

## SHAT KARMA

In Yoga great importance is given to the regular cleansing of the body system. Without purification of the body, one will not be ready for the higher practice of Yoga.

There are six purificatory techniques or '*Shat Karma*', prescribed for the internal purification of the body:

(i) Neti	nasal cleaning, including Jal Neti.
(ii) Dhauti	Cleaning of the digestive tract.
(iii) Basti	Colon cleaning.
(iv) Nauli	Abdominal massage.
(v) Kapalbhati	Cleaning of the lungs and respiratory system.
(vi) Trataka	Training of the Visual organs-eyes to practice blink less gaze (leading to concentration of mind)

These simple techniques purify the nadis and groom the organs for Yogic practice. They purify the whole body and promote good health, and also bring-calmness and harmony of the mind.

These can be practiced by all. They are specially of benefit to fat people to eliminate body toxins (Poison).

### 1. Jal neti:

Jal neti is the process of cleaning the nasal passage with lukewarm saline water. and is essential for allowing free breathing.

Take lukewarm water, with pure salt dissolved in it (1 Teaspoon of salt for half a liter of water) in a small kettle or tea-pot.

Gently insert the nozzle of the pot into the left nostril. There should be no force, but the nozzle should press firmly against the sides of the nostril, so that there is no leakage of water.

Gradually tilt your head to the right side, simultaneously raising the pot so that the water runs into the left nostril.

Let the water flow out of the right nostril for 10 to 20 seconds.

Remove the nozzle from the left nostril,

Blowout the impurities by blowing out through the right and left nostrils.

Repeat the same process with the right nostril.

After Jal neti, the nostrils are cleaned and dried by doing Bhastrika-Pranayama (Bellow

Breathing)

(a) **Chandra Bhastrika**:- (cleaning of left nostril )

Close the right nostril with the thumb. Through the left nostril inhale and exhale vigorously, with moderate force, with the help of rhythmic relaxation and contraction of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles.

Repeat this 10 to 20 times.

Inhale deeply and harmoniously through the left nostril, hold the breath for a while by closing both the nostrils. Then keep the left nostril blocked and exhale through the right nostril.

(b) **Surya Bhastrika**:

Close the left nostril, and repeat the same process (bellow breathing) as above with the right nostril.

Then inhale deeply through the right nostril, retain the breath for a while and exhale through the left nostril.

(c) **Surya-Chandra Bhastrika** :

Repeat the bellow-breathing with both the nostrils, for 10 to 20 times.

Then inhale deeply with both the nostrils, retain the breath for a while, and then exhale gradually through the both nostrils.

2. **Dhauti (Cleaning of the Digestive Tract)**

**Kunjali Kriya** : (A simplified method of Dhauti)

Sit in the squatting posture.

Drink three or four glasses of lukewarm saline water (or more till the stomach is full).

Immediately after this, bend the body from the knees, bringing the trunk as horizontal as possible.

Keeping the left hand pressed near the navel, gently slide the middle and index finger of the right hand along the surface of the tongue towards to back of the throat. simultaneously pressing the back of the tongue.

This induces the sensation of vomiting, and allows the water gush out from the stomach through the mouth.

Continue this until all the water is expelled from the stomach.

Kunjali Kriya should be done once a week

### 3. Basti

Basti is a Hatha Yoga method of cleaning the Colon by sucking in air or water through the anus. It is a direct method of cleansing the bowels.

Basti stimulates the nerves of the Colon as; well as the nerves connecting other parts and organs, of the digestive system.

It should be learnt from an expert,

Before attempting Basti one should master 'uddiyan Bandh' and churning of the abdomen.

### 4. Nauli

Nauli is a Yogic technique of massaging the entire abdomen and stomach by contracting and rolling the entire abdominal muscles. Of all yogic practices, nauli gives the most profound massage to the inner organs. It is beneficial for the digestive system and for bodily, health as a whole.

It is quite difficult and it is advised that this should be learnt under expert guidance.

Before attempting 'Nauli' one should master the two preparatory technique of 'Agnisar Kriya' and 'Uddiyan Bandh'

### Kapalbhati

Sit in a comfortable asana: Padmasana. (Lotus posture), Vajrasana, Siddhasana or Siddha Yoni Asana.

Hold the back upright.

Close the eyes, and relax the whole body.

Breathe rapidly from the abdomen.

Exhale with forceful contraction of the abdominal muscles.

Inhale by allowing the abdominal muscles to expand slowly, Repeat a comfortable number of rapid respiration.

Then take one deep and slow inspiration

Breathe out and empty the lungs as much as possible\_

Do Maha Bandha (Jalandhara, Uddiyan and Moola Bandh together),

Hold the breath as long as is comfortable.

Then release the 'Maha Bandha', raise the head and slowly breath in.

This is one round.

After one round, breathe naturally for a few times and then start the next round.

In Bhastrika Pranayama, both inhalation and exhalation are accentuated and forceful. In Kapalbhata only exhalation is forceful, the inhalation is completely passive.

The whole respiration is done from the abdomen as far as possible.

Benefits;

1. Kapalbhata cleans out the lungs and the respiratory tract.
  2. It massages and improves the functioning of the digestive organs.
  3. It wakes up the mind and induces a tranquil, receptive state of mind,
- It is the best preparatory techniques for meditative practice.

## 6. Trataka

Place a lighted candle at eye level at arm's length directly in front of you and make your position completely comfortable. You should be seated in a meditation posture with the candle in such a position that you do not see the double.

Close your eyes and become totally aware of your physical body. Make the body completely still, there should be no physical movement throughout the practice.

When the body has become still, chant 'OM' 7 times and feel the vibration of this mantra surging through your whole body and brain.

Now open your eyes and gaze intently at the wick of the candle; Do not look at anything else. Your eyes become fixed on the tip of the wick. Eyes should be wide open and the pupils should not move. Try to consciously relax the eye muscles. Concentrate fully on the candle. The whole of your consciousness must become centered in the eyes to the extent that awareness of the rest of the body is lost. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back.

You must try not to blink or close the eyes.

Gaze steadily at the candle for about 3 minutes, or until the eyes begin to water. Then close the eyes and relax. Do not move the body, but become aware of the after-image of the flame.

The after-image will tend to move up and down or sideways. You must try to hold it steady at the eye brow center.

When the image begins to fade, open your eyes and fix them on the external flame again.

For 3 minutes try to focus your awareness on the top of the wick. No blinking and no movement of the eyes.

Then close the eyes again and concentrate on the after-image.

Notice that the color of the flame's aura will change.

Try to hold the image steady at the eyebrow center. Witness any experiences and watch the activities of the mind.

Do not allow the mind to wander, merely observe its tendencies.  
Continue external and internal Trataka. Do as many rounds as you have time for, but do not strain the eyes.

Now chant 'OM' 7 times, keep the eyes closed for a short time and again witness your mind. Without becoming involved, watch the activities of your mind.

Then open your eyes and blow out the candle.

Gradually you should increase the number of rounds from 5, which will take about 20 minutes, up to 30 minutes of practice. Advanced aspirants can incorporate 'japa' into their practice of Trataka.

After Trataka, please do the following Eye Exercises :

Eye Exercises:

1. Far and Near:

First look at your right hand index finger, kept at the eye level and 6" away, then immediately focus the eyes at some far object.

2. Side ways:

Look at extreme left, then right. Look at the top and then at the bottom. Look at diagonals (left top to right bottom and right top to left bottom).

3. Rotation: Without moving the head, rotate eyes clockwise and anticlockwise.

4. Palming. Rub the two palms gently and briskly and then apply the hollow of the palms to both eyes; feel the soothing warmth. Repeat a few times.

Wash the eyes with cold water, or use eye wash ball.

5. Trataka brings out lot of perspiration (takes out poison). It also helps in the flow of Shushumna (Bilateral Breathing). After Trataka, if you feel excessive body heat, please drink milk with three almonds.

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