

Eight Limbs of Yoga

(Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

Pranayama (Breathing Techniques) (Part 3)

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Invocation to Sage Patanjali

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां । मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ॥
योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां । पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ॥
yogena chittasya padena vAchaM | malaM sharIrasya cha
vaidyakena ||

yo.apAkarottaM pravaraM munInAM | pata~njaliM
prA~njalirAnato.asmi ||

"I respectfully bow down with folded hands and offer my salutations to Sage Patanjali, the highest among the Munis (sages), who has presented the remedies for removing the impurities of the body through his treatise on Ayurveda, of language through his treatise on grammar (Patanjala Mahabhashya) and the impurities of the Chitta (mind field) through his treatise on Yoga (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)."

Outline

- Recap Part 1 and 2
- Six Cleansing Techniques
- Pranayama Practice
- Pranayama in Yoga Sutras
- Pranayama in Hatha Pradeepika
- Practical Considerations
- Benefits of Pranayama
- Pranayama Practice

Intro to Cleansing Techniques

Six cleansing techniques

- Dhauti (internal cleansing)
- Basti (yogic enema)
- Neti (nasal cleansing)
- Trataka (focused gazing)
- Kapalabhati (breath of fire)
- Nauli (abdominal massage)

Pranayama Practice

Breath Retention (kumbhaka) practices as per Hatha Yoga Pradeepika

- Surya-bhedi (sun-piercing)
- Ujjayi (victorious)
- Seetkari (cooling breath)
- Sheetali (cooling breath)
- Bhastrika (bellows breath)
- Bhramari (bumble-bee)

Pranayama in Yoga Sutras

- **(Sutra 1.34)** - Or by the expiration and retention of breath (mind is stabilized).
- **(Sutra 2.49)** - This having been established (that is, having mastered a comfortable and firm seated posture -asana), pranayama is defined as the cessation of inspiration and expiration.
- **(Sutra 2.50)** - Its fluctuations are internal (puraka), external (rechaka) or suppressed (kumbhaka); it is observed according to time, place and number, and becomes prolonged and subtle.
- **(Sutra 2.51)** - The fourth variety is the one that goes beyond the sphere of internal and external.
- **The benefits of Pranayama** are discussed in the following two sutras:
- **(Sutra 2.52)** - From that (practice of pranayama) is dissolved the covering of light (the darkness of ignorance that covers the light of knowledge)
- **(Sutra 2.53)** - and the mind develops the ability for Dharana (concentration).

Pranayama in Hatha Pradeepika

- By steadiness of the prana, the yogi attains steadiness of the mind (2.2)
- Pranayama should be practiced so impurities of the nadis can be eliminated (2.6)
- Large section devoted to description of various pranayamas
- Breath retention (kumbhaka) is a powerful technique to control prana
- Eight types of breath retention defined

Practical Considerations

- Place and time – quiet, clean space; early morning preferred; empty stomach
- Correct posture – comfortable sitting posture, erect spine
- Puraka (inhalation) – deep, smooth and soft (soundless)
- Rechaka (exhalation) - deep, smooth and soft (soundless)
- Kumbhaka (retention) – to individual capacity; should not impact the following breath
- During kumbhaka, apply the corresponding bandhas (locks)
- In deep breathing, develop a ratio of 1:2 between inhalation and exhalation

Benefits of Pranayama

- Diaphragmatic breathing can help with hypertension, anxiety
- Improves circulation of bodily fluids within the kidneys, stomach, liver, spleen, intestines, skin etc
- Improves the functioning of the lungs
- Helps achieve correct position, shape and tension in the kidneys
- Stimulate peristaltic and segmenting movements of intestines
- Re-engineer (rewire) brain's neural network to control emotions better

Benefits of Pranayama (cont.)

- Helps maintain flow of pure blood
- Sweat glands stimulated
- Purifies the nadis, protects organs and cells, energizes the system
- Improves digestion, vigor, vitality, perception and memory
- Helps achieve a state of 'pratyahara' (sense withdrawal), which helps in dharana (concentration)

Basic Pranayama Practice Recap

- Kapalabhati
- Deep three-part breathing
- Rapid breathing
- Breath Retention techniques
- Alternate nostril breathing
- Chakra cleansing (audio) meditation