaxed to the extent that one forgets the body. The mind experiences alert full rest.

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