

# YOGA EDUCATION

**Bachelor of Physical Education (B.P.Ed.)**  
Course Material for Students circulation

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- Yoga in Early Upanisads
- The Yoga Sutra: General Consideration
- Need and Importance of Yoga in Physical Education and Sports

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## Unit I: Introduction

- Meaning and Definition of Yoga o Aims and Objectives of Yoga.
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- The Yoga Sutra: General Consideration
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Introduction: Traced back over 5000-10000 years, the early writings on yoga were transcribed on fragile palm leaves that were easily damaged, destroyed or lost. Some texts state that Yoga has existed since the beginning of time and consider Lord Shiva as the 'ADIYOGI' i.e., the first Yogi.

Yoga has continued to evolve with time and can roughly be divided into:

1. Pre-Classical Yoga: originated in the Indus-Sarasvati civilization in Northern India over 5000 years ago with scriptures present in Rig Veda and Upanishads. This form of yoga modified the idea of ritual sacrifice from the Vedas and internalized it, teaching the sacrifice of the ego through self-knowledge, action (karma yoga) and wisdom (jnana yoga).
2. Classical Yoga: Defined by Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras, the first systematic presentation of yoga. Patanjali is considered the father of Yoga and still influences many practices of modern Yoga.
3. Post-Classical Yoga: rejected the teachings of the ancient Vedas and embraced the physical body as the means to achieve enlightenment. This exploration of physical-spiritual connections and body centered practices led to the creation of what we primarily think of yoga in the West: Hatha Yoga.
4. Modern Period: Swamy Vivekananda presented hatha yoga to the western world and laid the foundation for the growth and innovations that we see today.

Yoga is not merely restricted to performing asanas. It can be divided into:

1. Hatha yoga: This branch uses physical poses or asanas, breathing techniques of pranayama's and meditation to achieve better health as well as spirituality. Different styles in this path include Iyengar style, integral style, the ashtanga style etc.
2. Bhakti yoga: This is the yoga of devotion and paves the path of the heart to devotion. Enables one to see "the divine" in everyone and everything.
3. Raja yoga: This is the yoga of the mind. This is considered the king of yoga. It focuses on a man's intelligence.
4. Karma yoga: This is the yoga service. It is the path of selfless service that one treads.
5. Jnana yoga: It is the yoga of rituals. These rituals are a scary experience. The meaning of yoga is union or Communion or discipline or hold fast or oneness or unity or efforts towards or concentration or reintegration or meditation or to master harnessing one's energies.

Yoga means the union of the individual self (Jivatma) with the divine self. (Paramatma). It is the union of individual will with the universal will. It is the union of individual soul with the universal soul. Yoga is the union of body, mind, heart and action; Yoga is an integration and harmony among thought, feeling and deed. It leads man from the ignoble to noble. It transforms a brute man into a godly man. Yoga is a well Balanced and perfect scientific process for success and peace in life. Yoga is the integration of the personality.

1. Introduction: Yoga is the richest and noblest legacy the ancient Indians have gifted to the world. It is a timeless pragmatic science; it is an experimental science; it is an age old spiritual science; it is a cult- culture – cum-art-science; it is the grandest of all sciences; it is the science of the integral man; it is the science of sciences. It is the mother of all sciences. Yoga is a method of education in the society. It is an art of successful living. It is a way of healthy living at all levels. It is a tool for positive change. It is the sovereign remedy for all worldly miseries. It is the science of creativity and personality development. It is a voyage of discovering truth or knowing the reality. It is a utilitarian commodity. Yoga is a total experience of human life. Thus, yoga is as old as civilization. Yoga is as old as mankind. Yoga is creation. Yoga is intimate and ultimate. It is a living tradition and a proven system

of realizing divinity. 2. Meaning of yoga: The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root “Yuj” meaning to bind, to join, to apply, to attach, to merge, to connect, to add, to meet, to establish link, to contact, to touch, to use, to yoke, to subdue, to bring together, to associate, to fasten, to fix-up and to relate. It also governs the Latin words ‘iungere’ and ‘iugum’, the French word ‘joug’ and so on.

The meaning of yoga is union or Communion or discipline or hold fast or oneness or unity or efforts towards or concentration or reintegration or meditation or to master harnessing one’s energies. Yoga means the union of the individual self (Jivatma) with the divine self. (Paramatma). It is the union of individual will with the universal will. It is the union of individual soul with the universal soul. Yoga is the union of body, mind, heart and action; Yoga is an integration and harmony among thought, feeling and deed. It leads man from the ignoble to noble. It transforms a brute man into a godly man. Yoga is a well Balanced and perfect scientific process for success and peace in life. Yoga is the integration of the personality.

DEFINITIONS OF YOGA Swami Sivananda “Yoga is universal in its application leading to an all-round development of body, mind and soul”. Sri Sri Ravishankar “Blossoming of human potential to fullness is yoga” Nithyananda “Yoga is the ultimate practice for body, mind and being”

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev : Yoga is the science of activating inner energies Gheranda Samhita “There is no greater power than Yoga” Yogi Ashwini : Yoga is a complete science of the being’s evolution Sri Aurobindo “Yoga is a methodical effort towards self-perfection by the development of the potentialities of the individuals” Yogendraji “Yoga represents the effort, the path, the progress and the end of human evolution.”

Swami Sivananda “Yoga is integration between head, heart and Hand”

Krishnamoorthy “Yoga is awareness”. “Yoga is an order”

Patanjali “Yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind” ; “clarity of thought is yoga”;

Iyengar “Yoga is character building”; “Yoga cannot be explained. It has to be done”.

Patanjali “Yoga is suppression of thought.”

Bhagavad Gita “Evenness of mind is yoga”;

Bhagavad Gita “Yoga is supreme success of life; Yoga is the giver of untold happiness; Yoga is the destroyer of Pain; Equanimity is yoga; Yoga is skill is action; (yogah Karmasu Kausalam) Yoga is wisdom in work or skillful living”.

## NEED OF YOGA

Yoga is truly a global science. It is a metaphysical doctrine. It is a supreme divine science. It is a science of being. It is a science of living. It is a heritage. It is a blue print of perfection. It is a voyage of discovery in which one explores his/ her inner self. It begins with the body and ends by transcending it. It is a mirror to look at ourselves from within. It has the principle of “living in complete harmony with our natural system”. The central teaching of yoga is that man’s true nature is divine, perfect and infinite. Yoga is the rhythm of the body, the melody of the mind, the harmony of the soul and the creation of the symphony of life. Thus, yoga is the golden key which unlocks the door to peace, tranquility and joy. The quality of one’s life depends upon the quality of work he or she does. Fitness enhances the quality of life. Promoting fitness is the need of the hour. In order to improve one’s fitness, we ought to practice yoga and not only for fitness but also for wellness in the sense, a holistic approach – physical, mental, moral, emotional, social and spiritual, cultural, vital, occupational, environmental, educational, cosmic and so on. India today is in need of a strong and healthy race of persons. Regular and judicious practice of the reliable yogic exercises is needed for a stronger and healthy India. Many of our thoughts are negative. Yogic practice will distance your mind from day-to-day anxieties and give you the opportunity to overcome challenges and problems successfully.

In today so called modern society, most of the people suffer from various sophisticated and incurable ailments which were not reported by ancient people.

Yoga is needed for sports too. There are many naturally gifted sports persons who fail to achieve their full potential. They may lack total concentration and control over their emotions. Yoga thus is needed to improve the 'mental game'. Today, many of the people do not know what the goal of life is. Transcendence is the goal of life. They do not realize the purpose of life. The science of yoga, a practical and scientifically prepared method is needed for the people to realize their goal of life – to achieve or to find out truth along with perfection, peace, joy, happiness and immortality

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF YOGA

The aim of yoga is self- evolution;

- The aim of yoga is a state of equilibrium and peace;
- The aim of yoga is to manifest divinity within;
- State of freedom is the aim of yoga;
- The aim of yoga is to eradicate pain and misery;
- Yoga aims at spiritual evolution of consciousness;
- Yoga aims at attaining divine light;
- To live the life beyond the consciousness of the body and mind and intellect is the aim of yoga.
- The aim of yoga is to calm the chaos of conflicting impulses;
- The aim of yoga is to attain higher levels of consciousness by piercing through kosha after kosha;
- Yoga aims at excellence in all fields of life;
- Yoga aims at nothing less than a complete transformation of man;
- The aim of yoga is to always observe things accurately and therefore never act in a way that will make us regret our actions later;
- The aim of yoga is to encourage us to be a little better than we were before
- Yoga aims at total mastery over every aspect of the human personality in order to arrive at the ultimate truth;
- Yoga aims to discover to have 'wholeness';
- Yoga aims at the integration and harmonization of all the various human faculties - mind, body moral, emotions and spiritual;
- The aim of yoga is to lead a fruitful and righteous life.
- The aim of yoga is to have complete control, arrest of the fluctuations and modifications of the mind;
- Yoga aims at altering psychic by extremely high degree of attention concentration;
- Yoga aims to attain self – realization, super-consciousness; pure consciousness; soul consciousness.
- Yoga aims to attain blissfulness
- The aim of yoga is to achieve the state of unity or oneness with God;
- Conscious mental awareness is the aim of yoga;
- Union with God is the aim of yoga.
- Union with nature is the aim of yoga;
- An important aim of yoga is to accumulate and conserve every ounce of vitality as much as possible;
- The aim of yoga is not only individual liberation, but the transformation of the entire human race.

#### OBJECTIVES OF YOGA

1. To enhance a good health;
2. To improve public health;
3. To strengthen mental hygiene;
4. To possess emotional stability;
5. To mould moral values;
6. To attain spiritual and recreational purposes;
7. To develop psychological qualities;
8. To perfect the motor skills necessary for everyday life;
9. To provide knowledge for a broad use of yogic practices in everyday life;

10. To educate world outlook, collectivism and internationalism;
11. To raise the level of achievements in day to day life;
12. To reach higher levels of consciousness through positive experiences leading to higher truths;
13. To weaken the five affections such as ignorance, Egoism, likes, dislikes and the instinct of self – preservation.

Some of the Advantages of Yoga are as follows:

- Improves brain function
- Lower stress levels
- Alters gene expression
- Increases flexibility
- Lowers blood pressure
- Improves lung capacity
- Relieves anxiety
- Relieves chronic back pain
- Lowers blood sugar in diabetics
- Improves sense of balance

### **SCOPE OF YOGA**

- 1) Teaching (Schools, colleges, universities, special schools)
- 2) Fitness and Health related opportunities (community centers, Industries, Health clubs, camps, Resorts, spas, correctional institutions, Hospitals, sports Associations, old age homes)
- 3) Sports media opportunities (Writing Books, Sport Broadcasting, Sport Telecasting, Journals and Magazines)
- 4) Yoga and sport related opportunities (Research, sport consulting).
- 5) In some cases perhaps knowledge of yoga will motivate further study in any field of endeavor.
- 6) Yoga conquers the main obstacles to happiness- desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy.
- 7) It makes great personal and even business sense. Yoga helps to mould spiritual leaders, too.
- 8) Yoga provides opportunity to its lovers to teach and specialize in an area which are abundant such as yoga for physical fitness, yoga therapy, spiritual yoga, prenatal or postnatal yoga, yoga for kids, yoga for Couples, yoga for seniors and corporate yoga. Yoga is thus, an indispensable science

### **YOGA SUTRAS**

The yoga sutras of patanjali are the very heart of yoga. It is a timeless classic. It is the basic text of the orthodox philosophical system

of yoga. It is believed to be at least 2000 years old. A central theme running through patanjali's yoga sutra is that of pratyahara that is, withdrawal of the mind from its scattered externality to interiorizing it and focusing it upon the very origin of thoughts.

The yoga-sutras are presented in four chapters. They are a compilation of 196 aphorisms that cover the entire philosophical wisdom of yoga.

#### **A. Samadhi Pada**

- The yoga sutras first chapter is called Samadhi pada. It contains 51 sutras. It refers to the blissful state.

#### **B. Sadhanapada**

- The yoga sutras second chapter is called Sadhana pada. It contains 5 sutras. It means practice or discipline. In this chapter, Patanjali outlines two forms of Yoga: Kriya yoga and Ashtanga yoga.

#### **C. Vibhuti pada**

- The yoga sutras third chapter is called vibhuti pada. It contains 6 sutras. Vibhuti means power or manifestation. It talks on 52 supra- normal powers (siddhis) which are acquired by the practice of yoga.
- In this chapter patanjali describes the capacity of the mind

#### **D. Kaivalya Pada**

- The yoga sutras fourth chapter is called Kaivalya pada.
- It contains 34 sutras. Kaivalya refers to isolation or emancipation or liberation (moksha) which is the goal of life.
- This chapter deals the nature of liberation and the reality of the transcendental self.

## Unit II: Foundation of Yoga

### EIGHT LIMBS OF ASHTANGA YOGA

1. Yama (Principles or moral code)
  - Ahimsa - A principle of non-violence
  - Satya - A principle of Truthfulness
  - Asteya - A principle of non-stealing
  - Brahmacharya - Continence / Celibacy
  - Aparigraha - A principle of non-hoarding or non-possessiveness
2. Niyama (Personal Disciplines)
  - Shoucha - Purity
  - Santosh - Contentment
  - Tapa - Endurance
  - Swadhyaya - Self study
  - Eshwar Pranidhan – Dedication
3. Asana (Yoga Positions or Yogic Postures): A stable and comfortable posture which helps attaining mental equilibrium.
4. Pranayama (Yogic Breathing): Extension and control of breath.
5. Pratyahara (Withdrawal of Senses): A mental preparation to increase the power of mind.
6. Dharana (Concentration on Object): Concentration of mind on one object and its field.
7. Dhyana (Meditation): With drawing mind from all external objects and focusing it on one point and meditating on it.
8. Samadhi (Salvation): State of Super bliss, joy and merging individual consciousness into universal consciousness. Union between Jivatman and Paramatman. Union of Shiva and Shakti in Sahasra Chakra (the top of the head). Realizing the Brahman (pure consciousness) or Realization of God is the ultimate achievement of Human Birth.

Patanjali's classification of classical yoga, as set out in his Yoga Sutras explained 8 limbs of yoga as Yama (universal moral codes), niyama (self-purification by discipline), asana (postures), pranayama (rhythmic control of breath), pratyahara (withdrawing of mind from senses), dharana (Concentration), dhyana (deep meditation) and samadhi (union with the object of meditation).

1. Yama (Principles or moral code)
  - Ahimsa: Ahimsa is non-violence, has a wider positive meaning of love. The prerequisites for ahimsa include Abhaya (being free from fear) and Akrodha (being free from anger).
  - Satya: Satya means truthfulness in thought, word, and deed. Just how Mahatma Gandhi stated, "Truth is God and God is truth", the mind must think the truth, tongue must speak the truth and the actions must reflect the truth. There must be control of speech, which facilitates charity to others and roots out malice, and this helps them gain respect from all.
  - Asteya: asteya indicates not stealing. A desire to possess what the others have creates a need to steal, which results in a breach of trust, misappropriation, and misuse.
  - Brahmacharya: This indicates a life of celibacy, religious study and self-restraint. In modern times, it is the art of consistency, sustaining energy and not depleting vitality. It measures divinity in all. In case of a bachelor, a married man, and a householder as each of them are called to carry out their noble cause in life; brahmacharya can be practiced in all. Brahmacharya is fund of energy and vitality. It can fight injustice; use forces wisely, battery that sparks the sparks of wisdom and attains peace beyond this world filled with misery.

- Aparigraha: aparigraha means “not grasping things,” or non-possessiveness. This practice helps us achieve a balanced relationship with the things that we each call “mine.”
2. Niyama (Personal Disciplines)
- Shoucha - Purity
  - Santosh - Contentment
  - Tapa - Endurance
  - Swadhyaya - Self study
  - Eshwar Pranidhan - Dedication

A yogic maxim says, “All the things of the world are yours to use, but not to own.” The following are the inner observances one must imbibe for a peaceful life.

1. Shoucha: Purification of self is shoucha. Impurities of body and mind may exist. Impurities of the mind such as hatred, passion, anger, greed, delusion, and pride. This consists of Asanas, pranayama’s, bhakti, food, and place of practice.
2. Asanas help in toning the body, removing toxins. Pranayama cleanses and aerates lung, promotes better oxygenation in blood and purifies nerves. Bhakti or adoration washes these impurities away. Cleansing brings radiance and joy. Banishes pain and sorrow. By this they see virtues in others. Healthy food helps in purification. Each morsel eaten giving praise to God. Vegetarian food is considered good, good for this. Must avoid food that is sour, bitter, pungent, burning, stale, tasteless, heavy, and unclean. Na finally one must eat to live and not live to eat. The place where food is easily procurable, free from insects, pleasing surroundings. For eg: Banks of the river, corner in one’s room.
3. Santosha: Santosha is contentment, it means that there is bliss surpassed. When man is complete, he feels his duty to God is performed and he loves God. Individuals will be content when the spirit does not waver in the wind of desire.
4. Tapas: A burning effort under all circumstances to achieve a definite goal in life. Leading a disciplined life is the key with 3 aims including for the body, for the mind and through speech.
5. Savdhyaya: Education or daily reading draws out the best in a person. Changes one’s outlook to life by which he realizes all creation is for adoration and not enjoyment. By this the speaker and listener are of one mind. By education or daily reading it draws out the best in a person, changes his outlook to life and he realizes all creation is for adoration and not enjoyment. There is no sermonizing as one heart speaks to another. The knowledge from this is taken into the blood stream and is incorporated as part of one’s life.
6. Isvara pranidhana: Dedication of ones actions and will to God. All creation belongs to God. A yogi must give up all pride, power, selfish purposes, greed, and attachment. By this he shows strength in character and adoration towards goals. This also means giving up the feeling of "I".

The Bhagavad Gita names 18 different paths of yoga each with its own emphasis. The yogaptattva recognizes four paths- Hatha Yoga, Kundalini yoga, Mantra Yoga, Raja Yoga. But Jnana Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Kriya Yoga, tantra yoga and Karma Yoga are often mentioned. These ‘paths’ should not be confused with ‘schools’ (teaching styles) of yoga. Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga are the two prime paths of Yoga.

The paths of yoga bring about the transformation of the individual to attain perfection in life. By following these paths, we can realize the goal of life.

## HATHA YOGA

In Sanskrit the word Hatha means Bala or force implying force, valour, determination, persistence etc., Hatha means harnessing the body that has a certain hatham or stiffness about it in its set patterns of behavior and movement. Hatha means forceful. It means a balancing of energies or forces. The word Hatha is derived from two roots. Ha+tha mean sun and moon. The two energies Ha and tha are Prana and Apana. It gives first attention to the physical body. Hatha yoga is the yoga of breath and body control. It develops the theory of postures and breathing. It stresses on the purification of the body. Better health is its main goal. It is a complete and integral system of the body, mind and behavior. The Hatha yoga has six divisions – Dhouti, Basti, Neti, Asana, Mudra and pranayama. Hatha yoga provides complete control over the body and mind thereby to achieve good health to pursue, Raja yoga which shall lead to ultimate happiness. It focuses on the path toward



wellness and enlightenment. Iyengar yoga and Ashtanga yoga are among the most well-known forms of Hatha yoga. In the early 1900s, Hatha yoga was strongly promoted in India by Krishnamacharya. It is formulated earlier by the famous yogin Gorakhnath who lived in 1200 A.D Iyengar is a Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga pradipika, Gheranda samhaita and Hatharatnavali are famous Hatha yoga texts.

The schools of the Hatha Yoga are:

- 1) Classical (based on yoga sutras)
- 2) Advaita Vedanta (based on vedas & Upanishads)
- 3) Tantra (based on reality)

It focuses on the path toward wellness and enlightenment. It is the foundation for spirituality. It is a holistic path.

## BHAKTI YOGA

Bhakthi comes from the root 'bhaj' which means to serve. Bhakti yoga is the path of devotion and intense love of God. It teaches to attain perfection through the purification of love. It emphasizes self-control and religious observance. The control of emotions is its key. It involves the dedication of all actions and thoughts to a chosen God.

The nature of real Bhakthi is

1. Ask not anything in return for your love;
2. Love knows no fear;
3. Love knows no rival;
4. Bhakthi yoga develops the heart. It emphasizes the opening of the heart to
5. divine love. This devotional love is often translated into kirtans. Regular Prayer,
6. chanting, Mantra, singing, ceremonies and celebrations are all forms of this path.
7. It is the yoga of devotion to the source of all good things but not material things.
8. It contains pure altruism which gives immense happiness to others. Bhakthi yoga
9. is suitable for a man of emotional temperament. One of the most popular kirtan
10. artists in U.S today is Krishna Das, who is a bhakti yoga practitioner.
11. The prominent bhakthi scriptures are bhakthi sutra, the srimad bhagavatam and the Bhagavad Gita.
12. The scriptures describe a nine fold bhakthi as follows:
13. Being in the company of saints
14. Taking delight in the stories of God
15. Serving your spiritual mentor & following their instructions
16. Contemplating divine qualities & the all-pervasiveness of God
17. Meditating on your mantra sincerely & faith truly
18. Practicing self-restraint and purity as well as eliminating worldliness
19. Considering the world to be the manifestation of God & regarding the saints as the way to God.
20. Being content with whatever you have, and not finding fault with others
21. Cultivating simplicity, innocence, total reliance on God & dispassion.
22. Kabir, Tulsidas, Chaitanya Mehaprabhu Nam Dev and many more were notable bhakthi sutra, the Srimad Bhagavatam and the Bhagavad Gita.

Eight signs of Bhakthi are:

- Asurpath (tears)
- Pulak (horripitation)
- Kampan (twitching of the Muscles)
- Crying
- Laughing
- Sweating
- Murcha (fainting)
- Sarva Bhanga (in ability to speak)

## JNANA YOGA

Jnana yoga is the path of knowledge. The word Jnana means insight or Wisdom or intellect. It is the royal road of reason. It is the path of self-analysis. It is the way of philosophical analysis. Socrates was a Jnana yogi. Knowing the truth regarding you, the universe and god is its goal. In Jnana yoga, the intellect serves as an instrument to discriminate between the real and the unreal, thus leading to a realization of the real. The method of this path is to remove maya, the veil of ignorance, by discrimination and thereby be free and illumined. The two powerful intellectual techniques are viveka (Discrimination) and vairagya (dispassion). The stages of Jnana:

- Thinking
- concentration
- intuition
- understanding
- realization

The principle techniques of this path are meditation and contemplation. Sacred knowledge derived from meditation which teaches a man how to understand his own nature. The study of sacred texts, intellectual debates, philosophical discussions and introspection are all components of this path. It is the means to attain Samadhi through reason. Jnana yoga is the centre and the other yogas as auxiliaries to get rapid progress in the spiritual path. It is the most difficult of all the schools of yoga.

**KARMA YOGA** Karma yoga is the path of right, selfless action. It is the path of work and service. The word Karma comes from the Sanskrit word 'kru' which means action. Karma is the sum total of our acts. It is the method of attaining perfection through work or action. Karma is the sum total of our acts. It is the method of attaining perfection through work or action. Bhagavad Gita states that karma yoga is knowledge, devotion and work. It purifies the mind and develops the hand. Karma is three types: Kayika(physical), vacika(speech) and Manasika(mentally). In karma yoga, actions are performed without thought of reward and without emotional attachment to the results, thus dissolving the selfishness. Thus karma yogi makes all actions for others with no thought of personal gain. Mother Theresa and Mahatma Gandhi are the best examples of Karma yogi practitioners. Karma yoga leads to Bhakthi yoga which in turn leads to Raja yoga. Raja Yoga brings Jnana. It is most suitable for people who have an active temperament. It promotes mental purity, diminishes, egoism and enables one to experience through sympathetic understand, the unity of mankind.

**RAJA YOGA** Raja yoga is said to be the king of yogas. Raja yoga is the royal yoga. Raj means king. It is also called the yoga of meditation. It is perfection through Meditation. It helps to reach higher states of consciousness. It is the path of psychic control; the psychological and psychic forces within one. It stresses on purification of the mind to attain self – realization. The aspects of Raja yoga are; self – control, control of thoughts, control of posture, breath control, withdrawal of the mind, concentration, meditation and Samadhi. Raja yoga includes the cultivation of attention, unfolding of the consciousness and exploration of the lower and upper minds. It steadies the mind and makes it one – pointed.

One has to defeat the following:-

- Kama (lust or Passion)
- Krodha (anger or wrath)
- Lobha (greed) Moha (Delusion)
- Mada (Pride) Matsara (Jealousy or envy)

In the context of raja yoga the word yoga the word Raja in metaphorically when one reaches enlightenment, one becomes a king among men. Raja yoga is concerned with the meditative aspect. Raja yoga is the royal path to self, transformation and enlightenment. For Raja yogi, the

sutras serve as an instructional manual to one's own experience of reality. The goal of Raja yoga is oneness.

According to yogiraj Vethanthiri Maharishi", Raja yoga is best suited for our age and the only hope for modern man with his awakened and questioning intellect. Jesus Christ himself was a Raja – Yogi indeed. Thus, the synthesis of Bhakti, Karma and jnana yoga is called Raja (Royal) yoga. The yoga sutras of patanjali, The Yoga Bhasya of vyasa, the Tattava vaisarali of vacaspathi Misra is the basic texts of Raja yoga.

### Unit III: Asanas

- Effect of Asanas and 'Pranayama on various system of the body
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- Types of Bandhas and mudras
- Type of kriyas

#### Classification of asanas

Classification is just a dividing process that is based on physical and mental growth of human being.

We can see details of Classification of asanas.

Swami Kuvalayananda has classified Asanas in 2 main levels. The two main categories are Meditative and Cultural. Cultural also has sub classified viz. Relaxative. The Relaxative (*meditation or activity that promotes relaxation*) posture is fatigue releasing posture.

#### Type of ASANAS:

##### A. Meditation:

1. Padmasana - Padmasana is the Sanskrit name for a renowned yoga asana, otherwise known as Lotus Pose.
2. Siddh asana -Siddh asana is a yoga posture meant for Meditation. It is one of the ancient yoga postures and similar to Padmasana.
3. Swastik asana - Swastik asana is a meditation posture widely known as Auspicious Pose. It is an excellent alternative to padmasana .
4. Sam asana - In this asana the external structure of organs of the body are kept in such a way that they stand divided in to two, therefor the name of Sam asana in Sanskrit 'Sama' means equilibrium.

B. **Cultural:** Cultural asanas are meant for culturing the body and mental health. For a people who are doing Yogi, Physical health is very important, and then only he will be able to practice his/her Sadhana. Below are two type Classification of Cultural asanas:

##### 1. Physical:

- Sirsasana: In Sanskrit the word 'sirsha' means "head and "asana" means pose. Sirsasana is considered the king of all asanas and is usually done at the end of the yoga asanas practices.
- Sarvang asana: Shoulder stand or more fully Salamba Sarvang asana Supported Shoulder stand.
- Bhujangasana: Bhujangasana or Cobra Pose is a reclining back-bending asana.
- Hal asana: Hal asana is a classic yoga pose or asana in Sanskrit, lough pose is an inverted asana in hatha yoga.
- Supta-Vajarasana - it is a Sanskrit name Supta means "reclining," vajra means" thunderbolt" and asana means "pose."

##### 2. Relaxative:

- Shavasana: Shavasana is a Sanskrit word comprised of Shava means dead body and asana indicates means yoga or posture.
- Makarasna in this pose to feel the whole body touching the ground and the deep relaxation in all your muscles.

While doing Asanas, we should keep in mind - That is if Asanas are done merely by seeing here and there, they will lead to several diseases. Therefore, some important points to be remembered, while performing asanas are:

- i. Asanas should not be practiced merely from books; the guidance of a teacher is also necessary.
- ii. Asanas should not be performed with jerks, but slowly, step by step and gradually up to the final pose the return should be in the same way.
- iii. The final posture should be maintained for some time, but in no case under tension.
- iv. Do not practise beyond your limitation.
  - v. There should not be a competitive attitude. This is harmful and should be avoided.
- vi. Concentrate on the effect of Asanas on mind and the body.
- vii. Every Asana is to be followed by Shavasana. But it does not mean that it is harmful if you cannot practice Shavasana after every Asana.
- viii. If possible, maintain a diary of Asanas showing the duration of the practice of each asana.
- ix. In case of an injury or illness the teacher should be consulted and followed.
  - x. Never think about breathing and while doing asanas. The constitution of the whole body is such that the breathing is adjusted as per the situation e.g., when we put a thread into the needle or when we lift weight or when we do Salabhasana, Mayurasana the breathing is adjusted automatically. Hence, we should not mix breathing with postures. But during Pranayama people suffering from High B.P. Heart disease, Asthma, the teacher should be consulted.

The early morning is the best time to perform Asanas. It is to be kept in mind that after lunch up to 4 hours, no Asanas, Mudra, or Pranayama should be practiced. But Vaman, Dhouti may be performed, if necessary. For people having weak gastric fire, even a four-hour gap is not sufficient. They should start practicing at least 5 to 6 hours after lunch.

#### PRANAYAMAS:

When prana moves, Chitta (mental force) moves. When prana is without movement, Chitta is without movement. - Hathayoga Pradip Ika 2.02." Pranayama's are breathing exercises developed by the ancient yogis. They are used to purify the Pranic nadis in the Pranayama Kosha by controlling, regulating, and channelizing the Prana in the body. Prana is taken in through the air we breathe, and since the breathing exercises increase the amount of air we take in, they also increase our intake of Prana.

In Sanskrit Prana means energy or vital force and Yama means control. So, in English this would translate into control of the vital breath. However, there's much more to Pranayama than just control of the vital force. Pranayama essentially involves three things: regulating the breath, controlling the vital force and channelizing the Pranas in the right directions.

The principle of in Yoga is that order to alter a situation we must make changes in the energy that governs it. To bring about positive changes in body and mind we must understand and work upon the energies through which they work. This is done through a set of exercises that entail synchronized breathing. In Yoga the right or solar Nadi is considered masculine or solar in nature. The left is feminine or lunar in nature. It is Pitta or fire predominant and increases energy on the right side. The left or the lunar Nadi, is Kapha or water predominant, and increases energy on the left side of the body. To maintain harmony in our Physical or Subtle body, we should have an equal number of breaths from both nostrils. Since this is not always possible through normal breathing, Pranayama helps channelize them.

It is also for precisely this reason that Yoga also prescribes a sattvic diet, rich in Prana i.e., foods full of the life-force and a mind rooted in moral and ethical values like truth and non-violence. An impure or toxic body and mind cannot remain healthy for long. But, before we proceed further, there is something else we must understand. You might have noticed the use of the word Pranas in the last line of the first paragraph. Essentially, and little known to the general public, the Prana consists of 5 different Pranas, viz Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana and Udana, each performing a different function. They are all contained in a sheath called the Pranayama Kosha consisting of roughly 3,64,000 Nadis or subtle nerve channels that are connected to other gross and subtle bodies and sheaths. Thus, the one primary

Prana is divided into five, basis their movement, direction, and function. Further, they can be classified as energies and processes occurring on different levels in our system.

**Prana:** Literally meaning "air flowing forward", it governs the flow of energy from the head down to the navel, the Pranicenter in the physical body. It is responsible for all types of inward reception from inhalation to eating, drinking to reception of sense perceptions and experiences. Propulsive in nature, it sets and guides things in motion, thereby governing the basic energy that sustains our lives.

**Apana:** Apana, means "regressing air" and, like the name suggests, it moves downward and outward. It governs the movement of energy from the navel down to the root chakra and is responsible for all forms of systemic discharge, including carbon dioxide in the breath, stools, urine, semen, menstrual fluids and the foetus. On a deeper level it forms the basis of our immune system and governs the expulsion of all negative sensory, mental, and emotional experiences.

**Samana:** Meaning "balanced air", Samana flows from the perimeter to the centre, in a judicious churning movement. It channelizes the flow of energy from the entire body back to the navel. Primarily, though, it governs the gastrointestinal tract, i.e., it facilitates digestion of food and absorption of oxygen in the lungs. Mentally it serves to digest and assimilate all sensory, mental, and emotional inputs.

**Vyana:** Vyana means "air flowing outward". Contrariwise Samana, this one governs flow of energy from the navel throughout the body. Flowing from the centre to the periphery, it governs all circulatory functions and, in the bargain, assists the task of all other Pranas. It regulates the flow of oxygen, nutrition and water throughout the system, as well as disseminates our thoughts and emotions.

**Udana:** Udana, "upward moving air," literally moves upwards. It governs energy movement up from the navel to the head. Naturally, it is responsible for growth, aids and abets all bodily effort, enthusiasm and will, including the ability to stand and speak. Our main positive energy in life, it facilitates development of our different bodies as well as in evolving consciousness.

In summation, Prana governs the intake of all forms of nutrients, Samana regulates their digestion, Vyana sees to their circulation, Udana administers the release of positive energy and Apana, the elimination of waste matter from the system. Pretty much like operations of an organization, Prana fetches the fuel, Samana transforms it into energy, Vyana distributes it to the various departments and Apana discharges the waste matter produced in the process. Finally, Udana decides how the positive energy generated is to be used.

The secret of good health lies in balance and harmony. Since all the Pranas are interlinked, if even one becomes unstable, the others are susceptible to similar imbalance. Result, the working of the entire machine goes out of gear. This gets translated into mental and physical afflictions and indispositions.

**The Art of Pranayama:** Pranayama is the science of purifying the Nadis in the Pranayama kosha. Through regulated breathing i.e. altering the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation, it is possible to control the vital force in the body. Pranayama is the process by which such conscious control is achieved through synchronized breathing. Purifying the channels along which the life stream of 'prana' flows helps prevent a variety of physical and mental ailments. It also increases one's overall immunity and resistance to disease.

The best position to be assumed for these practices is any comfortable position like Sukh asana. The critical thing to bear in mind, however, is posture. The body straight and back, neck and head should be kept erect, i.e., in a straight line. And yet, the body should not be stiff. It can be in natural relaxed condition. You can prepare for this by practicing shavasana, the corpse poses, for a few minutes. To prepare for pranayama it is first better to breathe relaxed in the above-mentioned ratio. Do this a few rounds, for a few days. The next step is to learn the knack of full yogic breathing. This is also called Dirgha Pranayama the three-part breath. Known as the "complete" or "three-part" breath, Dirgha Pranayama teaches you how to fill the three regions of the body with Oxygen.

- The first is the belly (on top of or just below the navel),

- The second is the chest (the thorax or rib cage), and
- The third is the clavicular region (or upper chest, near the sternum)

Technique

1. Sit in any other comfortable position with back, spine, and neck erect. Start by taking slow, long, and deep nasal breaths
2. As you inhale, let your abdomen fill with air. As you exhale, let your belly deflate like a balloon. Repeat the exercise a few times, keeping your breath smooth and relaxed. Never strain
3. Breathe into your belly as in Step 2, but also inflate your thoracic region by letting your rib cage open up. Exhale and repeat the exercise a few times
4. Follow steps 2 and 3 and continue inhaling by opening the clavicle region or upper chest. Exhale and repeat the exercise a few times
5. Combine all three steps into one continuous or complete flow

Once you have got a good feel for this style of breathing, start practicing without the aid of your hands. Finally, relax and breathe in the three positions quietly feeling the waves of breath move in and out, up and down the body.

Pranayama benefits: Pranayama refers to the breathing technique in Yoga, which can work wonders in improving the overall health and the function of all the organs in the body. Pranayama is also closely linked to meditation, a crucial aspect of yoga. Several health experts also refer to Pranayama as the art of effective breath control. Practicing the proper techniques of breathing can help you become more aware of your breath and therefore pranayama benefits are physical, emotional as well as spiritual.

Some of the most common pranayama benefits are:

- Improvement in the rate of breathing.
- Reduction in the heart rate as well as the wear and tear of the heart.
- Helping the body get rid of excessive fat and weight.
- Curing problems that are related to the digestive system.
- Enhancing the functioning of several organs, which include the kidneys, pancreas, intestines, diaphragm, lungs and the heart.
- Removing the toxins from within the body.
- Preventing various diseases by strengthening the immune system.
- Getting rid of negative emotions like depression, anger, arrogance, greed & so on.
- Improving the circulation of blood throughout the body
- Reducing blood pressure, by relaxing the body and soothing the nerves
- Pranayama for weight loss

People often exercise to lose weight faster, because exercising regularly in the right manner can help increase the metabolism in a person, which further helps in burning off more calories. Pranayama can have a similar effect on your body. It is important to realize that the process of weight loss through Pranayama or most other yoga forms slow and gradual. However, when pranayama is modified by several levels, it can help facilitate weight loss at a faster rate. It is important to learn the various Pranayama breathing techniques through a well-qualified Yoga guru or teacher. Practicing this technique in the wrong way may have an adverse effect on the body. It is best to practice the 7 basic pranayama exercises before practicing other yoga poses. Techniques like AlomVilom, Kapalbhathi and Bhastika are believed to be the key factors in weight loss and should be practiced regularly. Just practicing these three breathing techniques for one hour daily could help you lose up to 25 pounds in a month. However, there are several other factors that could influence the amount of weight lost. Before practicing Pranayama or any other form of Yoga, it is best to consult a doctor, especially if you are suffering from any medical conditions.

**The 8 Pranayama's are:**

1. Kapalpathi
2. AnulomaViloma
3. Ujjayi
4. Bhastrika
5. Shitali

6. Sitkari
7. Suryabhedana

1. Kapalapathi Pranayama: What is Kapalbhathi? How to do it? Kapalapathi is related to the process of breathing but is not a kind of Pranayama. Beginners can perform this breathing exercise for three minutes and gradually increase it to five. Some of the benefits of Kapalbhathi are bringing stability and peace to the mind, purifying the chakras, and improving the function of the abdominal organs. Another effective breathing exercise you could try is Anuloma Viloma or Alternate Nostril Breathing. This breathing technique is done by breathing in through one nostril and releasing the breath through the other. It is considered to be very beneficial for individuals suffering from allergy, sinus, high blood pressure, depression, and heart blockages.
2. What are all the benefits of Pranayama and Kapalapathi? The aim of pranayama's is to bring the involuntary functions of the mechanism of respiration under control. Individuals who practice pranayama's will have good strength, courage, enthusiasm, and good appetite. Some of the **pranayama benefits** are maintaining a blood pressure level that is healthy, increasing the supply of oxygen to the brain, and reducing stress. Some of the Kapalapathi benefits in particular are in helping with obesity, indigestion, and other diseases related to the abdomen. Practicing meditation regularly can provide you with a lot of benefits. Some of the meditation benefits include decreasing the rate of respiration, building self-confidence, and helping with chronic diseases like arthritis and allergies
3. AnulomaViloma: How AnulomaViloma will help for Weight Loss? AnulomaViloma or Alternate Nostril Breathing is a breathing exercise in which you breathe in through one nostril, hold your breath, and breathe out through the other nostril in the ratio of 2:8:4. Regular practices of **AnulomaViloma** along with some yoga poses can help get rid of the fat deposits all over the body, not just a specific area. Padmasana (Lotus Pose) is a sitting posture that requires your hips to be open and should be consistently practiced. It is very effective in aligning the chakras. Bhramari is considered to be the best breathing exercise for meditating. It relaxes the mind and reduces high blood pressure, fatigue, and stress.
4. SitkariPranayam | Teeth Hissing Exercise: SitkariPranayam cools the body and affects important brain centres and regulates body temperature. It cools and reduces mental and emotional excitation, and encourages free flow of prana through the body

Procedure:

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

5. Ujjayi Pranayama: The Sanskrit word ujjayi means 'victorious'. It is derived from the root ji, which means 'to conquer' or 'to acquire by conquest', and the prefix us, which means 'bondage'. Ujjayi is therefore the pranayama which gives freedom from bondage. It is also known as the psychic breath, as it leads to subtle states of mind and is used together with khichari mudra, the tongue lock, in tantric meditation techniques such as mantra Japa, ajapajapa, kriya yoga and pranavidya

Procedure:

- Sit in any comfortable meditation asana. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Take the awareness to the breath in the nostrils and allow the breathing to become calm and rhythmic. After some time, transfer the awareness to the throat.
- Feel or imagine that the breath is being drawn in and out through the throat and not through the nostrils, as if it is taking place through a small hole in the throat.
- As the breathing becomes slower and deeper, gently contract the glottis so that a soft snoring sound, like the breathing of a sleeping baby, is produced in the throat.
- If practised correctly, there will be a spontaneous contraction of the abdomen, without any effort being made.

- Both inhalation and exhalation should be long, deep, and controlled. Practise yogic breathing while concentrating on the sound produced by the breath in the throat. The sound of the breath should be audible to the practitioner alone.

EXTENSION: when this breathing has been mastered, fold the tongue back into khichari mudra. If the tongue becomes tired, release it, while continuing the ujjayi breathing. When the tongue is rested, fold it back again. Surya Bheda Pranayama. The Sanskrit word Surya means 'sun', which refers to Pingala Nadi, while bheda means 'to pierce', 'pass through' or 'awaken'. Surya bheda, then, means to pierce or purify Pingala Nadi

Procedure: Assume a comfortable meditation asana. Place the hands on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra. Close the eyes and relax the whole body.

- When the body is comfortable and still, watch the breath until it spontaneously becomes slow and deep.
- Adopt nasagra mudra. Close the left nostril with the ring finger and inhale slowly and deeply through the right nostril. Exhale slowly through the right nostril, keeping the left nostril closed with the ring finger. This is one round

Duration: When first practising suryabheda pranayama, 10 rounds are sufficient. Over time, however, as the practice becomes comfortable, the duration may be increased to 10 minutes. Slowly increase the length of retention over a matter of months. A ratio of 1:1:1 may be introduced to stabilize the practice. Once this is mastered, it may be increased to 1:1:2 and then 1:2:2

Sheetali Pranayama: The Sanskrit word sheetali is derived from the root sheet which means 'cold'. Sheetal means 'that which is calm, passionless and soothing'. Sheetali pranayama is mentioned in the yoga texts Hatha Yoga Pradeep Ika and Gheranda Samhita.

Procedure:

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

Duration:

- With practice, the duration of the inhalation should gradually become longer to increase the cooling effect.
- Gradually increase the number of rounds from 9 to 15.
- For general purposes 15 rounds is sufficient; however, up to 60 rounds may be performed in very hot weather.

Anuloma Viloma Pranayama (Psychic Network Purification)

Right nostril is Pingala Nadi (Sun principle or body), left nostril represents Ida Nadi (moon principle or mind). In alternate nostril breathing, one inhales through right and exhales through left then inhales through left and exhales through right nostril. This purifies the Ida and Pingala Nadis. This purification brings balance to body and mind. The metabolic processes are balanced. The purpose of the Alternate Nostril Breathing is to balance the physical energy and mental energy. It is recommended for all types of problems. As Hatha Yoga principle says that the health conditions are due to imbalance between this Ida and Pingala. Alternate nostril breathing balances these two forces.

Procedure:

- Sit in any comfortable meditation posture, preferably siddha/siddha yoni asana or padmasana.
- Keep the head and spine upright. Relax the whole body and close the eyes.
- Practise **yogic breathing** for some time.



- Adopt nasagra mudra with the right hand and place the left hand on the knee in chin or jnana mudra.
- Close the right nostril with the thumb. Inhale and exhale through the left nostril 5 times.
- The rate of inhalation/exhalation should be normal.
- Be aware of each breath.
- After completing 5 breaths release the pressure of the thumb on the right nostril and press the left nostril with the ring finger, blocking the flow of air.
- Inhale and exhale through the right nostril 5 times, keeping the respiration rate normal.
- Lower the hand and breathe 5 times through both nostrils together. This is one round.
- Making sure that there is no sound as the air passes through the nostrils.
- Practise until this stage is mastered before commencing the next stage.

**Stage 2:** Begin to control the duration of each breath. Count the length of the inhalation and exhalation through the left, right and both nostrils. Breathe deeply without strain. While inhaling, count mentally, "1, 2, 3, until the inhalation ends comfortably. While exhaling, simultaneously count, "1, 2, 3, Inhalation and exhalation should be equal.

**Bhastrika Pranayama:** The Sanskrit word bhastrika means 'bellows'. Thus, bhastrika pranayama is also known as the bellows breathe, as air is drawn forcefully in and out of the lungs like the bellows of a village blacksmith. The bellows increases the flow of air into the fire, producing more heat. Similarly, bhastrika pranayama increases the flow of air into the body to produce inner heat at both the physical and subtle levels, stoking the inner fire of mind/body.

Procedure:

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

## KRIYAS

Shat Kriyas- Meaning, Techniques and Benefits of Neti Dhati Kapalapathi- Trataka Nauli Basti, Bandhas: Meaning, Techniques and Benefits of Jalendra Bandha, Jihva, Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, Mula Bandha

**KRIYAS:** The father of Western medicine, Hippocrates, used purification such as emesis, enema, purgation, sweating, diet, fasting, hydrotherapy, and massage as a first line of defense. Hippocrates resorted to herbal medicine only if the disease was already too far neglected. So too did the other physicians of ancient Greece and Egypt as well as the ancient Romans, Hebrews, Arabians, American Indians, and indigenous physicians and shamans from around the world for millennia. Such a fundamental idea of inner pollution and obstructions of energy flow has been considered a primary cause (or at least a primary breeding ground for disease) since the earliest of times and thus the use of purification methods to rid the body of this burden has been a dominant theme of medicine everywhere up until the twentieth century. The hatha yoga kriyas (cleansing activities) are specifically designed to clean the body, energy body, and chakra systems quickly and painlessly. They are often broken down into six or eight divisions of action such as the shat (six) or ashta (eight) karmas (actions).

**BENEFITS:** The kriyas will release and thus expunge some negative emotional contractions (kleshas) and holding patterns (Vasana's) such as pride, fear, anger, greed, jealousy, possessiveness, secretiveness, neurotic desire, attachment, and so forth.

1. Hatha yoga kriyas stimulate and accelerate body/mind/spirit change and evolution so we become a more powerfully embodied vehicle of evolutionary love, healing, and consciousness.
2. The dross of the body, the impurities, and constrictions of the nervous system and psychic nerves (Nadis) are washed away.
3. Such practices will be found specifically valuable to asana, pranayama, and meditation students because spiritual and physical progress can be severely hampered in the presence of physical toxins, irritants, impurities, congestive/constrictive habituations, pathway (Nadis) blockages, contractions around imbedded irritants, and other similar obstructions of the energy body or physical body.
4. As these processes affect the blood stream in a sanguine manner, a burden is lifted from all the organs including the brain and nervous system allowing them to function more efficiently and with greater lucidity.
5. Most of these purification exercises are designed to remove stagnant internal toxins, inner filth, or inner blockages (called ama in Ayurvedic medicine) consisting of both matter and its associated energy, but they also correspondingly clean out energy paths (Nadis) and allow more energy to flow within the body/mind complex.
6. In general, the hatha yoga kriyas such as the shat karmas (six actions), open obstructed energy pathways, enliven previously sluggish or stagnant areas, activate dormant circuitry and function.
7. Work on certain nerve Plexi strengthening and activating them increasing function. Other kriyas (such as Nadi shodhana) restore balance in the psychic energy channels (Nadis) clearing away causal obstructions which govern the health and balance of the entire nervous system including the brain ion.
8. Physical wastes are eliminated. Their presence irritates the nerves, slowdowns function, numb sensitivities and higher function, and burden the energy body by inviting unwanted parasites whose presence create unusual cravings and demands for additional nutriment as well as creating nervous agitation.

#### TYPES OF KRIYAS

- Ear Cleansing: Karna Dhauti
- Tratak
- Kapalabhati
- Neti
- Tongue Cleansing (Jivhanirlekhan or Jivha Kriya))
- Upper Palate Massage including Khichari Mudra
- Danta Dhauti (Teeth Washing)
- Nauli Kriya, Nauli Chalana, Laukiki, or Lauliki
- Agnisara (Vahnisara) Kriya
- Vamana Dhauti (sometimes called, jal dhauti, kunjla Kriya, or Gaja Karni)
- Hrid (heart) Dhauti, Danda Dhauti (stick) Dhauti and Vastra (cloth) Dhauti
- Vastra (cloth) Dhauti (also sometimes called Hrid Dhauti
- Vatasara Dhauti (Internal Air Washing): Bhujangini Mudra
- Shankha Prakshalana Kriya: varisara or sahaj basti kriya
- Jal Basti
- Aswini Mudra and Sthula Basti
- Citra, Mulasodhana kriya, and Ganesh Kriya
- Vajroli Mudra

1. **Tratak Kriya:** Continuous gazing of an object is called Tratak. It works on the ajna chakra or third eye. It is a preliminary for sambhavi and unmani mudras (see mudra appendix). Tratak is defined as focusing the eyes or "gazing" at an object for a prolonged period without blinking. This creates tears to flow in many people, thus washing and cleansing the eyes from the inside out, without the need for eyecups or eye washes. The usual and sufficient procedure is to stare at a candle for three to five minutes without blinking. At first you will feel like blinking, but you will soon get used to it after some practice.

The third cranial nerve innervates the medial rectus, superior rectus, inferior rectus and inferior oblique. It also supplies the levator palpebrae. The sympathetic nerve supply travels along the innervation to the inferior oblique. The parasympathetic supply travels in the nasociliary nerve.

Techniques: Tratak is most often performed on a candle placed about three feet in front. Gaze steadily without blinking at the candle-flame without blinking or moving for 20 minutes (average). If the eyes feel strained visualize a light moving from the center of the ajna chakra above through your eyes to the candle. Relax the eyes and rest the mind. Begin with external objects which will steady and strengthen the eyes while increasing the power of dharana. If an image appears to move, bring it back to the central space without moving the head or eyeballs. Other objects besides a candle can be used such as the Ishta devi (personal deity), a yantra, AUM symbol, third eye (ajna chakra), the sun, etc. Make sure that the object is sanguine. After tratata bring cupped palms to the eyes and apply a soft inward motion around the eye (cupping them but not creating any pressure on the balls of the eye).

Benefits: is an eye activity. Sit in one posture constantly without moving and gaze at a particular

Advantages:

- Eye diseases are prevented, sight is improved, concentration develops, will power increases and mind feels peace and calm. It is an excellent preparation for meditation.
- Efferent nerve impulses are less burdened.
- Along with these physical cleansings many of the Eye Exercises.

### Eye Exercises

The yoga practitioners attach special importance to eye exercises, for two reasons. Firstly, a lot of eye problems in later life are due to a loss of tone in the eye muscles. These muscles become rigid, and this loss of elasticity reduces the ability of the lens of the eye to focus on different distances. It also causes the eyesight to become weaker. These exercises tone the eye muscles up and keep them elastic. If you already have eye problems when you begin these exercises, you will find your eyesight improving after a few months. Secondly, any eye tension present will tend to produce a general feeling of tension, due to the eye's connection to the brain via the optic nerve. What happens is that eye tension produces an increase in the nerve impulses in the eye muscles. This increase in nerve impulses travels along the optic nerve and bombards the brain, causing a general feeling of tension and anxiety. The eye exercises will reduce tension in the eye muscles, as well as reduce general tension.

It is best to do these eye exercises while lying down after you've finished the asanas. This way you're resting after the asanas and doing the eye exercises at the same time, thus reducing the time taken to do your yoga routine.

When doing the eye exercises keep your eyes open and don't move your head.

- i. Sitting (as in the exercises for the neck given above), open your eyes, and then check on your posture. Spine erects, hands on the knees, body relaxed, head straight, that is how you should always remain while doing eye exercises. The whole body must be motionless; nothing must move except the eyes.
  - ii. Raise your eyes and find a small point that you can see clearly without straining, without frowning, without becoming tense and, of course, without moving your head. While doing this exercise look at this point each time you raise your eyes.
  - iii. Next, lower your eyes to find a small point on the floor which you can see clearly when glancing down. Look at it each time you lower your eyes. Breathing should be normal. In other words, you don't have to do deep breathing.
- Exercise 1: Move your eyes upwards as far as you can, and then downwards as far as you can. Repeat four more times. Blink quickly a few times to relax the eye muscles.
  - Exercise 2: Now do the same using points to your right and to your left, at eye level. Keep your raised fingers or two pencils on each side as guides and adjust them so that you can see them clearly when moving the eyes to the right and to the left, but without straining. Keeping the fingers at eye level, and moving only the eyes, look to the right at your chosen point, then to the left. Repeat four times. Blink several times, and then close your eyes and rest.
  - Exercise 3: Choose a point you can see from the right corner of your eyes when you raise them, and another that you can see from the left corner of your eyes when you lower them, half closing the lids. Remember to retain your original posture: spine erect, hands on knees, head straight and motionless. Look

at your chosen point in right corner up, then to the one in left corner down. Repeat four times. Blink several times. Close the eyes and rest. Now do the same exercise in reverse. That is, first look to the left corner up, then to the right corner down. Repeat four times. Blink several times. Close the eyes and rest.

- Exercise 4: This exercise should not be done until three or four days after you have begun eye exercises given here. Slowly roll your eyes first clockwise, then counterclockwise as follows: Lower your eyes and look at the floor, then slowly move the eyes to the left, higher and higher until you see the ceiling. Now continue circling to the right, lower and lower down, until you see the floor again. Do this slowly, making a full-vision circle. Blink, close your eyes and rest. Then repeat the same action counterclockwise. Do this five times then blink the eyes for at least five seconds. When rolling the eyes, make as large a circle as possible, so that your feet a little strain as you do the exercise. This stretches the eye muscles to the maximum extent, giving better results.
- Exercise 5: Next comes a changing-vision exercise. While doing it you alternately shift your vision from close to distant points several times. Take a pencil, or use your finger, and hold it under the tip of your nose. Then start moving it away, without raising it, until you have fixed it at the closest possible distance where you can see it clearly without any blur. Then raise your eyes a little, look straight into the distance and there find a small point which you can also see very clearly. Now look at the closer point-the pencil or your fingertip then shift to the farther point in the distance. Repeat several times, blink, close your eyes and squeeze them tight.
- Exercise 6: Close your eyes as tightly as you possibly can. Really squeeze the eyes, so the eye muscles contract. Hold this contraction for three seconds, and then let go quickly. This exercise causes a deep relaxation of the eye muscles and is especially beneficial after the slight strain caused by the eye exercises. Blink the eyes a few times.
- Exercise 7: This exercise is called 'palming' and is very relaxing to the eyes. It is also most important for preserving the eyesight. Palming also has a beneficial, relaxing effect on your nervous system. It's an ideal way to finish off the eye exercises.
  - Benefits: This exercise helps to do away with eye strain, and tension. Your vision will get better and clearer as the ophthalmic, or eye, nerves receive a richer supply of blood. Some people use this to improve their vision.

Kapalbhati, Bhastrika Kriyas:

**Kapalbhati:** It is the process of cleaning the brain and the central top of the head. Breath should be inhaled fully up to navel and should be exhaled three to four times with maximum force. Inhalation should be natural, but exhalation should be deliberate, while exhaling it should be breathed out through the nose with hissing sounds.

- **Advantages:** This activity sharpens the thinking ability, inculcates self-confidence and also helps in developing the memory and knowledge. It makes the face charming.

Kapalabhati (or) bhastrika

- i. long deep inhale with short kumbhaka holding mulabandha, swadhi bandha, and spine long
  - ii. long deep exhale with external retention (bahya kumbhaka) holding spine and torso long
  - iii. create hollow in abdomen toward the spine as the chest remains lifted (uddiyana bandha)
  - iv. release hollow (allow abdomen to snap back)
  - v. repeat 4 and 4 back and forth, while holding the breath out continuously
  - vi. Before energy subsides or any feeling of strain/distress inhale.
  - vii. Immediately repeat another round of kapalabhati or bhastrika.
  - viii. Perform three rounds for one sitting integrating agni sara into a daily pranayama practice
  - ix. One can start with ten, and then work gradually to twenty, thirty or more (according to our capacity). If one does the slow deep versions 10 or 15 are suitable.
- Hint: Think about agnisara as a melting of any hardness in the abdomen and an energizing/warming up at the navel region and below. Think kapalabhati without the breath, emphasizing the motion of uddiyana bandha (bringing the lower abdomen back to the sacrum and spine while lifting the torso).
  - Caution: Avoid the common mistake of pulling in from the area directly below the sternum (solar plexus). This is the area of the stomach, pancreas, and liver. In other words do not allow the chest to

sink and the upper back to round, but rather allow the inward motion to be created at the line of the abdomen near or below the navel after first implementing and holding mulabandha and swadhi bandha, keeping the chest open, and lengthening the spine. Remember that the navel point can go in only if the muscles release and soften. We are not trying to build muscle but rather heat. Relax, soften any hardness and tension, and tonify the region with fire or energy, thus burning up stagnant toxins (or moving stagnant chi).

**Bhastrika:** Bhastrika is also like Kapalbhata Kriya. Breath is continuously inhaled and exhaled without any interruption. Forceful exhalation is important in Kapalbhata, whereas inhalation and exhalation both are equally forceful in Bhastrika.

- **Advantages:** Bhastrika helps in reducing gases, constipation and acidity.
- **Note:** Stomach should be expanded when breathing in and it should be contracted when breathing out in both Kapalbhata Kriya and Bhastrika.

**Jala Vaman Dhauti Kriya:** Elephants follow this process when they are ill. So, it is also called Kunjal Kriya or Gajakarni (Kunjal = Gaja = Elephant). Yogis learnt this by observing elephants. Water is heated to lukewarm, little salt is added and filtered. Squatting on the feet, drink the saline water till stomach is full to its maximum say eight to ten glasses in succession. Then stand erect and move the waist front and back, left, and right and rotate it clockwise and anti-clockwise three to four times. With this movement the unwanted acids, gases and other wastes accumulated in the stomach are mixed in the drunk water. Now stand before a wash basin, press the stomach with the left hand and press lightly the inner tongue with the two right pointed fingers. With this sensation, the water in the stomach gushes out like a spring or fountain from the mouth bringing the accumulated wastes out. Hold the fingers inside the mouth and go on tickling the inner tongue till the entire drunk water is vomited out. If at all a little water is remained that is let out either through stool or through urine.

- **Note:** Fingernails should be trimmed or else the soft palate may be hurt and blood may start oozing. Saline water turns red when unwanted acids mix in it. During this process red water may come out. It is not blood. After the completion of the process either Arogyamritam or warm milk or both should be taken. Later a little rest is a must. After this process spiced food like pakodas, mirchees etc. should not be taken on that day. Non-veg food also should not be taken. This activity should be undertaken at least once a week. If needed it may be practiced continuously for two or three days.
- **Note:** People suffering from High B.P. should use lime juice instead of salt. People suffering from ulcers, heart diseases or any stomach disorder or pregnant women should not attempt this process.
- **Advantages:** Stomach is cleaned. Gastric trouble, constipation, indigestion, acidity, burning sensation in the stomach, headache etc. are relieved. Even the extra weight of the body is also reduced gradually. If it is done regularly Jaundice does not effect. People suffering from breathing problems get relief.
- **Benefits:** In yoga therapy vamana is excellent for disorders of udana, prana, samana, vyana, and apana. It cleanses and stimulates the stomach, esophagus, lungs, chest, heart, throat, nose, eyes, ears, and sinus. It balances the vayu (winds) in the body especially the upward moving prana-vayu (the prana that moves upwards). It alleviates depression, sloth, and heaviness. It is a remedy for many kapha and tamasic imbalances, Vamana dhauti is one of the specific remedies in Ayurvedic medicine for stomach, throat, asthma, and lung affliction (along with hrid dhauti). It is counter-indicated in cases of hiatal hernia and ulcers.

Vasti Kriya (enema):

- Either lime juice or salt is added to warm water and the enema pot is filled. A rubber tube is fitted to the hole of the enema pot. The other end of the rubber tube is inserted into anus in lying position. The water enters the large intestine.
- The abdomen is gently massaged with the palms. The impurities flush out along with the enema water. So, it should be practiced near to the toilet.

- In ancient days the rishis and the Yoga practitioners used to sit in a water tub or a river or in a tank and suck the water into the stomach through anus. Their willpower helped them in this process. Now there are only a few people, who can do it, so the water is conveniently sent in by enema process these days.
- When we pass out the water, gases, acids, and other dirt particles that have been accumulated in the large intestine gush out. After enema one should take rest for some time and should take light food on that day. Enema should be taken empty stomach before breakfast. Enema can be taken once a month or whenever one feels.
  - **Advantages:** Large intestine is thoroughly cleaned. Constipation and indigestion problems are solved. Appetite is increased.

#### NETI:

Neti is used to cleanse the entire area above the chest. Classically there are two types, jal (water) neti and vastra or sutra (string) neti. Jal neti is especially designed to clean out irritants in the nose and upper pharynx and to rehydrate and moisten the delicate goblet and ciliated cells of the nasal passageway, while sutra neti is a great stimulant of the nerves in the sinus, nose, ears, eyes, and throat greatly relieving congestion and stagnant mucous conditions of the sinus, eyes, ears, throat, and head. Sutra neti being more stimulating is best done in the daytime or morning. It works on the ajna and crown chakras and is beneficial for success in pranayama.

#### Benefits of Jala Neti

- Neti removes all the dirt and bacteria filled mucus from within the nose.
- It also helps to drain the sinus cavities. This in turn, will help to reprogramme the body's natural mechanisms against nasal infections such as hay fever, allergies, sinusitis and other upper respiratory complaints like sore throats and coughs, post nasal drip, inflammation of tonsils and adenoids.
- It is beneficial for illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis as it reduces the tendency for mouth breathing by freeing the nostrils of mucus.
- It has a cooling and soothing effect on the brain by drawing out excessive heat, and is therefore beneficial for headaches, migraine, epilepsy, temper tantrums, hysteria, depression, and general mental tension.
- Neti is of great benefit for problems associated with the eyes. It helps flush the tear ducts, encouraging clearer vision and gives a sparkle to the eyes.
- It can be beneficial for certain types of ear disorders such as middle ear infections, glue ear, tinitis.
- Neti improves sensitivity of the olfactory nerves, helping to restore lost sense of smell, and thereby benefits the relationship with taste and the digestive processes.
- It has subtle effects on the pineal and pituitary glands which control the hormonal system. This has a harmonising effect on emotional behaviour.
- Neti affects the psychic centre known as Ajna Chakra which helps in awakening higher states of meditation.
- It helps to stimulate better powers of visualisation and concentration and gives a feeling of lightness and clarity to the mind.
- Neti is excellent for those trying to give up smoking. Since it reduces the tendency for mouth breathing, Neti re-sensitises the nose to the actual pollution of ingesting smoke, thereby de-programming the brain of the physical and psychological addiction.

**Sutra Neti - Nasal Cleansing Using a Rubber Catheter.** This is a very effective way of opening up the nasal passages to their fullest capacity.

#### ○ **Technique**

- Pass a rubber catheter of about 1mm dimension into your nose through one nostril.
- Slowly keep pushing it in until you feel it in your throat.
- Now gently draw it out your mouth.
- Then gently tug the catheter to and for a couple of times.
- With practice, it can even be passed from one nostril through the other. But this requires a certain level of proficiency and is also not very necessary. The effect, however, is still the same.
- Before and after usage it is advisable to rinse the catheter in warm water or medicated oil.

- Repeat the exercise with the other nostril.
- **Benefits:** Both Jala and Sutra Neti help extract all the impurity and bacteria filled mucus from the nasal and sinus cavities. This in turn, will help to restore the body's mechanisms to natural and increase its immunity to nasal allergies like hay fever, sinusitis and other respiratory conditions like sore throats, chronic coughs and colds, postnasal drips, adenoids, and tonsillitis. By cleansing the nasal passages, it frees them of mucus and automatically reduces the tendency breathe orally. Neti is also of great benefit for eye and ear related disorders. By flushing the tear ducts, it facilitates clearer vision. Further, it has subtle effects on the pineal and pituitary glands that govern the hormonal system, resulting in harmonized emotional behavior.

Sutra or Vastra Neti (sometimes called Brahma Datuna Karma) Nasal String Cleansing Technique. Sutra Neti is also one of classic Shat Karmas (Six Cleansing Activities) of ancient Hatha Yoga. Its benefits are extolled by the great treatises on Hatha Yoga and Yoga Hygiene as an important synergist in accelerating the yogic process. Although water cleansing or bathing of the nasal cavities mechanically removes dust, irritants, and impurities from the nasal passages and is thus beneficially soothing, Sutra Neti goes further in stimulating and tonifying the nerves, glands, and organs of the entire nasal and cranial area including the eyes, sinuses, ears, and cranium. For centuries it has been a specific treatment in India for sluggishness, sinus headaches, congestion, eye and ear complaints, heaviness of the head, excess kapha (mucus), lack of alertness, opening of the third eye, and the like.

From the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* of Swami Swatmarama, Chapter 2 (Purification of the Nerves) verses 30-31: "A smooth braided string of fine threads, a cubit (18 inches) in length should be introduced into the throat through the nose. One should rub slowly."

**Agnisar Kriya:** One must spread a good cloth, carpet or blanket on the floor and sit on it in the Vajrasana posture and inhale fully and exhale totally leaning forward a little. The stomach should be sucked in and retained in that state as long as possible. Slowly the air is inhaled, and all the parts of the stomach are gradually brought to their normal position. This is called one chakra or a round. One may practice 3 to 4 such rounds. The Agnisar Kriya can be practiced in the standing posture also in the same way. **Some experts opine this as a Dhauti Kriya.**

**Uddiyan Kriya:** One should sit either in Sukhasana or Padmasana on a small pillow. First inhale and then exhale totally through mouth. Holding the breath outside, the stomach should be sucked in to its maximum, so that it seems touching the backbone. After being in that state for some time inhale slowly. It is repeated 3 to 4 times. This can be practiced even in standing position in the same way.

**Nauli Kriya:** After practicing Agnisar Kriya and Uddiyan Kriya perfectly, then only one should attempt Nauli Kriya. Making centre of the abdomen as a pipe is important in this exercise. The practitioner has to stand and keep his hands on thighs and inhale to maximum and exhale totally. Now the abdomen is sucked in such a way that it touches the backbone. At this stage, the centre of the abdomen is turned as a vertical pipe. Gradually one hand is lifted from the thigh and raised. The pipe like abdomen is moved from one side to the other. Then another hand is raised, and the process is repeated.

- **Note:** Nauli Kriya is to be attempted after attending to the calls of nature, empty stomach before breakfast. It should never be attempted after meals. People below 14 years of age or suffering from fever or high blood pressure, ulcer, hernia, and pregnant women should not attempt Nauli Kriya.
- **Advantages:** Potential Nauli Kriya cures the diseases of stomach and liver, increases appetite - removes disabilities. Nauli Kriyas such as central nauli, right nauli, left nauli etc. are to be practiced strictly under the guidance of experts.

Ajna Kriya or Kapalarandhra Kriya

- **Procedure:** Place the pad of the thumb of the right hand on the third eye with the nail pointing down and the four other fingers pointing straight up. Vibrate and massage the third eye region pressing firmly but with no strain or pain. Keep the scapula from raising up toward the ears, but rather allow it to release down

toward the sacrum. Keep the armpit/chest open and the occiput raised so that the chin falls and in toward the notch above the sternum (in a relaxed Jalandhara bandha). This will keep tension out of the neck, Sandalwood oil or paste although not at all necessary is often used as an adjunct.

- Benefits: This awakens and purifies the third eye region, is stimulating, clears congestion of the head and sinus, improves circulation, clarity, energy, and the eyesight. A similar practice is called Kapala randhra Prayag which stimulates the third eye region by massaging cold water on the forehead, temples, and bridge of the nose. Traditionally these ajna kriya exercises are performed daily.

**KAPALA BHATI:** *Kapala Bhati is also known as the 'Cleaning Breath' exercise. The meaning of the Sanskrit term 'Kapala' means 'skull' while 'Bhati' refers to 'shinning'. Kapal Bhati cleans all the respiratory passages including the nasal passage of the skull. The Kapala Bhati process (which incorporates exhalations and inhalations in quick succession) resembles the blowing of the blacksmith's bellows.*

### **Methodology**

- Firmly sit in a cross-legged posture.
- Your head, neck and spine must be in the erect position.
- Completely exhale.
- Then take a few deep breaths.
- Next, relax the abdominal muscles.
- After that, inhale but not deeply.
- Finally, expel the breath through both the nostrils in a short and forceful manner.
- The breath expulsion process must produce an audible hissing sound.
- At the same time, contract the lower abdomen with vigorous and rapid thrust of the abdominal muscles.
- Quickly release the contraction of the abdominal muscles.
- Your lungs will automatically take in air.
- Don't leave any gestation periods.
- Instantly follow up with forcible expulsions of your breath by contracting the abdominal muscles.
- Let the abdomen relax once air is drawn in.
- Concentrate on the portion just below the navel.
- Repeat several times in quick succession to make a round.
- Complete a round as you exhale.
- Take in a deep breath slowly to resume the normal breathing rhythm.
- This will provide rest to the lungs.

### **Points to Remember:**

- The rule is to perform two breath expulsions in a second. Thus, you will be performing 120 expulsions in a minute. Though this may be not possible at the initial stages, endeavour to attain this optimum level with practice.
- In each sitting perform three rounds.
- Between two rounds, take rest with normal breathing for at least 15 seconds.

### **Advantages:**

- Kapala Bhati is the most beneficial breathing means to provide elasticity to the diaphragm.
- Kapala Bhati increases the capacity of your lungs.
- Kapala Bhati flushes out residual air that is stale in the lungs.
- Thus, Kapala Bhati brings in fresh supply of air to your lungs.

**Vatasara Dhauti -- Washing the intestines with air.** There exists a different form of vatasara dhauti. Here we give one form which is drinking the air from the mouth and swallowing it, then churning it around through the intestines and expelling it out the anus, thus providing an air bath for the entire gastro-intestinal tract. Before



attempting this form, attempt to master bhujangini mudra below. The above form of vatasara dhauti is also called bashis kriya.

The Yogic Enema: Jal basti is the yogic enema using water. The ancient yogis having as few possessions as possible, instead of carrying an enema gourd or pouch, simply carried an enema bone made from a hollow stick or reed. The yogi would go into a river at navel depth, and after lubricating his anus and rectum with oil, he/she would lubricate and insert the hollow reed through the opening at the rectum and into the colon. Then practicing uddiyana bandha (with the aid of the positive pressure of the navel-deep water), the water would be sucked up into the colon wherein the yogi would then practice nauli kriya to wash the insides of the colon and then evacuate. It is said that one can learn to do this without the use of the reed or enema bone, but I have not met anyone who has done so. There is a similar practice done by yogis with air instead of water (sucking air into the colon through a long enema bone, aerating the colon with nauli kriya, and then evacuating the air).

**BANDHS:** The word Bandha means hold or lock in Sanskrit. Yoga Bandhas are an integral part of yogic practice. These play a prominent role in the practice of Hatha Yoga. A Bandha is essentially a static posture which constricts a certain part of the body thereby re-directing the flow of blood and lymph to other parts.

- Benefits of Yoga Bandhas: Let us take a look at some of the ways in which utilizing Yoga Bandhas can enhance the benefits that you gain from the practice of yoga:
    - Understanding and utilizing the appropriate Bandhas can simplify the performance of complex yoga poses.
    - When you make use of these yoga Bandhas, you also amplify the benefits that the practice of yoga grants your body.
    - Bandhas help you to control and improve the function of your body's internal organ systems such as the nervous system, digestive system, reproductive system, and hormonal system.
    - The practice of yoga Bandhas will also allow you to increase the duration for which you hold your postures.
- Precautions

Bandhas are a very powerful tool in yoga. They provide a number of benefits if performed in the proper manner, but conversely, if not performed properly, they can prove detrimental in the long run. Hence, it is important to learn the proper method for performing a yoga Bandha from your yoga teacher. He or she will also be able to demonstrate the best method to incorporate the Bandha into your yoga asanas. Yoga bandhas should also not be practiced by pregnant women.

- Type of Bandhas
  - Mula Bandha,
  - Uddiyana Bandha,
  - Jalandhara Bandha
  - Maha Bandha.

**Mula Bandha:** The word Mula means root. Thus, the Mula Bandha is the most basic of all the Bandhas. It is also the easiest of yoga bandhas to master. This Bandha can be performed in any of the yoga postures, whether standing, sitting, or supine. In order to perform this Bandha, you should contract the perineum-the area between your anus and genital organs. Engaging the Mula Bandha allows you to perform your yoga practice for longer without getting fatigued. It also makes you feel lighter on your feet, thereby making the other asanas easier to perform. Performing the Mula Bandha also stimulates the digestive, excretory, and reproductive system. It can also help with digestive ailments and is also good for treating depression.

Mula Bandha - Anal Lock

**Starting Position:** Meditation Pose

**Concentration:** on the Muladhara Chakra

**Breath:** inhale deeply and hold the breath

**Repetitions:** 3–5 rounds

- **Practice:** Inhale deeply and hold the breath. Place the hands on the knees, raise the shoulders and tilt the upper body slightly forward.
  - Concentrate on the Muladhara Chakra and firmly contract the anal muscles.
  - Hold the muscular contraction and the breath as long as possible and comfortable.
  - With a long exhalation return to the starting position.
  - Breathing normally remains in this position for some time.
- **Benefits:** Strengthens the pelvic floor, relieves hemorrhoids and congestion in the pelvic area. Calms the autonomic nervous system, calms, and relaxes the mind. On the spiritual level, Mula Bandha activates and purifies the Muladhara Chakra. It awakens dormant consciousness and the Kundalini Shakti.
- **Caution:** *A longer and more intensive practice of Mula Bandha should only be undertaken with the guidance of an experienced “Yoga in Daily Life” instructor.*

**Uddiyana Bandha:** The Uddiyana Bandha means flying lock. This refers to the fact that by practicing this Bandha, you direct the energy in your body upwards. In order to practice this Bandha, stand up straight with your feet slightly apart. Inhale and lift your arms straight up over your head. Exhale and bend forward from the back and place your hands just above the knees to support the body. Hold your breath on the exhale as you straighten your arms and arch your back so that your abdominal organs are pushed upwards towards your back. You know you are performing the Uddiyana Bandha properly when your ribs protrude outwards while your abdominal section is sucked in towards your back. Engaging the Uddiyana Bandha makes inverted postures and airborne exercises easier. In addition to strengthening and massaging the abdominal organs, it also stimulates the muscles of the lower back. The Uddiyana Bandha is one of the best exercises for the entire digestive system and can help to cure a wide variety of digestive ailments. It also stimulates the adrenal system. If you are looking for washboard abdominals, the Uddiyana Bandha is also a great exercise. Uddiyana Bandha - Lifting the Diaphragm

**Starting Position:** Meditation Pose or Standing

**Concentration:** on the Manipura Chakra

**Breath:** completely exhale and hold the breath out

**Repetitions:** 3–5 rounds

- **Practice:** Completely exhale and hold the breath out. Place the hands on the knees, raise the shoulders and tilt the body forward slightly, keeping the back straight. (To practice this Bandha standing, separate the legs a little and bend the knees slightly.)
  - Concentrate on the Manipura Chakra, pull the abdominal muscles in and up into the abdominal cavity as far as possible.
  - Hold the position as long as comfortable.
  - Release the muscular tension and return to the starting position with a deep inhalation.
  - Breathing normally remains for some time in this position.
- **Benefits:** Activates the Manipura Chakra and solar plexus. Stimulates intestinal activity and helps relieve constipation. Stimulates the pancreas and is helpful for diabetes. Strengthens the immune system. Balances the mind, soothes irritability and anger and dispels a depressive mood.
- **Caution:** *Perform only on an empty stomach! Do not practice this Bandha with high blood pressure.*

**Jalandhara Bandha:** The Jalandhara Bandha is a throat lock that is performed in conjunction with breathing exercises. To perform this lock, sit in the Padma Asana or Lotus Pose. Now inhale slowly as you bring your chin towards your chest. Try to maintain this posture while holding your breath as you try to further deepen the lock by straightening your elbows and trying to tuck your chin into your throat. You should be able to feel a double chin forming when you practice this posture correctly. To come out of this lock inhale some more, slowly lift your chin back to the normal position and then exhale. The Jalandhara Bandha is one of the best yoga bandhas for relieving stress. It also helps to stimulate the circulatory and respiratory systems and is beneficial for those who suffer from respiratory disorders.

Jalandhara Bandha - Chin Lock

**Starting Position:** Meditation Pose

**Concentration:** on the Vishuddhi Chakra

**Breath:** inhale deeply and hold the breath

**Repetitions:** 3–5 rounds

- **Practice:** Inhale deeply and hold the breath. Place the hands on the knees, lift the shoulders and tilt the body forward slightly, keeping the back straight. Press the chin firmly against the chest or between the collarbones so that the windpipe and esophagus are firmly closed.
  - Concentrate on the Vishuddhi Chakra and hold the breath for as long as comfortable.
  - Raise the head and with a long exhalation return to the starting position.
  - Breathing normally remains in this position for some time.
- **Benefits:** This exercise awakens the inner energy centers, especially the Vishuddhi Chakra. Improves the ability to retain the breath for a long period of time and develops the ability to concentrate. Beneficial for throat diseases and regulates thyroid function.
- **Caution:** *The breath should only be held for as long as easily possible. Consult a doctor before practicing if there is an existing thyroid problem.*

**Maha Bandha:** The Maha Bandha or Great Lock is so called because it combines all three of the previously mentioned Bandhas into one comprehensive exercise. The Maha Bandha should only be attempted once you have mastered the Uddiyana Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, and Mula Bandha individually. This Bandha is also performed in the Lotus Pose. While sitting in the Lotus Pose inhale deeply and then try to exhale all the breath out of your body. Hold the exhale and first engage the Mula Bandha. Once you have done so, attempt to engage the Uddiyana Bandha while sitting in the same posture. Now inhale slowly to expand your chest.

Maha Bandha - The Great Bandha

**Starting Position:** Meditation Pose

**Concentration:** on the Muladhara, Manipura and Vishuddhi Chakras

**Breath:** exhale completely and hold the breath

**Repetitions:** 3–5 rounds

- **Practice:** Inhale deeply and exhale fully through the mouth.
  - Hold the breath out.
  - Place the hands on the knees, raise the shoulders and tilt the upper body forward slightly, keeping the back straight.
  - Perform Jalandhara Bandha and concentrate on the Vishuddhi Chakra.
  - Perform Uddiyana Bandha and concentrate on the Manipura Chakra.
  - Finally, come into Mula Bandha and concentrate on the Muladhara Chakra.
  - Remain in this position, with all three Bandhas maintained, for as long as the breath can easily be held.
  - Release the Bandhas in the same sequence as they were applied.
  - Inhale deeply and return to the starting position. Breathing normally remains for some time in this position.
- **Benefits:** Beneficial for the health of the whole body, especially the autonomic nervous system, internal organs, muscles and nerves. Has a positive influence upon the mind.  
**Caution:** *The precautions given for each of the individual Bandhas are also valid for Maha Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha. The Maha Bandha provides the benefits of all three of the Yoga Bandhas. It increases your stamina and endurance and also helps to balance the endocrine system.*

## Mudras

Meaning, Techniques and Benefits of Hasta Mudras, Asamyuktahastam, Samyuktahastam, Mana Mudra, Kaya Mudra, Banda Mudra, Adhara Mudra. Meditation: Meaning, Techniques and Benefits of Meditation Passive and active, Saguna Meditation and Nirguna Meditation.

## MUDRA

'Mudra' means a seal or lock that closes the body apertures for a while. It is believed that prana flows in the body through various channels and energy points. Mudras help in diverting prana constantly back to the brain, otherwise it will flow into the atmosphere through the openings of the body and fingertips.

### Warning

All mudras are not practiced as a routine. It is important for a practitioner to understand the purpose behind the practice of mudras. Proper guidance from a guru for the specific purpose either of yoga meditation or yoga asana, is imperative. The practice should progress slowly and steadily. Some mudras can be practiced before or after other yoga asanas or Pranayama. It appears that mudras were practiced by ancient yogis to hear the internal sounds and to experience the most important energy of life force, the Kundalini. Mudras are not as simple as they appear. No theory can explain their intricacies. The mudras specified here may sound different as there is no definitive method followed by all schools and can be practiced by Hatha Yoga practitioners. It is important to teach these mudras as a part of Kundalini.



1. Chin Mudra: Hold the thumb and index finger together lightly while extending the remaining three fingers. The thumb and index finger need only touch together, without exerting any pressure. Keep the three extended fingers as straight as possible. The hands can then be placed on the thighs, facing upwards. Now, observe the flow of breath and its effect.

- Benefits of Chin Mudra
  - Better retention and concentration power
  - Improves sleep pattern
  - Increases energy in the body
  - Alleviates lower backache



2. Chinmaya Mudra: In this mudra, the thumb and forefinger form a ring and the three remaining fingers are curled into the palms of the hands. Again, the hands are placed on the thighs with palms facing upwards and deep comfortable ujjayi breaths are taken. Once more, observe the flow of breath and its effect.

- Benefits of Chinmaya Mudra
  - Improves flow of energy in the body
  - Stimulates digestion



3. Adi Mudra: In Adi Mudra, the thumb is placed at the base of the small finger and the remaining fingers curl over the thumb, forming a light fist. The palms are again placed facing upwards on the thighs and the breathing repeated.

- Benefits of Adi Mudra
  - Relaxes the nervous system
  - Helps reduce snoring
  - Improves the flow of oxygen to the head
  - Increases capacity of the lungs



4. Brahma Mudra: Here both hands are placed in Adi Mudra, then with the knuckles of both hands together, the hands facing upward are placed at the navel area and the flow of breath continued.



#### 5. Nabho Mudra

- Sit in a comfortable asana.
- Curl the tongue upward towards the palate of the mouth.
- The tongue should remain steady without movement.
- The lips are to be closed so that air does not enter the mouth.
- Keep the eyes open and the gaze fixed to a point. Keep the thoughts steady and focus on the point of gaze all the time.
- Breathing must be normal.
- Hold in this position for 2 minutes and release the tongue to rest. Repeat this mudra 5 times.
- Saliva gathered during this mudra must be gently swallowed.
- BENEFITS: This mudra causes the thymus gland to release beneficial hormones that release stress from the body.

#### 6. Bhujangini Mudra

- Relax on the ground with the chest facing the floor.
- Lift the chest up, and legs up like Salabasana and do a complete Adho Mukha Navasana.
- Look up towards the ceiling and fix the gaze at a point from the centre of the brow (Bhrumadhaya).
- Inhale deep and exhale with a hissing sound like that of a snake.
- Antara Kumbhaka (for 15 seconds) can be practiced in this mudra before exhaling.
- Exhale completely and rest on the floor.
- Repeat again 3 times if you are doing it with Antara Kumbhaka or 5 times without Antara Kumbhaka.
- BENEFITS: This mudra strengthens the abdomen and eliminates toxic gases from the abdominal region. It activates digestive juices and strengthens the digestive tract. It also subsides hunger.

#### 7. Kaki mudra

- Sit in a comfortable asana.
- Inhale and exhale 5 times.
- Form an Uddiyana Bandha (p. 30) and a Jalandhara Bandha (p. 30)
- Point the mouth like you are trying to drink water from a straw.
- Keep the tongue inside the mouth stable and settled.
- Suck air into the mouth with pointed lips and swallow it, pushing the air into the area of the navel.
- Holds the breath for 10 seconds or till you are comfortable.
- The abdomen should not feel bloated.
- Lift the head up gently.
- Maintain a Samadrishti or close your eyes when you practice this mudra.
- Do not practice for more than 5 rounds.
- BENEFITS: This mudra benefits the facial muscles, affects the thyroid and parathyroid glands and keeps the skin healthy and glowing.

#### 8. Mula Bandha Mudra

- Place the left heel in the perineum.
- The heels should feel the contraction.
- Inhale and do Antara Kumbhaka before proceeding to do a Uddiyana Bandha.
- Fix the gaze at the Nasagrai (Nose centre).
- Do not repeat more than 5 times.
- BENEFITS: Mula Bandha takes place in the centre of the body. It builds up core strength and establishes focus and concentration for higher spiritual practices.

#### 9. Shanmukhi Mudra

- Sit in a comfortable asana.
- Spread your fingers above your eyes. Then close all your senses by the following steps:

- Using your thumbs, close both the ears.
- Using your index finger, close your eyes.
- With the middle finger, block the nostrils.
- Place the ring finger above the upper lip.
- Place the little finger below the lower lip.
- Shape your lips into a gentle circle.
- Breathe in like you are sucking air. Hold the breath for an Antara Kumbhaka.
- Hold the Antara Kumbhaka for as long as possible and release through the nostrils at a slow, steady, and comfortable pace.
- Relax for a while and repeat 5 more times.
- Do not exceed more than 10 times a day.
- BENEFITS: This mudra calms the mind and relaxes disturbing thoughts. It also creates a balance in the thyroid that controls hormonal fluctuations.

#### 10. Tadaka Mudra

- Lie down on the floor with the chest upward in Supta Tadasana.
- Inhale as you raise your hands up towards the ceiling and exhale as you drop hands towards the ground behind the head.
- Observe the expansion of the chest as you breathe in and observe your navel dropping towards the ground as you breathe out.
- Set a breathing rhythm and get comfortable with it.
- The above points would be preparations for Tadaka Mudra.
- Keep the body in a completely stretched position.
- Breathe out completely and drop the navel towards the spine. Hold in that position for as long as you are comfortable.
- The hollow of your abdominal cavity will look like a pond.
- BENEFITS: This mudra benefits the spine and hydrates it. It also benefits the circulatory system. Respiratory organs are strengthened to hold in the Kumbhaka which is important during spiritual practices.

#### 11. Matangi Mudra

- Take a dip in the water until the head is completely inside.
- Inhale through the nostril along with the water and fill the mouth with this water. Do not allow the water to enter your lungs.
- After the mouth is full, stick the head out of the water and expel water from the mouth. (It should look like the water coming out of the tap.)
- BENEFITS: This mudra removes restlessness from the mind and calms down excitement.

#### 12. Kechari Mudra

- The tongue is pulled everyday till the tongue can touch the tip of the nose.
- Every week, the nerve below the tongue must be cut further and pulled till it can be stretched into the nose.
- The tongue will then be swallowed and moved towards the throat till it reaches a point which is commonly known as second tongue.
- When the tongue touches this point, a juice is produced in the gland which yogis believe can conquer hunger and thirst.
- BENEFITS: This mudra provides the body with youthful energy.

#### 13. Maha Bandha Mudra

- Press the anus carefully with the left heel.
- Place the right foot on the left thigh.
- Contract the anal muscles and pull the perineum upward.
- Draw air to do the Jalandhara Bandha.
- Then breathe out slowly.

- **BENEFITS:** This mudra benefits the lower abdominal organs and increases energy in all the chakras.
14. Maha vedha mudra
- Sit in Padmasana and do Jalandhara Bandha.
  - Place the palms on the ground.
  - With the support of the hands, palms pressed to the ground, lift the hip off the floor.
  - The buttocks are to be hit to the ground gently several times by bouncing the hip up and down.
  - **BENEFITS:** This mudra aids in spiritual practices. The lifting and dropping in this mudra build up cushioning in the sacral area which helps sit for long hours while practicing meditation.
15. Yoga Mudra
- Sit in Padmasana.
  - Place the palms on the heels and bend forward.
  - Exhale completely by the time you lean and touch the forehead to the ground.
  - Deepen the pull of the navel towards the spine and stay there for as long as comfortable. Breathe normally.
  - **BENEFITS:** This mudra benefits the lower organs of the body by increasing circulation. It also helps expel toxic prana from the abdominal cavity, making the body light and comfortable.
16. Viparita karani Mudra
- Lie on the ground with the chest facing up.
  - Raise the legs to do the Sarvang asana with the palm supporting the hips, and elbows pressing to the ground.
  - Keep your raised leg at an angle of 45°.
  - Stay steady in this position.
  - Gently pull in your neck and fix it into the collarbone to form a Jalandhara Bandha.
  - Pull in the anal muscle and do a partial Mula Bandha and do not stress the muscle if it is tired.
  - The position can be held for 2 to 3 minutes or more.
  - **BENEFITS:** This position increases blood supply to all areas of the body.
17. Vajroli Mudra
- Sit in the Padmasana with the palms placed on the thighs.
  - Inhale through the nose and hold your breath.
  - Pull up the sexual organs by contracting the lower abdominal muscles like you would to stop the flow of urine.
  - Continue to hold the breath as you relax and contract these muscles ten times.
  - On the tenth relaxation of the muscles, exhale completely.
  - **BENEFITS:** This mudra strongly influences the Nadis that supply the sex organs with spiritual energy. This is practiced before Kundalini meditation.
18. Ashwini Mudra
- Sit in a comfortable asana.
  - Breathe normally.
  - Gently contract the sphincter muscles and relax them.
  - The action should be confined to the anus only.
  - Repeat for 5 times and gradually increases the speed of the contraction.
  - The contraction should be rhythmic.
  - **BENEFITS:** This mudra benefits the muscles of the rectum, colon and perineum. It builds up efficient functioning of the abdominal organs and keeps the body light and clean.
19. Shakti Chalana Mudra: This mudra is practiced reaching the spiritual high of the Kundalini practice of yoga.
- Sit in the Padmasana on a wooden plank. Make sure the place of practice is quiet and secluded.
  - Inhale air forcibly and hold a tight Mula Bandha.

- Close the right nostril with the right fingers (Shanka Mudra).
- Now swallow the air like you are swallowing food and push it towards the naval.
- Do this swallowing 4 to 5 times.
- Exhale gently and relax in the Shavasana.
- BENEFITS: This mudra is practiced reaching the spiritual high of the Kundalini Yoga practice. It improves the power of concentration and conquers lust, thus freeing the mind for higher spiritual practices.

20. Manduka Mudra: This mudra is usually conducted to control anger.

- Sit in a comfortable asana.
- Roll the tongue upward to touch the soft palate of the mouth called the Chandra Mandala.
- Move the tongue left to right in small movements until comfortable.
- A juice is produced when you do this. Swallow the juice.
- The juice is the nectar which helps control hunger.
- The mudra should be repeated of 4 or 5 times and not more.
- BENEFITS: This mudra decreases the fluctuations of the mind and balances the energies of the Ida and Pingala.

21. Shambhavi Mudra: This mudra should be done only in sunlight and can be done 2 to 3 times daily.

- Draw a circle of about 5-inches radius on a black paper.
- Mark a white spot in the center of the circle.
- Sit in a comfortable position seven feet away from the circle.
- Stare into the white spot in a straight line without blinking.
- If you experience strain in the eyes, relax your eyes by blinking 10-15 times till you no longer feel the strain.
- Keep staring at the white point until tears form in the eyes.
- The eyes should be cleaned with a fresh handkerchief by dabbing them dry and not by rubbing.
- BENEFITS: This mudra, while practiced as a pre-meditation routine, improves the vision to see the self (self-assessment), which is an important step before meditation.