

# Certification of **Yoga Professionals** Official Guidebook

For level I (Instructor) and level II (Teacher)



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# YOGA

## Our Vision

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

**SHRI NARENDRA MODI**

Hon'ble Prime Minister





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

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

**”**



अजीत मोहन शरण  
**AJIT M. SHARAN**



सचिव  
भारत सरकार  
आयुर्वेद, योग व प्राकृतिक चिकित्सा  
यूनानी, सिद्ध एवं होम्योपैथी (आयुष) मंत्रालय  
आयुष भवन, 'बी' ब्लॉक, जी.पी.ओ. कॉम्प्लेक्स,  
आई.एन.ए. नई दिल्ली-110023

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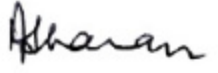
## FOREWORD

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

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

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

New Delhi  
21st October, 2016

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





# Preface

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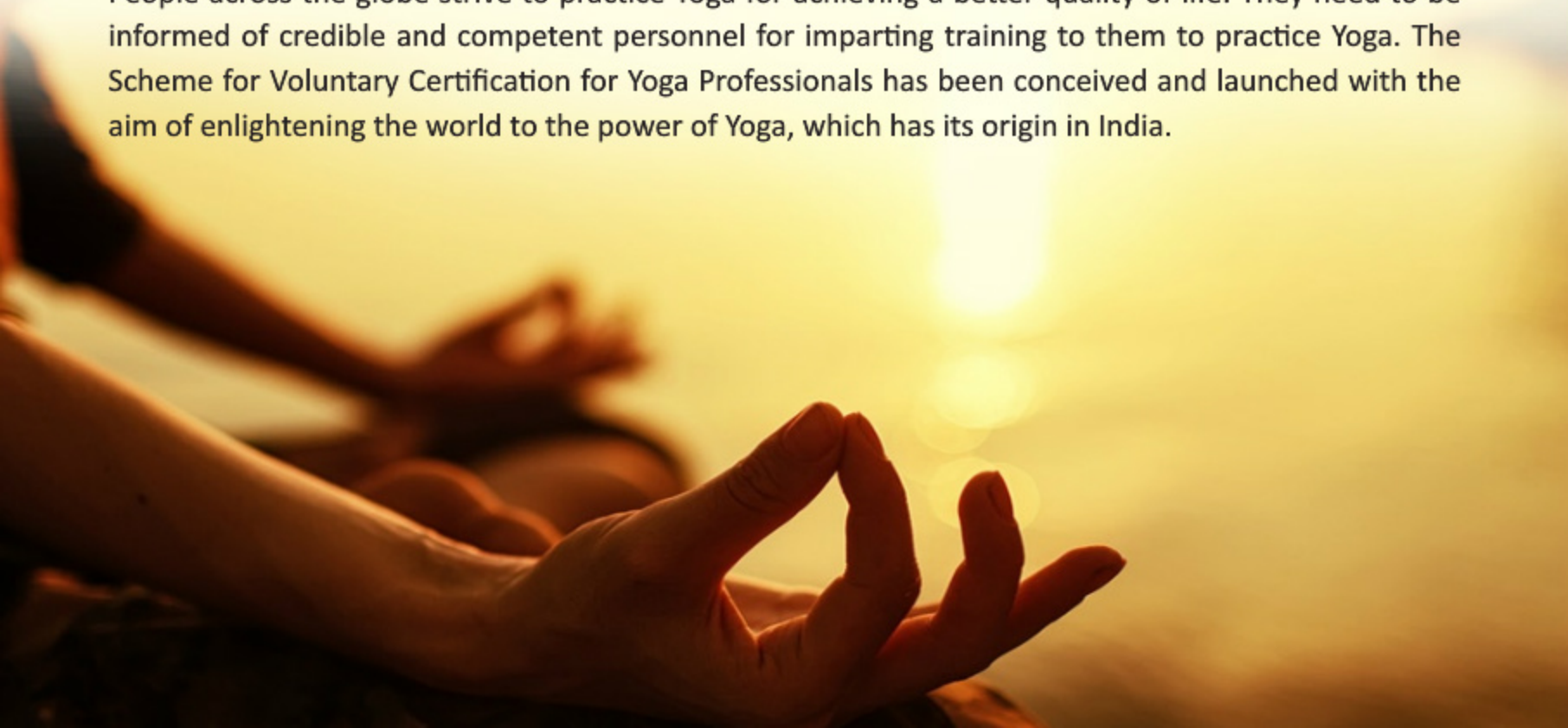
The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word 'yuj' – which means to unite or integrate. Yoga is most commonly known to be a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which, including breath control, simple meditation, and the adoption of specific bodily postures, is widely practiced world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

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

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

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

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





# Acknowledgements

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

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

We got the benefit of the vast knowledge, experience and practical exposure of Yoga through discussions with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Yogrishi Ramdev, Dr. H. R. Nagendra and Smt. Hansa Ji. Many others allowed us to decipher the intent and content in its purity through their technical sharpness, such as Shri Suneel Singh, Dr. Jaideep Arya, Shri. Arun Pandala, Shri. P.C. Kapoor, and members of the Technical Committee of the Yoga Certification Scheme. We are indebted to all our *gurus* who showed us the path and helped us to tread it carefully.

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

Dr. N. Ganesh Rao has been instrumental by his immense contributions in relation to the technical content of the book. He, by his experience and noble efforts, translated the book into reality. His valuable guidance as an author and his razor sharp eye for detail regarding the quality improvement, consistency, coherence and content presentation of this book is admirable.

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





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

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

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

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

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

Dr. R.P. Singh  
Secretary General, QCI





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# Brief SCHEME

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Incentivising/Benefits to Certified Yoga Professionals**

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

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



# Certification JOBS

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

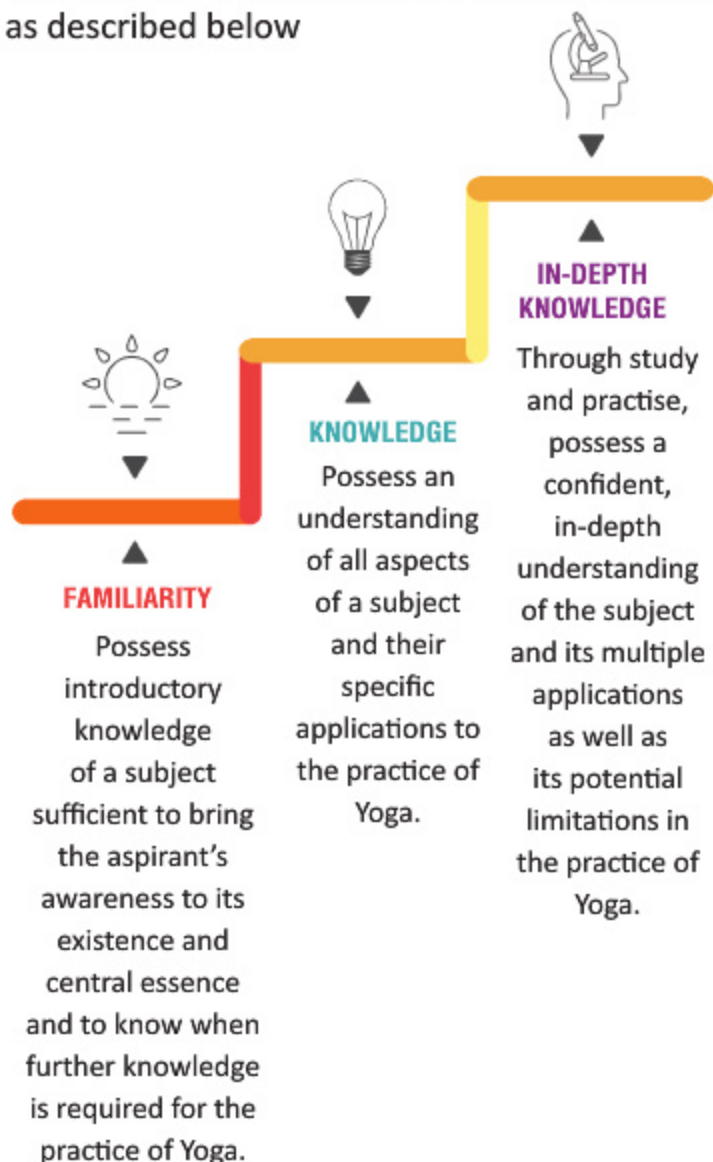
- Level 1: Yoga Instructor
- Level 2: Yoga Teacher
- Level 3: Yoga Master
- Level 4: Yoga Acharya

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

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

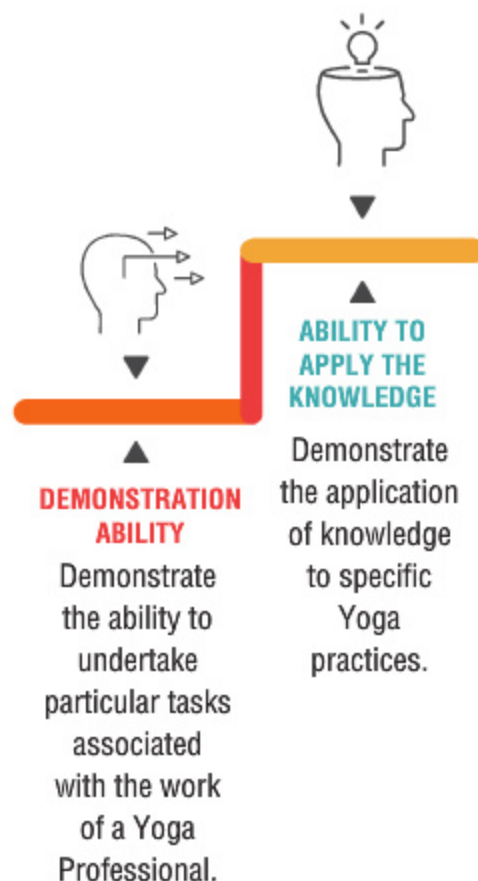
## Knowledge:

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



## Skills:

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







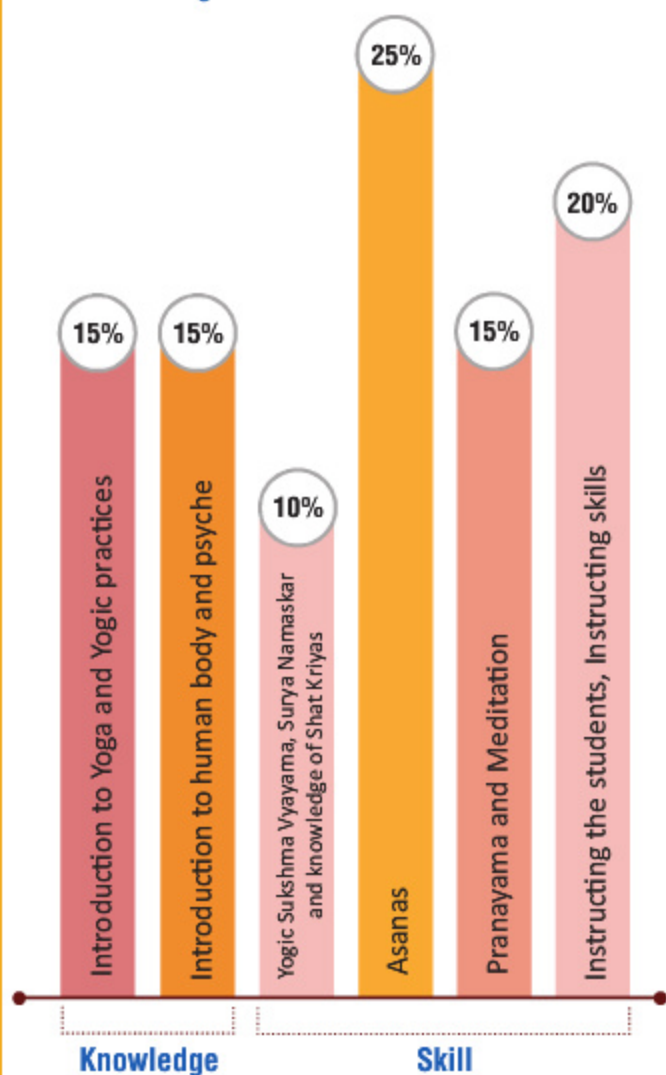
# Evaluation Patterns of CERTIFICATION

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

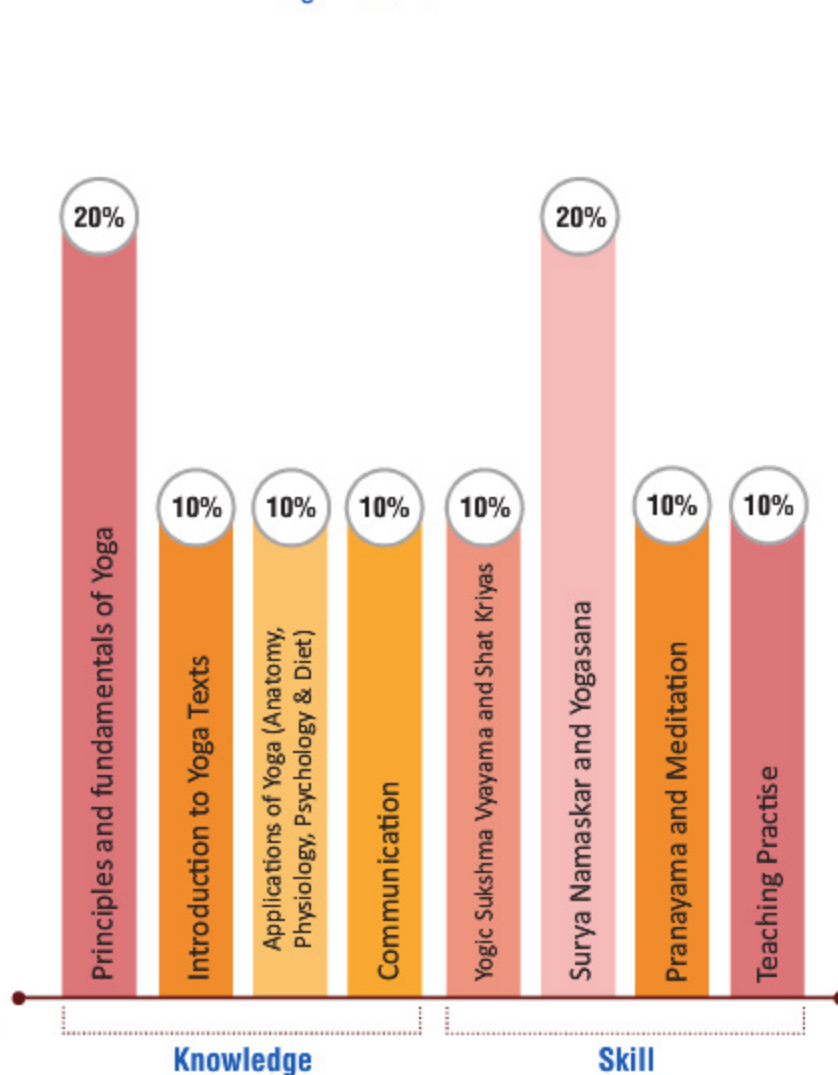
The criteria for evaluation of candidates includes assessing the knowledge and skill of a Yoga professional. The weightage of knowledge and skills is equally distributed while evaluating all the levels of Yoga professionals. The assessment of Yoga professionals shall be based on the scores secured by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

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

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



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





# Syllabus

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## COMPETENCE STANDARD FOR LEVEL 1 – YOGA INSTRUCTOR

### SECTION 1

---

#### 1.1 Introduction to Yoga and Yogic practices

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

#### 1.2 Introduction to Hatha Yoga

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

#### 1.3 Introduction to Patanjali

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

### SECTION 2

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#### 2.1 Introduction to Human Systems, Yoga and Health

- ➔ The nine systems of the human body

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

## 2.2 Yoga for Wellness

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

## 2.3 Yoga and Stress Management

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

## SECTION 3

### 3.1 Movement of Key Body Joints

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

### 3.2 Sukhshma Vyayama and Shat Kriyas

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

## SECTION 4

### 4.1 Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation)

Knowledge of and demonstrating ability to perform Surya Namaskar.



## 4.2 Asanas

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

## SECTION 5

### 5.1 Pranayama

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

### 5.2 Practices Leading to Meditation

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

## SECTION 6

### 6.1 Knowledge of Teaching Practice

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

## 6.2 Demonstrating Ability to Teach Practice

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

## 6.3 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants

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

## 6.4 Principles and Skills for Working with Groups

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

# COMPETENCE STANDARD FOR LEVEL 2 – YOGA TEACHER

## SECTION 1: Principles and Fundamentals of Yoga ..... ■

### 1.1 Yoga Teachings and Philosophy

- ➔ Familiarity with the evolution of the teachings and philosophy of the Yoga tradition and its relevance and application to the practice of Yoga.
- ➔ Familiarity with the teachings of the Vedas, Principle Upanishads, Shad Darshanas, Agama and Puranas.
- ➔ Familiarity with the four schools of Yoga (Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and Raja Yoga).

#### ➤ Jnana Yoga

- ◆ Four stages of Jnana (Viveka, Vairagya, Satsangata, Mumukshutva)
- ◆ Stages of Jnana Yoga practice (Shravan, Manana, Nidhidhyasana)
- ◆ Eight major chakras and their correlation to states of consciousness
- ◆ The concepts of ida, pingla and sushumna, the central channel of energy running along the spine.

#### ➤ Bhakti Yoga

- ◆ Navavidha Bhakti
- ◆ Qualities of a bhakta
- ◆ The pronunciation, chanting, knowledge, benefits of Sanskrit chants, hymns, and bhajans.
- ◆ Satsang and the uplifting meaning of chants helping to thin the activities of the mind.
- ◆ Mantra chanting and their effect on the nadi and chakras.
- ◆ Demonstrating ability to create a bhakti bhava during chanting and singing.



➤ **Karma Yoga**

- ◆ The concept of Karma Yoga
- ◆ Prerequisites for a Sthitaprajna
- ◆ Sthitaprajna lakshana
- ◆ The law of Karma

➤ **Raja Yoga**

- ◆ Concepts and principles of Patanjali Yoga
- ◆ Concepts and principles of Hatha Yoga (by Swatamarama)
- ◆ Familiarity with the fundamental principles of Yoga (pancha koshas, pancha bhutas, pancha pranas, shad chakras).
- ◆ Familiarity with examples of concepts and models from the above teachings and philosophy, relevant to the practice of Yoga.
- ◆ Familiarity with the concepts of instructor, teacher, master, acharya lineage.
- ◆ Familiarity with the contribution of yogis like:
  - ◆ Patanjali
  - ◆ Adishankaracharya
  - ◆ Aurobindo
  - ◆ Swami Vivekananda
  - ◆ Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati

**SECTION 2: Introduction to Basic Yoga Texts** .....

**2.1 Familiarity with Yoga Texts**

➤ **The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**

- ◆ Yoga Anushasana
- ◆ Concept of Citta
- ◆ Citta Vritti
- ◆ Citta Prasadana
- ◆ Panch Klesha
- ◆ Ashtanga Yoga

➤ **Bhagavad Gita**

- ◆ The context of Bhagavad Gita
- ◆ Principles and concepts of streams of Yoga as per Bhagavad Gita
- ◆ The concept of karma, sthitha prajna, bhakti as per Bhagavad Gita

➤ **Hatha Yoga Theory**

- ◆ Introduction to Hatha Yoga Parampara
- ◆ General introduction to Hatha Yoga texts
- ◆ Concept of mitahara, pathya, apathya, types of Yoga aspirants

- ◆ Badhak tattwa and sadhak tattwa – principles to be followed by Hatha Yoga practitioner.
- ◆ Shatkarma, asanas, pranayama, bandhas, mudras, pratyahara, and nadanusandhan as described in Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

## SECTION 3: Applications of Yoga (Human Anatomy, Physiology and Psychology) .....

### 3.1 Human Anatomy and Physiology

- ➔ Familiarity with the major systems in the body – skeletal, muscular, respiratory, nervous, cardio-vascular, endocrine, excretory, digestive and reproductive.
- ➔ Familiarity with the effects of Hatha Yoga as compared to other forms of exercise – on the joints, bones, muscles, heart, brain, etc. and therefore on health and well-being.
- ➔ Familiarity with the benefits of various asanas on different parts of the human body.

### 3.2 Obstacles in Practice of Yoga

- ➔ Familiarity with Patanjali's nine obstacles in Yoga practices
- ➔ Familiarity with limitations and contra-indications of specific Yoga practices

### 3.3 Yogic Diet

- ➔ Familiarity with the Triguna
- ➔ Familiarity with an Ayurvedic approach to diet and nutrition; significance of satvic vegetarian diet; and the ethical and spiritual reasons for a satvic vegetarian diet.
- ➔ Familiarity with different diets and their effect on the anatomy and physiology; Yogic diet – a lacto vegetarian, satvic approach to food.
- ➔ Familiarity with the benefits of Yogic diet on physical and mental well-being, and as an enabler for further practice of Yoga.

### 3.4 Psychology

- ➔ Familiarity with the concepts of cognition and perception
- ➔ Familiarity with the theories of cognition and non-cognition
- ➔ Familiarity with personality traits and their classification
- ➔ Familiarity with Indian Psychology
  - ◆ Psychology as per Bhagavad Gita
  - ◆ Psychology as per the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

## SECTION 4: Communication .....

### 4.1 Teaching Environment

- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrated ability to prepare the class room with cleanliness, proper laying of the mats, sufficient spacing, decorum, etc.
- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrating ability:
  - ◆ To prepare course schedule, give due weightage to various aspects of the practice of Yoga.



- ◆ To teach according to a pre-defined script through a standard teaching process.
- ◆ Describing the practice (name, meaning, justification, category, type, counts, complementary postures)
- ◆ Demonstration (silent demo, demo with counts, demo with counts, breathing and explanation)
- ◆ Benefits and limitation of the practice
- ◆ Single and group practice
- ◆ Practice in pairs
- ◆ Explanation of subtle points
- ◆ Question and answers
- ◆ To teach as per the daily plan and course schedule
- ◆ To keep records of aspirants enrolled, their attendance and their progress report during the programme
- ◆ To obtain feedback from the aspirants and make course correction as appropriate
- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrating ability to use the four teaching techniques of observation, instruction, touch and demonstration.

## SECTION 5: Shat Kriyas and Sukshma Vyayama .....

### 5.1 Shat Kriyas (cleansing techniques)

- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrating ability of Shat kriyas – the six classical techniques for purifying the body and mind.
  - ◆ Kapalabhati
  - ◆ Neti (Jal neti with water and Sutra neti with a catheter)
  - ◆ Dhauti which includes vatasara, agnisara and kunjla kriyas
  - ◆ Trataka and pratyahara by gazing at a candle flame, or a specific point of concentration
  - ◆ Basti
  - ◆ Nauli
- ➔ Knowledge of the shat kriyas to cleanse the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual body as a way to move from gross experiences to more subtle experiences.

### 5.2 Sukshma Vyayama

- ➔ Knowledge of the movement of key joints of the body and the demonstrating ability to perform the same: neck, shoulder, trunk, knee, ankle.
- ➔ Knowledge of the benefits of each of these practices and their compounding effect on the gross bodies.

## SECTION 6: Surya Namaskar and Yogasana .....

### 6.1 Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation Posture Sequence)

In-depth knowledge and demonstrating ability to perform Surya Namaskar.

## 6.2 Yogasana

- ➔ In-depth knowledge of basic postures as below and ability to demonstrate, perform these postures: Shirshasana (the headstand); Saravangasana (the shoulder stand); Halasana (the plough); Setu Bandhasana (the bridge); Chakrasana (the wheel); Matsyasana (the fish); Paschimottanasana (the sitting forward bend); Bhujangasana (the cobra); Salabhasana (the locust); Dhanurasana (the bow); Ardha Matsyendrasana (the half spinal twist); Kakasana or Mayurasana (the crow or peacock); Padahasthasana (the standing forward bend); Trikonasana (the triangle).
- ➔ Knowledge of another five asanas and demonstrating ability to perform the same: Tadasana (palm tree pose); Utkatasana (chair pose); Ushtrasana (camel pose); Pawanmuktasana (wind releasing pose); Vrikshasana (tree pose).
- ➔ Knowledge of the Sanskrit names of the postures and breathing exercises, their detailed benefits and caution.
- ➔ Knowledge of the five spinal movements – inverted, forward, backward, lateral twist, and lateral bend of the spine.
- ➔ Knowledge of total Yogic exercise through the practice of asanas, proper relaxation, proper breathing, contra-indications, cautions and medical considerations; Obvious and subtle benefits; Modification in basic postures to accommodate limitations.

## SECTION 7: Pranayama and Meditation .....

### 7.1 Pranayama

- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrating ability to perform abdominal (diaphragmatic), thoracic, clavicular breathing and the full Yogic breath.
- ➔ Familiarity with and demonstrating ability to perform advanced pranayama – Anuloma Viloma, Bhramari, Chandrabhedhana, Suryabhedhana, Sheetali, Sheetkari, Sadanta and Ujjayi, and the knowledge of their benefits, limitation and techniques.

### 7.2 Meditation

- ➔ Knowledge and demonstrating ability to perform Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and to demonstrate allied practices like Mudras, Japa Mala, Mantras, relaxation, etc.
- ➔ Demonstrating ability to perform meditation
- ➔ Knowledge of the environment for meditation; Benefits of meditation on health and its practical application in modern life.

## SECTION 8: Teaching Practice .....

### 8.1 Knowledge of Teaching Practice

- ➔ In-depth knowledge of the scope of practice of Yoga and how to assess the need for referral to other professional services when needed.



- ➡ In-depth knowledge of observed capacity for well-developed communication skills – listening, presence, directive and non-directive dialogue.

## **8.2 Ability to Demonstrate Teaching Practice**

- ➡ To recognize, adjust, and adapt to specific aspirant needs in progressive classes.
- ➡ To recognize and manage the subtle dynamics inherent in the teacher-aspirant relationship.

## **8.3 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants**

- ➡ In-depth knowledge of and demonstrating ability to apply effective teaching methods; Adapt to unique styles of learning; Provide supportive and effective feedback; Acknowledge the aspirant's progress, and cope with difficulties.
- ➡ In-depth knowledge of and demonstrating ability to transmit the value of self-awareness and self-responsibility throughout the process.
- ➡ In-depth knowledge of and demonstrating ability to develop and adjust appropriate practice strategies to the aspirant.

## **8.4 Principles and Skills for Working with Groups**

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





# CHAPTER 1

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## INTRODUCTION TO YOGA AND YOGIC PRACTICES

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## Structure



- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 1.1 Etymology of Yoga
  - 1.2 History and Development of Yoga
  - 1.3 Yoga – Aim and Misconceptions
  - 1.4 Teachings of the Vedas\*
  - 1.5 Teachings of the Upanishads\*
  - 1.6 Shad Darshanas
  - 1.7 Paths of Yoga
  - 1.8 Principles of Yoga and Yogic Practices
  - 1.9 Teachings of Prominent Gurus and Yogis\*
  - 1.10 Guiding Principles for Yogic Practice
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Describe and understand the spiritual essence of yoga
- Discuss the origin, history and development of yoga
- Outline the aims and objectives of yoga
- Recognize some common misconceptions about yoga
- Explain the *shad darshanas*
- Describe the different paths of yoga
- Explain various principles of yoga and yogic practices
- Discuss the teachings of prominent gurus and *yogis*
- Appreciate the guidelines to be followed by yoga instructors/teachers



## Introduction

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

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

\* Denotes that the content is specific to level 2 yoga aspirants.



## 1.1 Etymology of Yoga

This section discusses the origin of the word 'Yoga'. The word "Yoga" refers to different things in today's time. Some may understand it as an Indian form of exercise which has to do with specific body postures. Others may understand it as breathing practices and relaxation methods. Some may even consider it as a weight-reducing regimen involving profuse sweating. A Yoga therapist may understand it as an alternative therapy system especially for eliminating back pain or helping with recovery from an illness. Then, there is a general group of believers who consider Yoga as a typical religion. These different views about Yoga are logical to some extent, yet there is more to this ancient science which shall be revealed in this book.

The Sanskrit word "Yoga" or *Yog* is derived from the root word "yuj", meaning to yoke, harness or join together. Hence, Yoga is commonly understood to mean union. The union referred to is generally understood as the union of the *jeevatma* (individual self) with the *paramatma* (the universal self).



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

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

The legendary 4th century BC grammarian Panini, derives the term Yoga from either of the two roots, *yujir* Yoga (to yoke) or *yuj* in the *Yoga Sutras* of Maharishi Patanjali, the term Yoga is understood as derived from the root *yuj samādhau*. *Vyasa Bhasya*, the commentary of *Vyasa* on *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* states that Yoga means *samādhi*, which can be translated as concentration leading to "complete meditative absorption or spiritual absorption."

Yoga is the discipline (*sadhana*) or a continuous effort to attain that union. According to Maharishi Patanjali, the traditional founder of the yoga system, the purpose of the Yoga is to attain spiritual perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind.

Yoga is an applied science, a systematized discipline to achieve an intended goal. Psychological laws are utilized for the unfolding of man's consciousness in all dimensions and for scientifically applying them in a particular case.



### Notes

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

## Definitions of Yoga

The term 'yog' is derived from the suffix of 'ghang' to *Ātmanepadi divadiganiya dhatu 'yuj samadha'*. Hence, 'yog' has the meaning of *samadhi*, i.e., prevention of all actions of *Chitta*. *Yogscittavrttinirodhab*. Our mind (*citta*) is the source of *upādāna Kāraṇa*, the productive cause of all *Trigunās*, like *sattvaguna*, *rajoguna*, *tamoguna*. Hence, the mind is called *prakāśha-Kriyā-Sthitisheela* and the states of the *Trigunās* are respectively called brightness, action and static. *Sattvaguna* has brightness in its nature, *rajoguna* action and *tamoguna* is motionless. *Citta*, the mind has five states-*keshipta* (disturbed), *mudha* (dull), *vikshepta* (distracted), *ekagra* (one-pointed), *nirodhab* (mastered). *Yog* begins in the concentrated state of *citta*. All the moods, reflections and



thoughts that arise in *citta* are classified in five categories by *Patanjali Maharishi-pramāna* (right knowledge), *viparyaya* (indiscrimination), *vikalpa* (verbal delusion), *nidra* (sleep) and *smṛiti* (memory). The state of *yog* impedes these thoughts and moods, irrespective of their conditions. In *Yog* *samādhīh* the afflictions and bondages of *karma* subside when they are impeded, the practitioner achieves a mental state called *niruddha* (blackened). There are innumerable definitions of ‘Yoga’ applying to various levels of existence and evolution of consciousness. The most popular definition is union – union between the Individual Self and the Divine Self. In this sense the aim of Yoga is to help us realize our identity with the Real/Universal Self, to make us know and tune into our intrinsic nature.



Fig. 1.1: The *Bhagavad Gita* Manuscript

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

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

BG II - 48

“O *Dhananjaya*, Perform action being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and remaining equanimous in success and failure. Yoga is equanimity of mind”.

*Buddhi-yukto jabatiha ubhe sukerta-duskerte, Tasmad yogay yujyasva yogah karmasu kausalam.*

BG II - 50

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

The most widely accepted and ancient text exclusively devoted to Yoga is *The Yoga Sutra* of sage Patanjali. The period of Patanjali is placed between 3 and 5 centuries before Christ. He is believed to be the incarnation of *Adishesha*, the Serpent God, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu. In this classical text, Patanjali defines Yoga as “complete control to the point of cessation of patterns or modifications of the mind.” He states, “Yoga is complete stoppage (*niruddha*) of mental modifications (*chitta vritti*) so that the seer (*drashta*) is established in its own self.”

### ! Caution

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





Fig. 1.2: Yoga Sutra

Yoga consists of eight limbs and leads to *viveka khyati* (enlightened discrimination) which in turn will pave the path for *kaivalya* (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). According to Maharishi Patanjali, the eight limbs of Yoga are *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. The first five limbs make up the *bahiranga* yoga (external or exoteric yoga) and the last three limbs make up the *antaranga* yoga (internal or esoteric yoga). *Pratyahara* is considered as a bridge between external and internal yoga.



### Notes

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

## 1.2 History and Development of Yoga

Originated in ancient India, Yoga typically means the “union” of the mind, body and spirit. It involves the practice of physical postures, which is referred to as ‘*asana*’ in Sanskrit. As the name suggests, the ultimate aim of practising Yoga is to

create a balance between the body and the mind which leads to self-enlightenment. In order to accomplish this goal, Yoga makes use of different body postures, breathing exercises, relaxation techniques and meditation. Yoga is associated with a healthy and lively lifestyle with a balanced approach to life. The following pictures show different practices of Yoga being performed by yogis in ancient India.



Fig. 1.3: Different Practices of Yoga in Ancient India

### Origin of Yoga

The origin of Yoga is traced to the *Vedas*. There are references about Yoga in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. Besides, there have been a number of texts which are exclusively devoted to Yoga. As far as the ancient texts are concerned, it would be difficult to fix the time period as historians generally differ on the dates the texts were written. Yoga texts, however, are unique, as they are the recorded teachings. The teachings may date back even earlier as their compilation into books would have taken place later.

Originating in India, references to Yoga are found as back as almost 5000 years. The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of Yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi, and the first Guru or Adi Guru.



It was not until the discovery of the largest civilization known as Indus Valley Civilization, that knowledge about the origin of Yoga surfaced. Archaeological findings such as the *yogi*-like figures engraved on soapstone seal, verify the existence of Yoga during this period. In fact, it was the Aryan race that migrated to north-west India, and contributed to the discovery of Yoga. A number of seals and fossil remains of the Indus Saraswati Valley Civilization with Yogic motifs and figures performing *yog sadhana* authenticate the existence of Yoga in ancient India.



Fig. 1.4: Ancient Seals and Fossil Remains with Yogic Images



### Did You Know?

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

Before exploring the history of Yoga, let us understand the *Guru* and *Gurukul* System in India.

**The Gurus and Masters:** The word *Guru* can be broken down into *Gu* meaning “darkness” and *Ru* meaning “to destroy”. In simple words, the *Guru* is a spiritually enlightened being that dispels the darkness of ignorance and lifts the veil of *Maya* or illusion, thus rendering the disciple free from the cycle of death and birth. *Gurus* are also known as Masters, for they have gained

dominion over their senses, mind and body and they are *mahajnanis* (supremely enlightened). A real *guru* must be a *śrotriya*, or the knower of the *Vedas* which embody the eternal truth. In addition, a true *guru* must be a *brahmanishta*, or extremely devoted to God. He or she must be an embodiment of divine qualities, like *vinamrata* (humility), *karuna* (compassion), *nishkamabhaav* (selflessness), *tyaag* (self-sacrifice), *bhakti* (love) and *dharma* (righteous conduct). The journeying stops with the finding of the *Guru*.

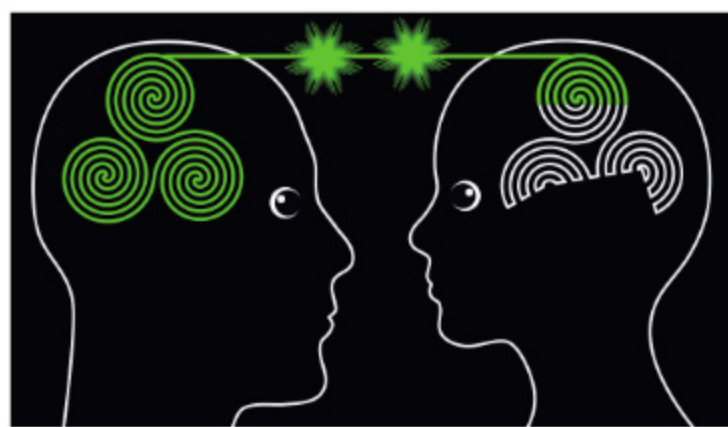


Fig. 1.5: Transferring of Knowledge from a *Guru* to *Shishya*

**The Gurukul System in India:** *Gurukul* translates into “the home (family) of the preceptor”. In practical terms, a place where the *Guru* lives with his family and disciples is known as *Gurukul*. It is a place where the students come to be a part of the family of the *Guru* for a fixed tenure to learn the *Vedas*, Sanskrit, fine arts, administration, many other skills and etiquettes. In ancient and medieval India, *Gurukuls* existed in the forests and by the riversides. According to the four *ashrams*<sup>1</sup> of the *Vedic* life, the first 25 years of a person's life were to be spent as a *brahmachari* – a celibate student – to acquire training in different subjects to serve the society and for attain his own emancipation. However, admission into the *Gurukuls* was not a simple process. The more enlightened and able the *Guru*, the more difficult it was for the aspirant to find shelter under his wings.

<sup>1</sup> The four *ashramas* or the four stages of human life are: *brahmacharya* (bachelorhood), *grihastha* (householder), *vanaprastha* (forest dweller) and *sannyasa* (renunciate).





**Fig. 1.6:** The Concept of *Gurukul* in India

Life in *Gurukuls* were far from easy; the *Guru* made the students undergo rigorous *tapas* (austerities) to prepare their bodies to withstand the hardships of life and instil good habits like love for hard work, enthusiasm and selfless service. The students served their *Guru* by performing duties, like fetching water from the river, cleaning, looking after the domestic animals and gathering twigs from the forest for ceremonial worship. Moreover, the disciples had to practice meditation, Yoga and other austerities to master their mind and senses. The classes were held under shady Banyan trees in fine weather or in thatched huts during the rainy season. The education was generally free; however, the *Guru* was given *dakshina* (in lieu of fee) by his disciples.

## History of Yoga

The tradition of *yog* is quite ancient – it relates to the Vedic-Era. There is no doubt about it. But some questions, like how ancient it is and who started it are to be answered. A detailed research has been done regarding this from our enriched and ancient Indian literature.

The foremost pioneer of *yog* is considered none other than Hiranyagarbha after an intensified

research. Hiranyagarbha Yogasya vaktā nānyah purātanah. (Br.yo.ya 12.5 u.). Rigveda supports this statement through this depiction, ‘when there was nothing created, then there was one unique Hiranyagarbha, from whom the sun like dazzling objects were born. He was the creator, He was the first and foremost one; He was the ancient, prime and legendary creator of this whole creation.’ (Hiranyagarbhah samavartatāgre bhutasya jātah patireeka āseet) (Rig: 10-121-1, Yaju: 13-4(Āryābhivinay). Hiranyagarbha is paid tribute in various ways in the *Vedās*. This Hiranyagarbha is only the ultimate God, because He is the creator of this whole universe of animate and inanimate objects. This is approved by the most prominent scriptures. Hiranyagarbha is the teacher of teachers (Sa Esha purveeshāmapī Guruh kāleenānvacchedāt. Yog Sutrās. 1.26). There was no one ancient before him (nānyah purātanah. Br.yo.ya.smr.12-5). Hiranyagarbha was accepted as the first and foremost pioneer of *yog* in mahābhārata also (Hiranyagarbho Yogasya vaktā nānyah purātanah. Maha.12-349-65). This brilliant bright Hiranyagarbha is the same, whom the *Vedās* describe; He is worshiped every day by the sages and he is called Vibhu, the nourisher or owner (Hiranyagarbho dyutimān ya Esha chandasi stutih. Yogih sampujyate nityam sa ca loke vibhuh smritah. Maha. 12-342-96) This Hiranyagarbha God is called as samashti buddhi (who has equal thought for the whole group). Yogis called this Hiranyagarbha as virinci (the Brahman) and ajanma (the birthless) (Hiranyagarbho Bhagavan Esha buddhiriti smritih. Mahaniti ca yogeshu virinciriti cāpyajah).

The beginning of Guru-sishya parampara, the teacher-disciple tradition, was depicted in mundakopanishad. Brahma, the Maker of the universe and the Preserver of the world, was the first among the devas. He taught the supreme



study of all studies, the knowledge of Yog, which is called *brahmavidya* or *yogvidya*, to his elder son Atharva. Then Atharva taught to Angirasa, Angirasa to Bharadvāja, and Bharadvāja to Satyavāha. This way the tradition has gone from one to the other (Mundakopanishad).

The sage Angirasa said- ‘Oh shaunaka! Now, hear from me the knowledge of yogvidya’ (mundakopanishad1-1-1.3) According to the *adhikāree bheeda*, the difference of merit in learning, this *sanātana* Yog, is categorized and popularized in two branches as ‘*brahmayog*’ (*rajayog*) and *karmayog*’.

We feel awe-struck, when we go through the literature which enriched different periods of history or when we observe the remnant parts that have archeological importance, knowing that ‘yog’ enjoys all-time favourism. It always won the supreme appraisal of the pious. But not limited to that status, it became the key note melody to enliven the whole array of religious, spiritual, civilized and cultural traditions, like Vedic, *Sanātana* Rishi (age-old sage) tradition, Buddha tradition, Jain tradition, Siddha tradition and Sant (saint) tradition. The practice of yog is obtained partially by all traditions worldwide. Thus, the prominence of yog is all-time valuable, universal and sovereign.

**Source:** Received from Dr. Arya, Patanjali Yoga Peeth, Haridwar.

The beginning of Yoga cannot be traced with accuracy. Some trace it back to over 5,000 years ago, but some speculate that Yoga may be up to 10,000 years old. Its traceable history can be generally divided into four broad periods as follows:

- i. The Vedic Period or Vedic Age
- ii. Pre-classical Yoga
- iii. Classical Yoga
- iv. Post-classical Yoga



**Fig. 1.7:** Tracing the Roots of Yoga to the Vedic Period

## The Vedic Period

This period is marked by the emergence of the *Vedas*. The *Rig Veda* is a sacred scripture of Brahmanism that forms the basis of modern-day Hinduism. It consists of sacred hymns in the praise of divinity. The other three *Vedas* are the *Yajur Veda* (knowledge of sacrifice), *Sama Veda* (knowledge of chants), and *Atharva Veda* (knowledge of atharvānas, or codes for everyday life). The *Vedas* contain the oldest known Yogic teachings called the Vedic Yoga.

In this period people followed the dictates of the Yogis or Rishis and life was lived in divine harmony. These Rishis realized the ultimate truth through their intense spiritual and meditative practices. The Yogis living in solitude and seclusion became known in this age.

## Pre-Classical Yoga

The *Upanishads* form the main texts of this period. These are also called as the *Vedānta* because they formed the end part of the *Vedas* and also because they are said to contain the end or aim or essence of Yoga. These expound upon three subjects: the *jīva* (embodied soul), *jagat* (the world) and *Ishvara* (God or the creator of the universe). The climax of the enquiry is the experience of the essential identity of the



individual soul (*atman*) inside with the ultimate reality (*Brahman*) outside. The *Upanishads* expound the teachings of the *Vedas*. The idea of ritual sacrifice from the earlier part of the *Vedas* was transformed into the idea of sacrifice of the ego through self-knowledge, action (*karma* Yoga) and wisdom (*jnana* Yoga).

Yogic aspects, particularly meditation, are also found in Buddhism and Jainism.

## Classical Yoga

The idea of Yoga and its practices were not very clearly defined or understood in the pre-classical stage. The first systematic and coherent presentation of Yoga was done by the sage Patanjali in the Classical period when he brought out his *Yoga Sutras*. This work is generally understood to be dated between the 3rd and 6th century BC. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* propound the *Ashtanga* Yoga or Yoga with 8 limbs. It is also referred to as Classical or Traditional Yoga. Patanjali organized the practices of Yoga into an "eight-limbed path" containing the steps and stages towards obtaining *Samadhi* or enlightenment. These eight limbs are:

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



### Did You Know?

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

## Post-Classical Yoga

Post-classical Yoga refers to Yoga after the Classical period till the present times. This period is marked by several books and literature on Yoga and its practices. Yoga now tries to harmonize the spiritual with the empirical. After the sage Patanjali, several Masters of yoga made their appearance and utilized yoga to promote health and increase longevity. The physical body and its upkeep started gaining significance because the body was considered as the vehicle for the soul to attain enlightenment. *Tantra* Yoga, came into the picture. It emphasized upon the cleansing practices for strengthening the psycho-physiological structure of human being so that it became fit to reach higher states of consciousness. From *Tantra* Yoga and its physical-oriented practices emerged what today we call *Hatha* Yoga.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is necessary to be flexible before starting Yoga practices. On the contrary, Yoga can help anyone gain flexibility with regular practice. There are subtle adjustments that a person can make to every pose so that he/she can benefit from the movement, without enduring pain.

## Evolution of Yoga

From the last part of the 19th Century and beginning of the 20th Century, Yoga travelled to the west with some renowned Yoga masters, the most prominent among them being Swami Vivekanand. The modern age of Yoga can be said to begin with this. A landmark date for



modern Yoga may be 1893 when the Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, USA. The young Swami Vivekananda made a big and lasting impression on all present in this Parliament.

Subsequently, Yoga and its tradition received strong inspiration and impetus due to the pioneering efforts of several legends in India – T. Krishnamachari (Ashtanga Yoga), B. K. S. Iyengar (Iyengar Yoga), Shri K. Pattabhi Jois, Shri T. K. V. Desikachar, Swami Sivananda (Sivananda Yoga), Shri Yogendraji (The Yoga Institute), Swami Kuvalayanandaji (Kaivalyadhama Health and Research Institute), Swami Satyanandaji (Bihar School of Yoga), Swami Rama, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji (The Art of Living), Swami Ramdevji (Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar), Dr. H.R. Nagendra (SVYASA) and Jaggi Vasudevji (Isha Yoga Center), so on and so forth.



### Learning ACTIVITY

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

## 1.3 Yoga – Aim and Misconceptions

- The ultimate aim of Yoga is self-realization, i.e., *moksha* or *kaivalya* or nirvana. This is the state in which one is ultimately free from the miseries and sufferings of life.



### Notes

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

Yoga offers more benefits than anyone can ask for. It could be said that the primary goal of Yoga is to gain balance and control in one's life; to free

oneself from confusion and distress; to provide a sense of calm that comes from the practice of yogic *asanas* and *pranayama* or the breathing practices. The practice of Yogic *asanas* aims at overcoming the limitations of the body. Other forms of exercises are also good, but being merely “good” is not enough. Such exercises strain the body muscles, joints, the entire skeletal system and cause free radical damage at the cellular level. In contrast, Yoga realigns and rejuvenates the body inside and outside, and liberates the mind from the havoc brought about by the fast-paced modern life.

Yoga teaches us that challenges faced by the modern man show up sooner or later either in physical or mental form. When our physical state is not perfect, it causes an imbalance in our mental state. The practice of Yoga helps us to overcome such imbalance.

Yoga will teach you that the goal of every individual's life should be to take the inner journey inside one's self. When there is perfect harmony between the mind and body, we achieve total balance and control. The practice of Yoga installs optimism within you. It helps you to focus better and overcome any obstacles in your way while on your road to perfect health, spiritual attainment and total well-being.

Pranayama starts with breathing practices and leads towards control of Prana or the life force in us. It involves developing awareness of one's breath followed by willful regulation of respiration as the functional or vital basis of one's existence. It helps in developing awareness of one's mind and establishing control over the mind.

Regular practice of the stretches, twists, bends and inversions (the basic movements of Yoga poses) restores strength and stamina in the body. Yogic postures together with breath control rectify physical, physiological and psychological disorders.



Practising Yoga *asanas* cleanses and detoxifies the body by increasing the circulation of fresh blood through the body. The practitioner is able to cleanse and flush out toxins which are a direct result of an irregular lifestyle, unhealthy habits and poor posture.

Yoga poses tone the whole body; they strengthen bones and muscles, correct the posture, improve breathing and increase energy. Yoga *asanas* help us learn how to adjust and arrange each part of our body. It teaches us how to achieve balance between both sides of the body when entering into *asanas*, until there is no undue stress on any organ, muscle, bone, or joint. The aim is instead to let all body organs and parts work together as one.

Yoga improves posture, increases the intake of oxygen and enhances the functioning of all body systems, including respiratory, digestive, endocrine, reproductive and excretory systems.

### Misconceptions about Yoga

For many, the practice of Yoga is restricted to *Asanas* (postures). However, among the Yoga *Sutras*, just three *sutras* are dedicated to *asanas*! This goes a long way in setting right the perspective towards *asanas* in the context of total yoga. Fundamentally, *Hatha* Yoga can be said to be a preparatory process so that the body can sustain higher levels of energy. The process begins with the body, then the breath, the mind, and the inner self.

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

Some people consider Yoga as a mere exercise. However, Yoga is much more than that. It is the integration of the mind, body and spirit into one

harmonious whole. It strives for attaining inner peace and union with the environment by means of quietening the constant chatter of the mind, creating a healthy body and being at peace with who you are and the world around you. Achieving this harmony is at the core of Yoga.

Some people believe that Yoga is not challenging enough and ranks low as a cardiovascular workout. However, the method and intensity of yoga depends upon the purpose for which you are practising it. Hence, there is prevalence of different styles/schools of yoga.



#### Example

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



#### Most-common Mis-conceptions

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

## 1.4 Teachings of the Vedas\*

The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas* and epics are considered as the basic sources of ancient Indian philosophy and education. The *Sanskrit* word '*Veda*' is derived from the root word '*Vid*'.

*Vid* means to:

- To know {knowledge perse}
- To be {one with God}
- To obtain {salvation}



### 1) There are four Vedas as follows:

- i. *Rigveda* (consisting of 1028 hymns),
- ii. *Yajurveda* (dealing with the procedure of sacrifices),
- iii. *Samveda* (dealing with Indian music),
- iv. *Atharvaveda* (dealing with medical sciences).

### 2) The Six Vedangas listed below help in understanding the Vedas:

- i. *Vyakarna* (grammar)
- ii. *Shiksha* (phonetics)
- iii. *Chandas* (metres)
- iv. *Nirukta* (Etymology)
- v. *Jyotish* (astronomy)
- vi. *Kalpa* (rituals)

### 3) There are four subsidiary Vedas called as Four Upavedas each dealing with a different topic. These are as follows:

- i. *Ayurveda* (Medicine)
- ii. *Dhanurveda* (Military Science)
- iii. *Gandharvavea* (Music)
- iv. *Shilpaveda* (Arts and Architecture)

Each of the four *Vedas* had four parts as follows: *Sambhitas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aryanakas* and *Upanishads*.

*Sambhitas* refer to the 'Collections' of *mantras*, hymns and chants. They contain expressions of joy at the majesty of nature. The phenomenal powers, raised to the level of deities, were worshipped through *mantras*.

*Brahmanas* were in prose and made up of rituals, and prayers. They contain instructions and descriptions of methods for the conduct of various rituals and sacrifices for invoking divine powers.

*Aryanakas* were appendages of *Brahmanas*. (*Aranya* means forest). These are forest treatises

which were products of contemplation of individuals who retired to the quiet of Himalayan valley.

*Upanishads*: The word *Upanishad* is made up of *upa* (near by) + *ni* (devotedly) + *shad* (sitting) and hence means knowledge which is passed from the *Guru* to the disciple when the latter sits close to the *Guru* devotedly. Being the fourth and last part of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* are also called as *Vedanta* (anta of the *Vedas*). The *anta* or end can also be understood as aim or essence. Hence, the *Upanishads* are considered as *Vedanta* or the essence of the *Vedas*.

The total number of the *Upanishads* is debatable. About 108 *Upanishads* have been generally accepted as authentic texts. The goal of all *Upanishads* is ultimate freedom, liberation, from the miseries and sufferings of human life. They prescribe ways and means of achieving this goal. The *Vedas* are termed as *apauruseya* or non-human human in origin and hence infallible. There is no human author of the *Vedas*. They are considered as *Shruti* meaning that which is 'heard' by the *Rishis* in their deep states of meditation. In addition to the *Shrutis*, we have the *Smriti* literature. *Smriti* means 'remembered'. All other scriptures which do not come under *shrutis* form the *smritis*. *Smriti* was composed by *Rishis* on the basis of their memory. Thus, the *Shrutis* and *Smritis* together throw light on all aspects of life in ancient India - the intellectual, economic, political, religious, social and spiritual.

Thus, each *Veda* has a *Sambhita* portion, which constitutes its main body of hymns and a portion containing commentaries called *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas* and *Upanishads*. The commentaries are mainly in prose. The *Brahmanas* deal with the ritualistic aspects of life while the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* are philosophical disquisitions. The *Brahmanas* and *Aranyakas* along with *Upanishads* together propound *Vedanta*, 'the end of *Vedas*'.



The *Brahmanas* were *Brahmanical* compositions while in the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads* the *Kshatriyas* came in for a substantial share. The former presented the '*karma marg*' or 'the way of the ritualistic works' while the latter emphasized the '*jnana marg*' or 'the way of the intellect'.

The four *Vedas*, i.e., *Rigveda*, *Yajurveda*, *Sāmaveda*, and *Atharvaveda* are considered as *apauruseya* (of non-human origin). They form the *Shrutis* (that which is heard). They are auditorily received by the sages in their deep states of meditation. They are therefore considered infallible. Hence, all human beings are advocated to follow the life prescribed in *Vedas*.

The *Vedas* and the truths embodied in them are considered eternal. Hence, we speak of *sanatana* (eternal) *dharma* (essence).



Fig. 1.8: The Vedas

Man's knowledge may be defective, erroneous and self-centered in nature. But the *Vedic* wisdom is all-perfect, unillusionary one. Therefore, we should have this divine *Vedic* wisdom and obtain *vedic-compliance* behaviour, implementing its directives and commands in our daily life with complete authenticity, great regard and responsibility towards them.

## 1.5 Teachings of the Upanishads\*

The term *Upanishad* has been variously explained. In the *Upanishads* themselves, the word, *Upanishad*

generally appears as synonymous with *rahasya* or "secret".

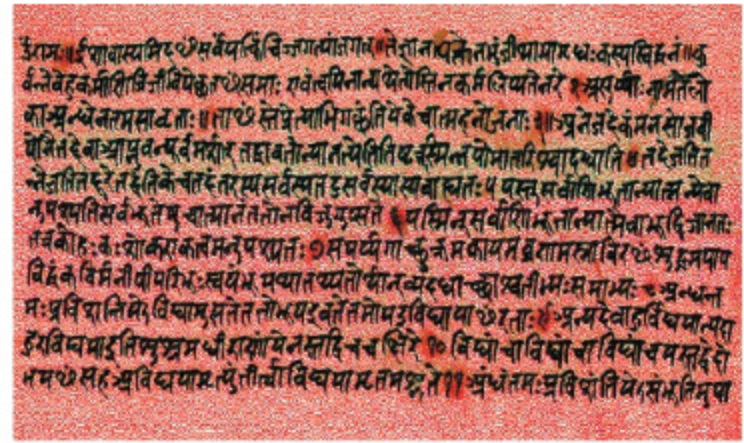


Fig. 1.9: Upanishads

The *Upanishadic* teaching was regarded as a mystery and much care and anxiety were bestowed upon keeping it away from the unworthy lest it should be misunderstood or misapplied. Etymologically, the word is equivalent to "sitting (*sad*) nearby (*upa*) devotedly (*ni*)" and signifies the secret instruction imparted at such private sitting.

The *Upanishads* form the 4<sup>th</sup> and last part of the *Vedas*. Standing at the end of the *Vedas* they came to be known as '*Vedanta*' or 'end of *Vedas*'. But the *Upanishads* as the end of the *Vedas* also meant the end or aim or significance or fulfillment of the *Vedic* teaching. The philosophy taught by the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* is called *Vedanta* (end of *Vedas*). *Vedanta* is meant for the most mature minds.

Like the *Mantras* and *Brahmanas*, the *Upanishads* were regarded as "revelation" i.e., works not ascribable to human authors.

There are about 200 *Upanishadic* texts but all are not equally old. Most of them are recent. Only about a dozen of them are ancient or classical. Some of the important classical *Upanishads* are named as *Katha*, *Isha*, *Kena*, *Prasna*, *Mundaka*, *Mandukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Chandogya*, *Brihadaranyaka*, *Kaivalya*, *Svetasvatara* and *Aitareya*. But all the *Upanishads* exhibit family likenesses both in thought and language. All classical *Upanishads* are pre-Buddhistic (before 6<sup>th</sup> century BC).



The Upanishadic texts contain the thoughts of a number of teachers and thus represent a progression or growth of ideas. These were composed by different persons at different times and places, and therefore there appear apparent conflicts in their ideas. Badarayana's<sup>2</sup> "*Brahma Sutras*" aim at interpreting the *Upanishads* and removing these supposed incoherences and conflicts. But these *sutras* themselves required commentaries or *bhasyas* for explanation. *Advaita Vedanta*, *Visishtadvaita Vedanta* and *Dvaita Vedanta* are some of the commentaries on the *Brahma Sutras*. Thus, *Upanishads* became the basis for different philosophies or schools or traditions.

The *Upanishads* consist of some very short and pithy statements like formulas which need to be exploded, understood and experienced, e.g., "*Tat tvam asi*" ("That thou art") of *Chandogya Upanishad*.

The *Upanishads* represent the earliest speculations/efforts of man at giving a philosophic explanation of the world and are invaluable in the history of human thought. They are viewed as the fountain-head of all Indian Philosophy.

The *Upanishads* are generally in the form of dialogues but they are more poetic than philosophic. The media of metaphors and allegories are used to indicate truths. At places, the language gets very symbolic. The uniqueness of the style is that it is highly elliptical (omission of word or words). This brings out the fact that the *Upanishads* required to be expounded orally by the master who could fill the gaps. This fact gave rise to different interpretations and explanations.

Some of the ideas, in very brief terms, expounded in the *Upanishads* are as follows:

### 1. The Concepts of Brahman and Atman

*Brahman* and *Atman* are the *Upanishadic* terms for the ultimate reality. *Atman* referred to the individual soul or consciousness. '*Brahman*'

referred to the universal consciousness or Truth. *Brahman* is the source of outer world and *Atman* is the inner self of man. The *Upanishads* reached the peak of human thinking when they asserted *Atman* and *Brahman* are essentially the same.

### 2. Idealistic Monism

The *Upanishads* taught that Reality is one and it is idealistic. According to idealism, there is nothing in the universe, which, if it is not itself mental, does not presuppose mind.

### 3. The Concepts of Maya and Avidya

*Maya* is the inscrutable power of *Brahman* through which the world of *nama – rupa* (name and form) comes into being. It is *maya* which makes the one *Brahman* appear as the many. On the part of human beings, it is *avidya*, which does not allow us to see the reality of One and instead we see the multitudinous world of name and form. Therefore, *maya* and *avidya* are considered as two sides of the same coin.

### 4. The Bhutas or the Fundamental Elements

The *Upanishads* recognize five fundamental elements (*stbula-bhutas*) – earth (*prithvi*), water (*aap*), fire (*tejas*), air (*vayu*) and ether (*akasa*). This classification is connected with the five-fold character of the sensory organs whose distinctive features are odour, flavour, form, touch and sound, respectively. These features are subtle or rudimentary (*sukshma-bhutas*). Out of these are made the gross ones (*stbula-bhutas*).

### 5. The Theory of Pancha Koshas

This theory finds expression in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. The human personality is made of five layers or sheaths which cover the Reality (soul or *atman* or *purusha*) of the human being. These five layers from the grossest/outermost to the subtlest/innermost are the *annamaya kosha* (food body), the *pranamaya kosha* (the energy body), the *manomaya kosha* (the mental body), the *vijnanamaya*

<sup>2</sup> Sage Badarayana is also known as Sage Vyasa



*kosha* (the wisdom or higher intellect body) and the *anandamaya kosha* (the bliss body). Personality development takes place on the path of moving inwards along the *koshas*.

## 6. Para Vidya and Apra Vidya

All knowledge is classified into two types – higher (*para vidya*) and lower (*apara vidya*), which are the knowledge of *Brahman* (transcendental knowledge) and of empirical things, respectively.

*Para vidya* is complete knowledge. *Apra vidya* is fragmentary knowledge. However, there is no conflict between them.

## 7. Four States of Self

The *Upanishads* study the Self under four states: **Waking (*Jagran*), Dreaming (*Swapna*), Dreamless or Deep Sleep (*Susupti*), and *Turiya* (super-conscious).** In the Waking and Dreaming states the mind functions. The other two states are supra-mental and are considered with a view to discover the true nature of the soul.

## 8. Self-Realisation

Miseries and sufferings being due to *avidya* or false knowledge about the nature of Reality, their removal can be only through right knowledge. This training for right knowledge is threefold:

- i. ***Sravana*:** Stands for study of *Upanishads* under a proper *guru*. Personal contact with the living embodiment is of great help.
- ii. ***Manana*:** *Sravana* should be supplemented by *manana* or continued reflection upon what has been learned for deriving intellectual conviction.
- iii. ***Nidhidhyasana*:** Refers to Meditation, by which one realizes within oneself the unity underlying the multiplicity of the universe. *Nidhidhyasana* is the highest form of meditation and is possible only after considerable practice in concentration of thought.

## 9. Samsara

The constant stream of births and deaths until *Moksha* is attained is known as *samsara* or transmigration. The law, which governs the type of birth a *jiva* gets every time it dies, is known as the Law of *Karma*.

## 10. Upanishadic God

Main concern of the *Upanishads* is the philosophic Absolute. The *Upanishadic* God is described as the “inner ruler immortal” (*antaryamurtah*) or the “thread” (*sutra*) that runs through all things and holds them together. It is the central truth of both, animate and inanimate, existence, and is accordingly not merely a transcendental but also an immanent principle. Some references to theistic conception of God are also found in some *Upanishads*.

## Agama and Purana\*

### Agamas\*

*Agamas* form the basic texts of the *Saiva*, *Vaishnava*, *Shakta* and such traditions. The *Agamas* too are revered as *Shrutis* and are passed down and preserved from generation to generation.

They form the primary source of guidance and authority for rituals, yogic practices and temple construction.

The *Shaiva Agamas* have *Shiva* as the Ultimate Reality. The *Vaishnava-Agamas* (*Pancharatra* and *Vaikhanasas Samhitas*) revere *Vishnu* as the Ultimate Reality. The *Shakta-Agamas* (*Tantras*) venerate *Shakti* as the Ultimate Reality. *Shakti* is the consort of *Shiva* and is considered as the Divine Mother of the universe (*Shaktas*). The *Agamas* of each sect elaborate upon the religious and philosophical teachings of the respective sect.

The *Agamas* explain in detail the means and methods of worshipping the deity, the approach to the worship and other specifics related to the worship. Each *Agama* may be said to consist of



four parts dealing with four topics as follows: (i) the philosophical and spiritual knowledge, (ii) the Yoga and the mental discipline, (iii) construction of temples and for sculpting and carving the figures of deities, and (iv) rules pertaining to the observances of religious rites, rituals, and festivals.

### Purânâs<sup>3</sup>

*Purânâs* are an integral part of the Sanskrit literature and have most significance in the context of Indian tradition. This literature is highly useful to the history, in presenting the principles of *Vedic* knowledge, elegantly.

व शूरा महेष्वासा श्रीमार्जुनसमा यधि अ  
 रथः युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महा  
 शूरा महेष्वासा श्रीमार्जुनसमा यधि अत्र  
 युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः  
 व शूरा महेष्वासा श्रीमार्जुनसमा यधि अ  
 रथः युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महा  
 शूरा महेष्वासा श्रीमार्जुनसमा यधि अत्र  
 युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः

Fig. 1.10: Puranas

The *Purânâs* are written to understand the *Vedic* principles in a classified and ingenious manner. And their inherent compatibility with the *Vedas* is the testimony of this.

We find the description of the following topics in the *Puranas* - *Sarga* (*srishitirachana*, the creation of creation) the canto, *pratisarga* (*pralaya*, the delusion) counter-canto, *vamsa*, the clan, *vamsânucharita*, the history of clan, *manvamtara*, the commencement of the tenure of Manu. We also find the mention of the four *Purusarthas*, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kâma*, *mokshâ*. In the *Purânâs*, we find the subjects related to the *dharmas*, the *Darshanas* and *adhyâtma*

(spirituality) through vivid *âkhyânâs*, the fables, adding a flavour to them. The use of similes adds flavour to the subject matter in an elegant style. In the *Purânâs*, utmost importance is given for righteous behaviour and philanthropy.

Philanthropy is the causative factor for sacred life and sadism for sinful one.

The *Purânâs* are 18 in number. All these 18 *Puranas* are supposed to be written by Maharishi Vedavyasa though there are some quarters who believe that the *Purânâs* were authored by different scholars. In the *Vishnu Purâna*, the names of the *Purânâs* and their order are given as follows:

1	<i>Brahma Purâna</i>	10 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
2	<i>Padma Purâna</i>	44 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
3	<i>Vishnu Purâna</i>	23 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
4	<i>Siva Purâna</i>	24 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
5	<i>Bhâgavata Purâna</i>	18 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
6	<i>Nârada Purâna</i>	25 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
7	<i>Mârkaandeya Purâna</i>	9 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
8	<i>Agni Purâna</i>	15 thousand 4 hundred <i>slokâs</i>
9	<i>Bhavishtya Purâna</i>	14 thousand 5 hundred <i>slokâs</i>
10	<i>Brahmavaivarta Purâna</i>	18 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
11	<i>Linga Purâna</i>	11 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
12	<i>Varâha Purâna</i>	24 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
13	<i>Skanda Purâna</i>	81 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
14	<i>Vâmana Purâna</i>	10 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
15	<i>Kurma Purâna</i>	17 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
16	<i>Matsya Purâna</i>	14 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
17	<i>Garuda Purâna</i>	19 thousand <i>slokâs</i>
18	<i>Brahmânda Purâna</i>	12 thousand <i>slokâs</i>

Table 1.1: 18 *Purânâs*

<sup>3</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



According to the traditional scholars, the above order of the *Purânās* is intentional. The central predicable subject is Creation and Delusion. For the purpose of creation, *Brahma* had taken a form of the *Brahman*. So, he is the origin of Creation.

## 1.6 Shad Darshanas

‘Philosophy’<sup>4</sup> in the Indian context is referred to as ‘*Darshana*’, which means “vision or insight into Reality”. The term, ‘Indian Philosophy’, refers to ‘philosophies born in India’. Accordingly there are two branches of Indian Philosophy: the *aastika* or the orthodox branch and the *naastika* or the unorthodox branch. The orthodox branch comprises the following six philosophies: *Mimamsa* (*purva mimamsa*), *Vedanta* (*uttara mimamsa*), *Nyaya*, *Vaisesika*, *Samkhya* and *Yoga*. These six philosophies are referred to as ‘*Shad Darshana*’. The unorthodox branch of Indian philosophy consists of philosophies like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, *Charvaka* (pure materialists), etc. The *aastika* or orthodox branch is so called because the philosophies herein accept the authority of the *Vedas*. The *naastika* or unorthodox branch of philosophies do not accept the authority of the *Vedas*.

The *Shad Darshanas* according to Indian Philosophy are:

<i>Darsana</i>	Originator
<i>Purva Mimamsa</i>	Sage Jaimini
<i>Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa</i>	Sage Badarayana or Ved Vyasa
<i>Nyaya</i>	Sage Gautama
<i>Vaisesika</i>	Sage Kanada
<i>Samkhya</i>	Sage Kapila
<i>Yoga</i>	Sage Patanjali

**Table 1.2:** The *Shad Darshanas*

<sup>4</sup> Philosophy, a Greek word, is made up of two words ‘philo’ meaning ‘love’ and ‘sophia’ meaning ‘wisdom’. Hence, ‘philosophy’ means ‘love of wisdom’.



### Notes

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



### Did You Know?

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

Each of the six schools of philosophy is discussed individually below.

### Nyaya – founded by Gautama Rishi



**Fig. 1.11:** Gautama Rishi

*Nyaya Darshana* is mainly concerned with rules of logic. It is a theistic philosophy and pluralistic at that. God creates the universe from the eternally existing atoms in order to ensure that due deserts are provided to the souls based on their *karma* to



be acquired in the human life and the means of receiving this knowledge.

### Vaisesika – founded by Kanada Rishi



Fig. 1.12: Kanada Rishi

The Vaisesika School of Philosophy followed the *Nyaya* system very closely, and hence experts in the study of philosophy often combine the two schools as *Nyaya-Vaisesika*. The *Vaisesika* system recognizes seven *Padarthas* or categories which are — substance, quality, action, generality, particularity, relation of inherence and non-existence. The *Vaisesika* system is known for its atomic theory of evolution and for its handling of particulars (*visheshas*). The *Vaisesika* goal of life, in accordance with other philosophies, is to become free from *Karma* by renouncing worldly desires and attain liberation by true knowledge.

### Sankhya – founded by Kapila Muni



Fig. 1.13: Kapila Muni

This school is referred to as *Samkhya* or *Sankhya*. It means right knowledge or numbers. Accordingly, this philosophy is understood as the philosophy of right knowledge or philosophy of numbers or categories. There are twenty-five categories or principles in *Samkhya*.

*Samkhya* philosophy is termed as an uncompromising dualism, atheistic realism and spiritual pluralism. *Samkhya* is a dualistic philosophy. Its two metaphysical principles are the *purusha* and *prakriti*. *Purusha* is the principle of consciousness or pure consciousness. *Prakriti* is the principle of matter. Both *purusha* and *prakriti* are eternal and independent of each other. The entire universe is born out of the *Prakriti* or the primordial matter. *Purusha*, on the other hand, is as innumerable as there are living beings. *Purusha* is all-pervading and eternal. *Sankhya* believes in the creation of the universe as a result of the union between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. The existence of God or the Supreme Being is not directly asserted.

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

The *Sankhya* School of Philosophy accepts only three *Pramanas* as the valid means of acquiring knowledge. These are *Pratyaksha* or direct perception, *Anumana* or inference and *Shabda* or verbal testimony.

*Samkhya* philosophy propounds *kaivalya* or liberation from the birth-life-death-rebirth cycle as the goal of human life. This liberation



results in ultimate freedom for man from all the miseries and sufferings of human life. Pain or sufferings come from three different sources – *adhyatmic* (intra-organic or from one's own body and mind), *adbibhautic* (extra-organic or from outside oneself but from the natural world) and *adbidaivic* (extra-organic but from the supernatural world). The griefs of *adhyatmika* can be of two types, namely physical and mental. Physical causes are when the body suffers from the imbalances of *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* or the differences of food and habits. Mental causes refer to desires, rage, jealousy, hatred and love like passion that cause grief. The *adbibhautika* griefs are caused by other animals like snake, scorpion stings and injuries by the other wild animals, or beaten by someone or suffering from abusive words, come under this category. Examples for *adbidaivika* sufferings are floods due to rain and snowfall, lightning strikes, earthquakes and such other abnormal natural disasters. The *Samkhyā Darshana* starts with the assertion that existing remedies for these pains and sufferings have twin inadequacies of improper diagnosis and temporary solutions. It proposes that only Right Knowledge, which distinguishes our real self (*purusa* or consciousness) from our unreal self (*prakṛiti*), is the remedy which is free from the above-mentioned two inadequacies. *Kaivalya* is the state where all the three types of grief cease. What *Samkhyā* Philosophy propounds, Yoga practices realize. Therefore *Samkhyā* and Yoga always go together. *Samkhyā* is considered as theoretical Yoga and Yoga is considered as practical *Samkhyā*.

### Yoga – founded by Maharshi Patanjali

Yoga *Darshana*, as represented by *Yoga Sūtras*, was written by Maharshi Patanjali. Thus, the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali is considered as the basic text of Yoga. These *sūtras* propound the *aṣṭāṅga* Yoga or Yoga with eight limbs.

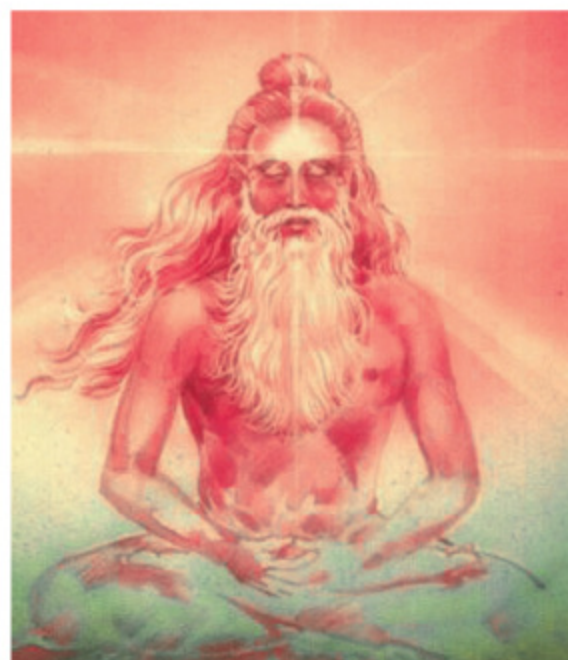


Fig. 1.14: Maharishi Patanjali

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

*Samadhi Pada* .... 51 *sūtras*

*Sādhana Pada* ..... 55 *sūtras*

*Vibhūti Pada* .... 55 *sūtras*

*Kaivalya Pada* ... 34 *sūtras*.

Total ... 195 *sūtras*.

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

The eight limbs are *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhara*, *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. These eight limbs or parts or steps are hierarchical in nature, i.e. one leading to the other higher *āṅga*. *Samādhi* is the goal wherein (in *Dharma* *megha Samādhi*) *Kaivalya* happens.

The *Samadhi Pada* starts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> *sūtra* with the definition of Yoga as “*chittavṛtti nirodha*”. It then gives the 5 *vṛttis*, namely *pramāṇa* (right knowledge), *viprayāsa* (false knowledge), *vikalpa* (fancy or imagination), *nidra* (deep sleep) and *smṛiti* (memory). Among other things, the *Samadhi Pada* deals with *abhyāsa* (practice), *Vairāgya* (detachment), *Samprajñata* and *Asamprajñata* states, *Ishvara* and



*Ishvara pranidhan*, *Pranava Japa* (Om chanting), *Antarayas* (obstacles on the path of Yoga) and their accompaniments (*Vikshepa Sababhuvas*), *ek tatva abhyasa* (practice of one principle) to remove the accompaniments, *chitta prasada* methods and *manas sthithi nibandhinin* techniques to control / pacify / calm the mind, the concept and types of *Samapatti*, *Sabija Samadhi*, *Prajna* or intuition, *Nirbeeja Samadhi*, etc.

The *Sadhana Pada* starts with *Kriya Yoga* (*tapa*, *swadhyaya* and *ishvara pranidhan*) and among other things deals with *Kleshas* (*avidya*, *asmita*, *raga*, *dvesha* and *abhinivesha*), methods (*kriya yoga*, *dhyana* and *pratiprasava*) for eliminating the *kleshas*, the four-fold (*heya*, *heya-hetu*, *hana* and *hana upaya*) way of looking at pain and removal of the same, the *yamas* as *mahavratas* or great vows, the *niyamas*, the technique of *pratipakshe bhavana* for confronting negative thoughts that come in mind, *asana* – definition, methodology and effect, *pranayama* – definition, types and effects, *pratyahar*, etc.

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

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

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

*Yama* – restraints/observances which govern the social equation of an individual. They are five

in number, viz., *Ahimsa* – non-harming, *Satya* – truthfulness, *Asteya* – non-robbing, *Brahmacharya* – moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures, and *Aparigraha*, non-possessiveness.

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

*Āsanās* – body postures. Patanjali says posture which is stable and comfortable is an *asana*.

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

*Pratyāhāra*– refers to withdrawal of sense organs from their pre-occupation with their respective sense objects.

*Dhāraṇa*– concentration. This refers to confining our mind to one region or object.

*Dhyāna*– meditation. Here the mind becomes successful in concentration and this results in a long lasting experience of only one object.

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

## Purva Mimamsa – founded by Maharishi Jaimini

The word *Mimamsa* means to ‘investigate’ thoroughly. The *Mimamsa Darshana* is a philosophy for rationally justifying the performance of rituals. It is a book of rituals. Its principle of



*apoorva* maintains and assures the fruits of rituals performed. The highest goal of life for man is to attain heaven, a state that transcends the earthly life. The school considers the *Vedas* as the highest authority to the extent of even relegating God to a position of non-importance.



Fig. 1.15: Maharishi Jaimini

The *Mimamsa* system is also called as *Poorva-Mimamsa*, because it deals with the earlier parts of the *Vedas*. As against this, the *Vedanta* is referred to as *Uttara Mimamsa* because it deals with the latter part of the *Vedas*, i.e., the *Upanishads*. The main goal of the *Mimamsa* philosophy is its insistence on a life of rituals as justified by the *Vedas*. These rituals are capable of leading man to his highest goal, i.e., heaven.

### Vedanta or Uttara Mimamsa

The philosophical system of *Uttara Mimamsa* does not have a specific founder since it is a conglomeration of different schools of thought, the three main schools being *Advaita*, *Visishtadvaita* and *Dvaita*. The philosophical system of *Uttara Mimamsa* is also known as the *Vedanta*. All these three schools of the *Vedanta* have different teachers. Adi Shankaracharya is the originator of the *Advaita* system of the *Vedanta*

philosophy; Ramanujacharya is the architect of the *Visishtadvaita* system of the *Vedanta*; while, Madhvacharya is the head of the *Dvaita* system of the *Vedanta* philosophy. It is important to note that all the three teachers accepted the *Vedas* as a valid compendium of knowledge.



Fig. 1.16: Sage Badarayana



### Notes

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

## 1.7 Paths of Yoga

**Note:** This section should be read along with sections 2.13 The *Bhagavad Gita*. (Page no. 87)

Just as there are distinct philosophies based on different interpretations of the scriptures in world religions, there are different schools of Yoga as propounded by different texts or different Masters. The goal of Yoga may be one, but the paths prescribed for its attainment are innumerable. Therefore, human beings with different



personalities find the presence of different yogic paths for their spiritual unfoldment.

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

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

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

## Jnana Yoga

*Jnana* in Sanskrit means “knowledge”. Hence, *Jnana* Yoga is also called the Yoga or Path of Knowledge. It shows the path of self-realization through discerning the eternal from the non-eternal or ephemeral, the Real from the unreal or illusory. In *Samkhya* Yoga, there is the discrimination (*viveka*) between the *Purusa* (the principle of consciousness) and the *Prakerti* (the principle of matter). It is a practice of discrimination between the Self and the non-self (body-mind-intellect-ego complex) until the real Self is realized in the moment of liberation. *Jnana* Yoga is typically characteristic of the non-dualistic (*Advaita*) *Vedantic* path. In all Indian philosophies, the mind is considered as an obstacle in realizing the Self. Hence, the mind has to be transcended and it has to be done by using the mind itself. The principal techniques of this path are contemplation and meditation.

*Jnana* Yoga is known as the “treacherous path”, and is so deep that it is commonly the last path achieved/undertaken.



### Caution

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

Taking into account the philosophy of the *Vedanta*, the *Jnana Yogi* uses his mind to inquire into its own nature. Just like we perceive the space inside and outside a glass as different, we see ourselves as separate from God. *Jnana* Yoga leads the practitioner to experience his unity with God or the Supreme Reality directly by breaking the glass, dissolving the veils of ignorance.



Fig. 1.17: *Jnana* Yogi

## Stages of *Jnana*\*

### Qualifications of a student of the *Vedanta*, i.e., of a seeker of Reality

The qualities and qualifications required for success in the study of the *Vedanta* (i.e., for knowledge of Reality) are collectively called as



“the *Sadhana Chatustaya*” – the four *Sadbanas*. These are as follows:

### *Viveka*\*

I. ***Viveka*\*** (*Nityanityavastu Viveka*): **Discrimination** between the real and the unreal, the eternal and the ephemeral. The firm conviction that *Brahman* only is real and this universe of names and forms is unreal.

II. ***Viaragya*** (*Ihaamutrāphalābhogavirāga*): **Non-attachment** to the fruits of the actions done, either for here or hereinafter, which results in the absence of any desire for transitory enjoyments. Patanjali defines *vairagya* as “*dr̥ṣṭānusravikavishayavitr̥ṣṇasya vāseekārasamjñāna vairāgyam*”. It means having detachment towards objects seen (this worldly objects) and heard (other worldly objects). Also, this detachment is consciously practised and does not happen through compulsion, or by default.

III. ***Shatsampathi*** (*Sama adi shatka sampathi*): **Six attributes** beginning with *Sama*, which are as follows:

1. ***Shama* (Calmness)**: Resting of the mind steadfastly on the God or *Brahman* after having detached itself from various sense-objects by consistently directing the mind to dwell on their defects.
2. ***Dama* (Self-control)**: Turning both *Jnanendriyas* (senses of knowledge) and *Karmendriyas* (senses of action) away from their *Vishayas*, i.e., the respective sense objects.
3. ***Uparati* (Detachment or self-withdrawal)**: This leads the mind to cease to be affected by the external world of objects.
4. ***Titiksha* (Endurance or patience)**: Developing a state of mind that allows

patient bearing of all afflictions without any grievance or complaint, least worrying to redress them.

5. ***Shraddha* (Faith and sincerity)**: A firm conviction in the Scriptures and the Guru.

6. ***Samadhan* (Not losing sight of goal)**: Constant concentration of the intellect on the ever-pure *Brahman*.

IV. ***Mumukshutva*** or yearning for freedom: The intense desire to free oneself (by realizing one’s true nature) from all bondages – from egoism to the identification with the body – bondages super-imposed by *Avidya* or ignorance (Sustained urge to attain liberation).

### Stages of Jnana Yoga Practice\*

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

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

- i. *Sravana* (listening or absorbing the instructions),
  - ii. *Manana* (reflection or contemplation involving reasoning and arriving at intellectual convictions) and,
  - iii. *Nidhidhyasana* (repeated meditation on convictions/truths accepted or implementation of convictions or attaining oneness with Reality).
- ❖ *Sravana* is quite significant in the spiritual path. It refers to the absorption of spiritual information / knowledge from various sources, like scriptures, *Guru* and Wise people.



- ❖ ‘*Manana*’ is contemplating or reflecting repeatedly over what one has heard, removing doubts if there are any and arriving at one’s own convictions. Just like an animal chews the swallowed food, a disciplined person is supposed to recollect the heard subject within his mind again and again.
- ❖ *Nidhidhyāsana* refers to Meditation wherein one realizes the truth of convictions arrived at by *manana*. In general terms, *nidhidhyāsana* may also be understood as implementation of convictions/truths attained through *manana*.

## Bhakti Yoga

Unconditional and intense love for God is *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* Yoga is the Yoga or Path of devotion. In it there is an emphasis on opening of the heart to divine love, an opportunity for the union of lover (the *yogi*) with the beloved (the divine). This devotion often manifests itself into singing *bhajans* or holy songs or chanting of praises of the divinity. Sometimes this may happen as ecstatic repetition of the names of the Lord in gatherings called *kirtans*. *Bhakti* Yoga does not tell you where to direct that devotion, or the specific methods by which you should do it. It is left to the devotee’s personal preferences.



### Note

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

In modern times, *bhakti* or devotion is many a times seen as the easiest path of Yoga to be adopted. It involves complete surrendering of the *bhakta* or devotee at the altar of the Lord. This surrendering helps the devotee to channelize his/ her emotions

rather than getting rid of them. Thus, there happens sublimation of emotions rather than suppression. The path of devotion involves love of and devotion towards a personal God (*ishta devata*). Techniques of *bhakti* are innumerable like for example prayers, repetitive chanting/ *japa* of *mantras* or names of Gods, relating/ listening to stories of God and saints, *pujas*, ceremonies and rituals, etc. *Bhakti* involves a mystical relationship with God who may be variously considered as a friend, a child, a mother or a teacher. The greatest benefit of devotion or *bhakti* is that it rids the aspirant of ego and egocentricity, as it involves self-surrendering. *Bhakti* automatically develops humility and the feeling of being an instrument in the hands of God.



Fig. 1.18: *Bhakti* Yoga

## Navavidha Bhakti\*

Though *bhakti* is endowed as a result of God’s grace, yet it can be cultivated by us through constant practice of engaging ourselves in meaningful devotional activities that can bring us closer to the Lord for his grace to flow through us. *Srimad Bhagavatham* elaborates the nine forms of *bhakti* or *Navavidha Bhakti* which, if cultivated and practiced regularly, will no doubt lead us closer to the Lord. A devotee can practise any of these nine



forms of *bhakti*, whichever suits his/her nature best. These nine forms of devotion are as follows:

1. *Shravanam* – Hearing the chanting of names and glories of the Lord. It means ‘listening’ to the divine glories of the Lord about His form, qualities, *leelas* or divine plays, His miracles, and His spoken words like in *The Bhagavad Gita*.
2. *Keertanam* – Chanting His glories. It involves ‘singing’ the praises of the Lord’s infinite powers with intense devotion. Chanting God’s name brings relief to the devotee’s mind.
3. *Smaranam* – Remembering the Lord. It involves constant ‘remembrance’ of the lord, feeling His presence all the time in all places in all tasks. It is to lose oneself in the contemplation of His qualities.
4. *Paada sevanam* – Serving the Lord’s feet or his sanctified sandals (*Paduka*). In honouring the feet of the Lord, the devotee surrenders himself completely at the lotus feet of the Lord.
5. *Archanam* – Worshiping the Lord. It is the complete “offering” in the form of *pujas* or ritualistic worship, chanting *mantras*, singing *bhajans*, offering *arati*, food, flowers and even clothes to the Supreme. Love expresses in giving and as love for the Supreme Lord grows in the heart of the devotee, he/she naturally wants to offer his/her best. By doing this, the devotee derives inner satisfaction and inspiration.
6. *Vandanam* – Saluting the Lord. It is offering obeisance unto the Lord. This may involve bowing before the Lord or touching the feet of the Lord. Gradually, this leads to devotee seeing the favourite form of His Lord everywhere and all the time.
7. *Daasyam* – Involves adopting the role of a Servant of the Lord. There is complete subjugation of the ego here. In course of time, the devotee sees himself also as a servant of the other devotees of the Lord. The ego subjugation happens without any sense of inferiority. *Daasyam* refers to a heartfelt yearning to be of personal service to the Supreme. It is the ultimate expression of humility, yet it is bold in its aspiration to such a lofty position.
8. *Sakhyam* – Developing friendship with the Lord. In this form of worship/ devotion the devotee adopts the role of a friend (*sakhaa*) of the Lord.
9. *Aatma Nivedanam* – This involves total surrender of oneself to the Lord. Even the smallest trace of ego is eliminated in this form of devotion to the Lord and his Will. Completely filled with devotion to God, the devotee gains the knowledge of his true self in this form of devotion where the devotee and the lord become one.

### Qualities of a Bhakta<sup>5</sup>

Four types of devotees are described in *The Bhagavad Gita* in the following sloka:

*Chaturvidhā bhajantae mām janâb sukrtinorjuna,  
Ârto jijnâsurarthârtthee jnânee cha bharatarshabha  
(sreemadbhagavadgeeta Bhagvad Gita.7.16)*

They are accordingly:

- *Ârta* (the distressed)
- *Jijnâsu* (the curious or the inquisitive)
- *Arthârtthee* (the desirer of wealth)
- *Jnâni* (he, who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute).

<sup>5</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



Further The *Bhagvad Gita* says,

*Samtushtah satatam yogee yatâtmâ drdhanischayah,*

*Mayyarpitamanobuddhiryo madbhaktah sa mae priyah.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita* 12.14)

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

*Anapaekshah Suchirdakesha udâseeno gatavyathah,*

*Sarvârambhaparitâgêe yo madbhaktah sa mae priyah.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita* 12.16)

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

*Yo na hrshyati na dvaeshti na sochati na kâmkshati,*

*Subhâsubhâparitâgêe Bhaktimânyah sa mae priyah.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita* 12.17)

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

*Samah Satrau cha mitrae cha tathâ mânâpamânayoh,*

*Seetoshnasukhadubkhaeshu samah samgavivarjitah.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita*.12.18)

“One who has equal feeling with his friends as well as enemies, who is equipoised in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress Taken from 54, is very dear to Me”.

*Tulyanindâstutirmaunee santushto yaena kaenachit,*

*Anikaetah sthiramatirbhaktirmânmae priyo narah.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita* 12.19)

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

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

### Mantra Japa - Chanting of Mantras in Bhakti Yoga\*<sup>6</sup>

Chanting of *mantras* or prayers has been an essential element of all religions and disciplines throughout the ages. When there is collective chanting in groups, group dynamics take over. Different and distracting thoughts are replaced by one thought and one rhythm in all minds. All minds become one. This oneness creates an intense energy field which invigorates all people present there. Chanting leads to the merger of all senses into one, and finally the transcendence of the mind happens. *Mantra* chanting can be considered as the Yoga of sound.

Sanskrit chants in particular have a very profound effect on the consciousness. They activate subtle energy centres, which produce a soothing, purifying and energizing effect.

*Kirtan*, the practice of chanting, is perhaps the most important technique in *Bhakti* Yoga. It can be considered the primary ingredient in the path of *Bhakti* Yoga. *Kirtan* is also referred to as *sankirtan*, *keertan*, *bhajan*, chanting, sacred chants or yoga chants. This style of devotional remembrance uses singing to engross the mind in devotion. *Kirtan* brings relief to the mind and body. Chanting is an aide in meditation that helps us channelize our devotional feelings. The sound of the *Kirtan* also helps to eliminate any external disturbances in our environment that may be a distraction in the path of our meditation.

<sup>6</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar,



## Karma Yoga

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



### Did You Know?

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

## Karma Siddhānta, the Doctrine of Karma\*

‘*Karma*’ refers to ‘actions’ which include both overt actions and inner experiences. Each and every *karma* begets an immediate result called *karma phala* (e.g., quenching of thirst when we drink a glass of juice) and leaves behind a *samskara* or deep impression on the mind (*chitta*). The scriptures say even Gods cannot escape the *karma phala*. But the real problem maker for man is the *samskara*. Man becomes free from the *samskara* only after it has fetched its fruit/consequences. This fruit or consequence may be in the form of another *karma* (action or experience) which in its turn creates a further *samskara* and a further *karma*. In other words, whatever *karma* we perform, we have to pay for the consequences – enjoy the pleasure if the *karma* is good or suffer the pain if the *karma* is bad. The Law of *Karma* can be formulated in Biblical terms as, “As you sow, so shall you reap”. If you plant mango seeds, only mangoes will grow on the tree and not apples!

The Law of *Karma* is cosmic justice. It is infallible and inviolable.

Till the time we are free of our *samskaras*, we have to take birth again and again. The never ending chain of *karma – samskara – karma* keeps us bound in the infinite cycle of birth-life-death-rebirth. And if we grant along with all Indian philosophies that human life is full of sufferings, we can easily infer that the *karma samskaras* are the reason for our suffering endlessly.

Since there is not a single moment in our 24 hours of the day when we don’t perform a *karma*, we can surmise the mammoth task in front of us if we are to become permanently free from miseries and sufferings in life.

Patanjali says in his *Yoga Sutras* (PYS: II – S13), “*Sati mule tat vipakaba jati ayuhu bhogaba*” meaning the life-species in which we are born, the life-span and the bundle of our experiences (pleasurable and painful) in life are dependent upon our stored *samskaras*.

The essence of *Karma* Yoga is the performance of an action without accumulating *samskaras*. It is in this sense that we find the definition of Yoga in the *Bhagvad Gita* as, “*Karmasu kaushalam*” i.e., “Skill or dexterity in action”. The skill here refers to the capacity of performing an action without generating *samskaras*.

Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that unmotivated actions are the only actions which do not generate *samskaras*. This fact brings about the significance in *Karma* Yoga of “*nishkama karma*”, i.e., *karma* without expectations of fruits from the action. Such an action can happen when we perform duty for duty’s sake. Arjuna being a *kshatriya*, it is his duty to fight. When he wages the war as his duty without expecting anything in return, he becomes free from the chain of *Karma-samskara-karma*.



## Karma\*

The choice for a human being is not between action (*karma*) and inaction (*akarma*) because we cannot remain without acting. The choice is regarding what sort of actions to perform and with what attitude or approach. *Karma* is of three types for common human beings:

- Virtuous or auspicious, i.e., *shukla karma*
- Non-virtuous or inauspicious, i.e., *krishna karma*. This may also be called as *vikarma*.
- A mixture of the two.

Every human being impulsively engages in doing *Karma*, the act, with the body or with the speech or with the mind. All men are forced to act helplessly according to the impulses born of the modes of material nature; therefore no one can refrain from doing something, not even for a moment.

Then how is it possible to get away from the constant cycle of *Karma* and *karma phala/karma samskara*, the act and its result? This does not seem to be possible.

A few very significant and popular slokas in The *Bhagvad Gita* with regard to *Karma* Yoga are as follows:

*Karmanyaevâdhikâraṣṭae mā phalaeshu kadâchana,  
Mā karmaphalabaeturbhur mā tae samgostvakarmani.*  
(The *Bhagvad Gita* 2.47)

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

*Yogasthna kuru karmāni samgam tyaktvā dhanamjaya ,  
Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhutvā samatvam Yoga uchyaata.*  
(The *Bhagvad Gita* 2.48).

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

*Muktasamgonabamvâdee dbrtyutsâhasamanvitna,  
Siddhyasiddhyornirvikârna kartâ sâttvika uchyaata.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita*.18.26)

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

## Characteristics of a Sthitaprajna<sup>7</sup>

A *sthithaprajna* is one who is firmly established in the knowledge/realization of the Reality.

What are the characteristics of such a *sthithaprajna*?

*Sthitaprajnasya kâ bhâshâ samâdhisthaya kaesava,  
Sthitadbee kim prabhâshaeta kimâseeta vrajaeta kim.*

(The *Bhagvad Gita*. 2.54)

Arjuna asks: What are the characteristics of one whose consciousness is thus merged in Transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk? While replying to this question, in the next sloka-

Lord Krishna replies:

*Prajahâti yadâ kâmansarvân pārtha manogatân,  
Âtmanyaevâtmanâ tushtab sthitaprajnastadochyatae .*

(The *Bhagvad Gita* 2.55).

“O Partha, when a man gives up all kinds of desires that arise from mental concoctions, and

<sup>7</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



when his mind finds satisfaction in the Self alone (that means, for one's self satisfaction, one does not depend on external sources), then he is said to be in 'pure transcendental consciousness' (*sthita prajnavân*).

*Du khaeshvanudvignamanâh sukhaeshu vigatasprha,  
Veetarâgabhayakrodhab sthitadbeermuniruchyatae.*

(The Bhagvad Gita. 2/56).

“One who is not disturbed by the miseries in the turbulent times and who does not immerse in pleasures in joyful times and who is free from attachments, free from all fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind”.

*Yadâ samharatae châyam kurmomgâneeva sarvasah,  
Inrdiyâneenrdiyârthaebhyastasya prajnâ pratishthitâ.*

(The Bhagvad Gita. 2.58).

“One who is able to withdraw his senses from sensory objects, as the tortoise draws its limbs within the shell, is to be understood as truly situated in divine knowledge”.

*Vihâya kâmânyah sarvânpumâmscharati nihsprhab,  
Nirmamo nirahamkârah sa sântimadhigachhati*

(The Bhagvad Gita. 2.71)

“A person who has given up all desires of the gratification of senses, who lives free from desires, who has given up all sense of the proprietorship and is devoid of *aham*, the false ego, he alone can attain the Ultimate bliss”.

## Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga means Royal or Kingly Yoga. It is the supposed climax of all different paths of Yoga. In fact, *Svatmarama* in his *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says that *Hatha Yoga* is a staircase leading to *Raja Yoga*. *Raja Yoga* here may not refer to a particular form of Yoga but to the ultimate state of Self-realization. Thanks to Swami Vivekananda, *Raja Yoga* came to be understood as Yoga propounded

by Maharishi Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras*. Patanjali's Yoga is mind-oriented and meditation is the highest practice therein. The final goal of all forms of Yoga is to have healthy body and mind in order to transcend the mind and go to the no-mind state or *unmani* or *manonmani avastha* wherein there is the experience of Self-realization. In Maharishi Patanjali's words, it is “*Tada Drashthu Svarupe Avasthanam*” PYS I – S3. *Raja Yoga* or *Ashtanga Yoga* of Patanjali aims at restraining to the point of cessation of mental modifications so that Real Self within is restored to its pristine purity.

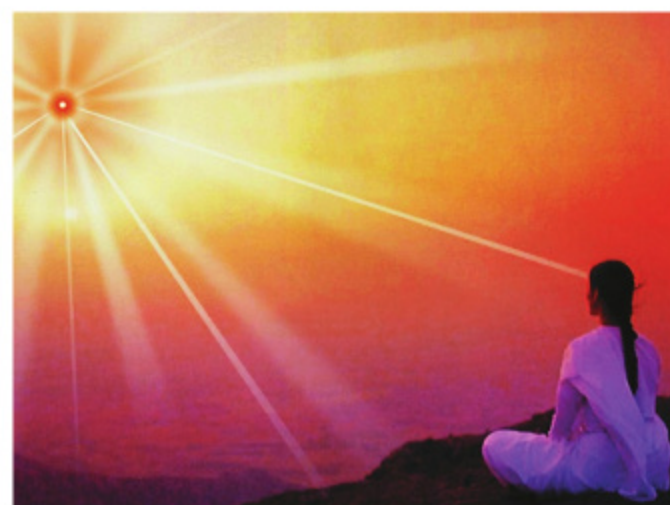


Fig. 1.19: Raja Yoga



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

## Hatha Yoga

*Hatha Yoga* is sourced from *Tantra*. It is a form of Yoga which is more physically oriented. Most *Hatha Yoga* systems begin with purification practices (*shodhana kriyas* or *shat kriyas*) as against *Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga* which begins with *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. There are several texts of *Hatha Yoga* like *Svatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Sage



*Gheranda's Gheranda Sambhita, Goraksha Sambhita of Gorakshanath, Shiv Sambhita, Yoga Rathnavali, Yoga Taravali, etc.*



**Fig. 1.20:** *Hatha Yoga*

The word *hatha* is a *Sanskrit* combination of the words “*ha*” (sun) and “*tha*” (moon), which is in itself a union of the opposites. Qualities associated with the sun are heat, masculinity, and effort, while moon’s qualities are coolness, femininity and surrender. *Hatha* Yoga is designed to help us bring pairs of opposites together in our heart, mind, and body for the purpose of discovering something deeper about the nature of our existence.

The practice of *Hatha* Yoga brings together apparent opposites into a harmonious union, to find a place in the middle. This middle place is a gateway into a whole new world for most of us. It is a place where we discover wonderful new things about our abilities and possibilities for our lives.

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

In *Hatha* Yoga, the term *Hatha* is symbolically used. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* says,

*‘Hakâra keertitah suryasya Thakâra chanrda uchryatae,’*  
*Suryâ chanrdamarsauyogâd hathayogo nigadyatae.*

The term ‘*hatha*’ is the union of two letters, viz., ‘*ha*’ and ‘*tha*’. Here ‘*ha*’ means the sun, ‘*tha*’ means moon. *Pingala nâdi* represents the sun or *surya svar*

and *idâ nâdi*, the moon or *Candra Svar*. ‘*Hatha*’ means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon or the *pingala* and *ida* in us. With this union, the *kundalini*, which is in latent state, would be awakened and through the *sushumna* it starts upward journey. It crosses all the *Shtatcakerâs*, while heading towards *sahasrâra*. There it unites with Brahman in *Brahma randhra* (the hole of *Brahman*) and stays forever there in the world of bliss. This is the union of *Atma* and *paramatma*. With this union, the ignorance of the practitioner would be eliminated and he then glimpses the radiance of divine enlightenment. All the sufferings would be uprooted. Therefore, this state of the union is called ‘yoga’. This is the valid sense of ‘*Hatha yoga*.’ The aim of *Hatha* yoga is to control the body and mind. This is because, without strengthening and making the body and mind healthy, no spiritual endeavour gets accomplished.

To make this union possible, the following four *angas* or parts of practice are described in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*:

- *Âsanâ*
- *Prânâyâma*
- *Mudra*
- *Nâdânusandhâna*

In *Ghaeranda sambhita*, the practices of *Hatha* Yoga are described in this way:

*Sodhanam drdhatâschaiva sthairyâ dbairyâ cha lâghavam,*  
*Pratyaksham cha nirliptascha ghatarya saptasâdhanam.*

The seven *angas* of *Gheranda Sambhita* with their effects are as follows:

- *Kriyas* for purification of the body (*shodhana*)
- *Asanas* for strengthening of the body (*drdhabata*)
- *Mudras* for bringing steadiness to the body (*sthairyam*)
- *Pratyahar* for calming and composing the body, i.e., for attaining courage (*dbairyam*)



- *Pranayama* for lightness of the body (*laghavam*)
- *Dhyana* for direct perception (*pratyaksha*)
- *Samadhi* for isolation (*nirlipta*)

*Ghaeramda samhita* says:

*shatkarmāṇāṁ sodbhanam cha āsanaena bhavaeda drdham,  
Mudrayā sthīratā chaiva pratyāhāraena dbeeratā.*

*Prāṇāyāmāllāghavam cha dhyānātrpratyakṣamātmanah,  
Samādhinā nirliptam cha muktirāeva na samsayah.*

(*Ghaeramda samhita*-1-10-11)

The purification happens by the regular performance of six purification practices. *Asanās*, the postures, give strength to the body. *Mudrās* provide steadiness. *Pratyāhāra* bestows calmness. *Prāṇāyāma* imparts lightness or *Laghima*. *Dhyāna*, the meditation, gives perception of self. *Samādhi* gives *Nirliptata*, the isolation, which is verily salvation. By practicing this method, one becomes free from all kinds of bondages and gets salvation. There is no doubt about it.

## Mantra Yoga

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



**Fig. 1.21:** *Mantra* Yoga

Therefore, ‘*mantra*’ stands for that which protects the mind. *Mantra* is a thought or intention expressed as sound. A *mantra* is a sacred utterance or sound charged with psycho-spiritual power. The power

or potency of the *mantra* is what is exploded and attained by *mantra* yoga. Yogis use *mantras* to achieve deep states of meditation and to invoke specific states of consciousness. The most recognized and important *mantra* is the sound of *Om*.



### Example

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

## 1.8 Principles of Yoga and Yogic Practices

Yoga is an ancient Indian cultural heritage, a spirituality, which has a history of more than 5000 years. Beginners are easily overwhelmed by the vastness and richness of Yoga’s practice, philosophy and literature. There are a few underlying principles of Yoga, which once grasped, provide easier access to all the numerous aspects of Yoga. The *Yamas* (*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*) and *Niyamas* (*shaucha*, *santosha*, *tapa*, *swadhyaya* and *ishvarapranidhan*) may be considered as basic and general principles of yoga to be followed by each and every person.



### Caution

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





### Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is commonly believed that Yoga cannot be practised during menstrual periods. On the contrary, practising specific *asanas* under the guidance of a yoga expert are a great way to prevent and stop menstrual cramps. It relaxes and rejuvenates the mind, and it is also helpful in overcoming mood swings commonly experienced during this period.

Yogic practices aim at attaining a healthy body and mind by following the philosophy and practice of Yoga.

The Yogic principles are related to *āhāra* (food), *vihāra* (relaxation and recreation) *ācāra* (conduct and attitudes), and *vicāra* (thinking and *vyavahāra* (actions)). In other words, one should have yogic food, involve oneself in right activities for recreation, have right attitude and try to experience positive emotions, and should have right thinking and perform right actions.

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

The three cardinal principles of Yoga are:

#### A. Proper relaxation

**(i) Relax the body:** When the body is relaxed, it works most efficiently if one harnesses one's energies in the right direction.

While resting all the muscles get relaxed and the joints remain loose. One can then conserve one's energy as the metabolic rate becomes very low.

During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body.

In crucial times, under conditions of high stress, the functions of organs coordinate so nicely that the necessary energy gets evoked and flows profusely into those regions which need them most.

The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation.

This 'stamina' through harnessing of inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such coordination can be effectively accomplished by yogic practices.

It is in this area of application of yoga that the specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen, acrobats, gymnasts, etc., have become keenly interested in yoga.

#### (ii) Slow down your breath to rhythmic phase

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

**(iii) Calm Down your Mind:** Yoga by its systematic and conscious process calms the mind down. Erases the weaknesses in the mind and builds will power into it. In such a mind each obstacle is conceived as a challenge and there arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation.

Bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfastness becomes the core. Such a person takes up challenges in life with marvellous sobriety and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission.

**B. Proper exercise:** The rationale for exercise stems from the fact that our physical body is



naturally meant for movement and exercise. They stretch and tone the muscles and ligaments, enhance the flexibility of the spine and the joints, and improve blood circulation. Practising these Yoga poses makes your body relaxed, give you more strength and energy, and rejuvenate the various systems of the body.

- C. Proper diet:** What you eat affects your body as well as your mind. Improper diet leads to mental inefficiency and blocks spiritual awareness. Over-eating on the other hand leads to obesity and consequent ailments. A well-balanced proper diet nourishes both mind and body. It should be based on natural foods. Proper diet in Yoga is referred to as *mitahar* meaning eating in moderation and proper. The food we eat should sustain our body. It should keep the body light and supple, the mind calm, and it should also help in maintaining a strong immune system.
- D. Positive thinking and meditation:** The way we think highly affects our way of life. Practice keeping a positive outlook in life. This will facilitate peace of mind. Positive thinking and meditation helps you remove negative thoughts and put your mind under perfect control.
- E. Sufficient sleep:** It is essential to sleep well and adequately.
- F. Recreation:** “All work and no play make Jack a dull boy” is an old adage. It is necessary in yoga too to keep the mind entertained and relaxed by involving in proper and healthy diversions, hobbies, etc.

## Pancha Koshas

*Pancha koshas* means five sheaths or layers or covers. The theory of *Pancha koshas* finds mention in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*. According to this theory the human personality is made up of five sheaths

which cover the Real Self (*atman* or *purusa* or soul) of the human being.

1. ***Annamaya kosha* or *kosha* made of food or the food body:** This is the outermost sheath, the most superficial sheath and is represented by our physical body made up of the five elements and is constituted by the food that we eat. *Kriyas*, *asanas* and *pranayama* go towards strengthening this sheath.
2. ***Pranamaya kosha* or the energy body:** This is the pranic sheath which energises or invigorates all other sheaths. It is responsible for all the physiological and mental functions. It is mapped onto the physical body and extends slightly beyond the physical body. This extension is called the aura. The *pranamaya kosha* is in between the *annamaya kosha* (body) and *manomaya kosha* (mind). Thus, *prana* or our breath is the bridge between the body and the mind. *Pranayama* practices strengthen the *pranamaya kosha*.
3. ***Maniomaya kosha* or the mental body:** This is the sheath of our thinking, feelings and emotions. It is comprised of *manas*, *ahamkar* and the lower *Buddhi*. *Pranayama* and *Pratyahar* practices cater to this *kosha*.
4. ***Vijnanamaya kosha* or the wisdom/higher intellect body:** This is the region where refined/higher level thinking and intuition starts happening. Meditation practices cater to this sheath.
5. ***Anandamaya kosha* or the bliss body:** This is the sheath closest to our Real Self. Spirituality reigns here. Transcending the body, mind and intellect leads to bliss. Meditation leads to this sheath.

Personality development progresses on the inward path from *Annamaya kosha* to *Anandamaya kosha*. But even the *Anandamaya kosha* has to be transcended for Self-realization to take place.



## Pancha Bhootâs<sup>\*8</sup>

The *Pancha bhootas* are the five elements of *akasa* (sky or space), *vayu* (air), *agni* (fire), *jala* or *aap* (water) and *prithvi* (earth). Each and every substance contains five elements in it, one of them being the principal element. Based on this importance of primary elements, the substances which contain the *Âkâsa* (sky) element are known as *Âkâsiya Dravya* (substance), the substances which contain the *Vayu* (air) element are known as *Vayavya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Agni* (fire) element are known as *Tejas Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Jala* (water) element are known as *Âpya Dravya*, the substances which contain the *Prithvi* (earth) element are known as *Parthiva Dravya*. The following are the chief characteristics of the five elements:

1. **Âkâsa dravya:** These substances are smooth, light, minute, flat, and have sound quality. These foods provide softness, lightness, fluctuation to the body and profusion of holes.
2. **Vâyavya dravya:** These substances are lighter, cooler, dry, and coarse in quality. In a nutshell, these substances provide coarseness, speed and agility to the body.
3. **Taijasa dravya:** *Taijasa dravyâs* have properties, like heat, pungency, lightness, dryness, greaseless and form. By using the ingredients having these qualities, one can have inflammation in the body, metabolic energy, digestive energy, charisma, colour and glow.
4. **Âpya/jala dravya:** These substances are fluid, cold, heavy, oily, soft, blunt, dense and juice. These are called watery substances.
5. **Pârthiva dravya:** These substances represent qualities like being massive, solid, heavy, gross, oil-free, hard and smelly. With the

consumption of these substances, one gets obesity, strength, and increase in body weight.

Our physical/gross body is made up of these five elements. The hard part of the body is constructed with the element of the earth and the liquid part of the body is built with the element of water. The empty part is built with the element of the sky, and also partially with the element of air. The food we eat is digested and transformed into *rasa* - juice, *rakta* - blood, *asti* - bones, *meda* - fats, *masma* - muscles and *majja* - bone marrow and *shukra* - semen. Apart from these functions, different kinds of physical and mental activities are managed by the *Vayu* or the air element.

## Pancha Prânâs\*

'Prana' is a *Sanskrit* word derived from two roots: 'pra', which is a prefix used to denote 'constancy' and 'na' means 'movement'. Therefore, 'prana' is a force in 'constant motion', like a vibration moving to and fro. It is the life force, the elan vital. *Prana* has two aspects: the individual aspect, which is responsible for all the functions (physical and mental) of the human beings and the cosmic aspect (*kundalini*), which is very subtle and is dormant, unused most of the time by most human beings.

*Prana* is the vital force that enlivens the human body. Though the term 'prana' is synonymously used with 'breath', it actually is much wider in scope than mere 'breath'. The breath actually is only the physical manifestation of *prana*. Breath is the grossest, most tangible aspect of *prana*. *Prana* is the energy, the principle responsible for life in any being.

*Prana* is only one, but depending upon the function it performs, it is given different names. The one primary or *mukhya Prana* is given five names according to the different function they perform. Accordingly, we have the *Pancha Pranas* or the five

<sup>8</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



main *pranas*. *Pranamaya kosha* is composed of five *pranas*. The *Panch Pranas* are as follows:

1. **Prana:** This *prana* provides continuous replenishment of the basic energy for life and living. It governs the reception/consumption of food, air, water, sensory impressions and mental experiences. *Prana* operates between the head and the navel, the pranic center in the human body.
2. **Apana:** This *prana* is responsible for excretion of waste products. It governs all forms of excretion – excretion of stool and urine, expulsion of semen, menstrual fluid and fetus, carbon dioxide through breath, elimination of negative sensory, emotional and mental experiences. *Apana* forms the basis of our immune functions at all levels. *Apana* operates from the navel down to the *mooladhara chakra* or perineal region.
3. **Udana:** This *prana* is responsible for so-called higher functions in man. It enables consciousness to evolve. It governs growth of the body, ability to stand, speech, effort, enthusiasm and will. It is our main positive energy in life. *Udana* operates from the navel up to the head.
4. **Samana:** This *prana* is mainly responsible for digestion. It helps in digestion at all levels – of food in the gastrointestinal tract, of air in the lungs in the absorption of oxygen, and of sensory, emotional and mental experiences in the mind. *Samana* operates mainly in the navel region.
5. **Vyana:** This *prana* is responsible for circulation. At the physical level it governs the circulation of food, water and oxygen and at the mental level emotions and thoughts. In doing so, it helps all other *pranas*. *Vyana* operates throughout the body.

Thus, *prana* governs ingestion, *samana* governs digestion, *vyana* governs circulation of nutrients,

*Udana* governs the release of positive energy, and *Apana* governs excretion. In other words it can be said that *Prana* brings in fuel, *Samana* transforms this fuel into energy, *Vyana* circulates this energy and *Apana* expels waste materials and *Udana* governs the generated positive energy and determines the work that the machine is able to do.

In addition to above *Pancha Prana*, there are 5 *upapranas* or minor *pranas* which are as follows:

**Naga prana** responsible for hiccoughs, burps and regurgitation

**Kurma prana** responsible for blinking of eyes

**Krikal prana** responsible for hunger, thirst, sneezing and coughing

**Devadatta prana** responsible for yawning, drowsiness and sleep

**Dhanajaya prana** which lingers around the body immediately after death

## Ashta Chakras

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

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



In yoga and, in fact, in most Indian systems, the *chakras* are symbolized by lotus flowers. This symbolization is significant because lotus is the only flower which exists at three different levels: mud, water and air. Mud indicates ignorance. From ignorance the stem grows upward through water implying efforts and finally the flower grows on the surface experiencing the freshness and freedom, air and direct light of the sun (illumination). The lotus signifies man's growth from ignorance to awareness and ignorance through the *chakras* to higher states of awareness culminating in the blossoming of the full potential/flower. The *chakras* are represented by lotuses of different colours and different numbers of petals.

The ascent of consciousness through the *chakras* is a representation of the spiritual path. It is an ascent from animalhood to manhood to godhood.

## The Main Chakras

Despite there being innumerable *chakras* only a few of them are utilized in yogic practices. The main *chakras* are *Mooladhara*, *Swadishdana*, *Manipura*, *Anabata*, *Vishuddhi*, *Ajna* and *Sahasrara*. Factually speaking *Sahasrara* is not really a *chakra*. It transcends all the *chakras*.

## Chakra Locations

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

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

*Mooladhara chakra* is at the **floor of the perineum**.

*Swadhishtana chakra* is **at the coccyx**.

*Manipura chakra* is **in the spinal area behind the navel**.

*Anabata chakra* is **in the spinal area behind the heart**.

*Vishuddhi chakra* is **in the spinal area behind the throat**.

*Ajna chakra* is **in the centre of the brain behind the point between the eyebrows**.

*Sahasrara* is **at the top of the head**. It is not actually a *chakra* but the culmination of the evolution of all the other six *chakras*.

The *chakras* can also be **classified according to guna domination**. Accordingly there are three classes. They are as follows:

1. *Mooladhara* and *Swadhishtana* are predominantly negative or *tamasic* in nature. Here one's actions tend to be *adharmaic*, disharmonious and not according to one's real nature.
2. *Manipura* and *Anabata* are a mixture of both positive and negative qualities, *dharmic* and *adharmaic*. Here, *rajas* pre-dominates.
3. *Vishuddhi* and *Ajna* are predominantly *sattvic*/positive. Actions and thoughts are *dharmic* in nature.

Progress from *tamas* to *sattva* indicates progress in spiritual life and a movement towards a more illumined state of mind.

At each *chakra*, the expression of the individual will vary according to his/her individual nature. Further, at all *chakras* all actions can and will be performed. The difference lies not in the actions but the attitude and understanding of the mind which varies according to the *chakras*. It is the identification and the inner attitude which characterizes each *chakra* and this is what transforms one's life. The *chakra* at which one operates can change throughout the day. Yoga aims at raising the level and predominantly operating at higher *chakra* levels/awareness.

The distinguishing characteristics of the *chakras* are given in the following charts:

Chakras	Ascending Order	Physical Location	Characteristics	Lotus Symbol	Granthi (Psychic knot)	Guna Quality
<i>Mooladhara</i>	1	Perineum	Security, Material possessions	4 petals, deep red	<i>Brabma</i>	<i>Tamas</i>
<i>Swadhishtana</i>	2	Coccyx	Joy, Sexuality	6 petals, vermillion	-	<i>Tamas</i>
<i>Manipura</i>	3	Navel	Power, action, self-esteem	10 petals, bright yellow	-	<i>Rajas</i>
<i>Anabata</i>	4	Heart	Love	12 petals, blue	<i>Vishnu</i>	<i>Rajas</i>
<i>Vishuddhi</i>	5	Throat	Communication	16 petals, violet	-	<i>Sattva</i>
<i>Ajna</i>	6	Top of Spine	Witnessing, Psychic abilities	2 petals, silver blue	<i>Rudra</i>	<i>Sattva</i>
<i>Sahasrara</i>	7	Crown of Head	Enlightenment	1000 petals, all colours	-	-

**Table 1.3:** Chakra Characteristics

Chakras	Loka (Levels of Awareness)	Kosha (Sheath)	Tatva (Element)	Bija Mantra (Seed Sound)	Musical Note (Indian)
<i>Mooladhara</i>	<i>Bhu</i>	<i>Annamaya</i>	Earth	<i>Lam</i>	<i>Sa</i>
<i>Swadhishtana</i>	<i>Bhuvah</i>	<i>Annamaya</i>	Water	<i>Wam</i>	<i>Re</i>
<i>Manipura</i>	<i>Swahab</i>	<i>Annamaya</i>	Fire	<i>Ram</i>	<i>Ga</i>
<i>Anabata</i>	<i>Maha</i>	<i>Pranamaya</i>	Air	<i>Yam</i>	<i>Ma</i>
<i>Vishuddhi</i>	<i>Janab</i>	<i>Pranamaya</i>	Ether	<i>Ham</i>	<i>Pa</i>
<i>Ajna</i>	<i>Tapab</i>	<i>Manomaya and Vijnanamaya</i>	-	<i>AUM</i>	<i>Dha</i>
<i>Sahasrara</i>	<i>Satyam</i>	<i>Anandamaya</i>	-	-	<i>Sa (*)</i>

**Table 1.4:** Chakra Characteristics

**Note:** In addition to these seven *chakras*, one more important *chakra* is *Bindu* or *Lalana* or *Mans Chakra*. Thereby making the total number of *chakras* as Eight (*Ashta Chakra*). (For details of *Bindu* or *Lalana* or *Mans Chakra* please refer page no. 78.)

(\*) The musical note 'N' belongs to *Bindu*.



### Concept of Nadis (Ida, Pingala and Sushumna)

As already seen, *prana* is responsible for all the functions in the human body. For any activity to take place anywhere in the body, the movement of *prana* is necessary. In the human body, *prana* is said to move through channels or passages called *nadis*. These are conceptual channels sometimes synonymously referred to nerves. According to ancient texts, there is not a single part of the body, howsoever small it may be, which is not connected by one *nadi* or the other. When all these *nadis* are purified, there is said to be perfect health.

The word '*nadi*' comes from the Sanskrit root '*nada*' meaning 'flow'. Thus, *nadis* are subtle flows of vibration. The *Upanishads* explain that the *nadis* penetrate the body from the soles of the feet to the crown of the head, carrying *prana*, the breath of life.

Yogic texts differ in the calculation of the exact number of *nadis*. According to *Charandas*, there are about 72,864 *nadis* in the human body, all of them sourced at the navel region; the *Prapanchasara Tantra* mentions the number as 3,00,000; while the *Shiv Sambhita* states that 3,50,000 *nadis* emerge from the navel centre. These *nadis* are described as thin strand-like threads (similar to those of the lotus stem) which emanate from the spinal column. Out of these, three (*Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*) are most important for Yoga. Out of these three, *Sushumna* is the most important.

In addition to the three *nadis* mentioned above, seven other *nadis* are named. These ten *nadis* connect to the 'doorways' leading in and out of the body. Of these the *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* are the most important. They are like high voltage wires which conduct the energy to the substations or *chakras*. The others are as follows:

*Gandhari* – goes to the left eye

*Hasti Jiva* – goes to the right eye

*Yashaswini* – goes to the left ear

*Pusha* – goes to the right ear

*Shoora gandha* – goes to the nose (to mid-brow)

*Alambusha* – goes to the mouth

*Kuhu* – connected to the reproductive organs

A few other known *nadis* are *Shankhini* (going to anus), *Saraswati* (going to the tongue), *Krikal* (going to sex organs), and *Varuni*, and *Vishwadari* (going to lower extremities) and *Chitra* (part of *Sushumna*).

Now, we shall consider the three most important *nadis*.

### Ida

The *Ida* starts from the left side of the base of the spine (*Muladhara*) and traveling spirally upwards over the spinal column reaches the opening of the left nostril. It is referred to as the negative channel, the channel of *manas shakti* or mental force.

It is primarily responsible for all those activities which are anabolic or constructive in nature, which conserve energy and give a cooling effect to the body.

It is symbolically denoted as the female aspect of the energy with a blue colour and is represented by the moon as its symbol and deity. So, it is also called as the *Chandra nadi*. This *nadi* gets involved in the *Chandra bhedan pranayama*.

*Ida* is associated with the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS), which creates a general state of relaxation, lowering the outer body temperature.

Inhaling through the left nostril brings about a cooling, relaxing and introverting experience.

### Pingala

This *nadi* starts from the right side of the base of the spine (*Muladhara*) and traveling spirally upwards reaches the opening of the right nostril. The *Pingala* *nadi* is referred to as the positive channel, the channel of the dynamic energy of *prana shakti*.

It is responsible for all those activities, which are catabolic or destructive in nature, which consume energy and generate heat in the body.



It is symbolically denoted as the male aspect of the energy with a red colour and represented by the sun as the symbol and deity. So, it is called the *Surya nadi*. It gets involved in the *suryabhedan pranayama*.

The *Pingala nadi* is associated with the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). Thus, *Pingala* is said to be energizing, heating and extroverting.

## Sushumna

This *nadi* starts from the base of the spine (*Muladhar*) and travelling straight upwards along the spinal column up to the opening at the base of the skull reaches the brain.

Its essence is *Agni* and hence it is '*agni svarup*'.

Under normal circumstances *prana* is not able to operate through this *nadi*. When through yogic *sadhana*, *prana* is made to enter and move upwards through the *Sushumna*, it is known as the rising of the *Kundalini* power. When *prana* reaches the highest point at the crown of the head (*sahasrar*), Self-realization is supposed to have taken place.

The real purpose of the *Sushumna* is to channelize spiritual energy, which is a greater force than either *manas* or *prana shakti*. The *Hatha Pradipika* explains that the *Sushumna* remains closed owing to the impurities of the *nadis*.

The meeting points of *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* on the spinal column are called as *chakras*. These are variously described as nodal points or plexuses or concentration of nerve fibres. The starting point at the base of the spine (*Muladhar Chakra*) where all these three *nadis* originate is called *Mukta Triveni*. At the sixth *chakra* (*Ajna Chakra*) the three *nadis* culminate meeting for the last time. This point is also called as the *Yukta Triveni*. From here, the *Ida* and *Pingala* move to the left and right nostrils respectively whereas the *Sushumna* moves towards the last *chakra* called the *Sahasrar Chakra* at the crown of the head.

It is observed that after approximately every  $2\frac{1}{2}$  *ghatikas* (i.e., 60 minutes) breathing happens through a different nostril. During *chandra svar* breathing takes place through left nostril and during *surya svar* breathing takes place through right nostril. Only during *sushumna svar*, breathing takes place simultaneously through both nostrils. This usually happens during the *sandhya samaya*. Hence, *sadhana* is more preferable and advisable during *sandhya kala* or *samay*.

## Purusharthas

*Purusharthas* literally mean 'aims of man' or 'what men live for'. This concept and an elaboration of it give in detail the priorities that human beings should have towards various goals or ends or values in life. Actually, it prescribes the right way of living for man.

The concept of *Purusharthas* recognizes the various urges inherent in man. All actions of man arise out of the necessity of satisfying these urges. If man has to live a meaningful life all these urges or desires have to be taken care. The concept of *Purusharthas* clearly regulates human life ensuring that all inherent human needs and wants are satisfied in the most amicable manner so that man is prepared to realize the ultimate goal of his life.

The *Purusharthas* are four in number. They are:

**Dharma** (righteousness),

**Artha** (wealth or material means),

**Kama** (satisfaction of [sensual] desires) and

**Moksha** (freedom or spiritual liberation).

*Artha* refers to the material resources necessary for satisfaction of desires, i.e., *kama*. Thus, *artha* is necessary for *kama*. *Artha* is not an end in itself but only a means for *kama*. For example, money (*artha*) is desirable only because of its purchasing power, for buying goods, which will satisfy needs and afford satisfaction (*kama*). Further, *artha* and the consequent *kama* are universal in that all men



are subjected to it. In this sense, *artha* and *kama* are secular values. *Artha* and *kama* cannot be negated totally. Some of these urges men share with animals too, for example, the urge for sex, hunger and thirst. These urges need to be adequately dealt with, either by satisfying or sublimating them.

In contrast to *artha* and *kama*, the *purusharthas* of *dharma* and *moksha* are exclusively applicable to human beings, i.e., not being shared with animals. *Dharma* or righteousness is the moral value of the four *Purusharthas*. It lends authenticity to the other two. *Dharma* discriminates between right and wrong, good and bad, in human actions and ends. *Dharma* is the regulating principle. The choice of desires and the methodology adopted in satisfying these desires are regulated by *dharma*. The pursuit of *artha* and *kama* are not bad; they may even be termed necessary – but then the principles of *dharma* should not be sacrificed. *Dharma* thus helps one to discriminate between the good and the bad, and lead a good life.

*Moksha* or liberation (spiritual) is higher than the *dharma* too. It is the *parama purushartha*. It is the ultimate goal of human life. *Artha* and *kama* are necessary, and they have to be in accordance with *dharmic* principles. But why so? Because only then can one be on the path of liberation. *Moksha* lends credence to *dharma*. *Dharma* by itself cannot be the summum bonum of life. It is the means to attain the final goal of *moksha* or *nirvana* or *kaivalya*.

## 1.9 Teachings of Prominent Gurus and Yogis\*

‘Gu’ means ‘darkness’; ‘ru’ means ‘light’; ‘Guru’ is one who removes the darkness of ignorance through the light of knowledge. *Guru* is a *Sanskrit* term that connotes someone who is a “teacher, guide or master” of certain knowledge. In pan-Indian traditions, *guru* is someone more than a teacher, traditionally a reverential figure to the

student, with the *guru* serving as a “counsellor, who helps shape values, imparts experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, sets an example in life, is a source of inspiration, and who helps in the unfolding of spirituality of a student.” The term also refers to a mentor, one’s spiritual guide, who helps in the discovery of the same potentialities that the *guru* has himself already realized.

### Concept of Guru and Lineage\*

Yoga is a system of self-development and self-refinement perfected over the centuries by sages and saints. It is a system that finally leads to actualizing one’s potential for Self-realization. From time immemorial, the science and secret of Yoga has always been imparted orally and directly from *Guru* to *shishya*, from teacher to student. In the Indian tradition, *Guru* is considered as God incarnate and the doorway to liberation. To meet the *Guru* is to meet God. The *Guru* is the living ideal of a perfect person and a human example to be emulated. The *Guru* is the remover of darkness of all doubts and ignorance and instrumental in transforming all the *samskaras*. The *Guru* awakens the spiritual energy in the disciple and provides illumination for the disciple to see with his inner eye. All spiritual knowledge was transmitted by means of the *Guru-Parampara* (*parampara* means tradition). It is transmitted directly from *Guru* to disciple. The *Guru’s* grace provides the light on the path; travelling has to be done by the disciple.



Fig. 1.22: *Guru Shishya Parampara*



All classical schools of Yoga trace their lineage from the present teacher to the first teacher by going backwards in time. The significance of a lineage to any tradition rests in the fact that due to different personalities of different *Gurus* in the lineage, the teachings over time automatically become modified and developed in subtle breadth and depth. The presence of lineage also guarantees that the knowledge transmitted retains its essence and does not get diluted due to biases and prejudices of the egos of different *Gurus*.

## Contributions of Different Yoga Gurus\*<sup>9</sup>

### Maharishi Patanjali\*

In different ancient treatises Patanjali is called as *Gomrdeeya*, *Gonikâputra*, *Nâganâtha*, *Abitapati*, *Phanibhrt*, *Saesharâja*, *Saeshâbi*, *Curnikara*, *Padakâra*. Three treatises are now available written by Patanjali – *Sâmavedeeya nidânasutra*, *Yoga sutrâs*, *Mahâbhâshya*. Many other treatises support the statement of a *Patanjali Sâkha* (branch) in *Sâmaveda*. One Patanjali school of thought is seen in *Yoga sutrâs*, which is interpreted by *Maharshi Vyasa*. *Vâchaspati Misra* has taken 4/10 *sloka* of *Vyâsabhâshya* (commentary of sage *Vyasa*) of *yogadarsana* in his *Teekâ* (interpretation) of *nyâyavartikatâtparya*, as it is in the same words giving his interpretation. In that context, he recollected the name of Patanjali. It is considered that *Carakasambhita* of *âyurveda* has also been refined by Maharishi Patanjali. According to *Krishna Charitra* written by Samudragupta, the great sage Patanjali added some Yogas in *Caraka*. *Cakrapâni*, *punyarâj* and *Bhojadeva*, etc., so many writers consider that *Mahâbhâshya*, *Yoga sutrâs* and *Carakasambhita* are written by one person. Maxmüller extracted a content which asserts that the writer of *yogadarsana* and *Nidâna sutrâs* is one.

*Vidyayodriktagunatayâ bhumâvamaratâm gatah,*

*Patanjalirmunivaro namasyo vidushâm sada.*  
*Krtam yaena vyâkaranabhâshya vachanasodhanam,*  
*Dharmâviyuktâscharakae yogâ rogaushab krtâ.*  
*Mahânandamayam kâvyam yogadarsanâdbhutam,*  
*Yogavyâkhyânabhutam tad rachitam cittadoshabam.*

This means, ‘Maharishi Patanjali, the greatest author of *Mahabhashya*, added some righteous yoga practices in *Caraka Sambhita* and this illustrator of the treasures of yoga interpreted ‘*Mahânandakâvyâ*’. With this description, it is quite evident that the author of *Mahabhashya* is associated with *Caraka Sambhita* and *Yogadarsana*. The essays of *Cakrapâni* are not totally fictitious ones. This Patanjali is the same person who was an ancient sage, who wrote *Pâtanjala Shâkha*, *Nidân Sutra* and *yogadarsana*. In *Matsya Purâna*, there is a description of *Ângirasa Patanjali*. Panini read the term Patanjali in 2.4.69 *Upakâdi Gana*. The author of *Mahabhashya* is a different person. He is a more modern person than him. The great saint Patanjali has interpreted marvellously. What is known as ‘*Mahabhashya*’ in Sanskrit language. In this treatise, the expertise of Patanjali in presenting the complex subject of grammar in a lucid and ingenious style is clearly seen. The language of the treatise is so simple and effortless, that it had won applause from one and all. Actually, this treatise is the only one of its kind which belongs to not only the Grammar tradition, but also, to the entire Sanskrit literature. This is an authentic treatise of *Mahabhashya Pânineeya vyâkaran*, grammar.

All the grammarians bow before this treatise. Even the modern grammarians contradict in their opinions regarding *sutra*, *vârtika* whereas regarding *Mahabhashya* they consider that it is an authentic treatise. Maharishi Patanjali is supposed to have been born in the second century BC. Even though his birth place was *Gonâradya* (Goniya), he lived at *Nâgakur*, in *Kâsi*. He was a great disciple of Panini,

\* Part of the information has been sourced from “Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar”.



a teacher of grammar. He was considered as an incarnation of *Seshanāga*, which is the reason that even now the residents of *Kāsi* share the pictures of *nāga*, the great serpent, with everybody, saying that 'Take this younger teacher's photo', 'Take this elder teacher's photo'. Maharishi Patanjali was a great physician also. Some people opine that he was the author of *Caraka Sambita*. His another book *Yoga sūtrās* is eulogized by one and all even now. Maharishi Patanjali existed in the reign of Pushyaitra Sunga (195-142 BC). The famous king Bhoja complimented him saying that Patanjali was not only a physician, who treats physically, he is a psychiatrist also. See this *sloka*:

*Yogaena Cittasya padaena vāchām malam Sareerasya cha  
vaidyakaena,  
Yopākarātam pravaram muneenām Patanjalinim  
prāṁjalirānatosmi.*

Salutations for that holy man, Patanjali, who through his work on yoga purified the mind, through his work on *ayurveda* purified the body and through his work on grammar purified the speech/language.

Patanjali, the author of *Mahabbhāshya* lived in *Kāsi mandal*, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.. He is the last saint of *munitraya*, the trio of sacred saints. Patanjali is the highest honourable personality after Panini. By interpreting *Panini vyakarana*, a treatise on grammar, he established her self. He was a genius. He was well versed with all the scriptures other than the *vyakarana*, grammar. His word was considered as the final word, if the issue was debatable. He closely observed the lifestyle of the common man. Therefore, the grammar of *Mahabbhāshya* is not only a treatise of *vyakarana*, grammar, but also, an encyclopedia of the world of ancient times.

*Vidyāranya Swami*, an ancient saint, considered that *Govinda Pādartha* is the form of Patanjali in his treatise, *sankara digvijay adi sankarāchārya*. Thus, Patanjali was associated with the *advaita vedanta* sect

also. To determine the time period of Patanjali, the incident of *Aswamedha yajna*, that was performed by the Brahman King, who was the founder of *Kanva* clan is used. This incident had occurred in the middle period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE or 150 BCE.

### Sankarāchārya\*

Sankarāchārya is considered as the incarnation of God Sankara. There are differences of opinion regarding the period of his birth. Some sources claim that he was born in between the period of 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE and 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Generally, it is accepted that he was born in the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD in Kaladi village, which is situated at the banks of river Purna, in Kerala Region. His father's name was Shivaguru and his Mother's name was Subhadra. He was born on *Vaisākha Shukla panchami*. He was the only child of his parents.

Many incidents happened in the childhood of Sankara, which had proved that he was a form of great soul and he was the incarnation of Lord Shiva. He learned to express his ideas in his mother tongue when he was hardly one year of age. When he was two years old, he learned by heart all the stories of the *Purānās*. At the age of three, he got his *cudākarma samskāra* (hair cut, one of the rites for a human being). After that his father passed away. When he was five years old, *Yajnopaveeta Samskāra* (*Upanayana*) was done to him and then he was sent to his teacher's place. He was there for less than the two years but by that time he had learnt the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* completely. He was a genius. All the teachers used to admire him for his unusual shrewdness in learning things. When he completed his studies, Sankara wanted to take *sanyāsa*, renunciation. But his mother did not allow him to do that. One day, when she went to the river to bathe, he also accompanied her. While they were bathing, a crocodile seized Sankara! Seeing her son's life was at risk, Sankara's mother became apprehensive. Then Sankara told



his mother that if she allowed him to take *sanyāsa*, the crocodile would let him off. His mother, to save her son's life, gave him permission to take *sanyāsa*. This way he took permission from his mother and at once that crocodile left its grip. Thus Sankara left his house at the age of eight. While he was leaving the house, he promised his mother that he would come back and stay at her side, at the time of her death. After that, Sankara went to the banks of river Narmada.

There he took *sanyāsa deeksha*, the oath of renunciation, from Swami Govind Bhagavatpada. He followed the path, taught by his teacher. And in a short period, he became a great holy person, who had achieved the miraculous powers of a yogi. Pleased by his performance, his teacher permitted him to go to Varanasi, to interpret the *Vedānta Sutrās*, the principles of philosophy. Thus, Sankara went to Varanasi. As soon as he stepped into the city, he became very popular. Many students approached him to become his disciples. Thus, he not only taught his disciples but also started writing interpretations.

Sankarāchārya wrote many treatises. Some of the famous treatises authored by him are the *Bhāshyas* (commentaries) - the interpretation of *Brahmasutrās*, *Upanishads*, *Sāreerikabhāshya*, *Geetābhāshya*, *Vishnu sahasranāmam*, *Lalitā trisati*, *Pamcheekaranam*, *Sivamamjari*, *Ānanda labari*, *Saundarya labari*, etc.

Sankarāchārya was a pioneer of the concept of *Advaita*. This path is mainly the path of *jnāna*, the wisdom. He insisted specially to achieve inner purity. He said that each and every path emphasized purification of the heart and mind. When the inner layers get purified, the truth reflects in the soul. He says that the decisions of an impure intellect and a dirty mind are surely deceptive. Attaining pure knowledge only leads to ultimate bliss. Therefore, whatever may be the

path you choose, your mind and heart should get purified through it and at last you should reach the ultimate abode.

He visited all parts of India to promote and establish the significance of the *Vedās*. At that time the *Vedās* were differently interpreted by the Jain and Buddhist scholars. Therefore, Sri Adi Sankarāchārya disproved those erroneous concepts. He established four *mutts* on all four sides of India. He toured extensively and promoted the concept of *Advaita*, the concept of non-dualism. He went to Darbhanga to establish his thought system and met Mandana Mishra. There he defeated him in debate. According to their agreement, Mandana Mishra became a disciple *sanyāsi*. Sri Sankarāchārya wanted to eliminate the ghastly practices of that time and establish the righteous equanimity. Hence he established four *mutts* to enlighten the whole of India- *Govardhana Mutt* in jagannāthapuri in the East, *Sārādā Mutt* at Dwarika in the West, *Jyotirmutt* at Badrika Ashram in the north, and *Sārādā Mutt* at Sringeri. *Sringeri Mutt* is also known as Sarada Peeth, and the *Dwarika Mutt*, Kāli Mutt.

The *Advaita* Philosophy is absolute monism. There is only one Truth, one Reality, i.e., Brahman. All beings are embodied souls. The soul or *atman* is essentially the same as *Brahman*. We are not able to see the Oneness and instead perceive the multitude of name and form (*nama/rupa*) because of our *avidya* or ignorance of Reality. Once this *avidya* goes, we realize our true nature which is the same as *Brahman*. That is *moksha* or ultimate freedom from birth-life-death-rebirth cycle, freedom from miseries and sufferings of human life.

### Sri Aurobindo\*

There are only a few rare personalities, who have graced this earth and left their footprints for future generations to follow.



Aurobindo is one of them. Maharishi Aurobindo led all his life as an ascetic. With his incessant endeavours, he re-established the honour of India. Sri Aurobindo was one of the brilliant prolific spiritual Indian personalities. Sri Aurobindo Ghose, a great yogi, philosopher and poet, was born in Kolkata on 15th August, 1872. At the age of seven, he was sent to London for studies.



Fig. 1.23: Sri Aurobindo

He used to study philosophical scriptures. In 1903, Sri Aurobindo went to Kasi. There he experienced the ecstasy of *Brahman* at a mountain called Sankarâchârya at a place known as Sulaimân. In 1904 also he used to do yoga exercises. In 1908, Sri Aurobindo met a Maharashtrian yogi, namely, Sri Vishnu Bhaskar Lele. Following the path guided by Sri Lele, he was successful in winning over his *mana*, the mind. The ultimate brahman was visualized by him beyond time and space.

He was under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Dayananda Saraswati. He aspired to establish the lost spiritual grandeur of India once again. According to him the Vedic Culture is par excellence. He used to propagate this message throughout his life. He interpreted *Srimad Bhavad Geeta*. According to the age-old Vedic tradition, he founded the Pondicherry Ashram. Influenced by his spiritual personality, Sri Mâ, who was a French lady, came to resided in Pondicherry. After the *nirvana*, the final journey, of Sri Aurobindo, she took up the responsibilities of the Ashram and served it.

The philosophy of Aurobindo starts from the ancient sages that behind all this evident world and universe, there exists 'one power'. That is called '*satya swarupa*', a true form of '*cetana*', consciousness. That is the unique and permanent '*atman*'. All entities are the integrated parts of the 'one *atman*', but as they exist separately, with a kind of separation of *cetana*, the conscience, they could know themselves their ownself '*atman*' and '*satya swarupa*' in *mana*, mind, *prâna*, the life and *sharira*, the body. But through psychological means, this *bhedâtmakea cetana*, the seperated-conscience, can be kept away and one's own form, the *atma-swarupa*, can be visualized and know *bhagavatta*, the divineness, which enlightens one and the whole universe.

Sri Aurobindo wrote 68 books in all on different spheres of spirituality. One of his best publications is *The Life Divine*, focusing upon theoretical aspects of Yoga. The other one is *Synthesis of Yoga* which throws light on practical facets of Yoga. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, located in Pondicherry is a great seat of spiritual practice, known as Integral Yoga. Auroville or Aurobindo Ashram is spreading the spirit of universal brotherhood.

### Swami Vivekananda\*

Swami Vivekananda, the pioneer social reformer whose contribution in the upliftment of Yoga in western world through discussion and lectures is worthwhile.



Fig. 1.24: Swami Vivekananda



He was also known as a great socio-spiritual leader and an exponent of Yoga. He stressed upon the theory that how negative thoughts are eliminated out of psychological, physiological and emotional balance through Yoga. His philosophical work on Yoga is:

- *Raja* Yoga
- *Karma* Yoga
- *Bhakti* Yoga
- *Jnana* Yoga

His important publications on Yoga include:

- *Karma* Yoga
- *Raja* Yoga
- Vedanta Philosophy: Lectures on *Jnana* Yoga, Addresses on *Bhakti* Yoga, *Bhakti* Yoga, *Jnana* Yoga and *Raja* Yoga

Swami Vivekananda was born on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1863 (according to Hindu calendar, on Makarasankranti 1920), in Calcutta, in a Kayastha family. His childhood name was Narendranath Dutta. His father Viswanath Dutta was a famous lawyer in Calcutta High Court. Viswanath Dutta was highly influenced by the English culture. He wanted that his son Narendra should also follow his footprints. But Narendra's mother Bhuvaneshwari Devi was a great lady, she was always busy with righteous activities. She used to spend all the time in the worship of Lord Shiva. He had a burning desire to meet God, who was hymned by scriptures, and the whole world. He went to *Brahma Samaj* also in this quest. But he was not satisfied anywhere. He determined to promote the *Vedanta*, the philosophy, and Yoga, in the west.

Swami Vivekananda dedicated his life to his Gurudev, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The body of his revered teacher became the abode of all kinds of illnesses. Swami Vivekananda was a great visionary. He visualized a society, which does not have any differences among the people,

in the name of caste and creed. He created his philosophical concepts in this way. Without going into the nuisances that exist between materialism and spiritualism, we can say concept of equality, which was established by him, is a unique one. It cannot be countered by any other intellectual concept. Vivekananda had high expectations from youth. For the youth in Modern India, a vigorous and powerful *sadhu*, Swami Vivekananda is a great source of inspiration.

*Sanyâsis* do not accumulate treasures or lands. They would not have any institute. They have only one bond that is with their gurus. This bond between a teacher and disciple is unique, and this is the speciality of India. If a teacher accepts money for his teaching, there exists no bond between them. A teacher cannot be a money – maker. In fact, in India, teacher-disciple relations exist like relation of a father and an adopted son.

It is considered that the exemplification of a great *sâdhaka*, practitioner or *siddha*, a miraculous person, the nature of his endeavour is as an essential element. What is achieved by that *sâdhaka* or *siddha*, what kind of enlightenment he gets, what are his experiences, and in how many forms he distributes them, the level of distributed knowledge, his language, the ability of style and effectability all these angles are very important. When all these factors are mixed in a personality, the glory of that person becomes explicit. Sheer traditions and paths do not reflect the real grandeur. It is a simple statement to say 'Swami Vivekananda considered the *advait* concept.' But real crux lies in appreciating the exclusive meanings that were understood by him, thinking his mode of life on the basis of that distinctive concept, visualizing his perspectives on different subjects.

While speaking on *Rajayoga*, Swami Vivekananda explained in detail many spiritual points. In prelude, he says:

*All the orthodox systems of Indian philosophy have one goal in view, the liberation of the soul through perfection.*



*The method is by Yoga. The word Yoga covers an immense ground, but both the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta Schools point to Yoga in some form or other.*

The whole world is made up of two elements- sky and *prāṇa*. This *prāṇa* expresses itself only in the form of muscle energy flow, in the form of intellectual power and activities of collective body energy. To know the real nature of the *prāṇa* and restraining it is called *prāṇāyāma*. If one attains the power of *prāṇamaya*, for him the gates to infinite power are opened.

One who gets control on *prāṇa* obtains control over all kinds of physical and mental energies. *Prāṇa* is a generalized expression of all kinds of energies.

In ‘*Karma Yoga*’ he writes- ‘According to the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, nature is composed of three forces, called in Sanskrit, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. In the physical world we may call these three as equilibrium, activity, and inertness.’ In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes *Tamas* prevails and sometimes *Rajas*, and at times *Sattva*.’

It is quite evident that even for *karmayoga* *jñānayoga* and *rajayoga* are essential. Explaining this, Swamiji said, “The different individual characters and classes of men and women are natural variations in creation. Hence, we ought not to judge them by the same standard or put the same ideal before them. But, it is essential to have standards and ideas for righteous actions and duties.”

In ‘*bhaktiyoga*’, swamiji analyzed critically, projecting *bhakti* as the ultimate love form, which is like *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras*. He interpreted the *Nārada Bhakti Sūtras* and translated it in English separately.

Swamiji said, ‘All philosophers have unanimously accepted three things. They all approve God, consider the Vedas as *Sritis*, and the creation-cycle.’ Most parts of the *Vedās* are unavailable, as many *Brāhmaṇa* scriptures got destroyed. The *Vedānta* is the ultimate wisdom part of the *Vedās*. It is called *Upanishads*. Practically, the *Vedānta* is the religious text of the Hindus.’

### Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati\*

Other than the four saints and yogis described above, one name also deserves to be mentioned purely for upholding the sanctity and purity, and enhancing the influence of the *Vedas* and their culture, is that of the great saint, Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati. A social reformer, an upholder of the *Vedic* values, he worked relentlessly to promote the physical, spiritual and social progress of all mankind. The perspectives of Yoga and spiritualism were greatly supported by him. Meditation practices were placed at a higher level and physical and purificatory *Hatha* Yoga practices were considered as a preparatory step for meditation. Karma and duty need to be performed without any adverse justifications. The universe is a manifestation of the Supreme Reality; hence everything is divine in this universe. Yoga and spirituality cannot be irrational and illogical. They have to be subjected to the principles of universalism, objectivity, scientific attestation and truthfulness. According to Maharishi Dayananda, Jnana, Karma and Bhakti are not three separate paths, but they flow together. These three aspects complement one other on the path of salvation. He was a living example of the union of these three paths. Maharishi Dayananda was an embodiment of great yogis, sages and *siddhas*.



Fig. 1.25: Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati\*



Maharshi Dayananda is an exquisitely enriched personality, who had rejuvenated the most ancient tradition of the *Vedās*. The pioneer had worked with the power of celibacy, intelligence and unshaken fidelity in the adoration of the Supreme God to let the glorious rays of the Vedic Sun shine in an inimitable way again, with an unusual brightness. He is a holy personality who enlivened the principle, practically, in which it is said, 'The primary object of *Arya Samaj* is to do good to the whole world, i.e. to promote physical, spiritual and social progress of whole mankind.' He wrote *Satyārtha Prakāśika*, to bring 'Thought movement' and *Samskāra Vidhi* to build a well-refined human being and the *Rigvedādibhāshyabhūmikā*, to establish universalism, universal application and scientific approval on the base of logic. The clarion call of Maharshi Dayananda is '*Vedās*, *Satyam* (truth), *Brahmacharyam* (abstinence, celibacy)'.

Now-a-days, there are so many illusions and misapprehensions in the name of *yog* and spirituality, prevalent in the society. As the general public did not know the fundamental principles the *Vedās*, they used to regard all those texts which are written in Sanskrit language as authentic texts, without any logical stand, without any authenticity and scientific reason. They took even unscientific traditions and opinions of religion and spirituality as *yog*. In fact, every perspective of the *Vedās* and the Vedic culture meets the needs of universalism, scientific value and secularism. Therefore, here we are giving seven principles of Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati, precisely –

1. The perspectives of *yog* and spiritualism are greatly supported by Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati. He considered that the practice of *Hatha yog kriyās* only purify the physical body. This aspect is unanimous in Maharshi Dayananda and all our ancient saints. In their

opinion, *Asanas*, *Kriyās*, *Mudrās*, *Prāṇmayās* provide a strong base to *yog*. Practizing these different activities is merely the first stage of *yog*, not the ultimate. The final destination of *yog* is to achieve *Ātma sāksātākār* or *Brahma sāksātākār*, attaining the real form of *Ātma*, freeing the self from the five *kleśhta vrittis*, difficult moods, namely pseudo wisdom, ignorance, pride, love, hatred, persistence; from the five defects lust, anger, misery, fascination, and ego. Just by practising the *Hatha yog kriyās*, one cannot be free from the *panca vikārās*, (five defects), and his defects are not burnt, to make them as *dagdhabeja* or the seeds that are burnt or *nirbeeja*, the seeds which do not sprout again. Without incessant practice of *Āstanga yog*, *Kriya yog*, *Vivāka* and *Vairāgya*, the *Hatha yog* alone can never help in attaining *samādhi*, *buddhatwa sambodhi* or *nirbeeja samādhi*, *nirvana* or salvation.

For the practice of meditation, chanting of *Gayatri Mantra* is the best method. The treasure and the glory of the God should be spread widely and at last the non-form of *Brahman* should be reached. The ultimate goal of *yog* is to submerge oneself into the oneness of the *Brahman* and represent it.

2. Maharshi Dayananda thought strongly that *Yogi* should not avoid doing his *karma*. He opines that due to the misconception of *karma* one is bonded with either love or hatred, which becomes a cause for taking a birth. The *karma* should be done with wisdom; it should be selfless. This is what our ancestors said and they lived their words.
3. The spiritual perspective of Maharshi Dayananda is that this world is not reproachable. This is the creation of the Supreme God. His creation represents this



form and His features only. The God is the form of piety and peace and so is his creation.

4. Maharshi Dayananda accepted only such statements of religion, spiritualism and *yog* which are logical, truthful, authentic, and on the criterion of creation on the basis of universalism, scientific temperament and secularism. He agreed only the *Vedās* are true. Hence, he accepted their authenticity. And he was always free from the narrow-minded thinking of untouchability, fraudulence, grandiosity, superstitions, categories, sexual differences, hypocrisy, dishonesty, deceptions and traditional limits. He used to think that we are all children of God. He thought that God is *Sanatana*, who has no birth and no death.
5. In the opinion of Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati, *jnāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* are not three separate paths, but they always flow together and they are one and the same. He considered *suddha* (pure) *jnāna*, *suddha karma* and *suddha bhakti* is a pious *triveni*, where all the three unite. Without *Jnana* and without *karma*, *bhakti* is only a gaudy show. That kind of *bhakti* would not provide us the salvation, in turn it fastens us with bondages. Hence, without having *bhakti*, *karma* also can not be a cause for the attainment of *Mukti*. So the *karma* which is inclusive of *jnāna* and *bhakti* can only be the means of getting salvation.
6. Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati cleared the unsolved complex statements of *Dwaitavād*, *Advaitavād* and *Visistadvaitavād*, etc. He established the *Traitavād* and spiritual unity of the *Vedās* and science and explained the authentic perspective of spiritualism. In the creation there are three entities – the God, *jeeva*, the individual soul and *prakriti*, the nature. The God is omniscient, formless,

omnipotent, supreme sovereign and He is the creator, nourisher and destroyer of this whole creation. He is the bestower of *karmaphala*, the result of the deeds, and judge. *Jeeva*, the individual soul, can't be an omniscient, omnipotent, All-prevalent, Supreme being like God. But *jeeva* can attain divine powers with the practice of *yogsadhana*, *samadhi* and reside permanently in the ultimate abode, which is a pure, prudent, blissful state. *Jeeva* has two states. 1. To experience the pleasures and pains, love and hatred, etc and 2. Free *jeevatma*, which is independent of all states and is blissful.

7. Just like our ancient saints, Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati also had great reverence for the adage, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam' aekatva* and *sabāstitva* theory. Therefore, he had a great faith in unity, integrity, sovereignty along with the social, political and economic systems that reflect law, equality, harmony. He experienced the godliness in all animate and inanimate entities.

Maharshi Dayananda was a great sage, who lived a magnanimous life, which was an admixture of wisdom, righteous behaviour and *yog*. We may have a glimpse of three channels of *jnāna*, *karma* and *bhakti* in him. He was *āptapurusha*. He was an embodiment of great *yogis*, *siddhās* and sages. He was disinterested, selfless, *karmayogi*, *Āpta kāmā*, who has gained his wish, *ātmakāmā*, having desire to attain the *ātma*, and *akāmā*, having no desire. He lived in this world with his yogic energy. And when he realized finally that his life was going to end, he went into meditation, singing hymns of God, praying, adoring the Supreme Lord, chanting 'OM' and left his body intentionally. He had conquered death, and became *mrityunjay*.

Maharshi Dayananda spent all his life in rejuvenation of the *Vedic Dharma* and dedicated his services to awaken the humanity in the mankind.

## 1.10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOGIC PRACTICE<sup>10</sup>

The guiding principles given below should be followed by the *sadhakas* while performing the Yogic practices:

### BEFORE

- *Shauch* means cleanliness, an important prerequisite for Yogic practice. It includes cleanliness of surroundings, body and mind. Yogic practices should be performed in a calm and quiet atmosphere with a relaxed body and mind.
- Yogic practices should be performed on an empty/light stomach.
- Bladder and bowels should be emptied and evacuated before starting Yogic practices.
- Yogic practices should not be performed on uneven surface. A mattress, *durry* or a folded blanket should be used.
- Light and comfortable cotton clothes are preferred to facilitate easy movements of the body.
- These practices should not be performed in a state of exhaustion, illness or in a hurry.

### DURING

- Practice session should start with a prayer as it creates conducive environment thereby relaxing the mind.

<sup>10</sup> This is taken from MDNIY's "Yoga Teacher's Manual for School Teachers".

- Perform the practices slowly with body, breathe awareness along with relaxation.
- Breathing should always be done through nostrils unless instructed otherwise.
- The body should not be held tight.
- Do not give jerks at any point of time.
- Do not hold breath unless it is specifically mentioned.
- While inhaling and exhaling, chest has to be expanded and compressed respectively.
- Do not be greedy, *i.e.*, perform according to your own capacity.
- Do not get disappointed. It takes some time to get good results. Therefore patience and regular practice is very essential for good results.
- There are contra-indications/limitations for each *asana*, *pranayama*, *kriya* and *bandha*. Such contra-indications should always be kept in mind. In case of chronic diseases or cardiac problems, doctor and Yoga therapist should be consulted prior to the performance of yogic exercises.
- During pregnancy and menstruation, Yoga expert should be consulted prior to yogic practices.

### AFTER

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





### Learning ACTIVITY

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



### SUMMARY

- The word “Yoga” refers to different things in today’s time.
- The Sanskrit word “Yoga” or *Yog* is derived from the root “*yuj*”, which means to yoke, harness or join together.
- Yoga consists of eight limbs and leads to *viveka khyati* (enlightened discrimination) which in turn will pave the path for *kaivalya* (liberation from the cycle of birth and death).
- The development of Yoga can be traced back to over 5,000 years ago, but some researchers think that Yoga may be up to 10,000 years old.
- The practice of Yogic *asanas* aims at overcoming the limitations of the body. Other forms of exercises are also good, but being merely “good” is not enough.
- ‘Philosophy in the Indian context is referred to as ‘*Darshana*’, which means “vision or insight into Reality”.
- The *Sankhya* school of philosophy accepts only three *Pramanas* or the valid means of acquiring knowledge.
- The *Mimamsa* system is called *Poorva-Mimamsa*, which means earlier study of the *Vedas*.
- The *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas* and epics are the sources to know the ancient Indian philosophy and education.
- The word “*Upanishads*” therefore means “sitting down of the disciple near his teacher in a devoted manner to receive instruction about the highest Reality which loosens all doubts and destroys all ignorance of the disciple”.
- The *Upanishads* form the 4<sup>th</sup> and last part of the *Vedas*. The *Upanishads* are generally in the form of dialogues but they are more poetic than philosophic.
- There are a number of recognized paths of Yoga, of which six have gained prominence in the ancient culture of India. These paths are: *Jnana* Yoga, *Bhakti* Yoga, *Karma* Yoga, *Raja* Yoga, *Hatha* Yoga and *Mantra* Yoga.
- The *Yamas* (*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*) and *Niyamas* (*shaucha*, *santosha*, *tapa*, *swadhyaya* and *ishvarapranidhan*) may be considered as basic and general principles of yoga to be followed by each and every person.
- ‘*Gu*’ means ‘darkness’; ‘*ru*’ means ‘light’; ‘*Guru*’ is one who eliminates the darkness of ignorance through the light of knowledge.
- The ten fundamental principles of Yoga are: non-violence or *ahimsa*, Truthfulness or *satya*, Righteousness or *asteya*, wisdom or *brahmacharya*, simplicity or *aparigraha*, worship of the spiritual goal or *ishvarapranidhana*, sacrificing the ego or *shaucha*, self-discipline or *tapas*, self-study or *swadhyaya*, and contentment or *santosha*.
- Yoga teachers and instructors have the moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the principles of Yoga, including kindness, compassion, generosity, patience, helpfulness, forgiveness, and purity.



## KEYWORDS

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

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

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

**Darshanas:** Schools of philosophy based on the *Vedas*.

**Bhakti Yoga:** The Yoga of devotion.

**Jnana Yoga:** The Yoga of wisdom.

**Karma Yoga:** The Yoga of Action.

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

**Mantra Yoga:** The Yoga of sound.

**Hatha Yoga:** A form of Yoga that propagates bringing together opposites into a harmonious union.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Define Yoga in your own words.
2. Write a short note on the Yoga *Sutras*.

3. Name the eight limbs of *ashtanga* yoga.
4. List the key aims and objectives of Yoga.
5. Enlist some obstacles in the path of Yoga as defined by Maharishi Patanjali along with their Sanskrit names.

### Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the origin and history of Yoga.
2. What are the *Shad Darshanas*? Elaborate on the relation between *Sankhya Darshana* and *Yoga Darshana*.
3. What are the different paths of Yoga? Discuss each path briefly.
4. Discuss the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* of Patanjali Yoga.
5. Discuss the contribution of Swami Vivekananda to yoga.
6. Discuss the concept of *Shad Chakras*.
7. Becoming a Yoga teacher involves broad ethical responsibility. Elaborate on this statement.



## FURTHER READINGS

Indian Philosophy by various authors.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras – commentaries by various authors.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika – commentaries by various authors.

Hatha Yoga Texts – commentaries by various authors.

Upanishads by various authors.



# CHAPTER 2

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## INTRODUCTION TO HATHA YOGA

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## Structure

- ➔ Learning Outcomes
- ➔ Introduction
  - 2.1 Introduction to *Hatha Yoga*
  - 2.2 Introduction to *Hatha Yoga Parampara*\*
  - 2.3 Distinction between *Asana* and Physical Practices
  - 2.4 Introduction to *Hatha Yoga* Texts
  - 2.5 Concept of Yogic Diet
  - 2.6 *Hatha Yoga* - Success and Failure
  - 2.7 Concept of *Chakras*
  - 2.8 Concept of *Ghata* and *Ghata Shuddhi*
  - 2.9 *Shat-Kriya* – Purpose and Utility
  - 2.10 *Asanas* in *Hatha Pradipika* - Purpose and Utility
  - 2.11 *Pranayama* in *Hatha Pradipika*
  - 2.12 *Bandhas, Mudras* and *Nadanusandhana* in *Hatha Pradipika*\*
  - 2.13 The *Bhagvad Gita*
- ➔ Summary
- ➔ Keywords
- ➔ Self-Assessment Questions
- ➔ Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- ➔ Understand the distinction between yoga *asana* and non-yogic physical practices
- ➔ Discuss the concept of yogic diet
- ➔ Understand the details of *shat-kriya* in *hatha yoga*
- ➔ Explain *asana* and *pranayama* in *hatha yoga*



## Introduction

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

\* Denotes that the content is specific to level 2 yoga aspirants.



## 2.1 Introduction to Hatha Yoga

“*Hatha Yoga* is a flexible combination of specific techniques that help develop every aspect of the individual: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. It is a scientific system that integrates the various branches of yoga and brings about a harmonious development of the individual. Regular practice of yoga helps achieve a body of optimum health and strength, senses under control, a mind well disciplined, clear and calm, an intellect as sharp as a razor, a strong will, a heart full of unconditional love and compassion, an ego as pure as a crystal, and a life filled with supreme peace and joy.”

—*Swami Satchidananda*



Fig. 2.1: Practicing Hatha Yoga

*Ashtanga*, *Vinyasa*, *Iyengar* and *Power Yoga* are all types of *Hatha Yoga* practices. The word “*Hatha*” means “willful” or “forceful,” and hence *Hatha Yoga* is sometimes understood as *Yoga* which involves tremendous will power and determination. But the more appropriate meaning of *Hatha Yoga* comes from the two *Bija mantras*, ‘*Ha*’ and ‘*Tba*’ – ‘*Ha*’ means “sun” and

‘*tba*’ means “moon”. *Hatha Yoga* is the balancing of these two energy systems in the human being. *Hatha* practices lead from the body to the mind to the spirit.

### The Science of Hatha Yoga

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



Fig. 2.2: Preparing Body for Hatha Yoga

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

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



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

People with stiff bodies cannot do yoga or that yoga is meant only for the flexible. The idea that an individual has to be flexible to even think about practising yoga and that inflexible people cannot benefit from yoga is completely bogus. But on the contrary inflexible people may initially feel some difficulty, but everyone can improve his/her flexibility with yoga.





Fig. 2.3: Experiencing Hatha Yoga

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

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

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

Where Patanjali’s Yoga starts with *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, *Hatha Yoga* starts with *shodhana kriyas*. *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are to be followed after an individual becomes physically and mentally fit.

Though *Hatha Yoga* practices have their therapeutic benefits, they are not exclusively meant for therapy. A fit person progresses towards the highest goal of life, i.e., Self-realization.



Fig. 2.4: Yoga and Spirituality

## Aims and Objectives

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

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

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





**Fig. 2.5:** Relaxing the Body by Performing *Pranayama*

Practices catering to the body and mind are interdependent and form one continuous spectrum of yogic practices leading to the spiritual goal of freedom from miseries and sufferings of life.



### Did You Know?

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

## 2.2 Introduction to Hatha Yoga Parampara\*

### Hatha Yoga Theory<sup>1</sup>

According to the *Purânās*, all human being deserves to study the science of *Hatha Yoga*. *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyās* and *Sudrás* have the authority to practice *Hatha Yoga*. This practice bestows peace and pleasure to the mind of a practitioner.

According to *Yājñavalkya*, this *Hatha Yoga* should be taught only to that person, who follows the

practices mentioned in the holy scriptures, the *Vedas*: who is desireless, who observes *yamas* and *niyamas* like regulations, who keeps himself away from all kinds of bondages of this world, who is a scholar, who conquers his anger, who is truthful, whose interest is in maintaining righteous behaviour, who dedicates himself at the feet of his *guru*, who is the caretaker of his parents, who observes his duties in compatibility with his *ashrama*, who has a virtuous mindset, and who has inquisitiveness for knowledge.

The main basis of *Hatha Yoga* for *yogis* is:

*Asaeshatâpataptânâm samâsrayamatho hathah,  
Asaeshayogayuktânâmâdharakamatho hathah*

(HYP 1.10)<sup>2</sup>

Like a house protecting one from the heat of the sun, *Hatha Yoga* protects its practitioner from the burning heat of the three *Tâpas*; and, similarly, it is the supporting tortoise, as it were, for those who are constantly devoted to the practice of Yoga.

This means, for the utmost grief-stricken people, *Hatha Yoga* is like a *mutt*, the abode which provides shelter. Generally, people have a wrong notion of about the term '*Hatha*'. They think *Hatha* is a function which is done with stubbornness and in an insisting manner beyond the body – capacity. But, actually, *Hatha* is derived from two *beej mantras*, *ha* and *tha*, meaning the sun and the moon, respectively.

While defining yoga, the scriptures of yoga say -

*'Hakâra keertitah suryasya Thakâra chanrda uchyatae,  
Suryâ chanrdamasanyogâd hathayogo nigadyâtae.*

(*siddhasiddhânta paddhati*. 1.69)

The term '*Hatha*' is the union of two letters, viz., '*ha*' and '*tha*'. Here '*ha*' means the sun, '*tha*' means moon. '*Hatha*' means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon or the *pingala* and

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

<sup>2</sup> Most of this information has been sourced from *Hatha Pradîpika*.



*ida* in us. With this union, the *kundalini* (*Shakti*), which is in latent state, would be awakened and begin its upward journey through the *sushumna nadi*. Crossing all the *shat chakrās*, it moves ahead towards the *sahasrāra*. There it unites with *Shiv* (pure consciousness). This is the union of *Atma* and *Paramatma*. With this union, the ignorance of the practitioner would be eliminated and he then glimpses the radiance of divine enlightenment. All the sufferings would be uprooted. Therefore, this state of the union is called 'yoga'. This is the valid sense of 'Hatha Yoga'.

The aim of *Hatha Yoga* is to control the body and mind because only then can the spiritual aspirations be fulfilled.

To make this union possible, the practices of *shat kriyas*, *āsanās*, *prānāyāma*, *mudras* and *bandhas*, *pratyāhāra* and *nādānusandhāna*, etc. are described. *Hatha Pradīpika* describes four important steps/limbs for the purpose: 1. *Āsanā* 2. *Prānāyāma* 3. *Mudras*, and 4. *Nādānusandhāna*. The *Gheranda Samhita* talks about *Saptanga Yoga* – the *saptangas* being *shodhana kriyas*, *asanas*, *pratyahara*, *pranayama*, *mudras*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. The effects of these seven *angas* are described as below:

*Sodhanam drdhatāschaiva sthairyā dhairyā cha lāghavam,*  
*Pratyaksham cha nirliptascha ghatasya saptasādhnam.*

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

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

*'Shatkarmanā sodhanam cha āsanaena bhavaed drdham,*  
*Mudrayā sthīratā chaiva pratyāhāraena dbeeratā.*

*Prānāyāmāllāghavam cha dhyānātrpatyakshamātmanah,*  
*Sādhinā nirliptam cha muktirāeva na samsayah.'*

(*ghaeranda samhita* 1.10.11)

### System of Hatha Yoga<sup>3</sup>

The system of *Hatha Yoga* was designed to transform the gross elements of the body so that they can receive and transmit a much subtler and more powerful energy. If the body is not prepared for this higher form of energy, it would be like running 200 volts of electricity into a machine which only has the capacity to utilize 6 volts. The machine would definitely 'burn out'. So *Hatha Yoga* systematically prepares the body, mind and emotions, so there will be no difficulties when the aspirant is undergoing higher states of consciousness.

Traditionally, *Hatha Yoga* consisted only of six *kriyas* known as *shatkarmas*. These were the practices of *dhauti*, *basti*, *neti*, *trataka*, *kapalbhati* and *nauli*. Later, *Hatha Yoga* also came to include *asana*, *pranayama*, *mudra* and *bandha*, and the *shatkarmas* were practiced afterwards by advanced practitioners. Through these practices the consciousness can be raised without having to come into a direct confrontation with the mind. Through *Hatha Yoga* you regulate the body secretions, hormones, breath, brain waves and *prana*; then the mind automatically becomes harmonious. *Hatha Yoga* is the means and *raja yoga* is the goal. *Hatha Yoga* is the stairway leading to *raja yoga*. Once the *sadhaka* reaches the stage of *raja yoga*, *Hatha Yoga* ceases to be necessary for him.

By first prostrating to the *guru*, Yogi Swatmarama indicates that he is only a tool of transmission for the knowledge which is to be imparted. It has also been emphasized that *Hatha Yoga* is to be practiced

<sup>3</sup> Most of this information has been sourced from *Hatha Pradīpika*, Swami Muktibodhananda.



for the sole purpose of preparing oneself for the highest state of *raja yoga*, i.e., *samadhi*.

Originally, a *sadhaka* practiced *Hatha Yoga* for many years to prepare himself for the awakening of *kundalini*, or in terms of *raja yoga*, for the experience of *samadhi*. Today, yoga is generally practiced to improve or restore health, to reduce stress, to prevent the body from ageing, to build up the body or to beautify it. *Hatha Yoga* does fulfill these objectives, but it should be kept in mind that they are certainly not the goal.



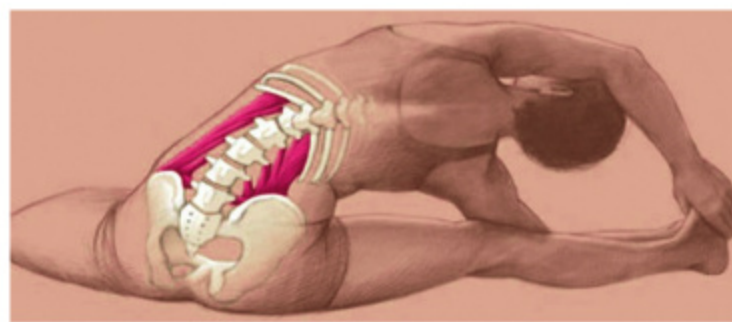
**Fig. 2.6:** Awakening the *Kundalini*

As one practices *Hatha Yoga* techniques, one's physical and mental potential begins to increase and unfold. We know that humans utilize only one-tenth of his/her total brain capacity, rest are dormant, waiting to be activated. Science calls the dormant brain the 'silent area'. Little is known about its capacity, but neurologists say it has something to do with man's psychic potential manifesting, maybe in the form of clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, telekinesis, psychic healing,

etc. These are called '*siddhis* or perfections'. Some people regard them as a grand achievement, but they are only temporary manifestations which can even hinder further spiritual progress. The goal of all yogic *sadhana* is to discover and experience the universal spirit within, and if *siddhis* are indulged in, they take one away from the ultimate experience, therefore, they are better ignored as the non-desired fruit of *Hatha Yoga*.

## 2.3 Distinction between Asana and Physical Practices

In Yoga, the obvious and most physical form of practice is called *asana*. Hence, a lot of times, *asanas* are referred to as physical exercises in yoga. The ancient science of yoga has a holistic viewpoint of exercise; many differences exist between yogic exercise and traditional physical culture. Today, yoga is influencing all sorts of mainstream sports and exercise: professional basketball and soccer, dance aerobics, and running. Many have learned the lessons of the longtime dangers of over-training, violent weight-training and unbalanced exercise and are adapting more and more to the wisdom of yoga. Let us look at the principles that have made it an increasingly popular and influential technique changing the way that we look at our bodies, minds and ways of exercising.<sup>4</sup>



**Fig. 2.7:** Spine Movement while Performing *Yogasana*

<sup>4</sup> The information has been sourced from Sivananda, Yoga Teachers Training Manual.



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

**Table 2.1** Distinction between *Asanas* and Physical Practices





### Did You Know?

According to all ancient scriptures on yoga, main purpose of yoga is not merely an exercise for the body. Yoga is meant for controlling the mind and finally transcending it; it is an art of awakening the supernatural energy which dwells within man by awakening the *Kundalini* power.

## 2.4 Introduction to Hatha Yoga Texts

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

### Hatha Pradipika

The *Hatha Pradipika* is a classical manual on *Hatha Yoga*. It is said to be written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in *Sanskrit* by Swami Swatmarama, a disciple of Swami Gorakhnath. The *Hatha Pradipika* contains instructions on the practice of postures (*asanas*), breathing exercises (*pranayama*) and purification techniques (*keriyas*), as well as a description of *mudras* and *bandhas*, the practices of which lead to a state of spiritual liberation.



Fig. 2.8: Essence of Yoga

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Notes

Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* is mind-oriented, while *Hatha Yoga* is physically-oriented.



## Gheranda Samhita

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

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

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



### Notes

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

## Hatharatnavali

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

## Siva Samhita

*Siva Samhita* or *Siva's* anthology is a dialogue between Lord Siva and his consort, Parvati. Its

author is unknown. It is an exhaustive text on the *Hatha Yoga*. It includes various philosophical points of view along with *asanas*, *dhyana* or meditation, the different energies in the body, the importance of the *Guru*, the four paths of yoga, the various methods of liberation and the means to overcome the obstacles in the path of emancipation.



### Did You Know?

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

## 2.5 Concept of Yogic Diet

A Yogic diet does not take calories into account. Nor does it give emphasis to the amount of vitamins, minerals or proteins obtained from food. Instead, it lays emphasis on the type and quality of the food to be eaten. A yogi can survive on a paltry diet and yet enjoy good health. The focus is on the nutrition obtained from the food and not the taste, as Yoga does not approve of being a slave to the taste buds. It recommends moderation in anything one eats and drinks. Self discipline in the choice of one's food is essential not only for one's health but also for one's spiritual journey. The principles of diet in Yoga are easy to understand but hard to follow.



Fig. 2.9: Food having Medicinal Benefits





Fig. 2.10: Vegetarian Diet

The *Hatha Pradipika* mentions very clearly the kind of diet to be taken and avoided. A proper diet is essential for keeping good health. Most problems arise due to our bad eating habits. One needs to start eating properly right away.



### Example

Wrong eating habits can lead to diseases like cancer and arthritis. It is essential to take a proper diet, follow correct breathing techniques, take sufficient exercise and rest, and above all, think positively.



### Caution

Eating should always be done in moderation and only when you are hungry.



Fig. 2.11: Sattvic Diet

A proper diet is as beneficial as fasting, as it does not tax the body with too many toxins. Food strongly influences the mind. Impure food makes the mind impure. Hence one's diet is very important. *Sattvic* food is the best for a yoga practitioner. It should comprise cereals, fresh and dry fruits, raw or freshly cooked vegetables like beans and legumes, ghee and pure, organic milk. Such foods are light and easy to digest and also increase one's vitality, strength, endurance and health. The diet should not only be healthy but also moderate as overeating results in diseases. Food, according to yogis, is one's first interaction with the outside world. If not eaten with a sense of love, connection and peace, it can adversely affect the other facets of one's life.



### Example

Yoga teaches one to express gratitude and reverence for the food before eating it, to eat it slowly with complete awareness and to chew it well. Only half the stomach should be filled with food and of the remaining half, a quarter should be filled with water and the balance quarter should be left empty. Food should be taken at regular intervals, only when one is hungry, and in a peaceful atmosphere.

## Concept of Mitahara, Pathya/Apathya, Types of Yoga Aspirants\*

### Mitâhâra, the Measured Food<sup>5</sup>

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

*Susnigdhamburâhârah, chaturthâmsavivarjitah,  
Bhujyatae sivasampreetyai mitâhârah sa uchyatae.*

(HYP 1.59)

<sup>5</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



A moderate or abstemious diet is that which satisfies three-fourths of one's hunger with well-cooked food containing ghee and sweets and is taken after offering it to Lord Shiva (one-fourth part should be kept empty. Only three parts should be had of hunger.) This is called 'Mitâbhâra', the limited food.

*Pushtam sumadburam snigdham pathyam  
dhâtupraposhanam,*

*Manobhilashitam yogyam yogee bhojanamâcharaet.*

(HYP 1.63)

A yogi should eat strength-giving food, well sweetened, lubricated (made with ghee), and full of minerals, which strengthens the *dhatus* (tissues) like *rasa* (fluids), and *rakta* (blood), etc., and food that is dear to heart, milk, butter, etc., which may increase the humours of the body, according to his desire.



Fig. 2.12: Cereals that help strengthen the body

### Pathya/Apathya - Prescribed and Prohibited Foods<sup>6</sup>

*Godhuma-sâliyavapâshtikasobhannânam,*

*Ksheerâjya-khamdânavaneeetasitâ madhuni,*

*Sumreepatolaka-phalâdikapancasâkam,*

*Mudgâdi divya mudakam cha yameenrdapathyam.*

(HYP 1.62)

<sup>6</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

The good grains: wheat, rice, barley and *swastika* (a special variety of rice), milk, ghee, sugar, butter, sugarcandy, honey, dry ginger, the *patolaka* fruit (a kind of cucumber), the five leafy vegetables, green gram, and rainwater collected when the Sun is in *magha* (the tenth lunar mansion), etc. are considered to be wholesome food for the advanced *yogis*.<sup>7</sup>

*Katavamlateekshnalavanoshnabareetasâka*

*Sauveeratailatilasarshapamadya-matsyân,*

*Âjâdimâmsa-dadhi-takra-kulattha-kola*

*Pinyâkahimgulasunâdyamapathyamâbuh.*

(HYP1.59)

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

*Bhojanamabitam vidyât punarapyushneekertam ruksham,*

*Atilavanamamlayuktam kadasanasâkotkatam variyam.*

(HYP 1.60)

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



Fig. 2.13: Leafy and Raw Vegetables (Healthy Diet)

### Types of Yoga Aspirants

Commentators to *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* talk about three types of Yoga aspirants which are as follows:

<sup>7</sup> *Hathapradipika* of Svatanmarama by Kaivalyadhama Publications.



1. *Uttama Adhikarin* – adepts at Yoga
2. *Madhyam Adhikarins* – aspirants who have been in Yoga for sometime but have not yet become adepts
3. *Adhama Adhikarins* – novices or fresh initiates into yoga

Further, when considering the concept of *anya* or *asamprajnat* state (*samadhi*), we can distinguish two categories of aspirants. The first category as described in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* 1.19 consists of *videhas* (body-less beings) and *prakritilayas* (those who have merged their beings into *mula prakriti*). For these beings, the experience of *asamprajnat* is congenital (by birth due to spiritual *samskaras* of past lives). They have yet to progress to the final goal of *kaivalya*.

The second category as described in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* 1.20 consists of others for whom the following is applicable: *Shraddha* (faith), *Veerya* (efforts), *Smriti* (purification of memory), *Samadhi* (absorption), and *Prajna* (intuition) for attaining to *asamprajnat* state (*Samadhi*) and reaching the goal of yoga.

### Six Factors Facilitating Progress in Yoga

The following six factors bring speedy success on the path of Yoga: *utsah* (enthusiasm), *sahas* (courage), *dhairya* (perseverance), *tattvajnana* (discrimination), *nischaya* (determination), *janasanga parityaga* (avoiding the company of common people).

- **Utsah (Enthusiasm):** There should be sustained enthusiasm over a prolonged period.
- **Sahas (Courage):** The courage to pursue on the face of obstacles is *sahas*.
- **Dhairya (Perseverance):** Strong belief in oneself and the goal enables one to persevere on the path of Yoga.
- **Tattvajnana (Discrimination):** Thorough capacity to discriminate between truth

and falsity, between the essential and the superficial, between factors conducive and factors obstructive on the path is called *tattvajnana*.

- **Nischaya (Determination):** One should be determined on its path.
- **Janasanga parityaga (Avoiding the company of common people):** Leaving behind the company of those critics and bad people, who argue against the proposed theories of yoga *sastra* is called '*Janasanga parityaga*.'

Yoga practice which is done with the above six points keeping in mind is fruitful.

### Six Factors Obstructing Progress in Yoga

The six factors according to *Hatha Pradipika* which come in the way of yoga practice are as follows:

1. *Atiashara* – over-eating
2. *Prayasa* – over-exertion
3. *Prajalpa* – talkativeness
4. *Niyamagraha* – (over)adherence to rules and regulations
5. *Janasangha* – company of (common) people
6. *Laulyam* – instability or wavering attitude

All these six factors result in the dissipation of energy. One of the principles of *Hatha Yoga* in particular, and Yoga in general, is conservation of energy. Hence, any act or activity which tends to lose energy is considered an obstacle on the path of Yoga.

### Familiarity with Triguna\*

#### Triguna Theory and Personality Psychology

The concept of *Gunas* dates back to the *Atharva Veda*, it is discussed in *The Bhagavad Gita* and is included in *Sankhya Darshana*. The concept of *Trigunas* has been utilized to explain human personality in modern era as well. Indian



researchers have also deliberated on this concept of *Trigunas* in their writings.

In *Sankhya* philosophy, *purusa* and *prakriti* are the two meta-physical principles. *Purusa* represents pure consciousness and *prakriti* is the principle of matter. This *prakriti* is the material cause of all the objects in the universe, physical and mental, living and non-living. This *prakriti* is comprised of three *gunas*, namely *sattva guna*, *rajas guna* and *tamas guna*. These three *gunas* are like the three strands of a rope. Without the strands there is no rope. Similarly, without the *gunas* there is no *prakriti*. Since, *prakriti* is composed of three *gunas*, and *prakriti* is the material cause of all the objects in the universe, all the objects in the universe are made up of the three *gunas*.

*Sattva guna* is the principle of manifestation/illumination. *Rajas guna* is the principle of activity. *Tamas guna* is the principle of inertia or inactivity.

The *Bhagavad Gita* devotes one full chapter to the explanation of the three *gunas*. This chapter, is referred to as '*gunatraya vibhaga yoga*'. In this chapter, the qualities of all the three *gunas* and the effects of their manifestation in human beings are discussed in detail. It is said that the knowledge of the three *gunas* is the highest knowledge which leads to *moksha*, salvation or liberation.

As regards human personality, following *Sankhya* philosophy, it can be said that all human beings are made up of the *trigunas*. The differences in the human beings are ascribed to the differences in the mix of the three *gunas*. Also, an individual's personality is determined by the *guna* which is naturally/inherently dominant in that person. The *guna* theory says that the *gunas* always go together. Hence, there cannot be any individual who has only *sattva* or only *rajas* or only *tamas guna*. All

human beings have characteristics pertaining to all the three *gunas*.

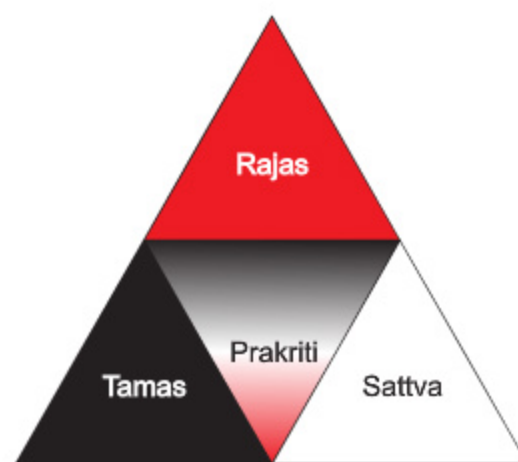


Fig. 2.14: The Three Gunas of Human Personality

It is interesting and necessary to see the descriptions of the three *gunas* for understanding human personality.

### The Sattva Guna

The term '*sattva*' stands for 'the essence of truth/existence'. *Sattva guna* being the principle of illumination, is responsible for knowledge, concentration, awareness, etc. It produces pleasure in all its manifestations – satisfaction, gratification, happiness, joy, bliss, etc. *Sattva guna* is light and buoyant. For example, the upward-moving nature of fire is because of *sattva guna* in it. On the psychological side, *sattva guna* is responsible for calmness and peace, serenity and tranquility, and in general, for all the noble qualities in human beings. A person with *sattva guna* will perform actions without expecting the fruits from the action. A *sattva guna* dominant person is bound by attachment to knowledge and happiness. *Sattva* is denoted by white colour because it represents purity.

### The Rajas Guna

The term '*rajas*' stands for 'foulness'. *Rajas guna* being the principle of activity, is responsible for all activities and undertakings of human beings. It produces pain. *Rajas* is responsible for restlessness,



hyperactivity, mobility, etc. Psychologically, *rajas* stands for anger, aggressiveness, ambition, passion, desires, etc. A person with *rajas guna* will perform actions and expect fruits/results from the action. A *rajas guna* dominant person is bound by attachment to action. It is denoted by the colour red.

### The Tamas Guna

The term '*tamas*' stands for 'darkness'. *Tamas guna* being the principle of inertia, is responsible for laziness and lethargy. It produces indifference. *Tamas* is responsible for ignorance, cowardice, and in general, all ignoble qualities. Sleep and drowsiness are also manifestations of *tamas guna*. *Tamas* produces ambiguity, idleness, fantasy, and stubbornness. Being 'heavy', it shrouds one from knowledge and 'pulls down' an individual. *Tamas guna* dominant people are cautious, apprehensive, and revengeful. *Tamas guna* also suggests disillusionment and cynicism. When *Tamas guna* is dominant, a person derives happiness which originates and ends in self-delusion and miscomprehension. The positive manifestation of *tamas guna* is willingness to work very hard. The *tamas guna* dominant person is bound by attachment to possessions and self-centered tendencies. *Tamas guna* is denoted by the colour black.

*Rajas* and *tamas gunas* also have their positive aspects. *Rajas* is responsible for energizing or activating *sattva* and *tamas gunas*. *Tamas* is responsible for sleep and rest, which many a times are merited or deserved.

The *guna* theory says that the *gunas* are inherently changing. Hence, no *guna* can manifest its effects permanently. For example, after concentrating for sometime (manifestation of *sattva guna*), we feel tired and either relaxed (manifestation of *tamas guna*) or do some physical activity like going for walk (manifestation of *rajas guna*). It is in this sense that the phrase, 'time is the best healer', makes sense. Neither sorrow nor happiness is permanent.

Knowledge of *gunas* and their effects go a long way in human interactions/relationships.

Personality development is always a movement towards *sattva guna*. In other words, we have to become more and more *sattvic* in nature. Also, only *prakriti* is made up of *gunas*, while *purusa* has got no *guna* qualification. *Purusa* is '*gunatita*', i.e., 'beyond the *gunas*'. Hence, in Yoga and in all spiritual disciplines, though personality development involves developing *sattva guna*, this *sattva guna* also needs to be transcended to attain 'Self-realization' – the Self being *purusa* or pure consciousness which is beyond the *gunas*.

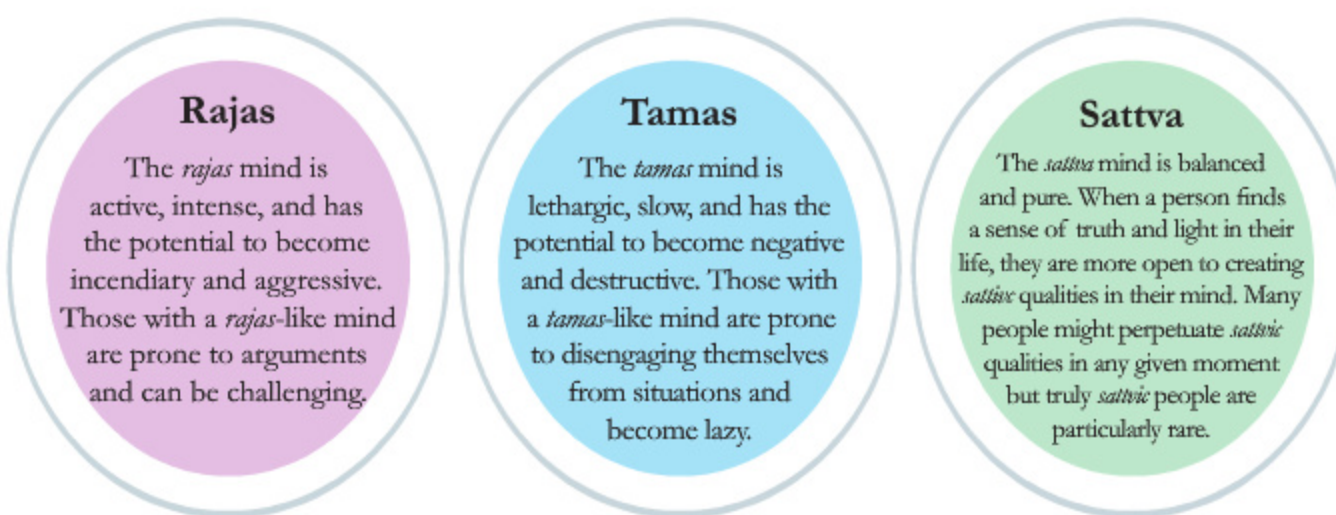


Fig. 2.15: Features of the Three Gunas



## Ayurvedic Approach to Diet and Nutrition and Significance of Sattvic Vegetarian Diet\*

### The Yoga Diet

*"We are constantly bombarded with stimuli, and these make up the diet of our lifestyle. From the food we eat, the air we breathe, the things we see, feel, hear and touch, our environment is formed and this in turn profoundly influences and shapes our internal environment. We are what we eat literally, for the mind is constructed out of the subtlest parts of our diet and the body from the rest. To achieve the goal of life, to find contentment and perfection requires a peaceful and focused mind. To control the mind is difficult since it is in reality very much under the control of our physical body. It is therefore suggested that we first discipline and control the physical body and the mind may be easily controlled. Diet plays an important part in this process."*

—Swami Vishnu Devananda

### Ahara vihara – key is moderation

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-cestasya karmasu  
yukta-svapnavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukkha-ha*

(BG 6.17)

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

*Yukta-ahara-viharasya*, refers to one whose eating habits and movements are regulated. *Ahara* (lit. food) means all that is gathered in food. It includes mental 'food as well', and the impressions we draw in through our sense organs, and the people whom we associate ourselves with. *Vihara* means moving about, walking; and *yukta-cestasya*, refers to one whose efforts (*cesta*) are moderate, like not over exerting; *karmasu* refers to one who works in moderation and is not workaholic. Similarly,

*yukta-svapna-avabodhasya* refers to one who sleeps in moderation and is wakeful. Such a person can overcome all worldly pains and sorrows.

The 'proper' yoga diet may be considered as a lacto-vegetarian one, consisting of grains, pulses, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and dairy products. As well as being simple, natural and wholesome, this diet takes into account the subtle effect of food has on the mind and the *prana*. Some of the reasons advocating a vegetarian diet are as follows: Lacto-vegetarianism may be regarded as a proper yogic diet. It comprises grains, pulses, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and dairy products. It is a simple, natural and wholesome diet that recognizes the fact that food affects one's mind and *prana*. Here are some of the reasons for advocating a vegetarian diet:

### Physical Reasons for a Vegetarian Diet

According to modern medical science, the high cholesterol and uric acid contained in meat along with additives and preservatives give rise to a number of diseases. A diet comprising mainly meat has been found to contribute to problems like high blood pressure, heart attack, hardening of the arteries, arthritis and gout. Arthritis occurs when excess uric acid gets lodged in the joints. Arteries, clogged because of excess cholesterol and other fatty deposits, prevent the flow of blood to the brain, contributing to senility and high blood pressure.

Conditions such as stroke, constipation, cancer, arthritis, high blood pressure, allergy, migraine, headache, ulcer, bad body odour, intestinal gas, kidney stone, hiatus hernia, gallstone, hypoglycaemia, diverticulosis, osteoporosis, kidney diseases and asthma are caused due to excess intake of meat.





Fig. 2.16: Sources of Protein like Pulses, Nuts and Seeds

### Spiritual and Psychological Reasons for a Vegetarian Diet

It is said that when meat is eaten, the hormones that cause fear and panic in the animal at the time of slaughter, get transferred into our body. Also, non-vegetarian food necessarily involves *himsa* in the form of killing of life forms. This *karma* of killing necessarily begets its unfavourable *samskara* according to the law of *karma*. Hence, non-vegetarian food results in impediments on the progress on the spiritual path.

### Yogic Diet and the Three Gunas

Mind, according to yogic philosophy is formed by the essence of food – the subtlest part of food. The intake of pure food results in the building of a strong mind, subtle intellect and good memory. A yogic diet leads to peace and progress in spirituality.

Entire nature can be classified into three qualities or *gunas*: *sattva* (pure), *rajas* (over stimulating) and *tamas* (putrefied). One's mental make-up can be judged from the type of food one likes to eat. According to yogis, you are what you eat. Your choice of food reflects your level of mental and spiritual purity. One's choice of food changes as one's life changes in a positive way. The yogi eats *sattvic* food.

### Sattvic Foods

*Sattvic* food is that food which increases one's life span, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness. It has an appetising taste and smell, is oleaginous or rich in oil, and is also substantial and agreeable.

### The Bhagvad Gita, XVII, 8

The *Bhagvad Gita* says that *sattvic* food is that food which increases vitality, energy, vigour, health and joy and is also delicious, wholesome, substantial and agreeable. *Sattvic* food makes the mind pure and calm by making a person equanimous, poised and peaceful. It is conducive to meditation. One should eat food that is fresh and natural - organically grown and not genetically modified, as far as possible and free from preservatives and artificial flavourings. Ideally, the food should be eaten raw, steamed or lightly cooked.

*Sattvic* food includes corn, barley, wheat, unpolished rice, oats, millet and quinoa and coarse foods like porridge and whole grain.



Fig. 2.17: Sattvic Diet – Vegetables and Fruits

### Rajasic Foods

Any food which is stimulating and goads one towards activity is considered as *rajasic* food. All spicy foods are therefore *rajasic* in nature. Meat



and meat products generating aggressive nature are also considered as *rajasic* foods.



Fig. 2.18: *Rajasic* Food

### Tamasic Foods

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, alcohol and other intoxicants including drugs, make one lethargic and lazy and are regarded as *tamasic*. So are over-processed, stale and difficult to digest food. Even food cooked without awareness, in anger or in a negative mood falls under this category. When one eats *tamasic* food, one's *prana* or energy gets withdrawn, the reasoning powers become clouded and one experiences a sense of inertia. The body loses its resistance power and one is filled with negative emotions, such as anger, jealousy and greed.



Fig. 2.19: *Tamasic* Food

## Effect of Diet on Anatomy Physiology - Physical and Psychological Advantages - Yogic Diet as an Enabler for Yoga Practices\*

We understand very well that the food we eat plays a key role in the maintenance of health.

We should know what kind of food we should eat, and also know about the way and conditions in which we should eat. So, we have to adapt that knowledge in our daily life, to maintain good health.

If we have a good meal, we can maintain a good health. Here we provide some important points about food in accordance with Ayurveda.

*Vinâpi bhaeshajairvyâdhib pathyâdaeva nivartatae,  
Na tu pathyavibeenasya bhaeshajânâm Satairapi*  
(*kshaemakutubalam*)

‘A disease can be kept away without taking a medicine. But if the patient does not take the regimen and does not leave the non-regimen, then the disease cannot be prevented even following thousands of remedies’.

Our diet should contain an adequate amount of ghee (clarified butter), oil and other oily substances. In today's life, the fear of heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity causes one to lean towards an oil-free diet and to avoid oily foodstuffs. This is a myth. Clarified butter (ghee) and other oils stimulate the appetite, enrich taste, soften food, activate the digestive fire and hasten digestion, strengthen the body, stabilize the sensory and motor organs, enhance the complexion, beneficially help in the case of *vata* and aid in smooth elimination of waste materials.

Hence, instead of abandoning ghee from the diet, ward off laziness and adopt the habit of exercise and physical workouts to enjoy the benefits of oily foods.





Fig. 2.20: Ghee

Take freshly prepared and warm food always. Such food is pleasant in taste, nourishing, easy to digest, increases digestive fire, boosts digestion and beneficially helps in the case of *vata*. Cold and stale food is heavy, *tamasic* and not nourishing. Ayurveda does not recommend the consumption of re-heated frozen food neither does it recommend the use of canned foods, canned and bottled juices and other drinks, instant foods with added preservatives, and cakes and pastries which are commonly eaten nowadays. Packaged foods and other fast foods that are eaten with great enthusiasm and appetite are the cause for obesity. Nowadays, obesity is spreading like an epidemic in the world, because of these canned and preserved foods, packaged snacks and other high-density foods. Everyone should keep a focus on this aspect. In this world, the genesis of most diseases is a result of wrong food habits, inappropriate diet and a bad lifestyle.

The food habits that are not conducive to health should be omitted. Drink natural and fresh fruit juices and take freshly prepared food in the diet.



Fig. 2.21: Fresh and Warm Food

The food which is *sattvic*, *santulita* (balanced) and *sampurna* (complete) is called Yogic *sattvic* food.

In the world, all people do not eat *sattvic* food. Those who eat *rajasic* and *tamasic* foods generally suffer from a number of physical and mental ailments. Those who take this kind of food cannot live in ideal state of body and mind.

Therefore, some important factors as regards diet are as follows:

1. To keep oneself healthy physically as well as mentally, it is essential to take *sattvic*, *santulita* (balanced) and *sampurna* (complete) food, i.e., Yogic *sattvic* food.
2. Non-vegetarian food and *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* food may cause diseases like obesity, cancer, blood pressure, diabetes and auto-immune diseases. They also lead to mental tension, strain, disturbance, stress, etc. Vegetarian food may lead to a happy and peaceful life.
3. In adopting a non-vegetarian diet, we may violate the fundamental principles of yoga like natural justice, love, friendship, kindness and co-existence with other beings.
4. Yogic diet makes a man healthy. His body, his thoughts and his life are made purer. It is the only diet which we can say is complete, healthy, scientific and advantageous for a human being.
5. Mental State: Negative emotions have a harmful effect on digestion. Eat food in a pleasant and peaceful state of mind. One does not enjoy the taste of food when food is eaten in an emotionally disturbed state of mind. Also, the secretion of digestive juices is hampered, affecting digestion. Hence, eat food when at ease and avoid unpleasant discussions, watching and reading about disturbing subjects while eating.



6. Appropriate time for food: *Kālabhojanam-ārogyakarānām* (*charaka samhita, sutrasthān* 25.40) means the best remedy for health is to take food on time. For proper and complete digestion, it is of vital importance that food should be eaten only at appropriate and regular hours. A few things must be kept in mind while deciding the appropriate time to eat. Food should only be consumed when experiencing hunger, after complete digestion of the previous meal, when there is no feeling of heaviness in the heart or stomach, and after elimination of waste matter, i.e., urine and feces. If the food is eaten before the complete digestion of preceding meal, its undigested *rasa* gets mixed with the *rasa* of the fresh meal, thus vitiating all the *doshas* and making the body susceptible to a variety of ailments.

The body gains more strength if food is eaten during the period of *pitta* aggravation (between 12 to 2 pm), as it gets digested very quickly. As a result, maximum nutrition is derived. It can be decided that the quantity of food is appropriate in these conditions: absence of heaviness and pressure in the stomach and in sides, absence of heaviness and tightness in the chest, when one does not face any difficulty in various activities such as standing, sitting, sleeping, walking, laughing, breathing or talking.

7. Appearance and presentation of food: The color, aroma, touch and taste of food make it attractive, enhance appetite and stimulate the digestive juices. Hence, to stimulate the appetite, attention must be paid to its appearance. Hence, the presentation including clean, decorative and attractive utensils and crockery with well-garnished food and a pleasing dining area is essential. This is particularly true for sick people, as the regular intake of bland, restricted and wholesome

diets reduces their appetite and may cause them to develop anorexia.

Along with food, the place where food is eaten should be clean, pleasant and peaceful. If it is possible, food should be taken together along with others. Hygienic, spiritual and aesthetic places bring peace of mind, whereas unhygienic or disorganized surroundings disturb peace of mind and that adversely affects the appetite and the entire digestive process. Eating food should be considered a pious activity and a righteous act and it should be performed with concentration. Avoid eating while watching the television, talking on the telephone or doing any distracting activity.



Fig. 2.22: Presentation of Food is Essential

## 2.6 Hatha Yoga - Success and Failure

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



## Causes of Success (SadhakaTattwa) on the Path of Yoga

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

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

## Causes of Failure (BadhakaTattwa) on the Path of Yoga

### Failure in *sadhana*<sup>8</sup>

*Atyāhārah prayāśascha prajālpo niyamagrāhah,  
Janasangascha lobham cha shadbhīryō vinasyati.*

(HYP 1.15)

Yoga is destroyed by the following six causes: Over-eating, exertion, talkativeness, adhering to rules, *i.e.*, cold bath in the morning, eating at night, or eating fruits only, company of common people, and unsteadiness.

1. **Atyāhāra (Over-eating):** Having more food than the appetite is called *atyāhāra*. A *yogi* should forfeit this habit.
2. **Prayāsa (exertion):** Exceeding certain limits in labour, whether it is physical or mental or oral. This should be avoided by a yoga practitioner.
3. **Prajālpa (talkativeness):** Exceeding the limit in speech is called ‘*prajālpa*’ or ‘*bahubhāshana*’.
4. **Niyamagrāha (adhering to rules):** Adhering to some traditional rules and regulations is *niyamagrāha*. One should not fasten oneself to certain rules and regulations, for example, wanting to take cold bath, bathing very early in the morning, stick to having only fruits or milk or any other particular food. If these conditions are not fulfilled, the practice of yoga is hindered. So this is also an impediment in the path of yoga.
5. **Janasāṅgha:** Being in people’s company is ‘*janasāṅgha*’. This disturbs a *Hatha yogi*, because common people’s company arouses feelings, like lust, anger, love, hate, misery and ego in a practitioner and disturbs his practice. Hence, a *yogi* should avoid common people’s company.
6. **Laulya (fickle-mindedness):** Capricious behaviour of the senses is called ‘*laulya*.’ There are ten senses in a human being. Having inconsistency in any one of the senses or in all of the senses is a cause for the disturbance for a *yogi*. That instability interrupts the intellect and the steadiness of a practitioner.

<sup>8</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



This volatility definitely becomes a cause of impediment in the path of yoga.

**Causes of failure in *sadhana*** (according to *Yogadarsana*)<sup>9</sup>

## 2.7 Concept of Chakras

**(Note: For further details about the eight Chakras (ashta Chakras) refer the appendix)**

In Sanskrit, '*Chakra*' means 'wheel' or 'circle'. In yogic context it refers to a 'vortex' or a 'whirlpool'. *Chakras* are vortices or whirlpools of *pranic* energy at specific areas in the body which control the circulation of *prana* permeating the entire human structure.

*Chakras* are beyond human perception because they belong to the *sukshma sharira* or subtle body.

The *chakras* are both real and symbolic. They imply two things:

1. They represent centers of subtle energies (*prana*) within the *pranic* body of man, each *chakra* being associated with *pranic* energy at specific frequency levels and subtlety.
2. They represent progressively higher states of awareness. The *chakras* symbolize varying levels of awareness in man from the more instinctive realms associated with the *mooladhara chakra* to the more intuitive realms associated with *ajna chakra*.

Thus each *chakra* has two defining characteristics, i.e., *prana* and consciousness/awareness.

Physical or mental stimulation of these psychic centers (*chakras*) rouses the psychic potential in man and provides him an insight into his own reality. This is the aim of yoga practices.

Technically speaking there are six *chakras* (*shad chakra*) in the human body. These *chakras* lie at the points of intersection of the three main *nadis* i.e., *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna*. These six *chakras* are the *muladhara*, the *swadhishtana*, the *manipura*, the *anahata*, the *vishuddha* and the *ajna chakras*. But actually speaking there are eight main *chakras* (*ashta chakra*). The two additional *chakras* are the *Lalana* or *Bindu chakra* and the *Sahasrara chakra*.

Let us see how the *chakras* operate and what are their effects on the human body.

1. ***Muladhara Chakra* (The Root *Chakra*):** *Muladhara Chakra* or the Root *Chakra*, as its sanskrit name suggests, is the support for other *chakras*. It is associated with the reproductive glands. It is located at the base of the spine, and the seat of *kundalini shakti*. Its colour is red and is symbolized as a lotus flower having four petals. It is the centre of physical energy, grounding and self-preservation. The element of this *chakra* is earth. The Root *Chakra* governs the back, feet, hips, ovaries, vagina, spine and legs. It is responsible for the fight and flight response when survival is under threat.



Fig. 2.23: *Muladhara Chakra*

2. ***Swadhishtana Chakra* (The Sacral *Chakra*):** *Swadhishtana Chakra*, also known as the Sacral *Chakra*, or the Spleen *Chakra*, is located just below the navel near the abdomen. It is the seat of *Shakti* and is represented as an orange

<sup>9</sup> Please refer to the section on *Antarayas* in Chapter 3 on *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*.



coloured lotus flower having six petals. The element of this *chakra* is water. If Sacral *Chakra* is working well, one will feel confident and emotionally balanced. If this *chakra* is overactive, one tends to be emotional all the time. It governs the reproductive organs, bladder, bowel and lower intestine. Cleansing of this *chakra* is possible by getting rid of low self-esteem, fear and desires.



Fig. 2.24: *Svadhistana Chakra*

3. **Manipura Chakra (The Solar Plexus):** In *Sanskrit*, *Mani* means “jewel” and *Pura* means “place”. *Manipura Chakra* has been so named because of its radiant lustre which makes it look like a jewel. This *chakra* is a centre of dynamism, dominance and self-assertion, and it is depicted by a yellow coloured ten-petal lotus flower with an inverted triangle which represents fire. It governs the spleen, stomach, upper intestines, upper back and upper spine. This *chakra* symbolizes peace. When the consciousness rises above this *chakra*, one is said to get free from stress and tension.



Fig. 2.25: *Manipura Chakra*

4. **Anahata Chakra (The Heart Chakra):** The term *anahata* means ‘unstruck’. This *chakra* is said to be located at the centre of the heart, where the unstruck vibration of the eternal *nada* or sound can be sensed. It is represented by a green coloured lotus flower of twelve petals located in the centre of the chest. It is the seat of emotions and feelings, of unconditional love, compassion, selflessness and devotion. One’s real self, which is always pure and stable, is said to reside here. Love manifests in the heart giving rise to feelings of universal brotherhood and tolerance. The *anahata chakra* bestows on one sense of responsibility, total security, confidence and chastity. Biologically, this *chakra* is related to the heart, blood, lungs and the circulatory system and the immune and endocrine systems. The imbalanced working of *Anahata chakra* leads to love-related problems. The imbalance creates agitation in the thymus gland, the endocrine gland that is associated with this *chakra*. *Asthma* and disorders of the heart are believed to result if this *chakra* is underactive. If it is overactive, one tends to suffocate another with love – a selfish kind of love.



Fig. 2.26: *Anahata Chakra*



5. **Vishuddha Chakra (The Throat Chakra):** The *Sanskrit* word *shuddha* means “pure” and *Vi* is used as a prefix to enhance this quality. The centre of pure consciousness and creativity, the *Vishuddha chakra* is symbolized by a sky-blue lotus with 16 petals. When the consciousness dwells in this *chakra*, one develops right understanding and discrimination, and as a result does not experience dualities in life. One accepts everything, both the good and the bad and is able to have pure relationships with others but with detachment. On the physical level, this *chakra* is associated with the thyroid gland and the lungs. It controls metabolism and the activity of the vocal cords, the pharynx and the oesophagus. It influences the way we express ourselves. If the *chakra* is underactive, one suffers from cold, cough, thyroid problems and will lack communication skills. If it is overactive, one becomes extra talkative and boastful. One should practise meditation, *brahmīri pranayam* and yoga *asanas* like *bhujangasana* to maintain balance in this *chakra*. Overactive, one becomes talkative and boastful. Meditation, *bhramari pranayam* and yoga *asanas*, such as *bhujangasana* help in balancing this *chakra*.
6. **Ajna Chakra (The Brow Chakra):** This highly important *chakra* is known by various names: as the third eye or *jnanachakshu* – the eye of wisdom; as *triveni* or the confluence of three rivers; as the guru *chakra*; and, the eye of Shiva. The word *Ajna* means ‘command’ in *sanskrit*. An advanced student who is in deep meditation will receive commands or guidance from his guru and from the divine self.
- This *chakra* is denoted by a lotus flower having two petals. It is a gate which opens the way for our consciousness to ascend to its final destination, which is the seventh centre. On physical level, *Ajna* is apparently related to the pituitary glands and the small brain which secretes hormones to communicate with the rest of the endocrine system, and also connects to the central nervous system via the hypothalamus. The hypophysis has a vital role in the physical basis of consciousness.
- It is the seat of wisdom and intuition. If it is underactive, one will experience negative thoughts, fatigue and incur more of the bad *karmas*. If this *chakra* is overactive, one ends up living in a world of fantasy and may even suffer from hallucinations.
- This *chakra* can be opened by contemplating on the divine, *pranayama* and Guru’s Grace.



Fig. 2.27: Vishuddha Chakra



Fig. 2.28: Ajna Chakra



7. **Bindu or Lalana or Mans Chakra<sup>10</sup>:** This *chakra* is situated in the Hypothalamus. The function of this *chakra* is to manufacture necessary cerebrum fluids and salts, etc., associated with the consciousness with relation to emotions, thoughts and culture. We can call this place as the *mana*, from where all thoughts and moods emerge.
8. **Sahasrara Chakra (The Crown Chakra):** The most sacred *chakra* of all is *Sahasrara Chakra* meaning “one thousand”. It has been named so as it is depicted by a brilliant violet-coloured lotus flower comprising a thousand petals. It is the centre at which Self-realization happens. When the *kundalini* is awakened, it ascends up to the *Sahasrara chakra* through the various *chakras*. At the *Sahasrara chakra*, the *kundalini* merges with its source and attains supreme bliss. This *chakra* is related to the pineal gland, a sensitive gland producing the hormone melatonin which regulates sleep and wakefulness. When it functions properly, one’s thinking power and intelligence improve. The gland is large in childhood but shrinks by puberty. The *Ajna chakra* helps in giving one the direct perception of the ultimate reality through the central nervous system. *Sahasrarachakra* is an integration of all the qualities of other *chakras*. It can be activated only by the *Divine Grace*.



Fig. 2.29: Sahasrara Chakra

## 2.8 Concept of Ghata and Ghata Shuddhi

In *Gheranda Samhita*, which propounds the *Saptanga* Yoga, Sage Gheranda talks about seven *angas* of Yoga which ultimately lead the practitioner to the goal of Self-realization. The *saptangas* are *kriyas*, *asanas*, *pratyahara*, *pranayama*, *mudras*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. The human being (body along with the mind) is compared by Sage Gheranda to a ‘*Ghata*’ or ‘vessel’. This *ghata* needs to be tempered by the fire of yoga which is akin to purifying the physiological structure of the human being in order to make it capable of reaching the heights and climax of yogic practices. This process of purification can be termed as *Ghata Shuddhi*. This is effected or brought about by the practice of the *saptangas* of the *Saptanga* Yoga.

As the *panchabhutas* or the five elements are the basis of all creation. Our body is also made up of these elements. The purification of these elements helps to keep the body in the state of well-being pattern and leads one to the ultimate well-being.

Purification of body leads to the following:

- A well-balanced body that works harmoniously.
- Ability to handle powerful states of energy.
- Enhanced capability of the body, mind and energy system.
- Complete mastery over the human system.



### Notes

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

## 2.9 Shat-Kriya – Purpose and Utility

One’s internal organs can be cleansed by yogic techniques called *Shat Kriyas*. The *Hatha*

<sup>10</sup> This information is taken from the Patanjali Yoga Peeth book.



*Pradipika* states six cleansing techniques or *Shat Kriyas*.

*Shat* is a *Sanskrit* word meaning 'six', and *kriya* means 'action'. The *kriyas* help to remove waste materials from our internal organs that are not easy to expel. The main aim of *Shat kriyas* is to cleanse the internal organs, help in the harmonious flow of *pranas* through the major *nadis*, the *Ida* and the *Pingala*, and to purify and balance the body and mind.

### Shatkarma (six practices)

*Maedabslaesbmâdhikab purvam shatkarmâni samâcharaet, Anyastu nâcharaet tâni, doshânâm samabhâvata.*  
(HYP 2.21)

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

*Dhautirvastistathâ Netisrtâtakam naulikam tathâ, Kapâlabhâtischaitâni shat karmâni prachakshatae.*  
(HYP 2.22)

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

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

1. *Neti* or the cleansing of the nasal passage.
2. *Dhauti* or the cleansing of the digestive tract, upto the stomach.

3. *Nauli* or the massaging of the abdomen.
4. *Kapalbhati* or the purification of the frontal lobes of the brain and the lungs.
5. *Basti* or the cleansing of the colon.
6. *Trataka* or the cleansing and strengthening of the eyes brought about by gazing without blinking.

### Shatkarma<sup>11</sup>

#### 1. Dhauti

*Caturamgalavistâram hastapancadasâyatam, Gurupadishitamârgaena siktam vastram Sanairrgasaet.*

*Punah pratyâbaraechchaiduditam dhautikarma tat*

(HYP 2.24)

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

*Pleebakushtham kâsasvâsam kapharogâscha vimsatih, Dhautikarmaprabhâvaena prayântyaiva na samsayah.*

(HYP 2.25)

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

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

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

<sup>11</sup> Most of this information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

## 2. *Basti*

*Nābhidaghnajalae pāyau nyastanālotkatāsanah,  
Ādhārākunchanam kuryāt kshālanam vastikarma  
tat.* (HYP 2.26)

To practise *Basti Karma*, first sit in *Utkatasana* in navel-deep water. Then take a pipe that is 6 inches long and half inch in diameter and open at both ends, and insert it inside the anus. Contract and withdraw the anal muscles so that water enters the anal passage and cleanses it.

*Gulmapleehudaram chāpi vātapittakaphodbbavāh,  
Vastikarmaprabhāvaena ksheeyantae sakalābbhayāh.*  
(HYP 2.27)

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

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

## 3. *Neti*

*Sutram vitasti susnigdham nāsānālae pravaesayaet,  
Mukhānnirgamayaechaishā Netih siddhairni-  
gadyatae.*  
(HYP 2.29)

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

*Kapālasodhinee chaiva divyadrshtipradāyinee,  
Jatrurdhvajātarogaugham Netirāsu nibhanti.*  
(HYP 2.30)

The *Neti* cleans the brain (*Kapāla*) and illumines the divine sight. The practitioner

can see upto long distances. It destroys all the diseases of the cervical and scapular regions.

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

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

## 4. *Trātaka*

*Nireekshaennischaladrsā suksmalakshya samāhita  
Asrusampātaparyantam āchāryaisrtātakam smrtam.*  
(HYP 2.31)

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

*Mochanam naetrarogānām tanrdādeenām kapātakam,  
Yatnatasrtātakam gopyam yathā hātakapaetakam*  
(HYP 2.32)

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

The two most common types of *trataka* practices are *antara trataka* and *bahya trataka*. In the former, with eyes closed, the focus is on any internal part of the body. In *bahya trataka*, gazing is done on an external object like a candle flame, the sun and the moon.

## 5. *Nauli*

*Amandāvartavaegaena tundam savyāpasavyatah,  
Nātamso bhrāmayaedaeshā naulih siddhai  
prachakshatae.*  
(HYP 2.33)

Sitting on the toes with heels raised above the ground, and the palms resting on the ground,



and in this bent posture the belly is moved speedily and forcibly from left to right just as in vomiting. This is called, by the adepts, the *Nauli Karma*.

*Mandâgnisandeepanapâchanâdisandhâyikânanda karee sadaiva,*

*Asaeshadoshâmayasâshane cha hathakriyâmauliriyam cha naulih.*

(HYP 2.34)

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

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

## 6. *Kapâlabhâti*

*Bhasrtâvallobhakârasya raechapurau sasabbhramau,*  
*Kapâlabhâtirvikhyâtâ kaphadoshavisoshinee.*

(HYP 2.35)

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

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

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

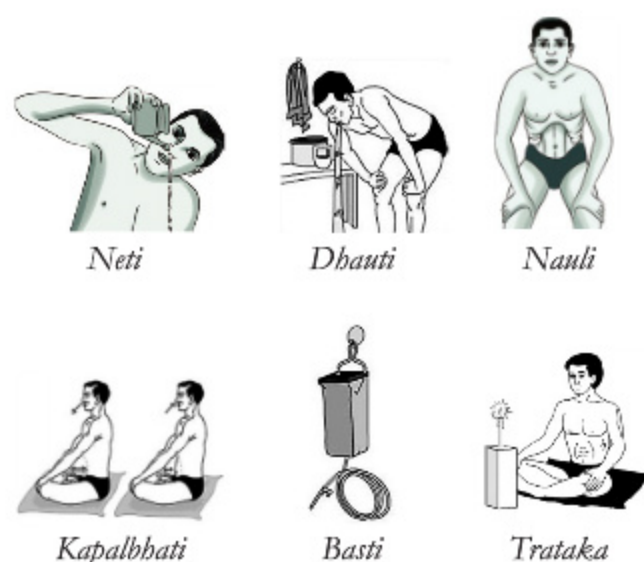


Fig. 2.30: *Shatkarma*

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

## General benefits of *Shatkarmas*:

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



## Did You Know?

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

## 2.10 Asanas in Hatha Pradipika – Purpose and Utility

In *Swatmarama's Hatha Pradipika*, *asanas* form the first *anga* of his *Chaturanga Yoga*. *Swatmarama* gives elaborate descriptions of fifteen *asanas* and their effects along with the methodology of performing them. These *asanas* are as follows:<sup>12</sup>

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

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



### Notes

*Asanas* teach poise, balance and strength and were originally (and still) practised to improve one's physical health, and for clearing the mind in preparation for meditation in the pursuit of enlightenment.

<sup>12</sup> For details pertaining to these *asanas* please refer to Chapter 9 and 10.

## Health and Fitness Benefits

One of the most immediate health benefits of practising *Hatha Yoga asanas* is a feeling of calm. When a person focuses on his/her yoga practice, he/she may focus less on his/her worries or woes. Yoga can increase flexibility, range of motions and strength as well as enhance the balance, leaving a person with a higher fitness level and reduced risk of injuries.

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

## Therapeutic Benefits

Though yoga is basically a preventive discipline, practices of yoga particularly *Hatha Yoga*, definitely have therapeutic benefits. *Hatha Yoga asanas* can help heal or sooth a specific health ailment or condition. One can be relieved of chronic neck pain with a series of poses that focus on gently stretching and elongating the spine. People can relieve sinusitis with poses that focus on inversion, forward bends and poses that calms the mind. Other poses can help alleviate anxiety, asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, insomnia, sciatica and a host of other conditions. Still others may help with pregnancy, menstruation and infertility.

## Awareness

The practice of *asanas* helps to align body, breath and mind and to divert one's attention from the outside world to one's inner being. Focussing one's attention thus inwards helps to make one aware of the way one thinks and reacts to situations, without judging whether one's thoughts or reactions are right or wrong. *Hatha Yoga* helps us to understand our behaviour and to respond effectively.





**Fig. 2.31:** Benefits of Yoga

### Spiritual Development

The goal of *Hatha Yoga* is to promote spiritual development. It does this by helping the energy flow freely throughout the body and by balancing the opposite aspects of one's being. Yoga believes that every human being has a masculine and a feminine side and refers to them as *ha* or the hot, active energy of the sun, and *tha* or the cool, receptive energy of the moon. Thus *Hatha* literally means sun-moon. It balances these two opposites and opens up the body's energy channels. The main channel is the spine. The divine energy or the *Kundalini Shakti* lies at the base of the spine. *Hatha Yoga* helps to achieve balance so that the energy is able to flow freely through the body and help in spiritual awakening.



**Fig. 2.32:** Spiritual Development

## General Notes for Asana Practitioners

1. *Asanas* can be practised anytime except that your bowel and bladder should be empty or rather light.
2. Wear comfortable clothing to class. Wear shirts or T-shirts that won't come off while you perform an inverted posture or backbends. The lower garment could be a pair of loose pants or sports leggings.
3. *Asanas* should be practised in a well-ventilated place.
4. You may carry your own yoga mat to your class to avoid skin issues related to hygiene.
5. Always practise yoga by spreading a blanket or carpet on a leveled floor.
6. During yoga practice, keep unwanted thoughts at bay.
7. During illness, after surgeries, fractures, sprains, one should refrain from doing yoga. Resume practising yoga only after consulting a physician.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga needs too much time. The fact is that any practice of yoga, even for a short duration of say 10 minutes, will benefit you.

## 2.11 Pranayama in Hatha Pradipika

*Prana* refers to the life-force or the vital energy, which is responsible for all the functions, physical and mental, in the human being. *Ayama* refers to control by stretching, expanding, elaborating, etc. Hence, *pranayama* refers to control of *prana* by stretching it. Breathing is the means through which control of *prana* is brought about. While in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, breathing is emphasized

in *pranayama* practices; in *Hatha Yoga*, retention or *kumbhak* is emphasized. It begins with the reference to *pranayama* practice with *nadi shodhana pranayama* or *anuloma-viloma pranayama*. In fact, *Swatmarama* in *Hatha Pradipika* refers to eight varieties of *kumbhak*, instead of *pranayama*.

*Swatmarama* also refers to *nadi shodhana pranayama* (alternate nostril breathing) or *anuloma viloma pranayama*. These eight varieties are as follows:<sup>13</sup>

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

In one of the *shlokas*, *Swatmarama* says that all types of diseases can be eliminated by proper practice of *pranayama*. At the same time all types of diseases can be attracted by improper practice of *pranayama*. This fact brings to fore the importance of learning *pranayama* under proper guidance.

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup> For details pertaining to these *asanas* please refer to Chapter 10.



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

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

### Effects of Pranayama

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

### General Notes for *Pranayama* Practitioners

1. *Pranayama* should be practised as slow as possible and with full awareness.
2. *Pranayama* practices are effectively done on the foundation of *asana* practice. In *pranayama* practices, the spine has to be held erect, which means the muscles of the back have to be strong and toned.
3. Always breathe through the nose during *pranayama* practice unless specifically asked to do otherwise.
4. There should not be any strain during *pranayama* practice. Lungs are delicate organ ensure that your breathing is not forced beyond limits.
5. *Pranayama* should not be practised immediately after meals. Keep a gap of three hours between meals and *pranayama* practice. *Pranayama* practices require the bowel and bladder to be empty, and dress to be loose and not constricting.
6. The rounds of *pranayama* practice should be increased gradually. Also, the breath should not be held beyond one's capacity.

## 2.12 Bandhas, Mudras and Nadanusandhana in Hatha Pradipika\*

### Mudras and Bandhas<sup>14</sup>

*Mudras* (including *bandhas*) form the third *anga* of *Swatmarama's Chaturanga Yoga* as propounded in his *Hatha Pradipika*.

*Mudras* and *bandhas* are higher *angas* as compared to *asanas* and *pranayama*. It is often said that *asanas* and *pranayamas* are ineffective if they are not followed by the practice of *mudras/bandhas*.

<sup>14</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



*Bandhas* may be defined as neuromuscular locks which are intended to arrest the flow of *prana* in a particular direction and redirect it. Traditionally, *bandhas* were *mudras* practised along with breathing practices. Therefore, *bandhas* without breathing may be referred to as *mudras*.

Etymologically, '*mudra*' can be understood as a practice which provides delight or joy – '*mudam anandam dadati iti mudra*'. *Mudras* can be done by the fingers of the hands and facial features as done in classical Indian dancing or they can be done using specific parts of the body or the total body as such. *Mudras* can be understood as gestures or attitudes. A particular *mudra* reflects the 'mind in body'. The *annamayakosha* (the physical body) when performing a *mudra*, effects the *manomayakosha* (the mind) through the *pranamayakosha* (the *pranic* circuits).

Both *mudras* and *bandhas* go towards influencing the *pranic* flow in the body and are instrumental in awakening and raising the *kundalini*.

*Mudras* in addition to bringing about good health, are also said to result in the attainment of *ashta siddhis* (the eight great supernatural accomplishments).

Swatmarama talks about ten *mudras/bandhas*, as follows:

1. *Mulabandha* (perineum or cervix retraction lock)
2. *Uddiyana bandha* (abdominal retraction lock)
3. *Jalandhara bandha* (chin or throat lock)
4. *Maha bandha* (the great lock)
5. *Maha mudra* (the great attitude)
6. *Mahavedha mudra* (the great piercing attitude)
7. *Khechari mudra* (the attitude of dwelling in supreme consciousness)
8. *Vipritakarni mudra* (the attitude of reversing)

9. *Vajroli mudra* (*sahajoli mudra* and *amaroli mudra*) (the thunderbolt attitude)
10. *Shaktichalana mudra* (the attitude of moving or circulating the energy)

## Pratyâhâra

*Pratyahara* forms the fifth *anga* of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga*. Incidentally, Swatmarama does not include *pratyahara* as one of the *angas* in his *Chaturanga Yoga* propounded in *Hatha Pradipika*.

In Patanjali's *Yogas Sutras*, the definition of *pratyahara* is as follows:

*Svavishayâsamrpayogae Chitta svarupânukâra*

*Ivaenrdiyânâm pratyâhârah*

(PYS II.54)

*Pratyahara* is the withdrawal of the sense organs from their engagement/occupation with their respective objects, following the nature of the mind (which gets interested in the Self). The mind can be compared to the queen bee and the senses are like other bees who follow the queen bee in whatever she does, or wherever she goes.

The first four *angas* of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are called as *Bahiranga Yoga* (external or superficial yoga). The last three *angas* are called as *Antaranga Yoga* (internal or esoteric yoga). 38, the fifth *anga*, is referred to as the bridge between *Bahiranga Yoga* and *Antaranga Yoga*.

## Meditation

Meditation is considered as the highest practice in all forms of yoga as also in all spiritual disciplines. Where *asana* practices predominantly cater to the body, *pranayama* and *pratyahara* practices affect the mind, meditation practices address the spiritual aspirations of the *sadhaka* (practitioner). All forms of meditation have the common and unique goal of transcending the mind after controlling it. In



other words, meditation aims at experiencing the 'no-mind state'. This no-mind state is called *unmani awastha* in *Hatha Yoga* including in *Hatha Pradipika*. Another term for this state is also *manonmani awastha* or 'mind-without-mind' state. Physical health and mental health are instrumental in reaching a state fit for meditation.

In the *Ashtanga* Yoga of Patanjali, the last three *angas* of *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* together comprise the practice of meditation.<sup>15</sup>

In the *Chaturanga* Yoga of *Hatha Pradipika*, the fourth *anga* of *Nadanusandhana* leads towards the meditative state, wherein there is dissolution (*laya*) of the mind (*chitta*) in *nada*.

The two main forms of meditation are the Concentrative Meditation and Mindfulness Meditation. In the first, meditation involves concentration upon a particular object. Meditation in Patanjali's *Yoga* is an example of Concentrative Meditation. In Mindfulness Meditation (e.g., Zen Meditation), there is no particular on which the mind is concentrated. Here, the meditator observes the contents of his mind as a pure witness (*sakshi bhava*) without actively participating in them.

## Nadanusandhana

This is the fourth *anga* of the *Chaturanga* Yoga as propounded in *Hatha Pradipika* of Swatmarama. *Nada* refers to sound and *anusandhana* refers to exploration. Therefore, *Nadanusandhana* means 'exploration of sound'.

*Nada* is of two types – *abat* (struck) *nada* and *anabat* (unstruck) *nada*. All the audible sounds are *abat nada*, which are produced by the collision of two bodies. Yoga believes that in addition to the *abat nada*, there is also the *anabat nada* which is continuously occurring in our body. Because our sensitivity and awareness are not sharp enough, we are not able to perceive this *anabat nada*.

<sup>15</sup> Please refer to *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi* in Chapter 3.

*Nadanusandhana* refers to the practice of trying to hear this *anabat nada* – not through the ears but by the whole being.

In Swatmanarama's *Hatha Pradipika*, the exploration of the *anabat nada* progresses through four states which are as follows:

1. *Arambha awastha*
2. *Ghata awastha*
3. *Parichay awastha*
4. *Nishpatti awastha*

In the first state, gross monotonous sounds are sensed and these become subtler and subtler till finally sounds like those of the *veena* are heard, and finally sound becomes pure vibration. In this process, the mind also becomes subtler and subtler and finally there is *laya* of the mind.

The four states of *Nadanusandhana* also correspond to the stages in the progress of *kundalini* awakening and raising through the *sushumna nadi*. Finally, *prana* through the *sushumna* reaches the *sahasrar chakra* on the crown of the head. This symbolizes the state of *kaivalya* or *moksha* or Self-realization.

## 2.13 The Bhagvad Gita

**Note:** This section should be read along with sections 1.7 Paths of Yoga. (Page no. 22)

The main philosophical essence of the *Mahabharata* lies in the holy the *Bhagvad Gita*, or the Song of the Lord. At the juncture when the war of *Kurukshetra* was about to commence, *Arjun*, the mighty hero, got entrapped by *Maya*, and withdrew himself from discharging his duty and declined to kill his own kith and kin, even after having prepared himself diligently to win the war. Although victory was certain for the Pandavas, *Arjun* could find no valid reason to justify the imminent bloodshed. *Arjun's* predicament raised a universal question – what is man's duty in the world? The *Bhagvad Gita* emerged when Krishna, driven by the faultlessness of his



favourite disciple Arjun, answered his questions and cleared his doubts to enlighten him.

### The Three Streams of Yoga according to the *Bhagvad Gita*

In the process of convincing Arjun to fight to wage the war, Lord Krishna explains the three paths of Yoga – *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and *Jnana Yoga*.

#### Karma Yoga

The *Bhagvad Gita* is a text of yoga which emphasizes action. The choice for man is not between action and inaction. The choice is only as regards the type of action and the attitude towards action. In the explanation of these two, we get the essence of *Karma Yoga*.

All our *karmas* or actions inevitably generate *samskaras* (deep latent impressions), which in turn give rise to further *karmas* and further *samskaras*. Thus, we get bound in this chain of *karma-samskaras-karma* leading to the seemingly never-ending cycle of birth-death-rebirth. Thus, our *karmas* bind us because of generating *samskaras*.

The *Bhagvad Gita* defines yoga as '*karmasu kaushalam*' 'skill or dexterity in action'. The action or *karma* is skillful if it ensures that there are no *samskaras* generated by it. Lord Krishna explains to Arjun that such skill or dexterity in action is possible when we do not expect any fruits from our actions (*nishkama karma*). When we do our duty for the sake of duty, there is no expectation of fruits and hence, we can then become free from the said bondage. Arjun being a warrior, is fighting his duty. Hence, when he fights for the sake of fighting (duty for duty's sake), it is an example of *karmasu kaushalam*.

Thus, the path of *karma* or *Karma Yoga* entails performing one's duty without expecting fruits from such action.

#### Bhakti Yoga

The path of *bhakti* or devotion is termed as *Bhakti Yoga*. This involves surrendering oneself completely at an altar such that there is no doer or enjoyer of the action in oneself. Therefore, in the acts of such a *bhakta*, there is no possibility of *samskaras* arising; hence, he/she is free from the chain of birth-life-death-rebirth cycle.

The following are the nine ways involved in *Bhakti Yoga*:<sup>16</sup>

1. *Shravanam*
2. *Keertanam*
3. *Smaranam*
4. *Paada sevanam*
5. *Archanam*
6. *Vandanam*
7. *Daasyam*
8. *Sakhyam*
9. *Aatma Nivedanam*

The four types of *bhakta* may be considered to be as follows:

1. *Ārta* (the distressed)
2. *Jijnāsu* (the inquisitive)
3. *Arthārthbee* (the desirer of wealth)
4. *Jnāni* (he, who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute.).

#### Jnana Yoga

*Jnana Yoga* is the path of *jnana* or knowledge. This path involves intellectual inquiry into the reality of the world as well as of oneself. It finally leads to the conclusive answer to the question, "Who am I?"

<sup>16</sup> Please refer to Chapter 1 for descriptions on each of these nine ways.



Indian philosophy talks about three steps<sup>17</sup> in arriving at the above-mentioned conclusion:

1. *Shravana*
2. *Manana*
3. *Nidhidhyasana*

The three streams of Yoga as per The *Bhagavad Gita* cater to the three dimensions of human personality, namely the cognitive aspect (intellectual/rational), the affective aspect (feelings/emotions) and the conative aspect (will/determination). Every individual has one or the other of these three aspects dominant in his/her personality. Therefore, for one who is intellectually oriented, *Jnana* Yoga is prescribed; *Bhakti* Yoga for one emotionally-oriented; and *Karma* Yoga for the action-oriented. The *Bhagavad Gita* thus provides for all kinds of human beings.

## Concepts in The Bhagavad Gita

### Karma

In *Sanskrit*, *karma* means “action”. It comprises both mental and physical action. Thinking and feeling are also *karma*. However, *karma* not just means action, but also the results of the action. These results are of two types: *karma phala* and *karma samskara*. *Karma phala* is immediate like when we drink (*karma*) water, the thirst is quenched (*karma phala*). *Karma samskara* refers to the deep impressions left in the mind of the *karma*. The law of *karma* says that the consequence of every action has to be borne by the doer. In other words, the *samskaras* have to be nullified by appropriate consequences. These consequences/experiences in turn become fresh *karma*s generating once again *samskaras*. Thus, the chain of *karma-samskara-karma* is never ending. This explains rebirth in one life after another.

Action is *karma*; inaction is *akarma*; wrong/bad action is *vikarma*.

### Sthithaprajna

This *Sanskrit* term means “equanimity” or “even-mindedness”. Yoga requires the spiritual aspirant to remain unruffled at all times, and in all conditions. Only then one can attain everlasting peace and eventually realize his true nature. However, worldly people get swayed by the joys of success and sorrows of failure. To arrive at this state, the seeker must adopt *vairagya* (non-attachment) and *abhyas* (practice). There should not be any attachment to any kind of work. The seeker should be ready to leave the work at any time without any remorse, if circumstances demand him or her to do so. This comes by practising *vairagya*. A true *vairagi* must be like a soldier ready to obey the divine call and act on it. To sum up, the concept of equanimity can be understood by the following verse quoted by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

*Yogasthab Kuru Karmani Sangam Tyaktva Dhananjaya*  
*Sidhyasidhyoh Samo Bhutva, Samatvam Yoga Uchyate.*

“Perform action, O Dhananjaya, dwelling in union with the Divine, renouncing attachments, and balanced evenly in success and failure; equilibrium is Yoga.” The *Bhagavad Gita*: Chapter II-48.

### Bhakti

This path appeals particularly to those of an emotional nature, though many *jnana* and *karma* yogis have been adept in *bhakti*. The *bhakti* yogi or *bhakta*, is motivated mainly by the power of love and sees God as the embodiment of love. Through prayer, worship and ritual, the *bhakta* surrenders himself to God, channeling and transmuting his emotions into unconditional love or devotion. Chanting or singing the praises of God forms a substantial part of *Bhakti* Yoga. Mira Bai and Tulsidas are some of the great *bhaktas* that continue to inspire many devotees by their unmatched devotion.

<sup>17</sup> Please refer to Chapter 1 for descriptions on these three steps.





## Learning ACTIVITY

Make a group and try to perform the *kriyas*, like *dhauti*, *neti* and *trataka* together.



## SUMMARY

- *Hatha* means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon or the *pingala* and *ida* in us.
- *Hatha* practices are designed to align and calm your body, mind, and spirit in preparation for meditation.
- *Hatha Yoga* entails first of all concentrating on the practice of postures (*Asanas*) and breath control (*pranayama*) to energize the subtle channels (*nadis*).
- *Brahmans*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* have the authority to practice *Hatha yoga*.
- The aim of *Hatha Yoga* is to control the body and mind because only then the spiritual aspirations can be fulfilled.
- The philosophy of yogic diet does not believe in calories count of foods or the amount of vitamins, minerals or proteins we get from the food.
- The six factors which bring speedy success on the path of yoga are: *utsah* (enthusiasm), *sahas* (courage), *dhairya* (perseverance), *tattvajnana* (discrimination), *nischaya* (determination), *janasanga parityaga* (avoiding the company of common people).
- The concept of *Trigunas* has been utilized to explain human personality in modern era.
- The term '*sattva*' stands for 'the essence of truth/existence'.
- The term '*rajas*' stands for 'foulness'.
- The term '*tamas*' stands for 'darkness'.
- The 'proper' yoga diet may be considered as a lacto-vegetarian one, consisting of grains, pulses, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and dairy products.
- The 'science' of *Hatha Yoga* is stated to not only be a physical practice intended for health and fitness, but also for awakening 'vital energies' within us (such as *prana*, *chakras* and *Kundalini* energy).
- The *chakras*, which are mainly 7 in number, are connected by a dormant energy channel known as *Sushumna*.
- *Shat Kriyas* are the yogic techniques to cleanse the internal organs.
- *Hatha Yoga's* overall goal is to enhance the spiritual development, which it does by releasing the energy that flows throughout your body and balancing the opposite aspects of your being.
- *Mudras* and *bandhas* are higher *angas* as compared to *asanas* and *pranayama*.
- Meditation is considered the highest practice in all forms of yoga as also in all spiritual disciplines.
- *Nadanusandhana* refers to the practice of trying to hear this *anahat nada* – not through the ears but by the whole being.
- The *Bhagavad Gita* emerged when Krishna, driven by the faultlessness of his favorite disciple Arjun, answered his questions and cleared his doubts to enlighten him.



## KEYWORDS

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

**Rajasic Foods:** Any food which is stimulating and goading towards activity is considered as *rajasic* food.

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Write down the meaning of *Hatha Yoga*.
2. Name the benefits of *asanas* as per *Hatha Pradipika*.
3. Name the different texts of *Hatha Yoga*.
4. What is a yogic diet?
5. What is *Ghata* in *Ghata Shuddhi*?
6. Name the six purification practices.
7. Name the *sapta angas* of *Saptanga Yoga* of *Gheranda Samhita*.
8. Name the four *angas* of *Chaturanga Yoga*.
9. Name the 15 *Asanas*, 10 *Pranayamas* and 10 *Mudras* of *Hatha Pradipika*.
10. Name the four stages of *Nadanusandhana*.
11. Name the main *Chakras* in the human body.

### Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the differences between *asanas* and physical exercises.
2. Explain the significance of *shat kriyas*.
3. Explain the significance of *pranayama*.
4. Explain the significance of *bandhas* and *mudras*.
5. Discuss the factors which bring success and failure in *Hatha Yoga*.

6. Discuss the prescribed (*pathya*) and prohibited (*apathya*) foods in *Hatha Pradipika*.
7. Discuss the three streams of yoga in the *Bhagvad Gita*.
8. Discuss the nine ways of doing *Bhakti*.



## FURTHER READINGS

*Hatha Yoga Pradipika* – interpretation by various authors

Patanjali Yoga Sutra – interpretation by various authors

The *Bhagvad Gita* – interpretation by various authors

*Health and Hatha Yoga* – by Swami Sivananda

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

*Hatha Yoga Pradipika* – by Swami Muktibodhananda

*Hatha Yoga for All* – by Rajeswari Raman

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



# CHAPTER 3

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## INTRODUCTION TO YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

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## Structure



- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 3.1 Yoga: The Definition
  - 3.2 Concept of Chitta and Chitta Bhumis
  - 3.3 Chitta-Vrittis and Chitta-Vrittinirodhopaya
  - 3.4 Concept of Ishwara and Ishwara Pranidhana
  - 3.5 Chitta-Vikshepas
  - 3.6 Concept of Chitta Prasadana
  - 3.7 Kleshas: Significance in Yoga
  - 3.8 Ashtanga Yoga: Purpose, Significance and Effects
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Define Yoga
- Understand the concept of *Chitta* and *Chitta Bhumis*
- Describe *Chitta-vrittis* and *Chitta-vrittinirodhopaya*
- Describe concept of *ishwara* and *ishwara pranidhana*
- Explain *Chitta Vikshepas*
- Understand the concept of *Chittaprasadana*
- Discuss significance of *kleshas* in Yoga
- Illustrate the purpose, significance and effects of *Ashtanga Yoga*



## Introduction

Yoga means union or integration of human personality.

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



### 3.1 Yoga: The Definition

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

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

The definitions of yoga as provided by the *Bhagavad Gita* have already been considered earlier.

Concentration is a quality of mind in all its manifestations. Based on the parameters of concentration, the human mind or *chitta* is categorized into five types:

*Kshipta* (*rajas* dominated - restless), *Mudha* (*tamas* dominated - dull), *Vikshipta* (*rajas* dominated but with slight *sattva guna* - distracted), *Ekagra* (*sattva* dominated – one pointed), *Nirodhab* (*gunas* transcended - arrested).

Yoga begins in the concentrated state of *chitta*, i.e., *ekagrata*.

Patanjali defines Yoga in his second *sutra* as *yogaha chittavritti nirodaha*, which means, "Yoga is

the stoppage of mental modifications". These modifications of the mind or *chitta* are called as *vrittis*.

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

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





**Fig. 3.1:** Posture in Yoga

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

This definition of yoga has three aspects

1. *Chitta* (the mind-stuff)
2. *Vritti* or the modifications (of the mind)
3. *Nirodhab* or cessation/control (of thoughts in the mind)

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



### Did You Know?

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

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

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

The western term 'mind' refers to *chitta* in yoga when *chitta* is used in a comprehensive sense

to include *manas* (synthesizing faculty), *buddhi* (decision – making faculty and store house of *samskaras*) and *ahamkar* (ego).



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is a Hindu tradition.

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

## Aim of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga

The aim or ultimate goal of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* is *Kaivalya*, a state where in man attains to freedom from miseries and sufferings of life permanently. Patanjali Yoga mainly deals with mind management to achieve concentration. This concentration gives way to awareness, finally leading to a state of pure awareness (*kaivalya*). This state of *kaivalya* is a state wherein all the miseries and sufferings of human life stop once for all.

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

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



**Fig. 3.2:** Elements of Yoga



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



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

## 3.2 Concept of Chitta and Chitta Bhumis

The *Upanishads* talk about four parts of the *antahkarana*, namely *chitta* (storehouse of *samskaras*), *buddhi* (decision-making faculty), *ahamkar* (the ego), and *manas* (the synthesizing faculty). In *Sankhya* philosophy, the *antahkarana* comprises only *buddhi*, *ahamkar* and *manas*. It does not make any mention of *chitta*. Here, *buddhi* may be additionally considered as the storehouse of *samskaras*. In *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, there is no mention of *buddhi*. Therefore, we may consider *chitta* of *Patanjali* to be the same as *buddhi* of *Sankhya* philosophy. The *chitta* in *Patanjali* is used a number of times to denote 'mind' of Western psychology. When the *chitta* is thus considered as 'mind', the *chitta* is used in a comprehensive sense to include the functions of *buddhi*, *ahamkar* and *manas*. *Chitta* can be better understood as mind-stuff or mind-field.

*Chitta*, the mind is *Trigunâtma*, three-qualified, i.e., *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*. Depending upon the domination of the *chitta* by these *gunas*, we can say that there are five states of the *chitta*<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

*Kshipta* (disturbed), *mudha* (dull), *vikshipta* (distracted), *ekagra* (one-pointed), *nirodhab* (mastered).

1. **Kshiptam:** '*rajasâ vishayaeshvavavrttimat*' the state of mind which is always involved in those things that cause agitation and anxiety by the provocation of *rajas* quality is called '*kshiptam*'.
2. **Mudham:** '*tamasâ nidrâdivrttimat*' the state of mind is called '*mudham*' which is always involved in those things that are caused to stupid and moron, by the provocation of *tamas* quality.
3. **Vikshiptam:** '*kshiptâdvishistam vikshiptam, satvâdhikyaena samâdadhapi chittam Rajomâtrayântarântarâ vishayântaravrttimat*'. This state of mind is a little better than the state of *vikshipta*, etc., In this state one can be immersed in *samâdhi* for quite sometime, but by the cause of battering of the *rajoguna*, emotional feelings, the mind darts along for other things. This state of mind is called '*vikshipta*'.
4. **Ekâgram:** '*aekasminnaeva vishayaegram Sikhâ yasya chittadeepasyaetyaekâgram, Visuddhasatvatayaikasminnaeva vishayae Vakshyaânâvadeekertakâlaparyantamachamchalam nivâstadeepavat, Tathâ cha kshiptâditrayaepikimchidaikâgrya Sattvaepi tatra nâtiprasamgab*'. In this state of mind the *satvika vritti*, the mood of entity remains engaged with any one thing. *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna* are in a suppressed state. Hence, that state of mind is called '*ekâgrabhumi*', in which, the mood is a heading towards any one subject.
5. **Niruddham:** '*niruddham cha niruddhasakalavrttikam samskâramâtrasaeshamityarthab*'. In this state, *satvika* moods along with the *tamas* and *rajas* ones are obstructed. Then obstruction impression only lies there, which is called *niruddha bhumi*.

The first three levels of *chitta* are not considered in the category of yoga. But *ekâgra* and *niruddha*



are considered under yoga category because only through these states the state of *samādhi* can be attained.

*Chitta* is known as *antahkarana catustaya*, the four inner entities, viz., *Manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, *Abhikāra*. When all kinds of *samskāras*, like *prārabhasamskāras*, which are the accumulated impressions of the so many previous births, and *vāsanā samskāra*, etc., are restrained, then *nirodha samskāra* remains in *chitta*, only.



### Notes

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

## Chitta Bhumis

The theory of *chitta bhumis* originates through Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* and is elaborated upon by sage *Vyasa* in his commentary on the said *Yoga Sutras*. *Chitta Bhumi* refers to the condition or state of mind in its aspect of concentration. This aspect defines and differentiates itself among human beings.

Sage *Vyasa* speaks about five *Chitta Bhumis* as shown in figure:



Fig. 3.3: *Chitta Bhumis* or Grounds of *Chitta*

Yoga can commence only with the *Ekagra* state of *Chitta*.



### Did You Know?

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

## 3.3 Chitta-Vrittis and Chitta-Vrittinirodhopaya

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

*Chitta Vrittayah pancatayah klistāḥ*, (*yogadarsana 1.5*) *chitta* Patanjali says the five *vrittis* are either *klistha*, i.e., accompanied by *kleshas*/painful or *aklistha*, i.e., not accompanied by *kleshas*/not painful.

'*Pramāṇaviparyayavikalpanidrāsmatayah*' (*yogadarsana 1.6*) The five varieties of thought patterns (*vrittis*) are<sup>2</sup>:

1. Knowing correctly (*pramana*),
2. Knowing incorrect (*viparyaya*),
3. Fantasy or imagination (*vikalpa*),
4. The object of voidness that is deep sleep (*nidra*), and
5. Recollection of memory (*smriti*).

These *vrittis*, the moods, are named as *klistha* and *aklistha*. *Klisthavrittis* generate sufferings and they generate *Karma samskāras*. The action of *virodhini* (anti) *vrittis* of *vivāka*, etc., qualities are called *aklistha vrittis*.

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

<sup>2</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

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

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

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



### Example

To understand the action of thought waves, let's take the example of water in a lake. When the water surface is calm and clear, it is possible to see the bottom of the lake but if it is covered with ripples or if it is muddy, it will be quite impossible to see the bottom. The bottom of the lake represents our true Self or *purusa*, the lake represents the mind or *chitta* and the ripples (and muddiness) are the wanderings of the mind or the *vrittis*. Thus, if the mind is calm and clear, it will be possible to see our true Self or *purusa*.

A *sattvic* person is calm. He has control over the thoughts that flit in and out of his mind. Yoga aims at restraining the mind's tendency to go outwards and draw it inwards to its natural, pure state because only in this way can the mind get into its proper course.

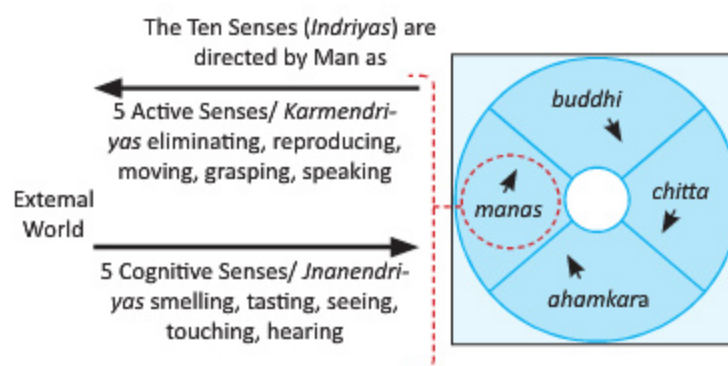
## Nirodhah: Cessation of the Functions of Mind

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



### Notes

The *Upanishads* compare the four parts of the mind (*chitta*, *buddhi*, *ahamkar* and *manas*) to a wheel with four spokes. The wheel keeps rotating whereas the centre of the hub remains motionless but appears to be rotating too. Similarly, the Self operates in the apparent manifestations through the four parts of the mind.



**Fig. 3.4:** The four functions of mind are like the spokes of a wheel. The wheel engages the world, while the center remains still.

## Nirodhah: Cessation of the Functions of Mind-field

*Nirodhah* or cessation needs to happen to all the movements/modifications in the *Chitta*. The five modifications of the mind are, as already mentioned, right knowledge, false knowledge, imagination/fancy, deep sleep, and memory. In the above five, questions regarding stopping of right knowledge and deep sleep may arise. But, these two also being *vrittis* give rise to *samskaras*, which in turn, give rise to further *vrittis* and



further *samskaras*, etc., thereby keeping man bound in the seemingly infinite life-death-rebirth cycle. Also, only when *vrittis* happen, mind/*chitta* comes into existence and because of that there is false identification between the *purusa* (pure consciousness-the Real Self of the human being) and *chitta*, leading to miseries and sufferings.

When *nirodbab* of all *vrittis* happens, the *purusa* is established in its own nature (*tada drashtuhu swarupe awasthanam*).



### Did You Know?

*Yoga Sutras* are considered to provide the principles for all yogic techniques. Maharishi Patanjali, who is sometimes referred to as *The Father of Yoga*, compiled 195 *Sutras*, which serve as a framework for integrating yoga into our daily routine and leading a yogic life.

## 3.4 Concept of Ishwara and Ishwara Pranidhana

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

The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, the foundational text of Yoga philosophy, makes reference to the description of *Ishwara* in 11 verses: I.23 through I.29, II.1, II.2, II.32 and II.45. These references bring out the fact that the concept of *Ishwara* does not appear in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* by default, but by

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

### Ishwara Pranidhana

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

Therefore, Patanjali lays tremendous significance on *Ishwara Pranidhana*. In this *Pranidhana* may be more emphasized. Surrendering oneself is only surrendering of one's ego, which is the most important hurdle in the path of Yoga.

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



Fig. 3.5: Pose for Chanting AUM

### 3.5 Chitta-Vikshepas

*Chitta-Vikshepas* refer to distractions of the mind.

Because Yoga can be considered as ‘concentration’, distractions of the mind can be considered as obstacles on the path of Yoga. Patanjali gives the term *antarayas* as distractions/obstacles on the path of Yoga.

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1:30 vyadi styana samshaya pramada alasya avirati bhranti-darshana alabdha-bhumikatva anavasthitava Chitta -vikshepa te anarayas*

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

1. *Vyadhi* – physical diseases
2. *Styan* – mental languor (lethargy) or listlessness
3. *Samshaya* – doubt or suspicion
4. *Pramada* – heedlessness or misplaced priorities
5. *Alasya* – physical laziness
6. *Avirati* – stubborn attachment to sense objects
7. *Bhranti darshana* – illusion or delusion or misunderstanding or wrong understanding
8. *Alabdha bhumikatva* – non-attainment of firm ground
9. *Anvastitvatva* – non-maintenance of a firm ground

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1:31 dukkha daurmanasya angamejayatva shvasa prashvasa Vikshepa sababhuva*

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

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

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1:32 tat pratishedha artham eka tattva abhyasab*

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

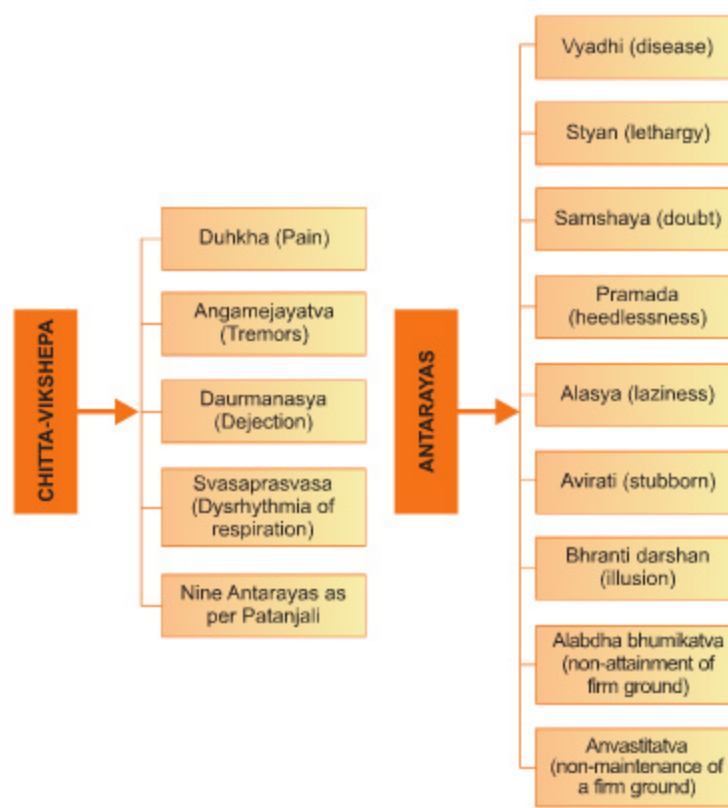


Fig. 3.6: Two Parts of Chitta - Vikshepa



### 3.6 Concept of Chitta Prasadana

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* 1:33 *Maitreekarunāmudito-  
paekshānām sukhadubkhabhūnyāpunyavishayānām  
bhāvanātaschittaprasādanam.*

*Chitta Prasadana* is one of the most practical and effective techniques prescribed by Patanjali for bringing about peace and calmness, serenity and tranquility, clarity, etc., in the mind. This technique involves taking four different approaches/attitudes towards four different types of people or qualities of people. Patanjali says develop friendship with happiness or happy people; develop compassion towards unhappiness or those who are suffering; take delight or joy towards virtues or virtuous people; be equanimous towards vices or people exhibiting negative qualities.

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

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

mind. Exhalation and external retention are always relaxing and soothing.

Patanjali also gives five more *Sutras* wherein he explains techniques for bringing about stability of the *manas* (mind). These *Sutras* (1:35 to 1:39) are referred to as *manas sthithi nibandhini sutras*.

### 3.7 Kleshas: Significance in Yoga

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra* II-3 *Avidyāsmittārāgadvaeshāb-  
hinivaesāh pancaklesha*

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

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

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

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

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

*Avidya* is taking as eternal, pure, happiness and the Self that is non-eternal, impure, unhappiness and non-Self, respectively. Thus, *avidya* is false



knowledge or contrary knowledge rather than ignorance in the sense of absence of knowledge.

*Raga* is attachment towards that which produces pleasure.

*Dvesha* is aversion towards that which produces pain.

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

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

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

These *kleshas* manifest in human beings in four degrees: *prasupta* (dormant), *tanu* (weak or enfeebled), *vichhina* (oscillating), and *udara* (abundant).

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



Fig. 3.7: Five Kinds of *Kleshas*



### Example

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

## 3.8 Ashtanga Yoga: Purpose, Significance and Effects

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra II:29 Yamaniyamâsanâprânâyâma pratyâhâradhâranadhyânasamâdhayoshâtâvamgani.*

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

1. *Yamas*: *Yamas* refer to the observances and restraints that regulate our interaction with others. Hence, they take care of our social equation. The five *yamas* given by Patanjali are as follows:
  - i. *Abimsa* (non-violence in thought, word and deed),
  - ii. *Satya* (truthfulness),
  - iii. *Asteya* (non-stealing of material as well as non-material things),
  - iv. *Brahmacharya* – in a very narrow context, this is understood as celibacy or sexual abstinence. However, it can be understood as moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures. Etymologically, it refers to walking on the path of Truth.
  - v. *Aparigraha* – non-possessiveness or non-hoarding.

These five *yamas* are normally prescribed by all religions. However, Patanjali distinguishes himself when he exhorts to comply with these *yamas* irrespective of *jati* (caste), *desha* (place), *kala* (time), and *samaya* (circumstances). In other words,



- Patanjali has taken away all our excuses of not following the *yamas*.
2. *Niyamas*: *Niyamas* refer to observances and restraints which govern an individual's personal life. Therefore, they can be said to govern the personal equation. These *niyamas* are as follows:
    - i. *Shaucha* (physical and mental purity/hygiene)
    - ii. *Santosha* (contentment – an ever-present happy state of mind),
    - iii. *Tapa* (austerities, penances, vows, etc.),
    - iv. *Swadhyay* – Self-study. This may comprise study of scriptures, following the Guru's dictates, listening to discourses of Saints/wise people, *satsang* (company of truthful or like-minded people), etc.
    - v. *Ishwara Pranidhana* (complete surrender to *Ishwara*).
  3. *Asanas*: Patanjali devotes only three *Sutras* for *asanas* out of his 195 *Sutras*! He defines *asana* as '*sthira sukham asanam*' – '*asana* is a posture which is stable and comfortable'. Obviously, Patanjali's emphasis is on meditative *asanas* which should be stable and comfortable for carrying on meditation undisturbed for a decent period of time. As regards methodology of doing *asanas*, Patanjali says '*prayatna shaitilya ananta samapattibhyam*' – '*in the performance of asanas, efforts have to progressively reduce and the mind should be attuned to the concept of infinity*'. In other words, *asana* performance should be graceful and mind should be concentrated. As regards the effects of *asanas*, Patanjali says, '*tataha dvandva anabhighata*' – '*from that (asanas) there is no assailment from conflicts*'. In other words, the effect of *asanas* according to Patanjali is mental in nature, i.e., freedom from conflicts.
  4. *Pranayama*: The orientation of *pranayama* in Patanjali is more towards inhalation and exhalation rather than towards retention as is done in *Hatha Yoga*. Patanjali says that *pranayama* happens when there is a break in the pace between inhalation and exhalation. Accordingly, he talks about four types of *pranayama* – modification of inhalation, modification of exhalation, the stoppage of breath as a modification, and the fourth which transcends the subject matter of inhalation and exhalation. According to Patanjali, *pranayama* practices make the mind fit for *dharana*. Also, due to *pranayama* practices, the shroud of impurities covering the spark of reality in us is diminished to the point of disappearance.
  5. *Pratyahara*: *Pratyahara* refers to the withdrawal of sense organs from their respective objects like the tortoise withdrawing its limbs into the safety of its shell. *Pratyahara* forms the bridge between the first four limbs (*Bahiranga Yoga*) and the last three limbs (*Antaranga Yoga*). In other words, *pratyahara* marks the transition of the mind from its extrovertedness to an inward-going process.
  6. *Dharana*: Patanjali defines *dharana* as '*desh bandha chittasya dharana*' – '*confinement of the chitta to one desh (place or object) is dharana*'. *Dharana* means concentration. This is the first stage of meditation in Patanjali's Yoga. In an earlier *Sutra*, Patanjali says that mediation can be done on any object. The only condition is that the meditator should be favourably disposed towards the object of meditation or like the object.
  7. *Dhyana*: *Dhyana* means meditation. Patanjali defines *dhyana* as '*tattra pratyaya ektanta dhyanam*' – '*therein (in concentration) when there is stretchedness of only one experience it is dhyana*'. In *dharana* or concentration, all the efforts are directed towards keeping

distractions away. When these efforts succeed and there are no distractions, that state of mind is the state of *dhyana*.

8. *Samadhi*: *Samadhi* refers to spiritual absorption. Patanjali defines *samadhi* as '*tat eva artha matra nirbhasam swaroopa shoonyam iva samadbibi*' – 'that itself is *samadhi* when the self-nature is as if not there and the object shines forth or reveals itself'. In both *dharana* and *dhyana*, there are three elements – the meditator, the object meditated upon, and the process of meditation. In the state of *samadhi*, the meditator and the process of meditation as if disappear and only the object of meditation shines forth. Patanjali explicitly mentions three types of *samadhis*, namely *Sabeeja*

*Samadhi*, *Nirbeeja Samadhi*, and *Dharma Megha Samadhi*. It is in the last stage named *Samadhi* that *kaivalya* happens, wherein *chitta vritti nirodha* finally takes place.

The three *Angas* – *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* – together comprise meditation in Patanjali's Yoga and when they happen together, it is referred to as *samyama* by Patanjali. It is this *samyama* which leads to the various *siddhis/vibhutis* (supernatural accomplishments) in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

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

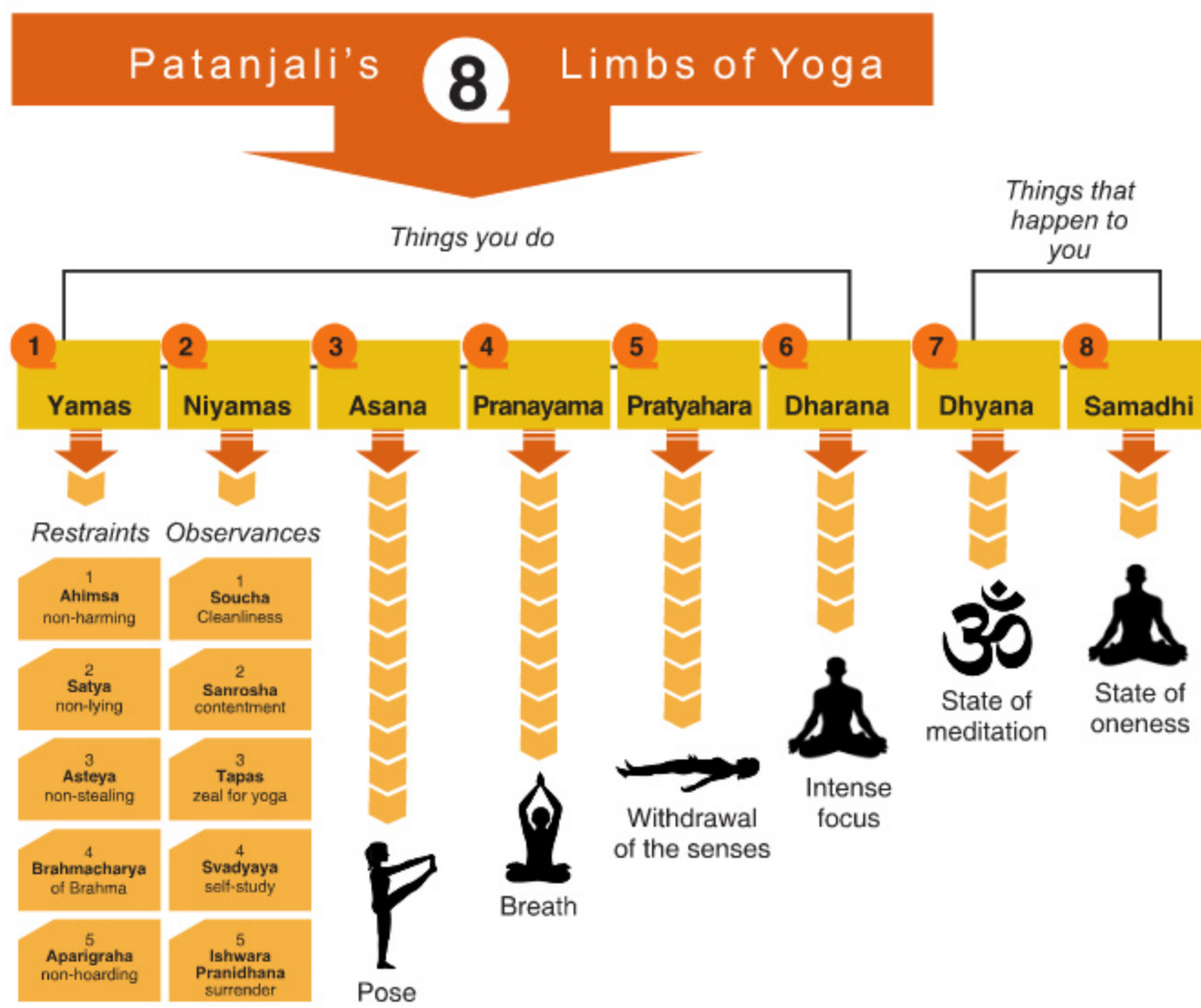


Fig. 3.8: Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga





## SUMMARY

- Yoga is “*Chitta Vritti Nirodha*”, which means “yoga is the removal of the fluctuations of the mind”. *Chitta* is mind, *Vrittis* are thought impulses, *Nirodha* is removal.
- Yoga or Concentration is the confinement of the mind to one object.
- Patanjali’s Yoga can be considered as Raja or supreme Yoga because almost all other systems of Yoga (*Jnana*, *Bhakti*, *Karma*, *Hatha*, *Mantra*, etc.) have their fundamental tenets incorporated in very subtle ways, in seed form in Patanjali’s Yoga.
- One of the principal aims of yoga is the quietening of the mind.
- *Chitta* is one of the four aspects of the human mind, the other three being *buddhi* (intellect), *manas* (synthesizing faculty) and *ahamkar* (ego principle).
- *Īśvarapra nidhāna* is a Sanskrit compound word composed of two words *īśvara* and *pranidhāna*. *Īśvara* (sometimes spelled *Ishvara*) means “Lord.”
- The *Vikshepa* are accompanied by manifest symptoms, manifest accompaniments of their existence, such as suffering, depression, tremors and irregular respiration.
- *Kleśhas* is a term from Indian philosophy and yoga, meaning a “poison”.
- *Ashtanga* Yoga literally means “eight-limbed yoga,” as outlined by the sage Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*.



## KEYWORDS

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

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

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

**Chitta:** It is the sub-conscious mind.

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

**Ishvara:** *Ishvara* in theistic Indian philosophies mainly stands for God who performs the functions of creation, preservation and destruction of the universe.

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

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

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

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



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. What is the definition of yoga in Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*?
2. Name the *Ashtangas* of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*.
3. Write down the five *yamas* and *niyamas* in Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*.
4. Name the five *kleśhas* in Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*.

5. What are the five *Chitta Bhumis*?
6. Name the four states of *kleshas*.
7. What are the different types of *Samadhi*?
8. Name the nine *antarayas* and four *vikshepa sahabbhavas*.

### Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the definition of Yoga in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*.
2. Discuss the theory of *kleshas*.
3. Describe meditation in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*.

4. Describe the concepts of *Ishwara* and *Ishwara Pranidhana*.
5. Interpret the technique of *Chitta Prasadana* in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*.



### FURTHER READINGS

*The complete illustrated book of Yoga* – Swami Vishnudevananda

*Light on Yoga* – Shri BKS Iyengar

*Light on Pranayama* – Shri BKS Iyengar

*Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* – interpretation by various authors



# CHAPTER 4

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## HUMAN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY, YOGA AND HEALTH

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 4.1 Systems of Human Body
  - 4.2 Functions of Different Systems in Human Body
  - 4.3 Sensory Organs
  - 4.4 Neuromuscular Coordination of Sensory Organs
  - 4.5 Exercise Physiology
  - 4.6 Homeostasis
  - 4.7 Asanas and Their Benefits
  - 4.8 Limitations and Contra-indications of Yoga Practices
  - 4.9 Psychology\*
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

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



## Introduction

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

\* Denotes that the content is specific to level 2 yoga aspirants.



## 4.1 Systems of Human Body

The change in time along with scientific development has made the perspective of the structure and function of the body more unbiased and logical in nature. As per the modern perspective, the human body shows a unique organizational unity that aids in carrying out activities in a synchronized and integrated manner. For the explicit functions of the body, there are various kinds of cells, evolved to carry out a specific function. The cells when form a separate specialized group, it is coined as a tissue. Various kinds of tissues come together to create various organs and these organs form the various systems of the body. The working of all these systems contributes to what is often termed as the body functions. Therefore, it is important to understand that the body function is a collective working of all the cells which make it up. The proper working of every single cell is the most essential factor for the body's survival.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

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

There are nine important systems that are accountable for the composition and function of the human body. **The skeletal system** and the **muscular system** are the principal systems responsible for the movement. The **nervous system** and **endocrine system** are principally involved in the organization and control of the whole body. The respiratory system and the circulatory system are responsible for making the oxygen and nutrients accessible for the entire body. The digestive and the excretory systems in the body are responsible for making the nutrients

accessible and for expelling out the unwanted waste as well as the unwanted waste matter from the body. In the end, the reproductive system is responsible for the propagation of the species.

## 4.2 Functions of Different Systems in Human Body

The human body is made up of interactive systems. Some of the organs in the body are important; however organs, like the tonsils are not. Every organ in the body has an important function but they cannot function on their own.

1. **Skeletal System:** The Skeletal system consists of bones, ligaments and tendons. The skeletal system works with the muscular system to help in the movement of the body. Marrow, a soft fatty tissue that produces red blood cells, many white blood cells and other immune system cells are found inside the bones.
2. **Muscular System:** The muscular system consists of tissues that together with the skeletal system control the movements of the body. Some of the muscles like the ones found in your arms and legs are voluntary which means that you can move them whenever you want. Muscles like the ones in the stomach, heart, intestines and other organs are involuntary. It simply means that they are automatically controlled by the nervous system and hormones — you often do not even realize they are at work. The body consists of three types of muscle tissues: skeletal, smooth and cardiac. Each of these muscles tissues can contract and expand, which enables the body to move and function.
  - ❖ Skeletal muscles help the body move.
  - ❖ Smooth muscles, which are involuntary, are located inside organs, such as the stomach and intestines.



- ❖ The Cardiac muscle is only found in the heart. Its motion is involuntary.

3. **Nervous System:** The nervous system consists of the brain, the spinal cord and the nerves. Being the control system, it is one of the most essential systems in the body. It sends and receives and processes the nerve impulses throughout the body. The nerve impulses instruct the muscles about what to do and how to respond to the environment. There are three parts of the nervous system that function together. They include the central nervous system, the peripheral nervous system and the automatic nervous system.

The central nervous system includes the brain and the spinal cord. It senses the nerve impulses and analyses information from the sense organs which tells the brain regarding the things that a person can see, hear, smell, taste and feel. The peripheral nervous system consists of the craniospinal nerves that branch off from the spinal cord and the brain. It carries the nerve impulses from the central nervous system to the muscles and glands. The autonomic system controls the involuntary action such as the heart beat and digestion.

4. **Endocrine System:** The endocrine system consists of a group of glands that produce the body's long distance messengers or hormones. Hormones are chemicals that control certain functions of the body like metabolism, growth and sexual development. The pituitary glands, the thyroid glands, parathyroid glands, adrenal glands, the thymus gland, pineal body, pancreas, ovaries and the testes discharge hormones directly into the bloodstream which carries the hormones to the organs and tissues throughout the body.
5. **Respiratory System:** The respiratory system takes the oxygen in and throws the carbon

dioxide out of the body. It includes the nose, the lungs and the trachea. When the body breathes in oxygen, it goes in from the nose or the mouth and goes down the trachea, a tube in the body. The trachea is divided into two bronchial tubes or primary bronchi that go into the lungs. The primary bronchi are divided into bronchial tubes or bronchioles. The bronchiole finishes at the alveoli or air sacs. The oxygen follows the same pathway through the air sacs and blood vessels walls and goes into the bloodstream. The carbon dioxide goes into the lungs and is thrown out of the body at the same time.

6. **Cardiac System:** The cardiac system, also known as the circulatory system, is the body's transport system. It includes a group of organs that deliver blood throughout the body. The heart pumps blood and the arteries and veins carry it ahead. Oxygen-rich blood moves from the left side of heart and goes into the aorta, the biggest artery in the body. The aorta is divided into smaller arteries, which are subdivided into smaller vessels, and then flows into the body. Once the blood flows into the capillaries, a tiny blood vessel present in the body tissue, it gives the body nourishment and oxygen to the cells and takes in the carbon dioxide and waste. If the blood does not have oxygen and nutrients, it travels back to the heart through the veins. The veins remove the waste from the cells and bring the blood back to the heart, which is then pumped into the lungs to take in oxygen and remove the carbon dioxide.
7. **Digestive System:** The digestive system includes organs that break the food down into proteins, vitamins, minerals, fats and carbohydrates which are required by the body for energy, growth and repair. The food goes down the oesophagus and into the stomach once it is properly chewed and swallowed.



The food that is broken down enters the bloodstream through tiny hair like projections present in the small intestine. The extra food the body does not require or cannot digest is turned into waste and is then thrown out of the body.

8. **Excretory System:** The removal of wastes created by homeostasis is taken care of by the excretory system. A number of body parts involved in this process are the sweat glands, the liver, the lungs and the kidneys. Human beings have two kidneys. Each of the two kidneys has three sections which include the renal cortex, the renal medulla and the renal pelvis. The kidney gets blood via the renal artery which then splits into various different arterioles. The arterioles travel to

Bowman Capsule (a cup-like sac) present in the nephrons where the blood is pressure filtered to remove any waste. The Renal Cortex forms the outer layer of the kidney while the inner layer is Medulla. The Renal Pelvis plays the role of moving urine from the kidney via the ureter to the urinary bladder. Once the bladder is full, it expands and sends nerve impulses. The urine is then passed out through urethra and out of the body.

9. **Reproductive System:** Human beings produce children. A male's semen contains sperms which pass through a female cervix and fertilize the egg or ovum in the fallopian tube. The fertilized egg from the fallopian tube goes into the uterus where the foetus is developed over a period of nine months.

Systems	Organs	Functions
<b>Respiratory</b>	Lungs, bronchi, pharynx, trachea, bronchial tubes, nasal passages and diaphragm	Breathes in oxygen and exhales carbon dioxide from the body
<b>Nervous</b>	Brain, nerves, skin, eyes, tongue, nose, ears, spinal cord	Control over bodily functions and reacts to the stimuli
<b>Digestive</b>	Stomach, liver, tongue, pancreas, intestine, oesophagus	Breaks down and absorbs food for use as energy
<b>Excretory</b>	Kidneys, bladder ureters, skin	Controls water and salt balance
<b>Endocrine</b>	Pituitary gland, adrenal gland, thyroid gland	Production of hormones and body regulation
<b>Skeletal and muscular</b>	Bones, muscles	Protection and movement
<b>Circulatory</b>	Blood, blood vessels, heart, lymph	Transportation of nutrients, metabolic wastes, water, salts, and fights diseases cells

**Table 4.1:** Body System, Organs and their Functions

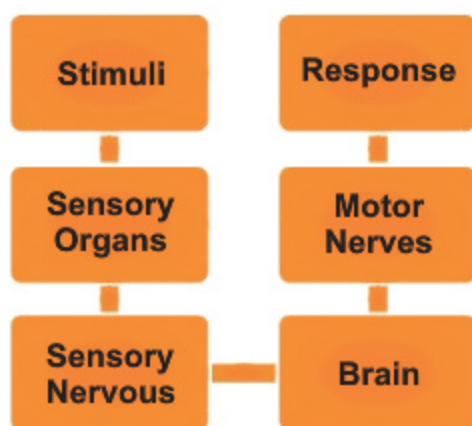
## 4.3 Sensory Organs

In 384-322 BC, Aristotle categorized the five sense organs which consist of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing. In order to describe the term, “extrasensory”, we need to know and understand the concept of “sensory”. All the 5 senses include organs with specialized cellular structures that have receptors for specific stimuli. These cells have links to the nervous system and thus to the brain. Sensing is done at primitive levels in the

cells and integrated into sensations in the nervous system. Sight is probably the most developed sense in humans, followed closely by hearing.

**Sensory Organ:** It is a body structure that receives a stimulus and is affected in such a way that it instigates an excitation of the associated sensory nerve fibres that pass on specific impulses to the central nervous system where they are seen as corresponding sensations.

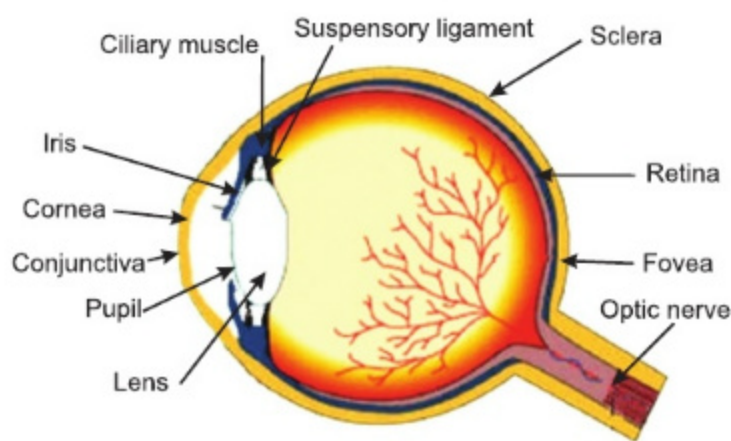




**Fig. 4.1:** Stimuli – Response Cycle

### Eye (Sight, Stimuli: Light)

The organ of sight is the eye. It is a complicated structure that has a transparent lens that reflects the light on the retina. The retina, again, has two types of light sensitive cells—rods and cones.



**Fig. 4.2:** Structure of an Eye

The cone cells situated in the fovea, a part of the retina, are resistant to colour, where the lens focuses the light. The rod cells do have a great sensitivity to light as compared to the cone cells but are not resistant to colour. The cells situated around the fovea, are liable for peripheral and night vision. The point where optic nerve connects the eye to the brain is called “Blind Spot”. Studies have shown that the back of a brain records the visual input from the eyes. The input from our eyes is merged by the brain into single three dimensional images. The brain balances and provides the right side up perception despite the fact that the picture

on the retina is upside down due to the focusing action of the lens.

Research has been conducted with subjects fitted with prisms that invert the images. During the early stages, there is a great deal of confusion that the subjects go through but in the end, the image is perceived as right side up.

The range of perception of the eye is amazing. The rod cells create and produce a substance which increases the sensitivity of the eye as it becomes likely to detect in dim light. The size of the aperture is reduced by the contraction of iris which admits light into the eye and the exposure of light sensitive cells is reduced by a defensive ambiguous substance. The light rays that make the eyes sensitive vary from red to violet. The less electromagnetic frequencies in the infrared are felt as heat but are not visible. High frequencies in the ultraviolet can be sensed as a tingling sensation of the skin or the eyes but cannot be seen.

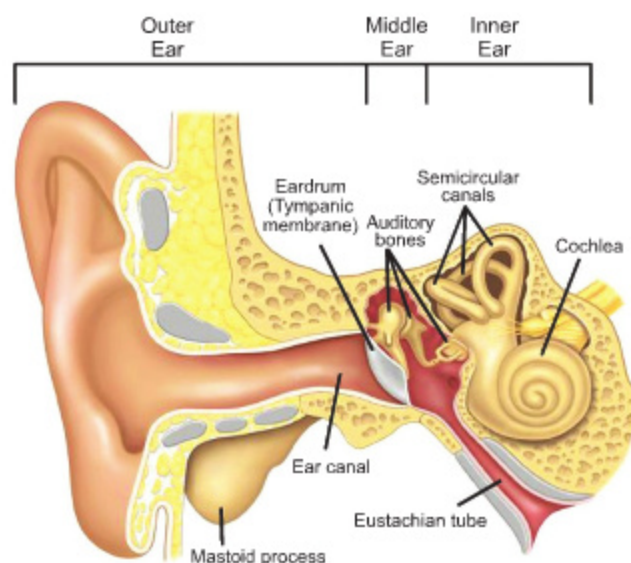
The human eye is not open to the polarization of light, i.e., the light which swings on a specific plane. The bees are vulnerable to polarized light. These insects have a visual range that extends into the ultraviolet. Most snakes have special infrared sensors that help them hunt in darkness with the help of the heat emitted by their enemies. Birds have a higher density of light sensing cells in their retinas as compared to human beings. They also have a higher visual acuity. Daltonism or colour blindness is an abnormality in human vision which makes it difficult to differentiate between different colours. Various types of colour blindness result in the inability to decipher colours like red or green. For specific kinds of occupations, it can be a problem.

For a colour blind individual, a person with proper colour vision would seem like he or she has extrasensory perception. Nevertheless, the term we are looking for over here is “extrasensory perception” for a view which is beyond the normal range.



## Ear (Hearing, Stimuli: Sound)

The ear is the organ of hearing. The outer ear sticks out from the head. It looks like a cup that directs sounds towards the tympanic membrane which transmits sensations to the inner ear via several small bones called the malleus, incus and stapes in the middle ear.



**Fig. 4.3:** Structure of an Ear

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

Cochlea (the inner ear) is a spiral shaped chamber which is covered by nerve fibres that react to the vibrations and sends impulses to the brain through the auditory nerve. The brain combines the inputs of our ears to decide the direction and distance of sounds. A vestibular system that the inner ear has is created by three semi-circular canals. It is liable when it comes to the sense of balance and spatial orientation. The inside of the ears has chambers filled with a sticky fluid and tiny particles over small hair cells in the inner ear sends signals to the brain that are interpreted as motion and acceleration and a particular smell.

The inner ear has chambers filled with a viscous fluid and small particles (otoliths) containing

calcium carbonate. The movement of these particles over small hair cells in the inner ear sends signals to the brain that are interpreted as motion and acceleration.

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

## Tongue (Taste, Stimuli: Chemicals)

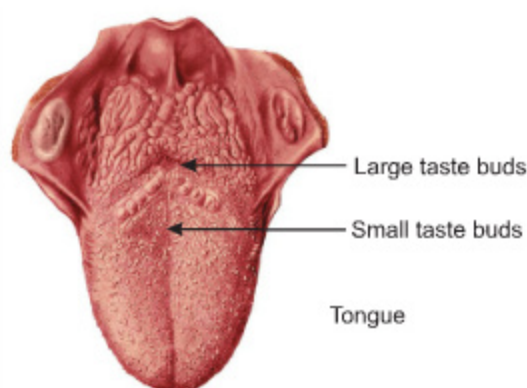
The taste buds, known as the receptors for taste are located in the tongue and at the roof of the mouth and close to the pharynx. They can detect the four basic tastes that include salty, sweet, bitter and sour. The tongue can sense a feeling called “umami” from the taste receptors that are sensitive to the amino acids. The taste buds that are generally close to the tip of the tongue are sensitive to sweet tastes. The taste buds that are at the back of the tongue are susceptible to sour tastes. There is a nerve at the base of each taste bud that sends the sensations to the brain. The sense of taste and the sense of smell function in coordination with each other.

Every individual's taste buds differ, but the increase sensitivity only comes with the increase



in numbers. Women have a bigger number of taste buds as compared to men. When it comes to colour blindness, most people are insensitive to certain kinds of tastes.

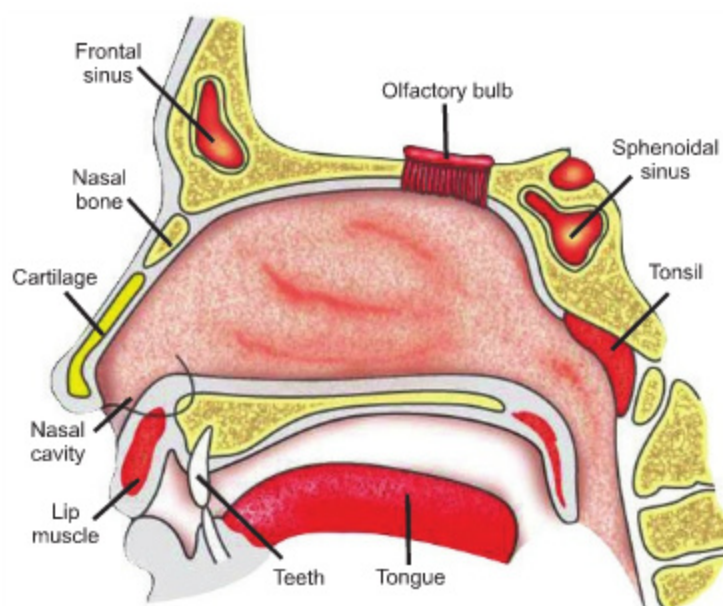
The receptors for taste, called taste buds, are situated chiefly in the tongue, but they are also located in the roof of the mouth and near the pharynx. They are able to detect four basic tastes: salty, sweet, bitter, and sour.



**Fig. 4.4:** Taste Buds on Tongue

### Nose (Smell, Stimuli: Chemicals)

The nose, one of the many parts of the body, is responsible for the sense of smell. The cavity of the nose is lined with the mucous membranes which have smell receptors connected to the olfactory nerve. The smells consist of vapours of various substances.

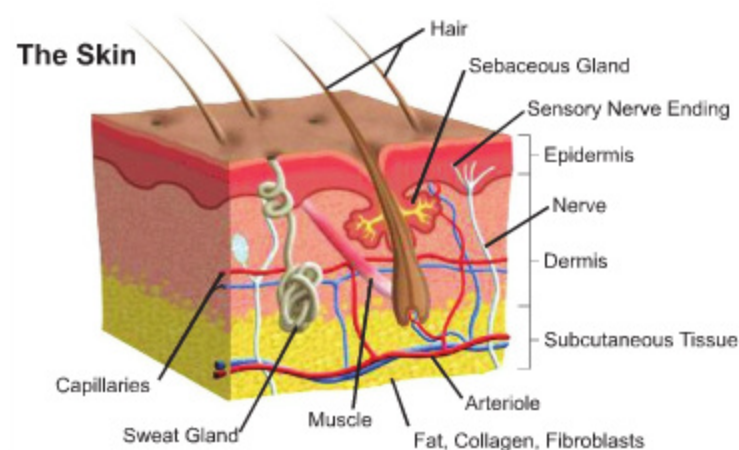


**Fig. 4.5:** Nose Structure

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

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

The sense of touch is circulated throughout the body. The nerve endings in the skin and in the other parts of the body spread sensations to the brain. There are some parts of the body that have a large number of nerve endings and hence, are a lot more sensitive.



**Fig. 4.6:** Parts of Skin

The four kinds of sensations of touch can be identified as cold, heat, contact and pain. The hair on the skin increases the sensitivity and operates as an early warning system for the body. The fingertips and sexual organs have powerful focus on the nerve endings. The sexual organs consist of "erogenous zones" that when stirred start a chain of endocrine reactions and motor responses which result in an orgasm.



### Beyond the Five Sense Organs

Contrary to sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing, humans also have awareness of balance (equilibrioception), pressure, temperature (thermoception), pain (nociception), and motion all of which certain things that could be involved in the coordinated use of several sensory organs. The complex interaction of visual inputs, the proprioceptive sensors (harmed by gravity and stretch sensors found in the muscles, skin and joints), the inside ear vestibular system and the central nervous system take care of the sense of balance. Disturbances occur in various parts of the balance system or at times in the integration of inputs in the brain which result in dizziness or unsteadiness.

## 4.4 Neuromuscular Coordination of Sensory Organs

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

Controlling body movement often involves a complex interaction between sensory neurons, the brain, and motor neurons. For example, what is involved in catching a ball? You see the ball coming towards you. You also see and feel the position of your arms and hands. As your brain sends signals to move the arms and hands, it also receives sensory information feedback. As the ball gets closer, the brain uses visual information about the ball and sensory information about your body position, to move your arms and hands to the correct position. As the ball hits your hands,

your brain signals your hands and fingers to close around the ball. You are not born with this ability. It must be learned through stages of motor development as you grow from baby to child and adult.

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



### Caution

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

## 4.5 Exercise Physiology

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

On a bigger platform, Exercise Physiology is the recognition of physiological mechanisms underlying the physical activity, the complete delivery of treatment services concerned with the evaluation, improvement and preservation of health and fitness, treatment of heart disease and various other chronic diseases or disabilities and expert guidance and counseling of athletes and those interested in athletics, training of sports and adaptability to severe chronic exercise.



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



### Did You Know?

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



### Caution

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

## 4.6 Homeostasis

The concept of homeostasis is widely used, in physiology and psychology, to identify what seems to be a general feature of living organisms: the tendency to maintain and restore certain balanced states or conditions of the organism. The systems of the body contribute in maintaining homeostasis, that is, the relative constancy of the internal environment despite external environmental changes. The body's internal environment is tissue fluid which washes all the cells, which in turn makes the body. The work of the tissue fluid remains constant if the cells are to stay alive and healthy. The fluid of the tissue is nourished and purified when molecules are exchanged across the thin vessel walls.

Tissue fluid remains constant only if the composition of blood remains constant.

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

## Examples of Homeostasis

Now that we have evaluated the basic contributions of the body's system, we can take a few examples of how the system cooperates in balancing the homeostasis in certain situations.

### Control of Temperature

The naked body is competent in maintaining a normal body temperature of about 37°C and 38°C even if the external temperature varies between 16°C and 54°C. The metabolic activity of cells in the body gives off heat as a by-product. When the body is stationary, the heat in the body is generated by the liver, the heart, the brain and the endocrine glands. On the other hand, when the muscles are active, they produce a lot more heat as compared to these organs. So, the increase in muscle activity by rubbing hands together or stamping feet is used as a short term measure to increase the body temperature.

On a long term basis, the hormone thyroxine created by the thyroid gland stimulates the cells to a higher metabolic rate. Hence, we can expect people living in cold climates to have a high metabolic rate as compared to those living in moderate climates.

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

### Hypothalamic Regulatory Centre

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

**Table 4.2:** Structure of Hypothalamic Regulatory Centre



## Control of Blood Pressure

Blood Pressure is created by the beating of the heart. It creates pressure against the walls of the blood vessels. Although the main arterial blood pressure increases rapidly from birth to old age due to the decrease in elasticity and narrowing of the arteries, it averages about 100 mm Hg. The arterial blood pressure will increase when the volume of blood will rise or when there is a decrease in the cross-sectional area of the arteries.

Sympathetic neurons under the regulatory control of the centres are situated in the medulla oblongata of the brain; they are known to increase the rhythm of the heartbeat and restrict the arteries. A heartbeat that beats really fast can increase the blood within the arteries and can restrict the blood vessels. It reduces their cross-sectional area.

Kidneys are a powerful mechanism with which the pH levels can be regulated. The kidneys can create acid or alkaline urine, bringing the hydrogen ion back to normal. When the kidneys create acid urine, they excrete  $H^+$  and when alkaline urine is formed in the kidneys, they excrete the bicarbonate ion. However, the complete effect of the kidney is not realised for ten to twenty hours. The pH of the body is regulated in three ways. The chemicals are buffered with the cells and the body fluids immediately react to regulate the hydrogen and hydroxide ion concentrations.

The pulmonary system needs a couple of minutes to bring about the effects while the kidney takes ten to twenty hours. Out of all the three, the kidneys are the most powerful.

## 4.7 Asanas and Their Benefits

The *asanas* benefit the human body in myriad ways. The primary *asanas*, *their postures*, their benefits and limitations are discussed in Chapter 9.

## Effects of Hatha Yoga Practices on Different Body Parts\*

Both the body and mind need exercise. When it decides to become more active, it is essential to consider that there are a few exercises that are healthier than the rest. When you compare yoga to other forms of exercise such as running, aerobics, or other activities performed in a gym, the obvious difference one gets is that yoga works the mind and spirit as well as the physical.

*Hatha Yoga* practices are best for the physical activity of every cell, organ and system in the human body. It is quite obvious that when someone performs *Hatha Yoga asanas*, one can gain flexibility of the tendons, muscles and spine. The health benefits are a lot more than just flexibility. All *asanas* increase the flow of blood and supply of oxygen to particular body organs, of course to the entire body to a certain extent. *Hatha Yoga* benefits the cardiovascular and lymphatic systems. As the lymphatic system does not have a heart to help pump the toxins, *Hatha Yoga* practices help keep the lymphatic system functioning smooth preventing the lymph nodes from becoming stagnant or obstructed.

*Hatha Yoga* practices are about controlling and forming perfect positions. There are no bursts or final jerks like weightlifting or sprinting. It's an endurance testing exercise routine, and it tests the most experienced yoga practitioners.

*Hatha Yoga* practices improve joint mobility and flexibility through the range of structured poses within the exercises. It also tones and builds muscle strength.

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



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

<i>Asana</i>	Beneficial for...
<i>Siddhasana</i> (Adept's Pose)	The best position for Meditation and <i>Pranayama</i> , leisure, restless mind, attentiveness, strengthens lower areas of the spine, tones abdominal organs
<i>Padmasana</i> (Lotus Pose)	Excellent pose for Meditation and <i>Pranayama</i> , relaxation, restless mind, concentration, toughens the lower areas of the spine, tones abdominal organs, advantageous for illnesses
<i>Baddha-Padmasana</i>	Enhances appetite, advantageous for several illnesses.
<i>Savasana</i> (Corpse Pose)	Relaxation, removes fatigue, calmness of mind
<i>Simhasana</i>	Halitosis (bad breath), stammering and problems with speech, strengthens liver, regulates flow of bile, halitosis (bad breath), stuttering and problems with speech, helps correct the coccyx area, constructively affects the thyroid glands.
<i>Bhadrāsana</i> (Auspicious Pose) (also called <i>Gorakhasana</i> )	A comfortable position for pregnant women, beneficial for several illnesses, fatigue
<i>Svastikasana</i> in combination with <i>Pranayama</i>	A comfortable pose for Meditation and <i>Pranayama</i>
<i>Paschimottanasana</i> (Sitting forward bending pose)	Strengthens various organs or parts of the body like the spine, heart, kidneys, abdominal organs, changes the metabolism and digestion, increases energy, beneficial form any illnesses and takes care of one's sex drive
<i>Mayurasana</i> (Peacock Pose)	Overcomes food poisoning, various toxins, spleen entropy, fever and trouble with the lower abdomen, advantages for diabetes and several illnesses. When it comes to toxins, the <i>dhauti</i> -techniques cleanse areas like the intestinal tract.
<i>Shirsasana</i> (Headstand)/ <i>Viparita-Karani</i> (Half Shoulder Stand)	Increases the flow of blood and supply of oxygen to the brain, insomnia, minimum energy, helps to think clearly and good memory, rejuvenates pituitary gland, pineal gland and thyroid, constipation, beneficial for many illnesses; reduces symptoms of wrinkles and grey hair that are often appear in old age.
<i>Uddiyana Bandha</i> (Abdominal Lift)	Reduces the fat around the waistline, abdominal organs, glands and muscles become strong, improves digestion and metabolism. It helps with constipation.
<i>Nauli</i> (Abdominal Practice)	Constipation, sexual problems, severe menstruation pain, improves digestion and metabolism, strengthens abdominal organs, liver, glands and muscles
<i>Bhujangasana</i> (Cobra Pose)	Keeps spine flexible, reduces fat around waistline, strengthens the wrists, strengthens various glands and takes care of vitality, neck tension and urinary problems
<i>Janu Shirsasana</i> (Knee-to-Head Pose)	Takes care of the kidneys and digestion problems, good for spine, reduces fat around waistline and helps relax and become energetic.
<i>Matsyasana</i> (Fish Pose)	Promotes good digestion and produces energy, minimizes neck tension, stimulates the brain and thyroid, asthma, lung problems and haemorrhoids.

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

## Research backing Yoga practices

Please refer Appendix



## 4.8 Limitations and Contra-indications of Yoga Practices

Despite the immense mental, physical and spiritual benefits of yoga, there are a few limitations. These limitations are being shared below for the knowledge of the practitioners and aspirants:

1. Each and every practice of yoga has its own limitations and contraindications. The practitioner of yoga should be aware of these contraindications before he takes up the practice.
2. Yoga is basically a preventive discipline rather than a therapy. Practice of yoga ensures good health in which case, therapy may not be necessary. But, in modern times, yoga is used more as an alternative therapy than as a lifestyle.
3. Every individual has a different constitution and hence cannot practise all the practices perfectly. Therefore, there is no point of competition or comparison in yogic practices.
4. Yogic practices when used as therapy are more beneficial in functional disorders rather than organic disorders. For example, yoga is helpless in the case of a fracture or for that matter even in cancer.
5. In cases where therapy (cure) is not possible (eg. cancer), yoga goes a long way in providing healing, thereby making the patient strong enough to bear the ailment.
6. Yoga is not a remedy for all ailments. Even in the case of obesity or excess weight in the body, yoga is helpful only along with diet restrictions and aerobic practices.
7. As a therapy, yoga suffers from the absence of diagnostic tools in its kitty. It is dependent upon diagnosis done by other therapy systems.
8. Yoga as a therapy can advantageously be used as a complementary therapy to allopathy or other therapies.

## Antarayas (Obstacles) in Yoga Practices\*

*“Vyadhistyanasamsbaya pramadasyavirati  
bhrantidarshanalabdha bhoomikatvanavasthitatvani  
chittavikshepate antarayaha”*

*vyadhi* = physical illness; *styana* = mental languor; *samsbaya* = doubt; *pramada* = carelessness; *alasya* = laziness; *avirati* = stubborn attachment towards sense objects; *bhranti darshana* = illusion or misunderstanding; *alabdha bhoomikatva* = non-attainment of any firm state; *anavasthitatva* = non-maintenance of firm state; *chitta* = mind; *vikshepaha* = distractions; *te* = these are; *antarayaha* = obstacles.

*“Physical illness, mental languor, doubt, carelessness, laziness, stubborn attachment towards sense objects, illusion or misunderstanding, non-attainment of any firm state, these are the distractions of the mind which cause obstacles on the path.”*

—Patanjali Yoga Sutras Ch 1: S-30

*Antarayas* or obstacles are so because they are distractions and hence, do not allow the mind to become concentrated. Yoga is concentration. Therefore, these distractions are obstacles on the path of yoga. They are described below:

1. **Vyadhi or illness** in the body is the first obstacle. Even though *vyadhi* can turn up in the most common form of physical pain or sickness which is beyond our control, a more restrained source can be derived from an unswerving negativity or other unproductive mental imbalance.
2. **Styana or mental laziness** reflects the inability to understand, listen, follow or practice anything. For instance, you will be in perfect health, but the minute you start meditating, the laziness befalls you! If you are watching television, nothing will happen but if you meditate then the body becomes restless. These are the obstacles that gets in your way.



3. **Samshaya or doubt** is a big one for lots of us who use much of our mental energy in doubting ourselves and questioning our self-worth. *Samshaya* turns up as self-doubt or a lack of confidence in our own power and potential. In order to counteract this obstacle, reaffirming faith in ourselves is important.
4. **Pramada or carelessness** refers to the misplaced priorities-taking into account what is not important as essential and not giving any sort of importance to what is important. You know certain things are not good for you: yet you do them.
5. **Alasya** is idleness, a lassitude in the body. This indolence can crop up in any aspect of life while doing anything. Laziness prevents you from concentrating.
6. **Avirati or stubborn attachment towards sense objects** showcases itself at the time when we are overindulging or non-refraining, as a result of being driven by temptations or overpowered by senses and feelings.
7. **Bhramidarshana or illusion/misunderstanding** it is often seen as stories made up in his/her mind. There are a million stories or point of views people have about how things: who people are and many more things like what each person is capable of and what not. *Bhramidarshana* refers to these inaccurate views. People can't make the most efficient route along our path and will likely lead substantially off course.
8. **Alabdhabhumikatva or non-attainment of firm state** is often linked with the working of our aims and objectives; we have to face situations where we feel like we haven't given it our best and have either failed or get inclined to give it up altogether. *Alabdhumikatva* can show its ugly side in such situations by showing a lack of grounding. There are things we can't easily attain and without facing the

challenges, it becomes quite tempting to lose our resolve and change the direction as it gets a little tough.

9. **Anavasthitatva or non-maintenance of firm state** refers to a situations in our yoga practice or life wherein after putting efforts and succeeding in reaching a higher state, we are not able to remain long there. We can fall prey to *anavasthitatva* when instability results in regression and backward movement.

## 4.9 Psychology\*

Yoga is *Chitta-vritti-nirodhab*, restraint of the mind- stuff or the psychological apparatus inside, generally known as the mind. There are various ways of controlling the mind or restraining the *chitta* that constitutes the complete discipline of yoga. It should be seen that the conviction forced into our emotions is of basic importance for successful building of the practice for Yoga, just as the proper fixing of pillars into the ground is of great significance for raising of an edifice on them. We have to be standing firmly on the ground of unshakeable assurance as to the need and value of yoga. We should not have any indecisive doubts in our mind. Having stood the ground being firm in this conviction, the feeling of yoga cannot be avoided in the course of any individual's life, the methods of practice has to now attract our attention in the needed manner. Yoga is the science of the mind. By taking control over the mind, the aim of yoga practices is to exceed the mind and have a pure consciousness which is our true nature.

*Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* is the first efficient text on the psychology of Yoga where the term yoga is explained in terms of controlling and balancing the *vrittis* or amendments of the mind. Yoga believes that it is the *chitta vrittis* (especially those accompanied by *kleshas*) that creates problems and causes instability in the mind. By exercising proper control over the *chitta vrittis*, the individual



is successful in removing negative thoughts and feelings, create a pleasant personality and attain equanimity. Hence, the mind is a central theme of yogic study. Several years ago, yogic literature described various kinds of human personalities and stressed on the notion that the same yogic method was not ideal for all kinds of people. On a temporary basis, the four kinds of yoga can be referred to. These are *Karma Yoga* for the dynamic, *Bhakti Yoga* for the emotional, *Jnana Yoga* for the intellectual and *Raja Yoga* for the spiritual.

Similarly, based on the parameter of concentration, we can speak about five types of minds:

- (i) *moodha* (lethargic),
- (ii) *kshipta* (restless),
- (iii) *vikshipta* (distracted),
- (iv) *ekagra* (concentrated), and
- (v) *niruddha* (arrested).

Yoga cannot be performed effectively in the *moodha*, *kshipta* and *vikshipta* states of mind. Real Yoga begins only with the concentrated state of mind. The goal of Yoga is to reach the *niruddha* state. The most relevant theory of personality can be said to be that which is based on the three *gunas*. These are *sattva* (illumined), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia). These *gunas* are understood as in-born mental afflictions. All individuals have these *guna* orientations by birth and these are mental. The path of personality development in yoga is a movement towards *sattva guna*. Even this *guna* is transcended when the goal of Yoga, *kaivalya*, is attained.

### Sources of Right Knowledge\*

According to Patañjali, there are three sources of valid knowledge: *pratyaksha* (direct perception via the five senses), *anumāna* (inference), and *āgama* (testimony). The *sanskrit* term for right knowledge is “*pramana*”. This term refers to uncontested information about a real object or experience.

*Pramana* concerns the facts that we gather either through direct or indirect contact with the many objects of the senses.

*Pratyaksha* or direct perception is the modification of mind that arises when one of our five senses comes into contact with a real object. It is the knowledge and impressions that are produced as we interact with the world through the medium of the senses.

The second source of valid knowledge is *anumana* (inference). According to Patañjali, in the process of inference, our contact with an object is indirect, perhaps through some other person or through our knowledge based on a previous experience. For us to reach an accurate conclusion, however, there must be a sign or a mark which points to a connection between two objects or events. Through the mark or sign, a statement is made about the known. For example, wherever there is smoke, we deduce that there must be fire. Whenever we see a mouse, we assume the absence of a cat. When two objects or events go hand-in-hand, we are able to obtain knowledge about one based on the presence or absence of the other. Unlike *pratyaksha* (direct perception), inference is not concerned with particularity (*visesa*), but rather with the domain of the general (*samanya*). It relates to the establishment of universal and general rules.

*Agama*, or scriptural testimony, is the third source of right knowledge. It arises from the teachings given in scriptures and other forms of sacred revelation. In order to constitute right knowledge, however, *agama* must come from an accepted authority. In *sanskrit* this kind of reliable individual is referred to as “*āpta*”, meaning someone who is competent, wise, and motivated by goodwill. By passing on the wisdom and knowledge that was given to him or her, the wise person aids the individual in arriving at right knowledge. In the greater yoga tradition, this kind of authority is connected with the *Vedas* and also with the many beings who embody the wisdom of the *Vedas* in



their lives. It is through the *agama pramana* that the many jewels of revealed truth and scripture are received by the yoga student as inspiration and guidance. These three sources of right knowledge are among the clearest and highest forms of the *vrutis* of the mind. They are associated with *sattva guna* and can also be classified as *aklista* (non-harmful).

### Personality Traits and Classification\*

The subject of *Guna* goes back to the *Atharva Veda*. It is talked about in the *Bhagvad Gita* and seen in the *Sankhya Darshana*. The subject of *Triguna* has been used to explain the concept of personality in modern era too. The Indian researchers have discussed this concept of the *Triguna* in their works. These are known as *sattva* called as stability; *rajas* called as activation and *tamas* called as inertia. The mind is characterized by these three *gunas*.

<i>Sattva</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Tamas</i>
<i>Priti</i> (pleasure)	<i>Apriti</i> (pain)	<i>Vishada</i> (indifference/despair)
<i>Prakash</i> (illumination)	<i>Pravritti</i> (activity)	<i>Niyama</i> (restraint)
Light	Mobile	Heavy

**Table 4.4:** Dimensions of *Triguna*

The *Bhagvad Gita* at various places gives highly developed human potential in its totality. It is described as the three *gunas* and says that we, humans are a mixture of these *gunas* which are *Tamas*, *Rajas* and *Sattva*. The following are detailed explanations mentioned about the three attributes of human personality. These *gunas* give rise to different kinds of temperament. It is chiefly influenced by physiological and psychological parameters.

### The *Sattva Guna*

*Sattva guna* is the “spiritual quality”. When *sattva guna* is dominant, a person has inherent desire to be good and caring. There is a resolute constancy of mind and senses. When *sattva* is prevalent, the light of wisdom shines through the individual. *Sattvic* intellect clearly understands the difference between desirable and undesirable, undutiful and dutiful action. When *sattva* is dominant in a person, he does his work as a duty. An action is done with calm understanding and the person is free from doubts. When *sattva* is dominant, a person pays homage to divine and spiritual values.

Strong respect for Gurus, non-violence, meditation, kindness, silence, self-control, and purity of character are the driving force of *sattvic* action. One of the limitations of *sattvic guna* is that it binds a person through attachment to happiness and knowledge. The *sattva guna* also brings with it the problem of goodness.

### The *Rajas Guna*

*Rajas guna* is the “active quality”. *Rajas guna* is considered to give rise to passion and desire; it causes greed, activity, undertaking of works, restlessness, and desire. *Rajas* dominant person is full of attachment, full of longings for fruits of action. Due to dominance of self-interest, the intellect gives distorted picture of right and wrong. Renunciation and detachment are not fostered by *Rajas* dominant person. Enthusiasm, interest, and activity are some of the attributes of this *guna*. *Rajas guna* too has its positive quality as it provides the energy for *sattva* to manifest itself.

### The *Tamas Guna*

*Tamas guna* is the “lethargic quality” responsible for apathy, laziness, drowsiness, sleep, ignorance, cowardice, and most of the ignoble qualities in human beings. *Tamas* creates vagueness,



sluggishness, hope, and perseverance. People with *Tamas guna*, lead people and are careful, anxious and vindictive. *Tamasic guna* also suggests disenchantment and pessimism. When *Tamas guna* is leading, an individual suffers from idealism and miscomprehension. The positive sign of *Tamas guna* is merited rest after hard work.

## Psychology as per The Bhagvad Gita and Yoga Sutras of Patanjali\*

The *Bhagvad Gita* or the Lord's Song is the teachings given by Lord Krishna to Arjun in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Arjun is faced with the dilemma of killing his near and dear ones, his respected *gurus*, friends and relatives for winning the war. At this juncture, Arjun refuses to fight saying winning the universe carries no sense if it stands on the foundation of bloodshed. It is then that Lord Krishna convinces Arjun with impeccable logic that he must fight the war. The teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjun bring out among other things deep understanding of the mind, the way the mind functions, the afflictions of the mind, the restlessness of the mind, what it takes to make the mind healthy and harmonious, and how to use the healthy mind for fulfilling a higher purpose in life. In short, Lord Krishna's teaching to Arjun is pure psychology.

The crux of the teaching is how to attain liberation from the sufferings and miseries in human life once for all. While providing these teachings, Lord Krishna explains the three paths open to human beings, depending upon their inclinations and temperament. The three paths are the path of knowledge (*Jnana Yoga*) for those who are intellectually inclined, the path of action (*Karma Yoga*) for those who are action-oriented, and the path of devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*) for those who are emotionally-oriented.

The *Bhagvad Gita* is a manual of action. There is no choice for human beings between action or

inaction. The choice is only pertaining to what type of actions to perform and the approach/ attitude with which to perform the actions. In this context, the *Bhagvad Gita* gives the two most popular definitions of Yoga:

1. "*Yogaha karmasu kaushalam* – Yoga is the skill or dexterity in performing an action". The skill here refers to the capacity to perform an action without generating *samskaras* (deep impressions of the action on the mind). This can happen when we perform *nishkama karma* (action without expecting the fruits of the action) or when we surrender ourselves completely at some altar.
2. "*Samatvam yogaha uchyate* – Yoga is equanimity of the mind." A person is as yogic as he is able to maintain an equanimous state of mind through different situations in life whether they are of pleasure or pain, convenient or inconvenient.

Lord Krishna acts as a perfect counselor to Arjun, removing all his doubts and misunderstandings as regards all aspects of life – relationships, duty, happiness, goal of life, etc.

The *Bhagvad Gita* is a total book of psychology.

Where the *Bhagvad Gita* gives *slokas*, *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* talks about *Sutras*. In a way, the *Bhagvad Gita* caters also to the masses, whereas *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* are meant only for those initiated into Yoga.

*Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* propound the *Ashtanga Yoga* or *Raja Yoga* which is distinguished from *Hatha Yoga* mainly because the former is mind-oriented while the latter is physical-oriented. In other words, *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* are focused upon mind, mind-control and mind-transcendence.

Yoga in *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* means concentration. To be yogic means to be concentrated. Anything that comes in the way of this concentration is an obstacle on the path of yoga. Thus, *Patanjali's Yoga* is a psychological discipline. *Patanjali* talks about



reaching the *ekagra* state of mind from the *moodha*, *kshipta* and *vikshipta* states of mind. For this purpose, he prescribes various tools/techniques. For example, he talks about *pranava japa*, *ekatatva abhyasa*, *chittaprasadana* techniques, *manas sthithi nibandhini* techniques, *pratipaksha bhavana* technique, *pranayama* practices, meditation, etc. The whole discipline of yoga is to make the mind healthy (concentrated) so that it is capable of going into the meditative state and thereby reaching the goal of *kaivalya*. In this state of *kaivalya*, there is complete stoppage of *chitta vrittis*. The *purusa* is disidentified from *prakriti* and established in its own nature.



## SUMMARY

- It is important to understand that the functions of the body are a collective function of each and every cell which constitutes the body, in the end.
- The skeletal and the muscular system are the principal systems that are responsible for the movement.
- The typical classification of the five sense organs is sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing.
- Exercise Physiology is the simple identification of physiological mechanism underlying the physical activity, the complete delivery of treatment services that are related with the analysis, improvement and balance of health and fitness, cure of heart disease and other severe diseases and disabilities and expert help and guidance of athletes and those who are interested in athletics, training of sports and human adaptability to severe exercise.
- Blood pressure is created by the beating of the heart and is the pressure against the walls of the blood vessels.

- Controlling body movement often involves a complex interaction between sensory neurons, the brain and motor neurons.
- Exercise is beneficial for both body and mind.
- Yoga is a science of mind. By controlling the mind, the goal of yoga practices is to transcend the mind and become pure consciousness which is our true nature.
- *Pratyaksha* or direct perception is the modification of mind that arises when one of our five senses comes into contact with a real object.
- Blood pressure, which is the pressure of blood against the walls of blood vessels, is created by the beating of heart.
- The *Bhagavad Gita* or the Lord's Song is the teachings given by Lord Krishna to Arjun in the battlefield of Kurukshetra.



## KEYWORDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Name the nine physiological systems in the body.
2. Name the organs of the circulatory and the respiratory systems.
3. Why is *Siddhasana* important?
4. Write the most important benefit of *Mayurasana*.
5. Give one limitation of yoga.
6. Name the *asana* which is helpful for back problems.
7. What is the difference between anatomy and physiology?
8. Give a list of obstacles one faces on the path of Yoga.
9. What are the different types of minds in Yoga?

### Long Answer Questions

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



## FURTHER READINGS

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati  
 Hatha Yoga Pradipika – interpretation by various authors  
 Yoga Teachers' Training Manual by Sivananda  
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 Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati  
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# **CHAPTER 5**

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## **YOGA FOR WELLNESS: PREVENTION OF DISEASES AND PROMOTION OF POSITIVE HEALTH**

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 5.1 Health and Wellness
  - 5.2 Yogic Concepts of Health and Diseases
  - 5.3 Concept of Pancha Kosha
  - 5.4 Concept of Triguna
  - 5.5 Concept of Panchamahabhutas
  - 5.6 Yogic Principles for Healthy Living
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Become aware about health and wellness
- Understand yogic concepts of health and diseases
- Explain the concept of *pancha kosha*
- Understand the theory of *trigunas*
- Discuss the concept of *panchamahabhutas*
- Know about yogic principles of healthy living



## Introduction

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

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



## 5.1 Health and Wellness

The views of the WHO (World Health Organization) presents health as *'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity'*. Recently, WHO has also noticed and recommended a fourth element of spiritual health, but was not able to give it a proper definition due to the confusion created by the element's relation with religion. It is quite clear from the yogic point of view that in the definition of health given by the WHO special emphasis is placed on 'well-being'; this means that it is will as important to 'being' healthy as 'feeling' healthy. It is of no use when medical reports of a patient claim him/her to be normal despite the patient himself/herself not feeling good.

It is important to be happy and healthy! This section explains about the contrast between health and wellness as well as what the different dimensions of wellness are and how they interact.



Fig. 5.1: Yoga and Health

People do exercise to be healthy. There is always a new diet or health fad every single year in the world of nutrition or exercise. But rarely do we hear of wellness fads or exercises helping one to get totally well. It is all about health. Is there a difference between health and wellness?

Health is defined as the overall mental and physical state of a person; the absence of any disease.



Wellness refers to the state of being in optimal mental and physical health. It is about living a life

full of personal responsibility and therefore taking proactive steps for one's entire well-being. This means that one who lives one's life well controls the risk factors that can harm him/her. Risk factors are different types of actions or conditions that increase chances of illness or injury.



### Caution

Causes of sickness or ill health are generally noted as impurities on the level of mind (*manasika*), body (*kaayika*) and speech (*vachika*). Your own speech can create distress in you as well as other people around you. Even distress or discomfort should be treated as an illness.

Hence, Yoga is a wonderful addition to your normal activities. Yoga will keep your muscles strong and stretched. It helps to maintain balanced strength in your body. It also helps in keeping your mind calm and peaceful. There is no better way to begin or end your day than with an uplifting and nurturing yoga practice.

## Role of Yoga in Health and Wellness

Modern lifestyle poses a number of challenges to the health of humans. Modern life's fast changing trends cause many problems such as mental, moral, spiritual and physical. Today in every walk of life, the confusion and chaos, tension and stress, competition and commercialization have led to a situation wherein man is finding himself helpless with regard to his personal hygiene and health. All individuals who took birth on this planet earth have right to enjoy all gifts of nature, to live a happy and free life.

Technological advancements have reduced the physical form of labour and given rise to the mental form of labour. Many health problems such as insomnia, gastric problems, acidity, diabetes, and hyper-tension (psychosomatic disorders) are outcomes of high level of mental labour performed nowadays. The reasons for such



disorders are irregular and faulty eating habits, working in stressful conditions, not doing physical exercises and lack of proper rest. The only remedy to overcome such hazardous habits is yoga.

Practicing the yogic principles and its virtues are the ways through which a practicing individual can lead a misery free, happy life. All individuals have the same concern of wellness and health in their lives. Modern life with its material wealth is not able to prove better as compared to the traditional one. Yoga is a spiritual science for the integrated and holistic development of an individual's mental, physical, and moral-spiritual aspects. The yogic philosophy has a practical applicability in our day to day life. Yoga has a great contribution in normalizing physiological functions. Recent developments in the field of Yoga have revealed the scientific thoughts behind it.



### Notes

Yoga should not be considered as a traditional misunderstanding of the past because it is more valid and valuable nowadays than it has been in the past and can provide greater amount of guidance and help to the modern man.

Regardless of the yoga style chosen by an individual, it helps him/her to embrace a lifestyle which is effective in reducing stress and enhancing overall health and wellness of practitioners.

### Strength



There are a number of *asanas* (e.g. *supine naukasana*, *utkatasana*, *bhujangasana*, etc.) in Yoga which develop the strength of muscles like in classic forms of exercises (push-ups, lunges or squats).

Active forms of yoga directly improve your fitness levels by building strength, balance and joints mobility.

### Balance



One of the vital elements of fitness is balance, which is generally ignored in the routine life of traditional gym. Yoga poses like *Vrikshasana* (tree pose) teaches practitioners how to stay firm only on one leg,

while *Kakasana* (crow pose) requires practitioners to learn to balance on their arms. Balance also helps you to be fitter for daily activities.

### Joint Mobility



Many poses in yoga require different joint movements by practitioners. Such movements generally differ from the joint movements to which individuals are habituated with, such as swimming,

walking, biking or running. This improves the overall range of motions and prevents injury. A regular practice of yoga helps in significantly diminishing the pain and stiffness.

### Mental Health



A regular practice of yoga helps in increasing the feel-good chemicals level in practitioners' brain and hence improves the health at mental level. As per the research published

in famous journal "Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine" in November 2010, it was found that the total participants who participated in three sessions of yoga, each session of 60-minute, experienced a greater relaxation and mood improvement and encountered reduction in anxiety level as compared to the experiences of



those persons who opted for a walking practice in their schedule. As per the researchers, a brain chemical GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) is responsible for such improved results. Mood improvement and reduction in stress level are the results of meditation and a proper breathing practice.



### Flexibility

The manifold benefits of yoga compel people to learn it and practice it regularly. Yoga improves flexibility in body as it poses help in stretching

out tight hips, back, shoulders and thighs. Elasticity of muscles along with connective tissues such as fascia, tendons and ligaments also gets improved by practising yoga. One is more prone to injury in case of chronic tightness and stiffness of body.

### Wellness



Problems and symptoms of many health issues such as asthma, arthritis, cancer, high blood pressure, chronic back

pain, hormonal imbalances, diabetes, irritable bowel syndrome and migraines could be reduced to a greater extent by practising yoga daily. A habit of practising yoga daily helps in reducing the anxiety and stress to minimal level which leads to better sleep and this ultimately indicates good health of practitioners.

## 5.2 Yogic Concepts of Health and Diseases

Yoga and health are two areas when combined together reflect a unique and beautiful combination of topics and represent a special blend of life and

joy. Considering the two topics of life separately, we find that each carry an exclusive meaning and promise to person practising it. These combined factors (yoga and health) also reflect the concept of 'what it means to be a good human being'.

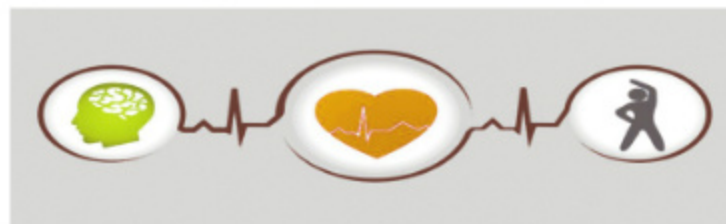


Fig. 5.2: A Blend of Mind and Health with Yoga

Traditional systems of curing diseases and prescribing medicine have been replaced by modern medical system almost all over the world due to its sensible and refined knowledge base. This replacement has proved effective as it saved people from infectious and contagious diseases which were incurable earlier. Modern medical system is encountering a great challenge of dealing with the rapid increase in number of ailments related to stress. Yoga is helping modern medical system to escape from the problem of increasing stress – related cases.

### Yogic Concepts of Health

For an individual to achieve the final freedom, emancipation or liberation, the most vital *moksha shastra* is Yoga. Good health and well-being are vital by-products of leading a yogic life. A proper usage of emotions and intellect (body and mind) along with spirit consciousness brings good health and well-being of an individual. This must be noted that one may attain dynamic state of health, which may be earned despite of karma *sanskara* of an individual, which reveals the genetic predisposition of an individual and also reflects the birth environment. A disciplined self effort in the form of Yoga helps to sustain and retain healthy dynamic state in an individual's life.



### Structural Aspects of the Human Being

As per yogic concepts, human beings are not just inclusive of a physical body, they are also a bundle of multifold universal nature. The *pancha kosa* (fivefold aspects of human existence) concept and the *trisharira* (threefold aspect of human physical nature) concept help in understanding the real multi-dimensional nature; at this point, health and result create an active interaction at all stages of existence. Seven substances are combined to make up the human body; this is considered by yoga and *Ayurveda* at the gross – body level. The seven substances or *sapta dhatus* are named as *rasa* (chyle), *rakta* (blood), *maamsa* (flesh), *meda* (adipose), *asthi* (bone), *majjaa* (marrow) and *sukra* (semen). The importance of *tridosha*, i.e., three *doshas* was well understood by ancient health sciences that good health requires well-balanced combination of *tridosha*. In other words, health is regarded as a synchronization of *upa prana vayus* (minor energies of physiological functions), *prana vayus* (major energies of physiological functions) and stable *nadis* (subtle energy channels) along with proper functioning of all *chakras* (major energy centres that may be correlated to the psycho-neuro-immunoendocrine axis).

### Qualities of Physical Health According to Yoga

The *Upanishad Shvetaasvatara* exemplifies the health from a yogic point of view. In the *Upanishad* health, lightness of body, mind's desirelessness, complexion clearness, an agreeable odour, beautiful voice and scantiness of excretions are considered as very first signs of entering Yoga.

These qualities have been again echoed in the *The Hathayoga Pradipika* in the words of Yogi Svamarama. According to him, *Slimness of body, lustre on face, clarity of voice, brightness of eyes, freedom from disease, control over seminal ejaculation,*

*stimulation of gastric heat and purification of subtle energy channels are marks of success in Hatha yoga.*

An excellent elucidation of *kaya sampat* (perfect body attributes) is found in the *Patanjali Yoga Darshan*. In *Vibhuti Pada*, the requirements of body are perfection, embrace, gracefulness, beauty, adamantness, hardness and strength. One of the characteristics of good health namely, effulgence, is also revealed through the concept of radiant effulgence which is an outcome of the mastery of *samana* (energy of digestion).

### Qualities of Mental Health According to Yoga

In Yoga, equal importance is given to physical health as well as to mental health. A person who is mentally healthy can be considered as a *stitha prajna*; his qualities are enumerated in The *Bhagavad Gita*.

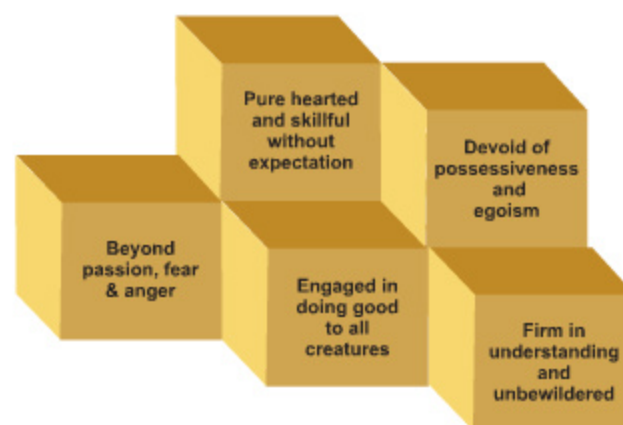


Fig. 5.3: Qualities of Mental Health According to Yoga

### Qualities of Spiritual Health According to Yoga

Verses 1, 2 and 3 of chapter XVI of The *Bhagavad Gita* also define the qualities of a person who is spiritually healthy. The qualities include:

- *danam* (charity)
- *tapa* (disciplined life)
- *hrir acaapalam* (modesty)
- *apaishunam* (aversion to defamation)
- *saucam* (cleanliness of body and mind)
- *akrodhab* (freedom from anger)



- *maardavam* (gentleness)
- *dama* (self-control)
- *daya bhutesv* (compassion for all living creatures)
- *sattva samshuddhib* (purity of inner being)
- *abhayam* (fearlessness)
- *jnanayoga vyavasthitib* (steadfastness in the path of knowledge)
- *yajna* (spirit of sacrifice)
- *svadhyaya* (self-analysis)
- *arjavam* (uprightness)
- *shanti* (tranquility)
- *naa timaanita* (absence of pride)
- *ahimsa* (non-violence)
- *satyam* (truthfulness)
- *tyagah* (spirit of renunciation)
- *aloluptvam* (non-covetedness)
- *tejah* (vigour)
- *kshama* (forgiveness)
- *dhritib* (fortitude)
- *adroho* (freedom from malice)

## Yogic Concept of Diseases

The main reason for stress related infirmities is the intensified likes and dislikes at an individual's *manomaya kosa*; this results into *Aadhi* (distressful emotional surges). Long-standing and uncontrolled surges of stressful reactions such as anger (*krোধa*), intense desire (*kama*) and jealousy (*matsarya*), fear (*bhaya*) disturb make the lifestyle. *Naadis*, the distribution channels, spread in whole body through a branching system, get violent variations in the flow of *prana* due to they distress. For carrying out biochemical process in a continuous and efficient way, all cells of the body need right amount of its *pranic* energy.



### Example

Uninterrupted power supply is essential for all types of electrical equipment in a right quantity. Any interruptions or irregularity in the power supply to electrical gadgets would cause them to breakdown. In the same way, human organ systems also fail to function when they do not get *prana* in the right amount. .

Five types of wrong inborn mental afflictions (*kleśa*) which can be considered as intrinsic causes for producing uncontrolled emotional responses (distress) as given in *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* are:

अविद्याऽस्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्चक्लेशाः ॥५॥ यो सू ॥२॥ ३॥

*Avidyā'smitā raga dveṣābhiniवेशāḥ pañcakleśāḥ* | |*pa yo sū* | 2 | 3 | |

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

*Kleśas* are the progressive steps through which the mind gets lost in the external world resulting in distress and disease.

The word 'health' in Sanskrit is known as *Swasthya*, and it carries a profound meaning. Two Sanskrit words – *Swa* or the Self and *Stha* which mean 'abiding' combine to form the word *swasthya*. From this, a general and rough meaning of *swasthya* comes that is "abiding in one's own Self". In the great Indian philosophy 'The Self' is referred to as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss) and it is the real and true nature of each and every human being. A little deviance from this is regarded as disease. Therefore abiding in one's Self produces health (bliss).

Healthy mind and body are the requirements for attaining a higher state of consciousness as per the ancient *Rishis* of India. Disease or *Vyadhi* is described as the main obstacle among the nine



obstacles or distractions of mind towards the yogic path by Maharishi Patanjali. He further revealed that by practising yoga, one can eliminate the present diseases and the ones which may manifest in future. One can easily preserve his/her health by practising yoga in life. The yogic method is a method and source in itself for a preventive and therapeutic medicinal system.



### Notes

Bilious secretion and *Pitta* are interrelated and they are the main reason of body heat. This is basically the metabolism energy which is vital for digestion. A glue known as *Kapha* keeps a combined hold on everything. This is also the energy of anabolism that helps in processes which are regenerative and generative.

*Yama* and *Niyama* are the first two parts of yoga. These two parts maintain an individual's internal and external harmony. An individual can achieve well-being and harmony in personal life as well as in society by following the values namely, non-violence, truth, cleanliness, contentment and non-stealing. Not following these values may put an individual's life in stress and strain.

Human body's vital energy is known as *prana*. Physiology of a human body is maintained through this *prana*. It is responsible for functioning of nervous systems, blood circulation and digestive system. *Prana* controls each and every activity of body. *Nadis* are the channels through which flow of *prana* in body takes place. Any kind of block in *nadis* causes obstructions or imbalance in flow of *prana* which may result into physical disorders. The balance of *prana* in body can be easily balanced by practising *asanas* and *pranayama* and this helps in removing the blockages, thereby improving the functioning of all systems of practitioners.



### Did You Know?

The concepts of yoga related to diseases and health help people to know that the root cause of physical disorders starts from the seeds in the mind. The disturbed mind (*adhi*) causes physical diseases (*vyadhi*). It is quite easy to trace back the origination of psychosomatic disease to the emotional and mental pressure patterns by carefully paying attention to individual's personal history.

Practising yoga helps in making the breathing slower and deeper; it also improves the capacity and ability of lungs and reduces the heart rate, which ultimately reduces blood pressure. Patients suffering from diabetes, and who are prone to heart attack, blindness and kidney failures are able to live life with minimal risk by practising yoga as it helps in reducing the cholesterol and the sugar levels.

One can achieve calmness of mind and removal of stress and anxiety problems by practising *pranayama* and Meditation. Through this, mental health is improved which ultimately leads to stability and a greater peace of mind; this is exactly what is required to experience a sense of constant well-being. Through meditation, the calmer alpha waves present in the brain are induced; this is normally experienced during the process of deep relaxation and this in turn improves memory, mental clarity and physical coordination.



### Did You Know?

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



Practising *asanas* help in bringing about strength, balance and flexibility in the body. The practice of *asanas* tones the internal organs of the body; it also improves blood circulation in body and helps in removing harmful toxins from the system. One can reverse the aging process and regenerate body tissues by yoga. One can improve the flexibility of the spine and joints with the help of practising *asanas* and this also makes the body feel younger. It also helps in correcting wrong postures and in removing of defects caused due to lengthy and improper work habits of individuals.

Yoga has endless benefits. A few of them are mentioned below.

- Yoga helps in improving lifestyle disorders, such as hypertension, anxiety, insomnia, obesity, high blood pressure, stress and diabetes.
- Yoga is well-known for its help in relieving depression and reducing dependency on psychiatric drugs.
- It is also useful for managing pain in case of back pain, arthritis, general muscle stiffness and fibromyalgia.
- The lymphatic system functioning can be improved by practising yoga and this also plays an important role in strengthening the immune system of body.

Most of the *asanas*, specifically the *shatkarmas* (such as *neti*, *nauli*, and *basti*) known for working as effective detoxing methods, help in removing the toxins present in the body. *Asanas* can help in eradicating the problems of acidity, sinusitis, heartburns, constipation, and migraine and also work in preventing the diseases which may occur in the future.

Although yoga first emerged as a science of spirituality, in the present day concept it is used

more as a system of self-healing to maintain a healthy mind and body.

We have understood that the concept of body according to yogic texts says that we are made of five layers of existence.

*Annamaya kosha* is the physical frame which is the grossest of the five *Koshas*. *Annamaya Kosha* consists of five elements (*pancha bhutas*) namely earth (*prithvi*), water (*jala* or *apa*), fire (*agni* or *tejas*), wind (*vayu*) and space (*akash*). This is normally nourished by the gross food that we consume.

Further *pranamaya kosha*, a uniform harmonious flow of *Prana* or Life energy to each and every cell of the *annamaya kosha* keeps them alive and healthy. *Prana* flows through subtle channels called *nadis*. The five dimensions of this *mukhya prana* flow resulting in activities in these areas are called *pancha prana*. The down ward force called *apana* is responsible for functions like defaecation, urination, menstruation, ejaculation, parturition etc. The *prana* responsible for breathing movement is called *prana*. *Udana* is responsible for upward activities like vomiting; *samana* is responsible for proper digestion and balancing *prana* and *apana*. *Vyana* is that which is responsible for all activities in the periphery like nerves impulses, blood circulation, and cellular activity in all cells. A balance among all these five *pranas* leads to good health.

*Manomaya kosha* is that layer of existence, wherein the mind carries on its different functions such as perception (*manah*), memory (*chittah*), and ego (*ahankara*). Mind is agitated during the interactions with the world characterized by feelings, such as 'likes or dislikes', 'love or hate', backed by the heavy 'I' (the ego). It is this emotion that is the root cause of all human distress. When the emotions become powerful, they start governing our actions against what is right. This going



against right actions leads to imbalances called *adhi* or stress.

Hunger, sleep, fear, and procreative instincts are common to man and animals. It is the *buddhi* (discriminating faculty) that is special for man. A person who does not have *buddhi* is equal to an animal.

The higher faculty the *vijananamaya* continuously guides the *manomaya kosha* to get mastery over the basic instincts. *Vignanamaya kosha* is the discriminating faculty which guides man to discriminate between what is 'good & bad', 'right & wrong', 'useful & not useful'. *Anandamaya kosha*, is the highest stage of evolution in the manifested existence where bliss is embodied in *anandamaya kosha*. A man is the healthiest when there is a perfect harmony and balance among of all his faculties. At *vijnanamaya kosha* there are movements but they are channelized in the right direction. As such, it is in the *manomaya* level the imbalances start, says *Yoga Vasistha*, one of the famous treatise on yoga.

## Genesis of Disease

As discussed earlier likes and dislikes come to play at this level. They start governing our actions; often they work in the wrong directions. Going against what is right causes agitations. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called '*adhis*'. Further, these agitations cause violent fluctuations in the flow of *prana* in the *nadis*. The *prana* flows in wrong paths flying from one to the other without rhythm and harmony. The *nadis* can no longer, in this condition, maintain stability and steadiness, but quiver. Due to these disturbances of the *prana* and unsteadiness in the *nadis* the food does not get properly digested. These arises *kujirnatvam* (wrong digestion), *atijirnatvam* (over-digestion) and *ajirnatvam* (no digestion). When

this improperly digested food settles down in the body amidst such commotion it results in psychosomatic ailments. Contained in this process of generation of psychosomatic ailments is the method for treating such ailments. Thus Long standing *adhis* get pushed into *pranamaya* and *annamaya kosha* causing *vyadhis*. Preponderance of *ajnana* (ignorance about one's real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges in untimely hours, association with wicked, evil thoughts, inflicting injuries, etc. These breed physical diseases called *vyadhis* or the secondary diseases.

## Yogic Concept of Healthy Living

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

*Yoga Vasistha* suggests that if the mind becomes purified with true *satvaguna*, then *prana vayu* will begin to circulate freely throughout the body, the food taken will be digested properly and hence no diseases will arise. This is also in line with *yama* and *niyama* (social and personal disciplines) of sage Patanjali described under *Asthanga yoga*.

## Achara Vichara

*Yoga Vasistha* also says to avoid actions, such as :

1. Eating of unwholesome food
2. Living in unhealthy places



3. Doing things at unreasonable hours
4. Association with the wicked
5. Longing after improper things
6. Evil desires and bad thoughts

### Development of Satvaguna

In an ordinary man there is a mixture of the three *gunas* (*sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*). *Tamas* and *Rajas* pull a man downwards; *sattwa* lifts a man upwards. *tamas* and *rajas* lead to bondage; *sattwa* helps to attain salvation. Discipline yourself and develop *sattwa*. When the mind is *sattwic*, there is calmness in it. Divine light can descend only when the mind is serene and cheerful (KN Aiyer, 1975).

### Research findings

A single month of integral yoga practices consisting of *yogasana*, *pranyama*, meditation and lectures imparts significant benefits to healthy volunteers in all psychological and health variables. It improves sustained attention and emotional quotient. It improves the personality of the healthy person by increasing *sattwa* and decreasing *rajas* and *tamas*. It also improves all dimensions of general health. (Sushil S Khemka<sup>1</sup>, Nagendra Hongasandra Ramarao<sup>1</sup>, Alex Hankey 2011). Yoga increases quality of life and spinal flexibility better than physical therapy exercises. (Tekur, P., Chametcha, S., Hongasandra, R.N., Raghuram, N. 2010). The results suggested a possible role for yoga to improve quality of life by affecting breast cancer outpatients. Vadiraja, H. S., et al. (2009). Yoga reduces perceived stress and improves adaptive autonomic response to stress in healthy and pregnant women. (Maharana, S., Nagendra, H. R., Nagarathna, R., and Padmalatha, V. (2009). Breathing through the left nostril increased performance in a spatial cognitive task, (Joshi, M., and Telles, S. (2008). Long term yoga practice (for one year or more) is associated with

increased insulin sensitivity and attenuates the negative relationship between body weight or waist circumference and insulin sensitivity. (Chaya M S et. al. 2008). The significant improvement in the yoga group in depth perception compared to the physical training group was speculated to be related to lower anxiety level which have been proven to be associated with better visual perception. (Raghuraj, P., and Telles, S. (2003).



### Learning ACTIVITY

List down 10 yoga poses and the ailments that they address. List down the ailments due to imbalance in each of the three *doshas* and the beneficial yogic *asanas* in each of the ailments.

## 5.3 Concept of Pancha Kosha

Most of the people have a limited knowledge and understanding about yoga. They think that yoga is limited to the practice of *asana* for increasing flexibility of body, muscles toning, body relaxation, strength development, balance improvement and finding relief from stress. The discussed benefits are only samples of what yoga can really provide with us. The real purpose of yoga is to create and develop a relationship within one's Self which exists deep within one's core.

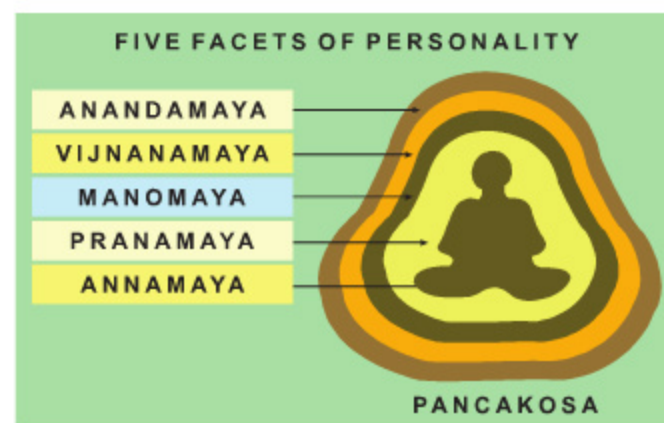


Fig. 5.4: Five Facets/Layers of Personality



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

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

- *annamaya-kosa*, that is, the *kosa* of matter which is basically the physical vehicle,
- *pranamaya-kosa* the *prana kosa*, it is one of the "vital" vehicles.

- *manomaya-kosa* means the *manas kosa*; it is the mental vehicle
- the *kosa* of *vijnana* is *Vijnanamaya-kosa* (the vehicle of higher reason)
- the *kosa* of *anand* (joy or bliss) is the *anandamaya-kosa*.

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

*Annamaya kosa* (the physical body) also known as "gross body" (*sthula-sharira*). *Anandamaya kosa* (the bliss body) is also known as "causal body" (*karana-sharira*). *Sukshmarsharira*, "subtle body" comprises the *pranamaya*, *manomaya* and *vijnanamaya kosas*, along with the *pranamaya* shell which disintegrates at death of an individual.

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

1	<i>Annamaya kosa</i>	Matter	Physical	Senses and physical body
2	<i>Prānamaya kosa</i>	Vital Air	Energy	Driving force behind the senses, the physical aspect and body process or operation
3	<i>Manomaya kosa</i>	Mind	Mental	Processes, reasons, logics and emotions
4	<i>Vijnānamaya kosa</i>	Intellect and Ego	Wisdom	Discriminating Faculty
5	<i>Ānandamaya kosa</i>	Innermost	Bliss	Not dependent on any reason or stimulus

**Table 5.1:** Pancha Kosha and its Significance

### Pancha Kosha or Pancakosās<sup>1</sup>

The soul of a human being is covered by *panca kosās* (sheaths) or five bodies; it is noticeable that

name of each *kosa* contains the word '*maya*' and this simply means 'made of'. These are as follows:

1. ***Annamaya kosa*:** This is the first part of tangible body made of five fundamental elements. The sheath of *annamaya kosa* is

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree- Fundamental principle of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



made of *sapta dhatus*, seven minerals (as named earlier). With a regular controlled diet and life style, *annamaya kosa* gets strength and becomes healthy.

2. **Prānamaya kosa:** Second sheath of the body of a human being is the sheath of *prāna*. The bridge between the gross and subtle bodies is *prāna*, which is the vital breath through which man lives. All the functions of wisdom are done by the *prānamaya kosa*. Based on the functions performed *prana* is named differently. There are 10 distinctly *pranas* – 5 major *pranas* and 5 minor or *upapranas*. Five major *prānās* are namely, *prāna*, *apāna*, *udāna*, *samāna* and *vyāna*. Five *upapranās* (minor) are *dhananjaya*, *nāga*, *kurma*, *krikal* and *devadatta*. The exclusive functions of *prānās* are ingestion, digestion, excretion, circulation and higher functions. With the regular exercise of *prānmāya*, the work performance of *prānmaya kosa* is enhanced.

The yoga texts give detailed descriptions of how the imbalance gets transferred from the mind to the body through disturbances in *prānamaya kosa*. This is described in this *sloka* of *yoga vāsīṣṭha*

चित्ते विधूरिते देहं संक्षोभमुपयाति हि ॥यो वा १९।९७॥

संक्षोभात्साम्यमुत्सृज्य वहन्ति प्राणवायवः ॥यो वा १९।९९॥

कुजीर्णत्वमजीर्णत्वमतिजीर्णत्वमेव वा ॥यो वा १९।१००॥

Chitte vidhūrīte dehaā saikṣhobhamupayāti hi  
| |yo vā| 9|97| |

Saikṣhobhātsāmyamutsr̥jya vahanti prāṇavāyavaḥ  
| |yo vā| 9|99| |

Kujērnatvamajērnatvamatijērnatvameva vā  
| |yo vā| 9|100| |

When the mind becomes disturbed it shows up in the body. This results in disturbances in the flow of *prāna* in the *nadis*. This manifests as

disturbed digestive function—either excessive or irregular or indigestion.

3. **Manomaya kosa:** The first important acting part of the subtle body is *manomaya kosa*.

Mind, intellect, ego and conscience are the integral parts of *manomaya kosa*, which are termed as the *catustaya*. *Manomaya kosa* is purified and strengthened with wisdom and meditation. There are five *karmendriyās*, the means of action, and they are associated with the external world.

4. **Vijnānamaya kosa:** This is referred to as wisdom body or sheath of higher intellect (intuition). The second part of the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) is *vijnanamaya kosa*. Intellect, and all the sensory organs, that work with wisdom fall in this category. The practitioner, who works under the guidance of *vijnanamaya kosa* having a good understanding of it, attains '*ritambhara prajna*' through the incessant meditation and *samādhi*, alienating all kinds of illusions, passions, interests, etc.
5. **Ānamdamaya kosa:** This *kosa* is also known with other terms like, '*hiranyamaya kosa*', '*hrdayaguha*', '*hrdayakāsa*', '*karanasarira*', '*linga sarira*', etc. This *kosa* is indicated as situated in our heart. It has an immense relevance with our inner realm its relation with the external world is considerably very less. Human life, the existence of gross body of a human being, all kinds of worldly conduct is depended on this *kosa*. The practitioner achieves *nirbeeja* (seedless) *samādhi*, attaining the blissful state and forever he resides there.

## 5.4 Concept of Triguna

The *doshas* (*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*) are the vital elements of the body. Similarly, the three *gunas* – *satwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the three important constituents, known as energies of the mind.



In *Samkhya* philosophy, which is dualistic, the two metaphysical principles are *purusa* (principle of consciousness) and *prakriti* (principle of matter). All the objects in the world, animate and inanimate, are made up of these two principles. The root cause supporting the whole universe is *prakriti*. The three *gunas* namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *Tamas* compose the *prakriti*. The three *gunas* are combined to make all objects physical or mental.

A distinctive explanation of human beings on the base of individuals *manasa* (psychology) and *prakriti* (constitution) is given in *Ayurveda*. In terms of genetical description, these psychological features are based on the relative dominance of the three *gunas*.

### Three Mental Qualities: Sattwa, Rajas, Tamas

Parallel to the three *doshas* of the human body, the three *gunas* namely *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are found in the mind and nature of human beings. The ideal state of mind is *sattwa*, or purity, as a person possessing these qualities is thoughtful, alert, kind, and calm. A person always indulges himself and seeks incessant diversions whose mind is predominant by *rajasic* (too active) quality. The dull and lethargic mind shows the predominance of the *tamas* quality.

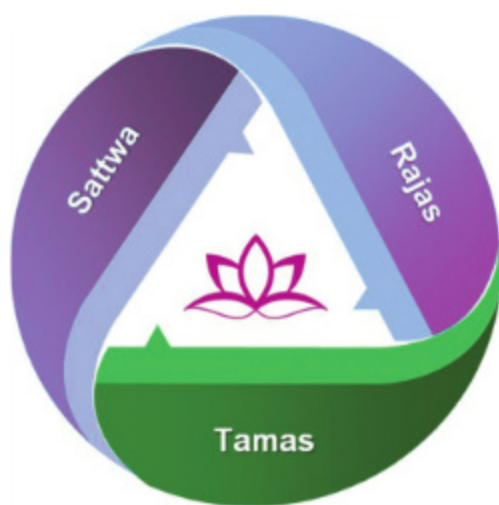


Fig. 5.5: The Three Mental Qualities

The persons who enthusiastically study spirituality and take all-inclusive measures to improve themselves have *sattwic* and *rajasic* minds. These people work actively and overcome lethargy by doing exercises.

A *sattwic* mind gets developed by maintaining the proper balance of mind and peace and purity development. This stage is known as first point of spiritual realization or *Samadhi*.

- The power of *sattwic* influence is enormous. It helps in creating many positive characteristics in an individual. Some of them are listed below:
  - ❖ It creates comprehension, which is needed for healing and unity
  - ❖ It creates a positive and conceptual viewpoint
  - ❖ It creates clarity, intelligence, leadership, warmth and independence
  - ❖ It creates love, peace, calmness, faith, compassion, forgiveness and nurturing.
- The impact of *rajasic* influence can be seen in the following ways in an individual:
  - ❖ It creates unreliability, indecisiveness, anxiety and hyperactivity.
  - ❖ It creates willfulness, ambition, manipulation, impulsiveness, aggressiveness, anger and vanity.
  - ❖ It also creates greed for material luxuries, money and comfort too.
- *Rajas* elements have features such as attachment, lustful sentiments and controlling
  - ❖ Outcome of *tamasic* influence are seen in the following ways:
  - ❖ It creates a servile attitude, fear, dishonesty, self-destructiveness, depression, sexual

perversions, addictive behaviour, suicidal thoughts and animal instincts.

- ❖ It creates violence, vindictiveness, criminality, hatred and psychopathic behaviour.
- ❖ It creates lethargy, dullness, lack of care, a tendency to steal and get depressed.

As all human beings have a mixture of the three *gunas*, and this defines an individual's personality/ *mansa /prakriti*. A symmetry and balance in the three *gunas* preserve the mind and indirectly protect the body, overall maintaining body in a healthy state. Different types of mental disorders are the outcomes of any disturbance or imbalance in the equilibrium of the three *gunas*.

- All the three *gunas* have different characteristics shown below in the table:

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

Stress and negative desires as *krোধ* (anger), *bhaya* (fear), *chinta* (anxiety), *irshya* (malice), *lobha* (greed), *kama* (lust), and *moha* (delusion and Rallucination) may disturb the balance of *rajas* and *tamas guna*. The individual quality of a person is defined and determined by the three properties, their types and sub-types. The persons of *satwika guna* are generally noble and have a spiritual character.

*vayu* (air) element are known as *vayavya dravya*, the substances which contain the *agni* (fire) element are known as *tejas dravya*, the substances which contain the *jala* (water) element are known as *âpya dravya*, the substances which contain the *prithvi* (earth) element are known as *parthiva dravya*. We are introducing here the substances of the above said elements precisely.

## 5.5 Concept of Panchamahabhutas<sup>2</sup>

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



Fig. 5.6: Concept of Panchamahabhutas

<sup>2</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principle of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



- **Âkâsa dravya:** These substances are smooth, light, minute, flat, and are sound.
- **Vâyavya dravya:** These substances are lighter, cooler, dry and coarse in quality.
- **Taijasa dravya:** *Taijasa dravyâs* have properties like heat, pungency, lightness, dryness, greaseless and form.
- **Âpya/jala dravya:** These substances have qualities like fluidity, coldness, heaviness, oiliness, softness, bluntness, dense its and juicy. These are called watery substances.
- **Pârthiva dravya:** These substances represent massiveness, solidity, heaviness, grossness, dryness, hardness and are smelly. One who possesses these substances, gets obesity, strength and increase in body weight.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

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

While we observe these properties of five elements and the physical structure of the body, we perceive the fact that we have these five fundamental elements in our body, especially the earth and water elements. The hard part of the body is constructed by the element of earth and the liquid part of the body is built by the element of water. The empty part is built by the element of the sky, and also partially by the element of air. The food we eat is digested and transformed into *rasa* - juice, *rakta* - blood, *asti* - bones, etc.

## 5.6 Yogic Principles for Healthy Living

The first limb or the *yamas* (*ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*) is made up of the characteristics perceived, detected and codified by intelligent and prudent men since the starting of time for a life lived in freedom. The concern was placed on how individuals use their energy in relationship with others and in an elusive sense, their own relationship with themselves. Activities like stealing, stimulation, discord, suffering are caused by lying; violence causes more violence, and this results into a life which is not favourable for living peacefully as per the sages' observance. The *niyamas* (*shaucha*, *santosha*, *tapah*, *swadhyaya* and *ishvara pranidhan*) are the second limb. These establish a code for living in a method which nurtures the self-adjustment of the human being and has to do with the choices they make. An individual's connection to his/her source is revealed by the emphatic descriptions of the *yamas* and *niyamas*. The fundamental nature of individuals like being generous, peaceful, honest, and compassionate is expressed by them.

### Yamas—Codes Governing Social Equation<sup>3</sup>

*Ahimsâsatyâsteya brahmacharyâparigrahâ yamâh*  
(*yogadarsana* 2.30)

According to *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, the following are the five self-regulation codes or *yamas* or restraints to eight steps of yogic life:

- *ahimsa* (non-harming)
- *satya* (truthfulness)
- *asteya* (abstinence from stealing)
- *brahmacharya* (celibacy)
- *aparigraha* (non-grasping by the senses)

<sup>3</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principle of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



1. **Ahimsa (Non-violence):** Non-violence means abandoning hostile feelings for others and loving all beings. Non-violence has to be practised in thoughts, words and deeds.
2. **Satya (Truth):** It means being truthful, i.e. exactly having the same thing in mind and in speech and in deeds—that what is seen, what is estimated with assumption and logic, what is heard. To know the matter unerringly in its original form, and the same thing to be kept in mind, in speech and in doing, is called Truth.



### Notes

Commitment towards truth has never been so easy; one can win over it by practising and also make it less complicated, experiencing less pain caused due to self-deception and avoidance. One can deal with situations or problems before making them bigger through proper communication.

3. **Asteya (Renouncing theft):** Non-appropriation of things not belonging to me, whether concrete or abstract, is *asteya*. Only the renouncement of theft of physical things cannot be considered as *asteya*.
4. **Brahmacharya (Celibacy):** Walking on the path of Reality is *Brahmacharya*. In a narrower context it is considered as celibacy or abstinence. In a wider context it is considered as moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures. *Brahmacharya* provides tremendous virility/capacity to the practitioner.
5. **Aparigraha:** It means non-possessiveness. One should not accumulate the worldly things and grow attached to them for the appeasement of the senses. Instead observing the truth behind them, and their transitory and decaying nature is *aparigraha*. Relinquishing all the things and thoughts that prove harmful in the progress on the path of spirituality is *aparigraha*.



### Did You Know?

Suppressing energy may backfire and reveal its existence in a life-negating way. It does not mean that celibacy is an illogical practice. When encompassed in a joyful way, the repression of sexual energy could be extremely revitalizing and self-nourishing, and at its lowest possible efforts it can offer an opportunity to learn the wise usage of energy. By practising celibacy in such a way, one does not have to restraint oneself from doing what one exactly wants to do. Finally the usage of energy in a right way matters; it doesn't matter what the kind of energy it is.

### Niyamas — Codes Governing the Personal Equation<sup>4</sup>

*Sauchasantoshatapatpahsvādhyāya Esvarapranidhānāni niyamāḥ*, (yogadarsana-2.32)

**The meaning of Sutra:** *saucha* (cleanliness), *santoshā* (contentment), *tapa* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (self-observance), and *pranidhāna* (surrendering) to *Ishvara* are the fixed observances.

1. **Saucha (Purification):** There are two types of purification. One is external and the other is internal. Cleaning the body, clothes, place, utensils, food and earning wealth and treasures in a righteous way come under the category of external purification. Keeping away the negative qualities like ignorance, false ego, love, hate, anger, misery and fascination are categorized as internal purification. External purification is possible with a little effort, whereas the internal purification needs much more endeavour. In short, purification has to be at the physical as well as at the mental level.
2. **Santoshā (Contentment):** It means to be happy with what you get, after giving your complete effort towards the attainment of the thing. Contentment is an ever-present state of mind irrespective of all the things,

<sup>4</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principle of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



pleasant and unpleasant, happening in the environment.

3. **Tapa (Austerity or Penance):** *Tapa* means to burn. *Tapa* practices burn the impurities within oneself. They involve undertaking of penances, austerities and vows upon oneself. They invariably lead to purification and strengthening of the psychophysical personality. Forbearance with the two polar extremities, like happiness-distress, cold-hot, loss-profit, honour-dishonour is *tapa*. Keeping oneself busy always with performing righteous deeds and never giving them up is the righteous behaviour. This kind of behaviour may be called *tapa*.
4. **Svādhyāya:** It refers to self-study. It involves study of scriptures, studying under a living *Guru*, listening to discourses of saints and scholars, *satsang* or company of truth/like-minded people, etc. *Svādhyāya* is studying and teaching the *mokshasāstās*, the *Vedās* and the scriptures that are compatible with the *Vedās*, chanting mantras like *prāṇava* and *Gayatri Mantra* and meditating upon their exclusive meanings.
5. **Isvarapranidhāna:** *Isvarapranidhāna* means to surrender oneself completely to dedicate all the results of actions to the supreme soul *Iswara* (*purusa visesha*), the provider of all kinds of learnings. *Isvara pranidhan* is given tremendous significance in *Patanjali Yoga Sūtras* as a technique to not only reach out but also to attain perfection in the state of *samadhi*. *Pranidhan* involves surrendering one's ego which is supposedly the main obstacle on the path of spirituality.

प्राप्तेनाभिमतैर्नैव नश्यन्ति व्यावहारिकाः ।

आधिक्षये चाधिभवाः क्षीयन्ते व्याधयोऽप्यलम् ॥यो वा १९।१३॥

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥भू गी १२।५५॥



## SUMMARY

- Yoga is considered as the most impeccable health and wellness segment due to its comprehensive and holistic nature.
- The principles of yoga help an individual to develop and strengthen positive health and it also enables individuals to withstand stress in a much better way.
- The views of WHO (World Health Organization) present health as 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity'.
- For an individual to achieve the final freedom, emancipation or liberation, the most vital *moksha shastra* is yoga.
- As per yogic concepts, human beings are not just inclusive of a physical organs, they are also a bundle of multifold universal nature.
- Most of the *asanas*, specifically the *shat karmas* (such as *neti*, *nauli*, *basti*, etc.) known for working as effective detox methods, help in removing the toxins present in the body.
- The soul of a human being is covered by *panca kosās* (sheaths) or five bodies; it is noticeable that name of each *kosa* contains the word *maya* and this simply means 'made of'.
- According to *samkhyā* philosophy all the objects in the universe, animate and inanimate comprise the three *gunas* – *satwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*.
- *Panch* means five, and *mahabhutas* mean basic elements. This concept is used to understand the functioning of nature. Nature includes everything – macrocosm and microcosm.
- Parallel to the three *doshas* of the human body, the three *gunas* namely *sattwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are found in the mind and nature of human beings.



## KEYWORDS

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

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

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

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

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



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Define health.
2. How does health differ from wellness?
3. Write a short note on the yogic concept of diseases.
4. What are the benefits of yoga?

5. What is *aadhi*?
6. Name the *yamas* and *niyamas* of Patanjali Yoga.

### Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of *pancha kosha*.
2. Discuss the concept of *triguna*.
3. Elaborate the concept of *panchamabhutas*.
4. What are the various *yogic* principles of healthy living? Explain.
5. Describe your understanding of *yamas* and *niyamas*.



## FURTHER READINGS

Light on Yoga – Shri BKS Iyengar

Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Prana and Pranayama – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hatha Yoga Pradipika – interpretation by various authors

Patanjali Yoga Sutras – interpretation by various authors



# **CHAPTER 6**

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## **YOGA AND STRESS MANAGEMENT**

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 6.1 Human Psyche
  - 6.2 Frustration, Conflicts and Psychosomatic Disorders
  - 6.3 Relationship between Mind and Body
  - 6.4 Role of Yoga in Mental Hygiene
  - 6.5 Mental Health: A Yogic Perspective
  - 6.6 Prayer and Meditation for Mental Health
  - 6.7 Psychosocial Environment
  - 6.8 Concept of Stress – A Modern View
  - 6.9 Role of Yoga – Stress and Life style Management
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Discuss the concept of human psyche
- Explain the concept of frustration, conflicts and psychosomatic disorders
- Identify the relationship between mind and body
- Describe the meaning and concept of mental hygiene and role of yoga in mental hygiene
- Discuss the concept of mental health in yogic perspective
- Explain the importance of prayer and meditation in mental health
- Understand the concept of stress with relation to modern science and yoga
- Identify the role of yoga in stress management and life management as well



## Introduction

Stress and anxiety have become an integral part of human life. They affect our emotional and physical health in a big way. Stress can sometimes impel us to act in a positive manner; on the other hand it may have a negative effect. It may give rise to the feelings of rejection, disruption, depression and anger. Thus, it may lead to various problems related to health, such as stomach upset, headache, sleep disorder, rashes, high blood pressure, ulcers, stroke and heart disease. In most severe cases, it may also trigger suicidal tendencies.

In this chapter, you will explore about stress. What is stress? How it degenerates and how it can cause grievous harm to our body. Also you will be able to gain information regarding the psyche of the human mind, frustration, conflicts, psychosomatic disorders, relationship between the mind and the body, mental hygiene, and the role of yoga in mental hygiene: the positive effect of prayer and meditation on mental health; psychosocial environment; concept of stress according to modern science and yoga; and finally, you wind up this chapter with the role that yoga plays in stress management.



## 6.1 Human Psyche

Psychology refers to the scientific study of human mind and human behaviour. Psychology also refers to the application of such knowledge to various spheres of human activity including issues related to daily life *e.g.*, family, education and work and the remedy for mental health problems. It is not easy to understand the nature of human mind as it is hidden and subtle.



**Fig. 6.1:** Human Psyche

Psychology deals with the study of:

- First: soul
- Second: mind
- Third: consciousness
- Lastly: observable behaviour

Nowadays, psychology is the science of both mental and behaviour processes. Therefore, in the light of yoga, psychology is embedded in philosophical studies.

To sum up, psychology is an analytic and scientific study of mental process and behaviour. Psychologists study such phenomena as perception, cognition, emotion, personality, behaviour and interpersonal relationship.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Generally, people consider that yoga is not effective for chronic physical injuries or aches. In many studies, people who are suffering from low-back pain have been recommended that adopting carefully a set of yoga postures may help in reducing pain and improving several functions such as ability to move and walk. By practising yoga (with other forms of regular exercise), recent studies suggest that it may help in providing various health benefits like reducing blood pressure and heart rate, relieving depression and anxiety.

### Yogic and Modern Concepts

The term “yoga” was first cited around 3,000 B.C. in the text of *Rig Veda* in ancient India. Yoga was then considered to be mainly a meditative practice. In recent years, the typical perception of people regarding yoga has shifted considerably.

Historically, traditional yoga was taught verbally. Usually, principles of Yoga are communicated in the style of *sutra*, where brief outlines are expanded upon verbally.

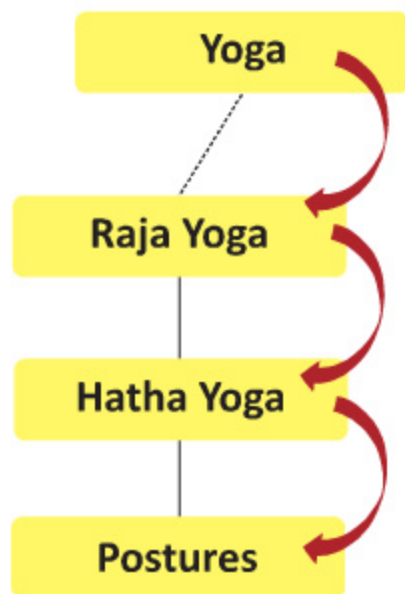


### Example

Yoga is defined in 196 Sutras of the *Yoga Sutras*. It is then discussed and described to the students by their teachers. Likewise, the great depth of “*Om mantra*” meaning is defined only in twelve verses of the *Mandukya Upanishad* and is explained verbally. The word ‘yoga’ is specifically contained in 700 verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Over ten percent of the 700 verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* have the word yoga.

According to the ancient sages and instructors, yoga is a complete system, wherein though the poses are small but beneficial. All *asanas* and postures come under the umbrella of the term yoga. The true end of yoga is spiritual in nature.





**Fig. 6.2:** Traditional View of Yoga and Postures

The yoga history can appropriately be categorized into FOUR broad classifications:

- Vedic Yoga
- Pre-classical Yoga
- Classical Yoga
- Post-classical Yoga



**Fig. 6.3:** Modern View of Yoga and Postures

The relative postures of yoga have been elevated in the modern times. They help people to understand the term “yoga”, as related to *asanas* or physical postures, and its main objective is physical fitness.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is understood to be a physical system with a spiritual element. Unfortunately, there is a dominant viewpoint regarding yoga that it is merely a programme of physical exercises. Such false viewpoint is spread by those classes, institutions, magazines, books, teachers and various students of modern yoga who either have no knowledge or little knowledge of the objectives of yoga. They have no interest in the spiritual purposes of ancient, authentic, traditional yoga and yogic meditation. Therefore, the actual truth is that ‘Yoga with a physical element is a spiritual system’.

## Behaviour and Consciousness

Today, Psychology is the science of both human behaviour, and working of human mind.

### Behaviour

Behaviour highlights the actions or reactions of an individual with respect to his/her internal or external situation. Psychology studies how and why an individual behaves in a particular manner under different circumstances.

A psychologist examines and analyzes the human behaviour with two perspectives: Overt and Covert

Overt behaviour refers to visible and external behaviour.



### Example

The way an individual eats his food or plays a game are examples of an overt behaviour.

Covert behaviour is invisible. It refers to what happens internally in the minds of human beings.



### Example

Thinking is an example of a covert behaviour.

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

The ancient Indian model of “Personality”, given in the *Upanishads*, consists of the ‘five’ sheaths. They are *annamaya* (food sheath), *pranamaya* (vital air sheath), *manomaya* (mental sheath), *vijnanamaya* (intellectual sheath), and *anandamaya* (bliss sheath). *annamaya*; a segment of human system is nourished by *anna*, that is, food. *Pranamaya* is that segment which is nourished by ‘*prana*’, that is, ‘bioenergy’. *Manomaya* is the segment nourished by ‘education’. *Vijnanamaya* is nourished by ‘ego’, and *anandamaya* by ‘emotions’.

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

## Mental Processes

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

Consciousness depicts the quality or state of awareness that comes under the scope of psychology in modern times. However, some of its concerns have their roots in occultism, mysticism and religion. In psychology, the emergence of the consciousness study reflects a change in people’s mentality. Most of the people question about their possibility of growth and self-actualization rather than how to get rid of pathological symptoms.

In the normal state of consciousness, an individual is unaware of his full potentials and depends on the knowledge gained through the sensory perception for the expansion of his consciousness. The field of consciousness can be expanded by the development of the capability of non-sensory intuitive cognition of knowledge through yogic techniques, so as to reach the super-conscious state, in which an individual has a direct intuitive revelation of knowledge. In the final state of yogic attainment the individual consciousness merges with the Supreme Consciousness, which is verily yoga or Self-Realization.

## 6.2 Frustration, Conflicts and Psychosomatic Disorders

### STRESSORS

Stressors refer to those situations where an individual finds himself/herself unable to cope up and deal with certain difficult situations.



In this section, students will understand the various sources and nature of stress that result in disturbed mental health. Several types of frustrations and conflicts are the outcome of ineffective coping with the stressors. Stress imposes certain demands on the individual which he/she finds himself/herself unable to deal with. Constant failure and disappointment to meet with the stressors demands may produce mental stress in the individuals.

### Conflict and Frustration

An individual may be stressed out when he/she faces the problems to attain his/her goals which may create frustration and conflict in him/her. Thus, a conflict in the mind may become more stressful the intensity of frustration increases. Usually, an incompatible situation is the reason for conflict.

Conflicts arise when an individual is faced with two or more alternatives from which he has to choose one, thereby necessarily forsaking the other alternatives.



**Fig. 6.4:** Facing Conflict

Depending on the situation and nature of goals, an individual may face three categories of conflict which are as follows:

- a) **Approach-approach conflict:** Such conflict may take place when individuals have to select between two or more desirable goals, and when both goals appear necessary. This sort

of conflict can be considered as “a problem of plenty”.



#### Example

Selecting from the invitations of two parties on the same day is an example of approach-approach conflict.

- b) **Avoidance-avoidance conflict:** Such conflict may take place when individuals have to select between two or more undesirable goals. Avoidance-avoidance conflict is also termed as “*caught between the devil and the deep blue sea*”.



#### Example

A youth with little educational qualifications has to choose either unemployment or a low-paid disagreeable job. This kind of conflict can create serious adjustment problems, because even the resolution of the conflict may bring frustration rather than relief.

- c) **Approach-avoidance conflict:** In this kind of conflict the individual has a strong tendency to approach and to avoid the same goal as well.



#### Example

A man may want to marry because of some social reasons, as security. But he fears that after getting married he would be accountable and lose his personal freedom. Such type of conflict is usually resolved by accepting some positive and some negative characteristics of the goal. Thus, sometimes approach-avoidance conflict is also known as “*mixed-blessing*” conflicts as it involves several alternatives.

Frustration refers to thwarting or preventing one from accomplishing of a goal. It is an experiential state which may either be the outcome of the absence of a desired goal, or blocking of motives and needs through some external forces that may produce difficulties and prevent the fulfilment of wants.





**Fig. 6.5:** Frustration and Depression

Obstacles or hindrances, social and physical as well as internal and external, may frustrate an individual. They may arise due to the death of loved ones, unhealthy interpersonal relationships and accidents.

Personal characteristics, for example lack of self-discipline, inadequate physical competencies can be sources of frustration. Frustrations may often cause special difficulties, such as mindlessness, loneliness, losses, failure and lack of resources.

Thinking is the function of the mind. Mind is defined as conglomeration of thoughts. Thought is one unit of mind. Different thoughts are arranged in a meaningful sequence and are continuously on the flow like the incessant movement of waves in an ocean. The type of thoughts decide the nature of mental activity. For example, if you solve the problem of Law of Motion the thoughts are all related to that topic and you call it intellect. If they are about the intense feeling of a disaster, you call it an emotion and so on. You may assign different names to different types of thoughts, such as intellect, memory, and creativity. The yogis described the sequence of events in the *manomaya kosha* as follows. The information that has to be gathered from the external world is perceived by the mind which flows out through the doors of perception called the *indriyas*. After this the meaning is analyzed by the intellect. After this processing, we play on our emotions, which

is the most important modification of mind. The emotional reaction in the mind to a situation differs from person to person as the reaction is interpreted with relation to the memories, and experiences are stored. All emotions are initially in the form of either 'likes' or 'dislikes'. Their initial wave of activity proceeds on with several chain reactions of thought processes that could be named as positive or negative emotions. Negative emotions are those destructive and violent emotions which are characterized by distress and unhappiness, which at times manifest themselves and sometimes are suppressed by the mind. Anger, fear, hatred, jealousy, tension, depression, anxiety and frustration are the example of negative emotions. These violent and destructive functions of the *manomaya kosha* is what we call stress and it is recognized as the root cause of many of the psychosomatic illness including diabetes. On the other hand contentment, satisfaction, peace, bliss etc., are examples of positive emotions which are constructive and rejuvenating in nature. Sometimes positive emotions are violent too. Some of the examples of violent positive emotions are excitement, thrill, joy, passionate love, etc.

In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna explains how our senses become the cause of our suffering. We, in our daily lives, constantly perceive material objects. Gradually we get attached to them and get a strong desire to possess them. But then it is not possible to possess everything man wants. This leads to disappointment. In turn, disappointment turns into anger and from anger comes delusion. Delusion arises confusion in memory which further leads to a loss in the powers of intelligence and discrimination. Final outcome of these activities is devastation.

*dhyāyato vishayān pumsaḥ saṅgas teshupajāyate  
saṅgat sajjāyate kāmāḥ kāmāt krodho 'bbijāyate*  
(2.62)



When a man thinks of material objects, attachment for them arises in him, from attachment desire is born and from desire anger.

*krodhād bhavati sammohāṁ sammohāt smāti-vibhramāṁ  
smāti-bhraṇṇād buddhi-nāṣo buddhi-nāṣāt praēcyati*  
(2.63)

From anger comes delusion; from delusion comes loss of memory; from loss of memory comes the destruction of discriminative power; from destruction of discrimination man perishes.

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

Anger comes from unfulfilled desires.

Delusion or wild ideas arise from anger.

The mind is bewildered by delusion.

Reasoning is destroyed when the mind is bewildered.

One abandons the right path when reasoning is destroyed.

The *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes the importance of withdrawing the senses from the sensuous objects, and transcending them through self control to experience inner peace and supreme happiness. Since the senses are responsible for the instability of the mind and thereby for the delusion, it needs to be actively disengaged from them as they go habitually to them. By disengaging the mind from sensuous pleasures man can fully concentrate upon his inner self. The withdrawing the mind in this way can be compared to the manner in which a tortoise withdraws its limbs. Thus, a yogi can gain mastery over his senses. This is called *pratyahara*. (2.85)

### How do we attain peace?

Patanjali says: *sukhanushayi ragah* i.e., 'attachment is that which dwells on pleasure'. He also says:

*duḥkhanushayi dveshabh*, which means, 'aversion is that which dwells on pain'. This is a natural tendency as we all know that our mind runs after things which are agreeable to our senses or produce pleasant sensations. Anything that is disagreeable, or anything that produces unpleasant sensations, we try to avoid. Not to speak of humans even animals do that.

We also notice that different feelings arise in our minds like anger and hatred. They remain dormant in our subconscious mind for sometime, and later on they become aroused by certain conditions which produces provocation of some kind. For instance, if somebody says unkind words, we instantly get enraged, and want to take revenge. This is a natural tendency of the human mind. At first the feeling of anger rises slowly, and gradually it produces a wave in the mind. That wave again overpowers us and we lose the sight of our condition and relations. We lose our memory and become violent. All these things first rise in a slow minute form, like in the form of bubbles, and then gradually take the form of violent waves. All these different feelings are described as the waves of the mental ocean. They bring bondage and suffering in the end. It has been said before that when any disagreeable feeling, like that of hatred, jealousy, or anger, arise, we can overcome them through mental modification by trying to arouse softer and opposite feelings.

*raga-dvesha -vimuktais tu vishayān indriyaischaran*

*Atma-vashyair vidhey Atma prasadam adhigacchati*

(2.64 BG)

But a self-controlled man, despite moving among the material objects with his senses under restraint, and having free from attraction and repulsion, attains peace and bliss.

### Psychosomatic Disorders

Psychosomatic disorders are those disorders which originate in the psyche or mind of a person



and result in ailments in the *soma* or the body. Most often, psychosomatic diseases are caused by stress. They are characterized by somatic signs and symptoms which are not related to any specific physiological dysfunction.

It is a fact that any kind of physical symptom (such as palpitation) can be psychosomatic in nature. Furthermore, psychological stresses can cause physical symptoms, such as headache, hypertension, psychogenic impotence, and digestive problems.



### Did You Know?

High levels of stress hormones can interfere with memory. Stressful events that cause the release of certain hormones can make you forget things you should know. This helps you to explain why your mind goes blank when you stand up to give a presentation or why test-anxiety causes you to forget information you know. Normal memory function returns when the levels of stress hormones return to normal. This is yet another good reason to practise deep breathing and relaxation.

## 6.3 Relationship between Mind and Body

What is going on in your mind determines what is happening in your body. For decades scientists have studied how stress affects the body, how thoughts and emotions relate to our experiences and stress.

The interconnection between the mind and body was proposed by several ancient healing methods. According to Hippocrates, the father of western medicine, health is achieved through a balance among mind, body and environment. This theory is proved by the science of the modern day which has determined that an individual's emotions and thoughts play an important role in all aspects of his/her health. This means that by taking care

of our psychological well-being, we may be able to prevent medical illness or speed our recovery when we are sick.

The entire behaviour is effectively managed and controlled by the coordination and functioning of the nervous system. Psychology studies human behaviour which involves both body and mind. They are interrelated and interact with each other. Mental functions and physical states affect each other. Body and mind are two aspects of living.

Mind is regarded as a function of the body; it does not exist apart from the body. It is a sum total of various mental processes, such as observing, knowing, thinking, reasoning, feeling, imagining, remembering, and judging.

There is a close link between the mind and body and their relationship can have a positive effect on quality of life as well as one's health. State of emotions, beliefs and attitudes that ranges from compassion to love to anger; and fear can trigger chain reactions which affect heart rate, blood chemistry as well as the activity of each human cell and organ – from the stomach and digestive tract to the immune system. Also, emotions can affect the one's physical reactions to strains and stresses. This can cause various physical problems, backaches and headaches.



**Fig. 6.6:** Balance among Mind, Body and Spirit Leads to Healthy Living



Thus, the treatment can improve and increase the awareness between mind and body relationship helps with:

- Fatigue
- Chronic pain
- Stress
- Smoking
- Excess weight
- Substance abuse

## 6.4 Role of Yoga in Mental Hygiene

Mental health is closely linked with the mental hygiene. Mental Hygiene is a science that deals with the procedure of achieving mental health and preserving it in the society. The key objective of mental hygiene is to attain proper mental health. Thus, mental hygiene is a means to achieve mental health; thus it can be said that:

- Mental hygiene is the means and,
- Mental health is the end.

### Definition

Many authors have given various definitions of Mental hygiene which are given below:

According to Klien, *“Mental hygiene is an endeavour to aid people to ward off trouble as well as to furnish ways of handling trouble in intelligent fashion when it cannot be warded off.”*

According to Rivillin;

- Mental hygiene means the application of a body of hygiene information and technique.
- It is taken from the sciences of Psychology, Child Psychology, Education, Sociology, Psychiatry, Medicine and Biology.

- It cares for the purpose of the preservation and improvement of mental health of the individual as well as community.
- It is meant for prevention and cure of minor and major mental diseases and defects of mental, educational and social maladjustments.

### Objectives of Mental Hygiene

Some of the key objectives of mental hygiene are given below:

- **To develop self-respect and respect for others:**
  - ❖ One of the major factors that may lead to most of the of emotional disorders is the loss of self-respect.
  - ❖ An individual who likes himself can like others, and an individual who dislikes himself would find it difficult to like anybody else.
  - ❖ The main goal of mental hygiene is to help one to respect oneself.
- **To help realize one's potentials:**
  - ❖ Each and every person has certain potentials.
  - ❖ Mental hygiene helps each person to develop those potentials.
- **To understand one's limitations and tolerate the limitations of others:**
  - ❖ Mental hygiene can assist one to understand one's own limitations and tolerate others' limitations as well.
- **To cause harmonious development:**
  - ❖ Mental hygiene aims at the harmonious development of the physical, mental and spiritual capacities of and individual. This

would help people to make adjustments with their circumstances.

- **To create happiness:**

- ❖ The next objective of mental hygiene is to develop a positive attitude towards life.
- ❖ This will help in creating a sense of happiness in an individual and he/she would live happily in the world.

- **To enable one to make effective adjustment:**

- ❖ Mental hygiene helps a person to make effective adjustments in all situations and all spheres of life, for example at work, in school, society, home and with self.

- **To enable one to know his or her self:**

- ❖ As most of the people do not know themselves because they are unaware of their limitations, weaknesses, potentials, etc. This makes them suffer from different kinds of complexes.
- ❖ So, mental hygiene helps each person to know himself/herself.



### Learning ACTIVITY

Formulate the general principles of mental hygiene.

## 6.5 Mental Health: A Yogic Perspective

Mental hygiene and mental health are the two sides of a coin. The pre-requisite situation for maintaining sound health is referred to as hygiene. Concepts of mental health include subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and recognition of the ability to realize one's

intellectual and emotional potential. It has also been defined as a state of well-being whereby individuals recognize their abilities, are able to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and make a contribution to communities. Mental health is about enhancing competencies of individuals and communities and enabling them to achieve their self-determined goals. (Basavanthappa, B.T., 2007).



### Example



Geeta is afraid of ant. Rohit suffer from serious headache 2 or 3 times a week. Doctor says nothing is wrong with him. Then what is the reason for this? When we ask people if they like themselves, they answer differently. Some give positive reply, while some do not. But some may say "I don't know". There are times when we also say, "I hate myself". From the above statement it is quite clear that some people are well adjusted while others are not. This is a problem of adjustment.

Yoga system teaches how to reduce mental substance into its simplest form, by the method of suppression (*nirodha*), which implies achieving a state of consciousness (*chaitanya*).

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

Patanjali says: '*tasmin sati svasa-prasvasayorgativicchedah Pranayamah*'. *Pratyahara* is making the mind introspective: '*sva-vishaya-sam-prayoge chittasya*



*svarupanukara ivendriyanam pratyaharah*. Then comes *dharana* which means concentration. It is the process of concentrating different modifications of the mind on to a point: '*desavandhaschittasya dharana*'. Next comes *dhyana* or meditation: '*ta-atra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam*'. Then comes *samadhi* or super conscious state of the mind. Patanjali says: *tadevartha-matra-nirbhasam svarupa-sunyamiva samadib*'. (Swami Aabhedananda, 1967).

The differences between persons who are mentally healthy or unhealthy are as follows:

Mentally Healthy Persons	Mentally Unhealthy Persons
1. Are aware of their own self and have respect for others.	1. Unaware of their own self and also they disrespect others.
2. Can tolerate limitations of others and also know their own limitations.	2. Cannot tolerate limitations of others and also cannot understand their own limitations.
3. These people know that all human behaviour is casual.	3. These people cannot understand the reason of a certain behaviour.
4. These people know the basic wants which motivate and stimulate behaviour.	4. These people do not know the basic wants which motivate and stimulate behaviour.

**Table 6.1:** Distinction between Mentally Healthy and Mentally Unstable Persons

The WHO defined health not merely as an absence of infirmity or disease, but as a complete state of mental, social and physical well-being. Recently spiritual well-being has been added as the fourth facet of health.



### Notes

*Asanas* can be considered as physical exercises, *pranayamas* as breathing exercises and meditation as a mental exercise.

People who practise Yoga may experience various factors which have profound effect on the individual's mental health.

## 1. Reduced Tension

Most of the individuals who practise Yoga experience "steadying the mind", "calming the spirit," or "freeing the mind from mental disturbances." Certain benefits which are experienced are mental fatigue, depression, confusion and irritability and reductions of nervousness. A person can experience a relief from the pressure of his "compulsions." Thus, his/her nervousness, particularly any kind of jitteriness or anxiety would disappear or subside.

## 2. Mental Agility

The positive benefits from yogic exercises is called renewal of mental agility. Thus, willingness and attentiveness as well as capacity and mood for attentiveness and alertness to tackle difficulties revive.

For example a person may not be able to renew endless enthusiasm late on a working day or noon time, but the efforts for recharging mental energies can rekindle a full measure of enthusiasm and willingness. Traditional phrases, for example restored "spiritual vitality" intend to convey the idea of mental resilience, agreeableness, spryness, and feelings of self-sufficiency and confidence.

## 3. Enriched Personal Values

Personal values are the following:

- Avoidance of Fear:** Yoga helps in curing various mental illnesses which range from ambiguous feelings of insecurity, oppression, frustration severe or acute on one hand to particular forms of insanity on the other hand.

- b. **Acceptance of Faith in Life:** Confident living is the main objective of yoga. Its purpose is to replace pessimism with an appreciation of life not only on any particular day but everyday. When a person attains any yogic spirit he/she can say with the Stoics, “I accept the universe.” If a person does not accept all of it due to some difficulties that may remain unavoidably troublesome, he/she will accept the difficulties which he/she has and may wish not to have any more difficulties.

#### 4. Harmonious Social Values

Yoga helps in reducing your frustration or annoyance with others, and others’ frustration or annoyance with you. You tend to irritate others less if you become less irritable yourself. One also tends to be less irritated by the problems presented by others.



#### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Many people consider yoga to be an early morning regime. However, yoga is not about time but about discipline. It is a discipline of human body that syncs with our mind and soul all through the day. Yoga is not merely limited to your physical self or restricted to a routine life.

## 6.6 Prayer and Meditation for Mental Health

In the context of healthcare, prayer is very important as it is most widely used in yoga. Mental health concerns are weakened by poor self-care and stress. Studies show that 90% of patients with severe illness sometimes feel relief by prayer. Prayer is regarded as the most widely practised healing or remedial modality among all types of alternative medicines.

Following points are given below which help in identifying how prayer helps in improving the health:

- **The relaxation response:**
  - ❖ Prayer elicits the relaxation response.
  - ❖ It helps in lowering blood pressure and other factors heightened by the stress.
- **Secondary control:**
  - ❖ Prayer releases control to something greater than oneself.
  - ❖ It can lessen the stress of needing to be in charge.
- **The placebo response:**
  - ❖ Prayer increases a person’s expectations and hopes.
  - ❖ In turn, it has positive effect on health.
- **Healing presence:**
  - ❖ Prayer can help in bringing a sense of loving or spiritual presence.
  - ❖ It can also align us with an immersion in God, the universal consciousness.
- **Positive feelings:**
  - ❖ Prayer can elicit our feelings of hope, forgiveness, compassion, and gratitude.
  - ❖ Most of our feelings are related to wellness and healing.
- **Mind-body-spirit connection:**
  - ❖ When prayer calms or uplifts, it inhibits the release of cortisol and hormones.
  - ❖ Thus, it helps in minimizing the negative effect of stress on the immune system and assists in healing.





**Fig. 6.7:** Praying Supports Inner Health and Peace

Prayer and meditation are beneficial on mental well-being in the following ways:

- Give intense respite
- Provide internal serenity
- Aid in countering complications and increasing awareness
- Assist in improving focus and fortitude
- A vent for discharging fury and relieving stress, misery and anxiety
- Advantageous in optimizing one's creative potential

### **'Patanjali Yoga Sutra' emphasises Om Meditation:**

*'Pranavasya japah pranavabhidheyasya cha ishwarasya bhavana'*

The mind of the yogi, who constantly repeats the *pranava*, and habituates the mind to the constant manifestation of the ideas it carries, becomes one pointed. And so it has been said: 'Let the yoga be practised through study, and let study be affected through yoga. By yoga and study together, the highest self shines.'

The contention of *vachaspati mishra* is the 'repeated thinking or understanding' (*bhavana*)\_means making thought enter the mind over and over again, until it becomes the very substance of the mental existence. The mind feels bliss in the one

Lord alone. And so it has been said: 'Lord then becomes gracious to him up to his attaining the faculty of trance (*samadhi*) and its fruit.'

The ancient practice of meditation is as integral part of yoga, as the poses have the same intention: not to tune out, but to tune one into a frequency long forgotten, or perhaps undiscovered. To meditate is to become acutely aware of what's going on within you; it's about learning to tame your mind so that you can focus all your energy and awareness on the task at hand.

Meditation is especially beneficial for reducing stress. Studies show it can also reduce depression and anxiety, and help people manage chronic pain. Meditation can benefit people who have mental health conditions, as well as those who do not.

When you meditate, you clear away the information overload that builds up every day and contributes to your stress.

As stated in the *Bhagvad Gita*, meditation is a tool to achieve self-realization. In a secluded place, establish a posture with a straight back. Concentrate between the eyebrows or on the tip of the nose. Fix the mind on the self (*atman*). Develop one-pointed concentration called *dhyana* and achieve self-realization (or Union with God) in the state called *samadhi*. Observing moderation in everything, with strict celibacy, one overcomes the lower self in order to gain the higher self. Thus, the yogi no longer relishes the pleasures of the senses. He cannot be deluded any more. He abides in the self. Needless to say that many modern organizations and individuals are practising meditation to tackle emotional problems such as frustrations, conflicts, inferiority complex, stress and burnout.

The traditional practice of meditation is regarded as an essential posture one of yoga. It tunes into a frequency perhaps undiscovered or long forgotten. To meditate is to be aware of what is going on within you. Thus, it is about learning to



that you are able to apply all your awareness and energy on the task at hand.

Meditation is specifically beneficial in minimizing stress. Researches depict that it can also help in reducing anxiety and depression and help people in managing their chronic pains and aches. It benefits people who are mentally healthy as well as those who are not.

When a person meditates, he/she is cleansed of the overloaded information which builds up daily and contributes to his/her stress.

Following are the emotional benefits of meditation:

- Minimizing negative emotions
- Concentrating on the present
- Attaining a new perspective on the situations which are very stressful
- Increasing self-awareness
- Building skills for managing the stress

Also in the case of medical conditions arising out of stress, meditation is beneficial.

Therefore, some researches recommend that meditation helps in managing symptoms of conditions, for example:

- Problems related to sleeping
- Pain
- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Cancer
- Asthma
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

## 6.7 Psychosocial Environment

The climate and culture of the place of work is known as psychosocial environment.

“Psychosocial morbidity” or “psychosocial dysfunction” refers to those problems which take place in one’s psychosocial functioning. Thus, this depicts a lack of atrophy or development of the psychosocial self that may often occur together with other dysfunctions, which may be cognitive, emotional, or physical in nature.

Stress may take place when a person has problems to deal with it. According to biologists, stress is defined as a negative feeling which is experienced by a person whose body fails to respond to a threat. The stress which may originate from any kind of communication with people is known as psychosocial stress. Hence, stress may manifest itself in various forms, for example high blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweating, feelings of sadness or irritability and dizziness. Reasons of psychological stress which can be classified as acute or chronic are termed psychological stressors.



### Example

Some of the examples of psychosocial stress are:

- threat to a person’s social esteem, social status, respect or/and acceptance within a group
- threat which a person feels that he/she has no control over
- threat to a person’s self-worth

The above threats may lead to stress that our body responds. Several methods are there to manage the psychosocial stress as it results from the inside (our thoughts about it) as well as the outside (what we are dealing with) and can have impact on several aspects of our lives. Therefore, to treat issues related to psychosocial stress and maintain wellness, yoga is regarded as a natural as well as readily available approach.

Many psychologists are researching on the importance of performing yoga with people who are the survivors any kind of trauma. Yoga



is the most effective technique in curing them as compared to psychotherapy techniques. Personally practising yoga and accepting a stance based on the principles of yoga, for example non-judgment, spirituality, and compassion along with the connection of all living things can assist in relieving stress, enhancing compassion as well as potentially making a person a better therapist. When a person can come up to a level of making peace with himself/herself, there may be more nurturing that they can exude towards their patients.

### Importance of Mental Health (Yamas and Niyamas)

As the animal body wants food to sustain, in the same way human mind requires *yamas* and *niyamas* to uplift itself and function in a balanced way.

The first step in the *Ashtanga Yoga* is *yama* which sets the foundation of social conduct. Thus, there are five *yamas* and five *niyamas*, which are explained below:

Following are five *yamas*:

1. **Ahimsa:** *Abimsa* is the highest virtue. *Abimsa paramo dharmah*. Practising of *abimsa* is not just refraining from abuse or physical violence which could be an approach to a civilized social conduct. *Abimsa* also addresses to health of the mind. Offensive language, backbiting, comparison, sarcasm, criticism and cynicism are also called verbal *abimsa*. Further, the body gestures of disregard and denial are also expressions of mind which are unhealthy and which may lead to disturbing and unhappy relations.
2. **Satya:** Practising of truthfulness is the next *yama*. Mostly people do not try to tell a lie outright. Sometimes people speak partial truth in an inarticulate or deceitful manner, or speak some words that may be understood and interpreted in a different way. They

may not be untrue according to common understanding, but then it is NOT TRUTH. Why? What is it mirroring you? What are you trying to hide?

3. **Asteya:** The third *yama* relates to avoiding stealing. As it is not good to use a service or facility, or take a thing which is not given by its owner, *Asteya* refers to trying to get that to which one is not entitled. It means having no desire to have other people's belongings and to resist from taking anything which is not one's own.
4. **Brahmacharya:** In a narrower sense, *brahmacharya* is understood as celibacy or sexual abstinence. In a wider sense, it is understood as moderation in sensual and sexual pleasures. Etymologically, *Brahmacharya* refers to "walking on the path leading to Reality". *Brahmacharya* means abstaining from any kind of excess, but exercise, sleep, or food; it could also be cravings for addictions, objects, and relations.
5. **Aparigraha:** This means non-covetousness or non-hoarding. What belongs to others is referred as *asteya*, whereas what belongs one's is *aparigraha*. Any relationship, possession, ideas, objects, situations, etc., all show a sense of experience only. The continuous experience of one with one's possessions brings in the feelings of 'I, me, mine' and once these get a space they increase the vice of possessiveness and sometimes become ideologies, resulting into limitations and stagnation.

The social behaviour guidelines are the *yamas*. These are very much relevant these days and demand a sensible response towards anybody at anytime. A mature and sensible handling is required by issues which relate to social behaviour.

Yoga related to personal conduct is *niyamas*, which is the second step in *Ashtanga Yoga*. *Niyamas* are



basically the observances, and its every day 'To Do' list follows below:

1. **Shauca (Purity):** It implies to have a proper observance towards cleanliness and purity in terms of thoughts, words and deeds. Here it means to think beyond the normal and daily routine of personal hygiene and attire. One gets thoughts of shirking when the mind is not willing to be structured. So note the excuses of mind and find out the reason for the same. The excuses do not depend upon the kind and level of work or activity. One should spend 2-3 minutes daily in the early morning with the nature, such as grounds, open lawns, sunrise, seashore, fresh air, holy place and space. Doing this gives a positive beginning to the day.
2. **Santosha (Contentment):** This implies to be happy, relaxed and contented without any conditions or reasons. It is that balanced state of joy which does not fluctuate with the external attractions of abundance or limitations as well. *Santosha* is a feeling of internal completeness.
3. **Tapa (Austerity):** *Tapa* is a big term; it involves asceticism, penance and voluntarily vows taken by oneself. It encompasses discipline, commitment and consistent actions. It discourages lethargy and lay back attitude. One should begin by making a small household or personal goal commitment. It is the true way to make the mastermind follow the commands. In case the mind does not follow commands it reveals limitations and negativity, while in the case of following commands the mind expresses a positive energy and takes a step ahead towards self-growth.

4. **Swadhyaya (Self-study):** It is the study of one's self, the pure self. *Swadhyaya* practices involve study of scriptures, learning under a living Guru, learning from a Saint/Scholar, *satsang* (company of truth or like-minded people), listening to spiritual discourses, etc.
5. **Ishwarapranidhana (Surrender to Ishwara):** It means to surrender. The actions, which we perform, bear the fruits as per the law of Karma. We are here for playing the role we are subjected to, and while doing so, progress towards the fulfillment. On this journey holding on to our ego, attachments, possessions, cannot take us beyond pain, misery and suffering. *Ishwarapranidhana* helps us to realize our limitations. By surrendering we are able to take a step back and accept the higher direction.

## 6.8 Concept of Stress - A Modern View

### Definition of Stress

Selye and Levi have defined stress as a non-specific, conventional and phylogenetic basic response pattern, the primary function of which is to prepare the body for physical activity such as resistance or flight (called Eustress). If, however, the subject lacks the means of restoring either to fight or flight, *i.e.*, of relieving himself/herself the stress reaction, gives rise to distress which manifests itself in the form of psychosomatic disorders.

**Eustress and Distress:** There are two kinds of stress that are distinguished by Selye and Levi. Eustress is synonymous with healthy essential stress produced, for example, by joy, or by



any other kind of positive impulse, sensible recreational activities, sports, hobbies, etc.

Distress is synonymous with morbidity, stress that has to be controlled, *e.g.*, continuous mental or physical strain of any kind, anger, frustration, states of tension seemingly without hope. However, even high and prolonged Eustress can turn dangerous in cases as in IHD due to strong excitations associated with Eustress too. Thus, stress is the reaction to a demanding situation in the human physiology. Stress can occur at two levels—physical and psychological (1) Physical stress, like accidents, burns, major surgeries, major infections, etc., which make demands on the entire physiology. (2) Psychological stress which can occur independently or as a reaction to physical stress. Examples are – fear, anxiety, tension, worry, jealousy, hatred, anger, excitement, emotional conflicts, etc. It may be temporary stress, demanding only an immediate adaptation process. Or, it may be a long-standing one, leaving deep-seated subconscious impressions leading to prolonged tension. In modern society with fast moving vehicles, rapid industrialization and with a highly sophisticated lifestyle, there could be hundreds of stimulations which produce both these types of stress. Accordingly the incidence of physical trauma has increased steeply (today accidents cause the highest number of deaths in day to day life).

## Stress Reaction

What happens in your body due to stress reaction?

- Stored sugar and fats pour into the blood-stream to provide fuel for quick energy.
- The breath rate shoots up, providing more oxygen.
- Red blood cells flood the blood-stream, carrying more oxygen to the muscles of the limbs and the brain.
- The heart speeds up and blood pressure soars, ensuring sufficient blood supply to needed areas.
- Blood-clotting mechanisms are activated to protect against injury, muscles tense in preparation for strenuous action.
- Digestion ceases, so that blood may be diverted to the muscles and brain.
- Perspiration and saliva increase.
- Triggered by the pituitary glands, the endocrine system steps up hormone production.
- Bowel and bladder muscles loosen.
- Cortisone pours into the system, as do the hormones epinephrin and norepinephrin.
- The pupils dilate, allowing more light to enter.
- All senses are heightened.

## Stress According to Yoga

Stress according to Yoga is imbalance. Imbalance causes misery. Stress leads to pain and leads to ailments and diseases. Imbalance at the emotional level manifests as upsurges caused by strong likes and dislikes. At the psychological level imbalance lead to conflicts and often manifest as petty and narrow ego-centric behaviour. Lack of holistic knowledge and a balanced outlook, at the subtle level are responsible for imbalances found at gross levels. Thus, while understanding stress, a holistic concept of man is kept in view and not merely his physical existence. The *Taittiriya* Upanishads has presented this holistic concept of man systematically as having five major sheaths of existence. Stress is studied and understood at the physical level by modern medical systems as an



imbalance of the neuro-endocrine systems and the neuro-transmitter level. Emotional disturbances in the form of strong likes and dislikes bring about imbalance in *prana* (the vital energy), in the *pranamaya kosha* which percolates to the *annamaya kosha* causing stress symptoms and hazards. Origin of desires and actions guided by strong likes and dislikes (and not by what is right and wrong) will be the expression of imbalance in *manomaya kosha*. In *vigyananamaya*, the *avidya* goes on reducing until in *anandamaya kosha* is all bliss. This state is a totally stress-free state.

Thus, in the *Upanishads*, a more fundamental and generalized concept of stress is presented. The great sage Patanjali uses the term *klesha* which aptly describes stress. In his text *Yoga Sūtras* (Yoga aphorisms) the *kleshas* have been described thus: *avidyaasmita-raga-dvesabbhinivesah klesah* (PYS 2-3) In our original state we are totally stress-free. We are blissful. That state – devoid of any tension and pressure, (even) thinking or feeling – is the source of all bliss, knowledge, creativity and freedom. We may call it perfection. Patanjali calls it *Svarupa* or Self.



Fig. 6.8: Stress and Anxiety have become a part of Our Lives

The main reasons that cause stress in modern life are the following:

- **Number of obligations:** A number of health problems in today's life is the result of continuing stress one faces daily, the reason

of such stress could be any, such as bad marriage, or a very demanding job. When one experiences chronic stress, the autonomic nervous system gets affected causing stress.

### Caution

With the increase in stress cycle and its levels, health problems both at physical and mental levels are becoming increasingly a serious issue.

The stress causes a chain reaction; firstly it causes overwork, then overwork causes tiredness and exhaustion, exhaustion leads to depletion and excessive depletion causes collapse and a number of diseases. At first the symptoms are comparatively mild, like chronic headaches and an increase in the level of sensitivity towards cold.

Visits to doctors concerning stress issues have an estimate of about 90%. The common diseases which associate with stress are prolonged form of insomnia, muscle pain, mental disorders, depression, diabetes, cancer and sexual dysfunction.

- **When the enemy is himself/herself:** Many a times people deliberately damage themselves by becoming impatient towards others, or due to tensions caused by psychological pressure. It's not only the external factors which cause tensions or stress, an individuals' internal thinking and perceptions, such as undermining oneself causes more stress in the following ways:
  - ❖ *Negative or adverse thoughts:* Many a times an individual's enemy is his/her own mind. The manner and way in which a child talks to himself/herself is followed throughout the life and this plays a very important role in his/her overall development. If a person is habituated to negative thinking and speaking, it becomes the main reason and cause of



stress. Overall positive thinking is a real heal from stress and negativity.

- ❖ *Conflicts dealing with poor skills:* A human life is full of conflicts and nobody is spared out of it. One should know how to deal with conflicts properly so that the relations with others get stronger and do not become a burden. Being humble does not mean that we are giving a chance to others to treat us badly.
- ❖ *Pessimism:* Can pessimistic people cannot take much stress.
- ❖ *Overburdened with commitments:* Everybody possesses a different level of handling stress. Some can handle higher levels of stress, whereas others may not. People who are overburdened with responsibilities are more prone to stress.

## 6.9 Role of Yoga – Stress and Life Style Management

The practice of yoga helps one in stress reduction by promoting relaxation; this is ultimately the contrary of stress. The three main elements, i.e., individual's body, mind and breath get benefited by practising yoga, as these are real victims of stress issues.



Fig. 6.9: Yoga for Relief and Stress Management

### Yoga for Stress Relief

Let's discuss some *yogasanas* for stress relief. Generally, any *asana* which gives a good and thorough stretch to the spinal column will provide relaxation and relief in stress.

1. ***Paschimottanasana* (Sitting Forward Bending Pose):** *Paschimottanasana* is so called because *paschim* refers to the back and *uttana* means stretching. Hence, *Paschimottanasana* means stretching of the back. Sitting forward bending pose gives increased energy and opening to the lower abdomen.



Fig. 6.10: *Paschimottanasana*

### How to Perform

- Start with sitting on the mat and stretching legs out in front of you.
- Keep the spine erect and legs flexed toward you.
- The thumb, middle and index fingers should be used to catch the toes and then the upper body is bended and moved forward.
- Exhale and bend slowly to touch your forehead with your knees; try bending as much as possible.
- Draw your belly button towards your spine as your exhale and bend.
- Stretch the arms out in front of you. Hold the pose for 5-10 moments initially and steadily augment the duration.

- Inhaling, come back up to the sitting position.
- Breathe out and lower the arms.

### Benefits

- Helpful for weight-watchers in reducing abdominal fat.
  - Cures enlargement of the spleen and liver.
  - Stimulates endocrine glands, kidneys, liver and pancreas.
  - Increases the peristalsis of the bowels.
  - Diabetes, piles get cured and the back muscles are rendered flexible.
  - It is said that in *Paschimottanasana*, the *anahat nada* can be heard by an expert practitioner.
2. **Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose):** The word *Setu Bandhasana* is made up of three words; *setu* which means bridge, *bandha* which means lock, and *asana* which means posture. This pose is generally used to strengthen and stretch the back and abdominal muscles along with opening the lungs and chest.

### How to Perform:

- Loosen up yourself on your back; your feet should be fixed behind your hips, and your knees should be up.
- Raise your hips up to a relaxed position, and keep a slab below your sacrum.



Fig. 6.11: *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*

### Benefits

- The chest, neck, and spine get stretched
  - Lessens stress and mild depression by calming the brain
  - Abdominal organs, lungs, and thyroid get stimulated
  - Tired legs get rejuvenated
  - Improvement in digestion
  - Helps in relieving the signs of menopause
  - Relieves menstrual discomfort
  - Relieves anxiety, fatigue, backache, headache, and insomnia
  - A therapy for sinusitis, asthma, osteoporosis, and high blood pressure
3. **Shavasana (Corpse Pose):** This *asana* resembles a dead body laid down, so it is known as *Shavasana* or Corpse Pose. This is usually a position of relaxation and rest, and is customarily practised almost at the end of a yoga session. This pose also offers wonderful meditative benefits; completing this pose has been shown to help reduce stress.



Fig. 6.12: *Shavasana*

### How to Perform

- Lie down on the mat.
- Keep the hands on the ground by the sides with palms facing upwards.



- Stretch the legs straight and keep them close to each other.
- Close the eyes. Breathe slowly.
- Relax all muscles, nerves, joints, etc.
- Start the relaxation process from toes to head.
- Imagine tiredness is getting removed from every part of your body.
- You may repeat *OM* or any holy mantra or remember God.
- Do not sleep.
- Continue being in this state for 10 minutes and then finish your practice.

### Benefits

- It rejuvenates body, mind, and spirit.
- Nervous system is relaxed by this pose and mind becomes calm.
- Helpful in relieving stress
- Body relaxation is experienced
- It also decreases beta brain waves and shifts to slower brain waves
- Reduces insomnia, hence helps in improving the sleep of the practitioner
- Reduces fatigue and headache
- Helps in relieving depression

### Effect of Yoga on Positive Health

The benefit of yoga on an individual's glucose levels, suffering from diabetes, and other chronic health conditions is immense. The symptoms of mental illness as well as of anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder are highly relieved by effective benefits of yoga. On making a comparison between results of studies related to the effects of yoga, and exercises on both health and disease segments of population, yoga gives better positive results as compared to other

physical exercises, and it also improves a variety of health-related outcome measures, which includes HRV (Heart Rate Variability), blood glucose, blood lipids, salivary cortisol, and oxidative stress. The subjective measures of fatigue, pain, and sleep in both healthy and ill populations improve more with the practice of yoga.



### SUMMARY

- Psychology is the science of both mental and behavioural processes. Therefore, in the light of yoga, Psychology is embedded in philosophical studies.
- Psychology refers to the science of activity of people that leads to an understanding of the nature of human behavior. The psychologist can examine and analyze the human behaviour with two perspectives: Overt and Covert.
- Consciousness depicts the quality or state of awareness which has come up as a field of psychology in modern times.
- Stress imposes certain demands on the individual which they find unnecessary and hard to cope with. Stressors refer to situations which an individual perceives as difficult to cope up and deal with.
- Conflicts arise when an individual is faced with two or more alternatives from which he has to choose one, thereby necessarily forsaking the other alternatives. A conflict may become more stressful when it involves intensity of frustration. Usually, an incompatible situation becomes the reason for conflict.
- Frustration is an experiential state which may either be the outcome of the absence of a desired goal, or blocking of motives and needs through some external forces that may generate difficulties and prevent the fulfilment of wants.

- Psychosomatic disorders are disorders which originate in the psyche or mind and result in ailments in the *soma* or the body. Psychosomatic diseases are mostly caused by stress.
- The interconnection between the mind and body was proposed by several ancient healing methods. There is a close link between mind and body, and their relationship, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on both quality of life and human health.
- Mental Hygiene is a science that deals with the procedure of achieving mental health and preserving it in the society.
- Prayer is regarded as the most widely practised healing or remedial modality among all types of alternative medicine.
- “Psychosocial morbidity” or “psychosocial dysfunction” refers to the problem which may take place in one’s psychosocial functioning.
- The first step in *Ashtanga Yoga* is *yama* which sets the foundation of social conduct. Thus, there are five *yamas* and five *niyamas*.
- Stressors cause stressful and oppressive feelings. A stress situation could be positive or negative, and this is determined by the individual’s reaction towards the stress-causing event.
- The practice of yoga helps one in stress reduction by promoting relaxation. The three main elements, *i.e.*, individual’s body, mind and breath get benefitted by practising yoga, as they are prone to stress issues.
- The benefits of yoga on a person’s glucose levels, suffering from diabetes, and other chronic health conditions are immense.



## KEYWORDS

**Stress:** Stress is described as a reaction of the individual when he/she finds that the demands made upon him/her are greater than his/her capabilities to handle the same.

**Behaviour:** Behaviour is an action which can be followed, documented and quantified; this comprises initially the actions done by living beings or organisms, that is, their motion in universe.

**Psychosomatic Disorders:** They are ailments brought about by stress. They can also be called as somatic symptoms and signs which are not linked to any particular physiological dysfunction.

**Mental Hygiene:** It is a discipline which is concerned with the method of achieving mental well-being and conserving mental fitness in the world.

**Santosha:** *Santosha* means to feel happy and contented.

**Tapa:** Tapa is voluntarily accepted austerities, penances and vows.

**Shauca:** *Shauca* means to practise hygiene and freshness of thought, expression and action.

**Swadhyaya:** *Swadhyaya* refers to the study of one’s own Self, the pure Self.

**Ishwarapranidhana:** *Ishwarapranidhana* means to surrender to Ishwara.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Define stress. Identify the major stressors in life and the usual responses to them.



2. "Frustration and conflict pervade human living". Explain.
3. Write down the types of conflicts. Explain how conflicts and frustration lead to stress.
4. What is the relationship between mind and body?
5. Mention the desirable ways of coping with stress.

### Long Answer Questions

1. What is mental hygiene? Write down the role of yoga in mental hygiene.
2. What is mental health? Explain the characteristics of mental health.
3. Discuss the ways in which yoga will lead to mental health.
4. Prayer and meditation are helpful for mental health. Discuss in detail.
5. Explain the relevance of *yamas* and *niyamas* in the context of mental health.



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# CHAPTER 7

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## COMMUNICATION STRUCTURE

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## Structure\*

- ➔ Learning Outcomes
- ➔ Introduction
  - 7.1 Communication Skills
  - 7.2 Environment of Yoga Classes - Do's & Don'ts
  - 7.3 Work Activities and Qualities of Yoga Teacher/Instructor
  - 7.4 Effective Teaching Skills
  - 7.5 General Pointers on Teaching a Class
  - 7.6 Yoga Course Schedule
  - 7.7 Teaching Process of Yoga Practice
  - 7.8 Managing and Executing Yoga Classes
  - 7.9 Teaching Techniques
  - 7.10 Motivation and Adherence Techniques
- ➔ Summary
- ➔ Keywords
- ➔ Self-Assessment Questions
- ➔ Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- ➔ Understand the importance of communication skills and its types
- ➔ Learn Do's and Don'ts of environment of yoga classes
- ➔ Discuss the work activities and qualities of yoga teacher/instructor
- ➔ Describe effective teaching skills of a teacher/instructor
- ➔ Illustrate various general pointers on teaching a class
- ➔ Explain yoga course schedule
- ➔ Discuss teaching process of practice, its benefits and limitations
- ➔ Describe managing and executing yoga classes
- ➔ Explain various teaching techniques
- ➔ Discuss motivation and adherence techniques



## Introduction

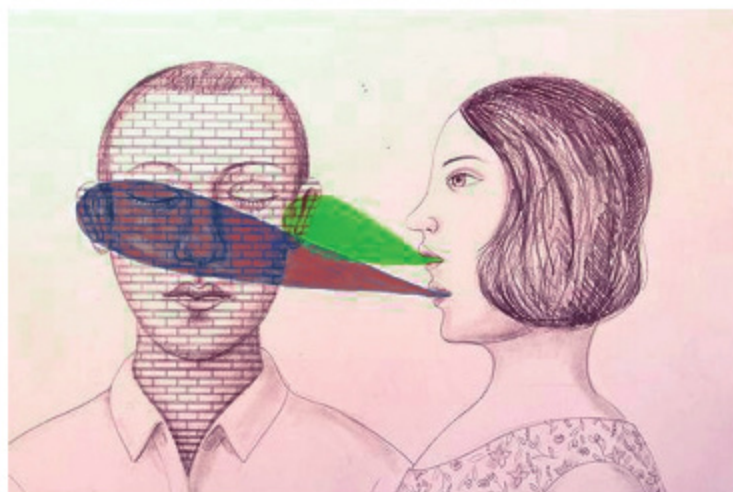
Effective communication skills are an imperative if you wish to be a successful professional. So lead a good social life with spiritual progress wherein relationships are fulfilling. In order to be creative one has to acquire effective communication skills. This implies good listening ability too. Listen to your student's words attentively, understand the meaning behind those words and watch their body language closely. Yoga entails a life-long education to teachers as well as students.

This chapter will make you realize the importance of communication skills. It will teach you the do's and don'ts to keep the environs of a classroom congenial and use the general pointers to make your teaching effective and purposeful. You will also learn various instructing and motivational techniques.

\* Denotes that the content is specific to level 2 yoga aspirants.



## 7.1 Communication Skills



**Fig. 7.1:** One-to-One Communication

Communication skills are an essential part of teaching yoga. A yoga instructor/teacher should have ability to express a body of skills and knowledge to his/her students in an effective manner. Simply put, it is not enough to know the material all around; an instructor/teacher must have the ability to impart the skills to the students in a useful manner. While teaching Yoga, the instructor/teacher must have the ability to demonstrate the poses, depict them, and help the students execute them excellently. Communication lies at the heart of having the ability to teach yoga to others.

Direct cues and comments are ideal while instructing in a yoga session. Students are commonly focused on the yoga instructor/teacher only briefly, and afterwards their attention directs to their own bodies. When we analyze a flowing *asana* practice, students must figure out how to flow through all postures easily, while getting the advantages every posture offers. In the event that an *asana* is new for them, they will concentrate on the teacher to get legitimate the form, but when students are comfortable with each pose, yoga class becomes more reflective and personal for the individuals.

Yoga instructor/teacher also needs to manage students in a non-intimidating and friendly

manner. Students should feel comfortable enough to ask for assistance and ask questions throughout the duration of the class. If the yoga instructor/teacher shows an unfriendly attitude, this may work for certain students, but in the long run this approach will most likely end up in losing the respect of students who are eager to learn the deeper aspects of yoga.

Body language plays an essential role in communication. It incorporates posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. Yoga instructor/teacher should work to make eye contact with students when talking to them separately, as well as while addressing the whole class. Avoid looking away, crossing your arms, appearing distracted or agitated. Body gestures should remain inviting and open. Make your students feel valued and welcome during each yoga class by maintaining smile on the face and keeping the atmosphere happy and relaxed.

Voice tone and volume are essential for establishing a pleasant environment for practising yoga. Students commonly expect the room to be calm and quiet, which lends itself to quiet voices. The teacher/instructor requires to make himself or herself heard, of course, but do so in a voice that is not too brash or loud. Vary the tone of your voice when giving cues to make a relaxing environment. Few yoga poses require more explanation than others, including postures you are presenting for the first time. Use a louder voice slightly when teaching students about new pose. Remember that silence is okay, too, and various individuals crave that about yoga class. Do not feel as if you need to fill every second with knowledge, cues, and advice only.

The key to better communication in your classes, when you teach is to present the first round and walk around the room assisting and communicating with the students. You are helping, observing, and maintaining a communication association, in this way, through precise instruction with the class.



The efforts to communicate will make students comprehend clearly that certain class duration is fixed aside for them.

If a particular yoga instructor/teacher is not concerned to assist, make eye contact and communicate, a student might get the impression that he/she is not a part of the class.

Keep in mind when you put your best efforts in the class as a group cluster, you have done what is necessary in the class. After class, the yoga teacher/instructor stays back to answer questions is certainly very good.

The aim of communication is to instruct the students in a proper way. Two aspects are included in this, which are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

1. Communicate the instructions
2. Understand the instructions completely

## Features of Communication

The following are some of the valuable features of communication:

1. Communication can be in oral or written form.
2. There should be at least two people available for communication.
3. One of them would communicate the instruction and the other would follow them.
4. Communication includes instructing, listening, and understanding the instructions.
5. In all kinds of activities, communication is an essential art.
6. In each training, communication is such an art, in which a flow of wisdom continues from the trainer to the disciple.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

7. The instructor communicates wisdom, technology, values, ideas, and ideals to students.

## Two Types of Communication<sup>2</sup>

The figure given below shows various sources of information transfer.



**Fig. 7.2:** Information Transfers through Communication

1. Communication through conversation
  - ❖ Selection of language
  - ❖ The volume of the voice
  - ❖ Reliable presentation
  - ❖ Simple accent
  - ❖ Technical support for the presentation
2. Communication without any conversation
  - ❖ Gestures
  - ❖ Physical feelings
  - ❖ Facial expressions
  - ❖ Communicating through the looks
  - ❖ Communicating message through gestures
  - ❖ Physical angles
  - ❖ Dress code
  - ❖ Art of communicating without speaking

<sup>2</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



### Did You Know?

The feeling of security among students can be enhanced by encouraging forthright and open communication between a yoga instructor/teacher and his/her students. Irrespective of whether a student is new to your class or not, encouraging open lines of communication is utmost essential when you are instructing a student through a series of physical poses and *pranayama* practices.

## The Art of Verbal Communication

Language matters in all aspects of life. What we say and how we say it—make an important effect on the quality of our student's experience. Altogether, correlate how frequently your students are hearing your words to how often they are seeing your demonstrations and receiving your instructions.

### Provide Landmarks

Do you remember how confused you were when you first practised yoga—figuring out which foot was your right, which was left, and following the instructor/teacher in mirror image? There is no easier way to give instructions to your students with clarity than by using understandable landmarks in the room such as the clock, windows, altar, and so on. Think about teaching twists, for instance. Your student's bodies are so overlapped, crisscrossed, and tied up, that their right is on their left and their left is on their right. So instead of saying, "Turn your torso to the left," tell your students to "Rotate your torso toward the windows (or, whatever conspicuous landmark is to the left of your students)." Telling your students to face a landmark in the room instead of a cardinal direction will make a big impact on them.

### Allow Space

If your directions are clear and you provide adequate pause after each instruction, your students will be able to follow easily. If, however,

you give 10 instructions in a row without any pause or break your students will be lost. Always give time to the students to digest your words before blazing ahead.

### Edit Yourself

Do not tell your students everything you know about each posture. Certain instructors/teachers are tempted to fill every second of class with precaution, instruction, personal revelation, lore, and more. But this is not a storytelling seminar, this is yoga class so do not overload the students to compete with yourself. Stick to an average of 3 instructions per posture. You can use more instructions to get them into the posture, be judicious once they are in the *asana*. If these instructions are associated with one another, are clearly descriptive, as well as relevant to the overall theme of the class, they will give the students enough to work with while allowing them to have their own experience.

### Use your Student's Names

As a yoga student yourself, you are aware that everyone spaces out in class once in a while. Truthfully, whose eyes do not glaze over after ninety minutes of generalized and impersonal instructions? Make your teaching more intimate and skilful by using the student's names. In place of repeating the same instructions, look at the students, and help them expand, clarify or deepen their poses by relating to them directly.



### Example

Try saying, "Rohit, please relax your neck and soften your jaws," or, "Ram, please bend your front knee more deeply."

Personalizing instructions is the best way to make your communication relevant and direct; it is also a good way to take care of the students. The



added bonus is that everyone else in the room that needs to relax his/her neck will most likely follow suit. Obviously, you should use an encouraging and soft tone when you use student's names so that people do not feel like they are being scolded or singled out.

### Use Direct Command, Images, Analogies and Stories (when appropriate)

Different students learn through different ways. Also, different students resonate with different types of instruction. Some will hear you when you give straightforward, direct commands like "press the top of your femur's back." Others will hear you more clearly when you provide an image or an analogy to articulate an instruction. Some students will only engage when you share a personal story that highlights a teaching. Don't force yourself to use a style of language that doesn't resonate with you, but do your best to vary your language and style of delivery so that more students can learn from you.

#### Caution

Keep in mind, some will learn by listening carefully to your cues, some will be able to copy just by watching, and others will gain more from your support. All yoga students cannot learn from you in a similar manner. Being a yoga teacher, you should be a decent listener when it comes to all practitioners' queries or doubts.

## 7.2 Environment of Yoga Classes- Do's & Don'ts

When students come to the mat, there is an implied contract they make with you as a teacher. Staying safe, honouring one's self, and practising *ahimsa* (non-violence) is of primary importance. As teacher/instructor, however, we cannot be fully responsible for our student's safety and

security. We require to teach them to acquire self-awareness and to take responsibility for themselves. This may mean learning to self-adjust, respect their limitations, and practise with more love and less ego for their well-being.

#### Notes

As yoga is a spiritual and holistic practice, no matter what style of practice is being done, it is very essential to have a holistic environment for yoga. The environment of a yoga class is a good energy that enhances the yoga learners as well as the teacher/instructor through the practice of yoga.

### Do's

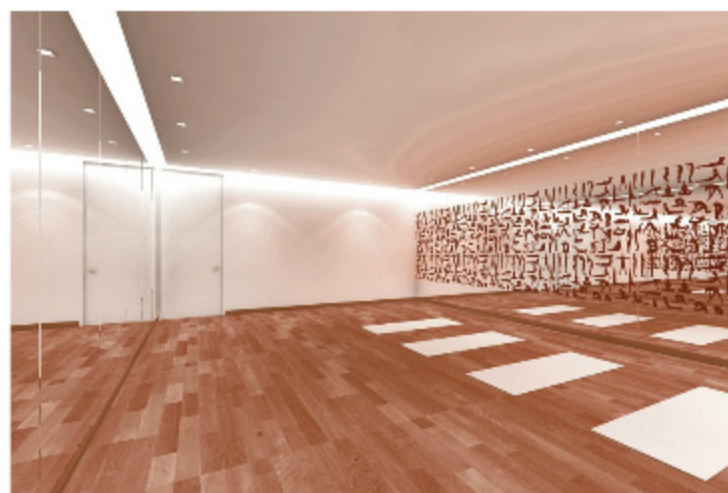


Fig. 7.3: A Spacious Yoga Class

1. The class space must be comfortable and safe in order to engage the students in a joyful practice. It is appropriate to take yoga classes in the atmosphere where there is no pollution and the air is fresh and clean.
2. For every practitioner, 6×3 feet space is needed to sit and lie on the floor, while doing exercises.
3. The space should be energetically rich and robust. The space should be large enough to let the yogis practice with ease. The space requires for fitting at least two yoga



mats, one in a horizontal manner and the other in a vertical manner. For maneuvering around the mat, space must be adequately wide. Mat should be made of cotton or of a bad conductor (electrically non-conductive material) of heat.

4. Around the yoga practice area, it is best to have plain walls. There are various reasons behind this. First is to minimize any kind of disturbance. You do not need the attention to move away from yourselves through your wandering eyes that are continually seeing at distinct things within the particular space. The wall is a great assistant or prop for working on few asanas like handstand, headstand, half-moon, and different balancing poses.

### Caution

Around the yoga practice area, it is very necessary to have light-coloured walls because colours may be a great mood changer. A light coloured wall gives a cool and calming effect.

5. The music played during class should merge with the practice.
6. It should invite the students to ask questions related to their practice so that all practising students can learn. But most of all, the energy, the teacher/instructor brings in to his/her students, should be of the kind that is motivating, inspiring, energetic, joyful, soothing, relaxing, trusting, honouring, educating and inviting the students to release themselves into the safe environment without any inhibitions.
7. Once you have your righteous place for yoga practice, make sure to keep it mess-free as well as clean. Keep the floor or any nearby furniture, etc. free of clutter and dust. This creates positive energy for an orderly practice.



### Example

Do not place a dustbin while practicing nearby your mat because it is generally unhygienic as well as very distracting. At the time of practice, we involve in deep breath in yoga and it is essential to inhale clean as well as fresh air and not polluted air.

8. Fresh air will convey the practice of yoga to another level. We will absolutely like to inhale fresh air as opposed to stale air into our body. Taking in the fresh air makes the mind as well as body healthier and fresher. For keeping a well-ventilated space, let the windows remain open. If there is no fresh wind, it is best to turn on a fan on the moderate speed mode that rotates to make sure better air circulation. Likewise, in an air-conditioned room also, it is possible to practise yoga. Warming up is essential as it allows us to go for deep stretching poses which protects from muscle injuries.

### Don'ts



Fig. 7.4: Distraction in Yoga Class with Cell Phone

1. The space should not be congested.
2. The music should not be distracting.
3. Cell phone ringing should not impinge on the yoga class environment.



4. Once the class begins, there should be no chatter that has nothing to do with the practice itself. But most of all, there should be no negative energy either from the space itself, the teacher or the student.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Many things can be controlled in yoga classes. There are things that may not be under the control of the yoga teacher/instructor teaching in a leased space or the student attending the class, but what one can be in control of is one's attitude, perspectives and the energy one brings into any space, as any environment can be turned joyful for the practising *yogi* with the right attitude. When both the teacher/instructor and the student make a joint effort to get to know each other, a wonderful student – teacher relationship is formed and the practice reaches joyful heights.

## Work Activities



Fig. 7.5: Various Yoga Postures

## 7.3 Work Activities and Qualities of Yoga Teacher/Instructor

Yoga instructors/teachers are professionals who teach yoga that uses controlled breathing and postures techniques to enhance strength and flexibility. To become a yoga instructor, in any style, specialized and comprehensive training is mandatory. All yoga instructors/teachers must complete a training programme in yoga and within the field, have the option of specializing in a specific discipline. A yoga instructor/teacher has been trained in specific yoga philosophies and techniques in order to teach yoga in one-on-one settings or to groups. Yoga for physical fitness can sculpt and tone the body as well as lower mental stress levels.

Being a yoga instructor/teacher, you would teach individuals various yoga poses (positions). Yoga instructor can also instruct how to maintain visualization, meditation, and controlled breathing. Tasks for the yoga instructor include:

1. Designing lesson plans as well as the course.
2. Ensuring syllabus is well-planned before the begins of the class.
3. Recognizing the requirements of beginners, mixed ability groups and experienced students.
4. Instructing a wide range of yoga postures from simple moves to more complex ones.
5. Adapting poses for individual conditions like arthritis or pregnancy.
6. Instructing proper breathing habits, from basic breathing techniques to breath control exercises.
7. Assessing students achievements and progress.
8. Reviewing his/her own teaching skills and courses.

## Skills, Interests and Qualities

To become a yoga teacher/instructor, you will need to have:

1. An interest and belief in yoga
2. Training and experience in yoga practice
3. A good level of personal fitness, strength and flexibility
4. A caring approach and an interest in people
5. The ability to motivate individuals and groups
6. Good oral communication skills
7. To begin where practitioners are and take them where they have not been before by giving them a tool that helps them.
8. To help practitioners cultivate beneficial actions and attitudes.
9. To develop practices that work on the breath, body, mind, thinking, emotional state, intellect, and so on.
10. To teach by modelling or inspiring rather than telling.
11. To treat practitioners appropriately as well as equally.

## 7.4 Effective Teaching Skills

Teaching a multilevel class with grace is the hallmark of an experienced teacher/instructor; but there are strategies you can use even if you are just beginning to teach yoga.

### Role of Teacher/Instructor

A teacher/instructor acts as a mirror to practitioners' conditioning and experiences. His role includes the following:

1. Instructor may be a witness to practitioners' performance. To observe their emotional challenges, physical patterns, habitual actions, and so on.
2. The teacher should conduct the yoga practice as per the practitioners needs, not as per his/her own needs.
3. To support practitioners, to observe the reality of their circumstances.
4. To empower practitioners to notice their state for themselves and promote their freedom.
5. To provide practitioners' permission to be where they are and to respect their current condition.
6. To direct practitioners to focus on their real experience over practices.
1. Follow the *niyamas* and *yamas*.
2. Show your love and enthusiasm for yoga through your practice and actions, through your expressions and gestures, through your voice and words.
3. Stay centered.
4. Be motivational as well as inspirational.
5. One should admit and show his/her limitations towards the specific area such as scope of knowledge, physical limitations and so on.
6. Be honest and modest.
7. Provide straightforward feedback in a non-harming way.
8. Be always non-discriminatory.
9. Be polite, respectful, courteous, and compassionate.
10. Be patient with your students and with yourself.
11. Be strong and confident in your actions and words.
12. Respect and honour the sources of your knowledge.



## Relationship between Teacher and Student

### Communication Expectations

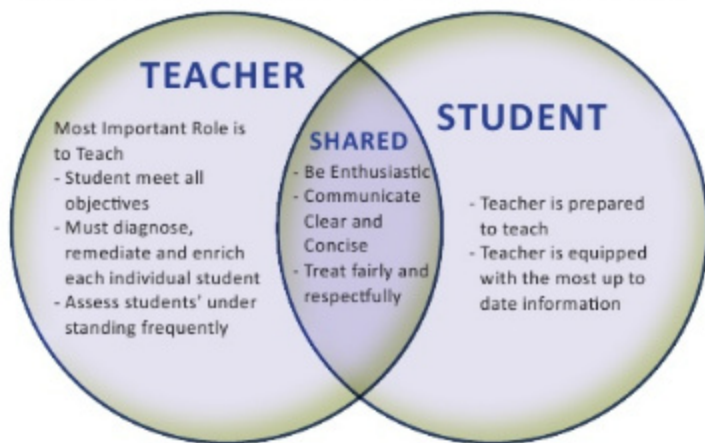


Fig. 7.6: Relationship between Teacher and Student

One of the keys to success is the relationship between teacher/instructor and student. It should have the following essential elements:

1. Teacher/Instructor must behave in a way that encourages trust.
2. Teacher/Instructor should have good experience.
3. Teachers/Instructors and students should respect one another. If teachers and students do not do so, the relationship might end. The teacher is not just a specialist. He has tested these teachings and knows they have worked for him/her. Student must evaluate and experiment whether they work for them also and become eager and curious to explore them in order to get benefits and knowledge.
4. Teacher should be willing to support students and help them in that exploration.
5. Teacher/Instructor must do his/her best to help and support his/her students in their voyage.

## 7.5 General Pointers on Teaching a Class

Teach from your knowledge and experience.

Always remember that how it felt being a beginner.

### Time



Fig. 7.7: Importance of Time in Yoga

1. Reach timely and make sure that the training room is ready, e.g., tidy, right temperature, and so on.
2. Be punctual and start the class on time.
3. At the end of session, give students time to ask relevant questions.
4. End the session on time.
5. Leave training room organized for next teacher/instructor.

### Room Arrangement



Fig. 7.8: A Well-arranged Yoga Class Room



Room arrangement is affected by shape (rectangle, round and square) of room and size (small, large).

1. Small room: It registers only few students who can comfortably sit in the room. It permits for each student to have his/her own space.
2. Large room: It uses smaller or a corner space for spatial reference and optimal communication.
3. Minimize distractions like clocks, windows, doors, mirrors and so on.
4. Organize props and mats in an orderly and a neat pattern (saucha), e.g., in the rectangular room, place props on side of mats, and mats should be parallel to the short wall.
5. Room arrangement should be according to the postures being taught.

### Teacher/Instructor Position



**Fig. 7.9:** The Position of the Teacher while Performing Yoga

1. Position the students and yourself in such a way that you can see all students and that they can also see you, e.g., taller students in the last.
2. When you are speaking face the students.
3. Move around the room in the same direction in order to make sure that all students are given attention and noticed. Maintain a focused, grounded atmosphere.

4. Walk around the training room to connect with all students.

### Student Position



**Fig. 7.10:** Students Position

1. Let students have specific choice in where they want to be.
2. Group students in such a manner that they feel more comfortable, e.g., with similar limitations, with friends or similar physical concerns.



#### Example

If a student's size or height blocks vision of the other students too much, then either ask the student if he/she would be willing to alter his/her position or alter your position.

### First Class

1. Meet/Greet students.
2. Indicate where coats, shoes, and valuables can be positioned.
3. Give the location of yoga props and equipment, fire exits, washrooms, etc.
4. Direct placement of props and mats.
5. Ask students about their yoga stories, physical injuries or limitations.



## Pacing

1. Pace of the teacher/instructor should be as per the level of the students.  
For instance, give beginner more freedom to make mistakes.
2. Pace fast enough to get student's attention, yet slow enough for them to understand ideas to adjust and work on the basis of their requirements. Fast pace can lead to contracted as well as inhibited breathing and slow pace can increase fatigue.
3. Pace class to have time for breath-work, clean-up, relaxation, closure, meditation, etc.
4. Pace the class such that you have taught a well-rounded class within the time allotted.

## Voice

1. Your voice should be audible enough for all students. Project your sound till the back of the room.
2. Explain in mature tone like you are talking to adults.
3. Speak on your out breath.
4. Stay grounded and relaxed.

5. Regulate your tempo and tone to focus the student's attention on the quality of the practice, e.g., slow and soft for relaxation; quick and strong for energizing poses.
6. Do not speak too quickly while explaining the philosophy or a pose, and pronounce well.
7. Use an authoritative, enthusiastic, inspiring, commanding but kind tone.

## Adjustments

1. Let practitioners know that you are doing adjustments.
2. Adjust those practitioners who require the most enhancements.
3. Always give verbal guidelines before physical adjustments.
4. Soothe the practitioners with your props, body, and so on.
5. Let them know that they can request if they do not prefer adjustment.
6. Let the students know about the adjustments in the poses.
7. Position of the instructor should be for the most beneficial and effective adjustment.

## 7.6 Yoga Course Schedule

A general course schedule for any Yoga class should include the following things:

Title Name	Learning Objectives	Subject Description
<b>Asanas (Yoga Postures)</b>	This will provide students the understanding of the benefits and contraindications for each <i>asana</i> , and the way to reduce the risk of injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun salutation</li> <li>• Twelve basic yoga poses</li> <li>• Several <i>asana</i> variations, from intermediate level to advanced</li> <li>• Deep relaxation with autosuggestion</li> <li>• Postural alignment</li> <li>• Release of blocked energy</li> <li>• Training classes for all age groups</li> </ul>

Contd...

<b>Pranayama</b>	Students will learn the different techniques of <i>pranayama</i> , the aspects of breathing and their effect on the body and mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expands capacity of the lungs</li> <li>• Balances the two hemispheres of the brain</li> <li>• Relaxes the nervous system</li> <li>• Purifies the nadis (subtle energy channels)</li> <li>• Awakens the inner spiritual energy</li> <li>• <i>Kapalabhati</i> (lung cleansing exercise)</li> <li>• <i>Anuloma Viloma</i> (alternate nostril breathing)</li> <li>• <i>Ujjayi</i>, <i>Surya Bheda</i>, <i>Bhastrika</i>, <i>Sitali</i>, <i>Sitkari</i>, <i>Bhramari</i></li> <li>• The three <i>bandhas</i>: <i>Moola</i>, <i>Jalandhara</i>, <i>Uddiyana</i></li> </ul>
<b>Kriyas</b>	Students will learn the different kinds of purification <i>kriyas</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Neti</i>, <i>tratak</i>, <i>kapalabhati</i>, <i>dhauti</i>, <i>nauli</i> and <i>basti</i>: six classical purification exercises for the nose, eyes, air passages, oesophagus and stomach, abdominal organs and large intestine.</li> <li>• Demonstration and explanation of the practices and their effects.</li> <li>• Individual instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Yoga Anatomy and Physiology</b>	Students will learn the relevance and application of the foundational principles to the practice of yoga vis-à-vis the physiological systems of the body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the foremost body systems</li> <li>• The effects of <i>pranayama</i> and <i>asanas</i> on the respiration, cardiovascular system, digestion, and muscular and skeletal systems, endocrine system, etc.</li> <li>• The nine systems of the body</li> <li>• Physical culture and yoga</li> <li>• Nutrition and diet</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching Practice</b>	This will provide students the understanding of various teaching practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to teach the breathing exercises as well as twelve basic poses to beginners, and intermediate students</li> <li>• General pointers on teaching a class</li> <li>• Setting up of a proper environment for class</li> <li>• Beginners' Course</li> <li>• Advanced Postures</li> <li>• Yoga for pregnancy, older citizens, and children</li> <li>• Relaxation</li> </ul>
<b>Yoga Nutrition</b>	Students will learn about a conducive diet for practicing Yoga. Beyond mere do's and don'ts, the curriculum looks in depth at the effect of specific foods on the systems as well as how distinct foods can restrict or support one's spiritual and physical development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How diet affects the mind</li> <li>• Vegetarianism – for spiritual, health, and ethical reasons</li> <li>• Proper balance of the key nutrients</li> <li>• Ayurvedic principles of nutrition</li> </ul>

Contd...



<b>Meditation</b>	Students will get practical instructions for meditation practices, and how to guide meditation classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is meditation</li> <li>• Guide to meditation</li> <li>• Why meditate</li> <li>• Types of meditation</li> <li>• Twelve-step daily practice</li> <li>• Effects of experiences in meditation</li> <li>• <i>Mantras</i> spiritual energy in sound</li> <li>• <i>Mudras</i> – types and significance</li> </ul>
<b>Hatha Yoga</b>	This will help students to understand what is <i>Hatha Yoga</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moral and Ethical principles</li> <li>• Body – <i>prana</i> (life energy) – mind</li> <li>• From control over the mind, over the body, and meditation</li> </ul>
<b>Patanjali Yoga</b>	This will provide students the understanding of self-realization or liberation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ashtanga</i> – the 8 steps of yoga</li> <li>• Various concepts in <i>Patanjali Yoga Sutras</i></li> <li>• Concentration and meditation</li> </ul>
<b>Kundalini Yoga</b>	This will provide students the understanding of cosmic energy and how to tap its resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Seven <i>chakras</i></li> <li>• The awakening of cosmic energy</li> </ul>
<b>Bhakti Yoga</b>	Understand what is Devotion and its Path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Bhakti Yoga</i> as discussed in The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i></li> <li>• Ways of Devotion</li> <li>• Qualities of a devotee</li> </ul>
<b>Karma Yoga</b>	Understand the path of selfless action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Karma Yoga</i> as discussed in The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i></li> <li>• Definition of Yoga in The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i></li> <li>• The law of <i>karma</i>, i.e. cause and effect</li> <li>• <i>Karma Yoga</i> - selfless service</li> </ul>
<b>Jnana Yoga</b>	Students will get to know about various philosophies of life. Understand the path of knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Jnana Yoga</i> as discussed in The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i></li> <li>• Steps in <i>Jnana Yoga</i> for Realization of 'Truth (<i>sadbhava hatustaya</i>)</li> <li>• <i>Sravaṇa, manana, nidhidhyasana</i></li> </ul>
<b>The Bhagavad Gita</b>	This will provide students the understanding of perspectives on Yoga as given in the The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considered one of the greatest spiritual texts of the world, The <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> is also a textbook of yoga. It has profound and subtle teachings on yoga and contains a universality which embraces all aspects of human actions.</li> </ul>

Table 7.1: General Course Schedule

## 7.7 Teaching Process of Yoga Practice



Fig. 7.11: Yoga Practice

In the following sections, you will understand the teaching process while practising yoga.

### Describing the Practice

Practice is a process for being present in the moment with an abiding sense of wholeness and freedom that brings about an experience of being fully energized, alive and in bliss. By way of a self-transformation practice, yoga provides us a set of tools for untying the binding knots that create stagnation deep in our being and create patterns of holding. The art of teaching the *asana* practice is one of guiding students into an expanding awareness of yoga.

When thinking about *asana*, we can identify a variety of essential elements: relaxing, being present, breathing, stabilizing, rooting, moving, energetically engaging, and aligning. But when expressed in an integrated practice—that is, when doing yoga—these elements are not separable but are portion of practice. We also begin with these qualities, gradually refining and honing them through the practice while the practice is one of the movements into these qualities.

### Demonstration

Use demonstrations wisely. Demonstrating a posture or an approach can be very instructive,

because a student cannot see the form of his own posture. Viewing the posture from another perspective is very helpful and can often explain what words alone cannot.

Nevertheless, demonstrations have the effect of breaking the continuity of flow within a class and altering the direction of concentration for the student. When you decide to use a demonstration, make sure it counts by doing the following:

- Make sure every student can see and hear you. Ask them to gather near you.
- Be concise as you explain the approach you want them to employ, or the focus of the posture you are demonstrating. Stay with one or two main points.
- If you are using a student to demonstrate, quietly ask his/her permission first.
- When you have finished the demonstration, thank the students for their attention and the student you have used to demonstrate.
- Move the students to go back to their mats and perform the same pose again, employing what was highlighted in the demonstration.

### Silent Demonstration

It is an interesting and powerful phenomenon that the part of the brain used to control a given part of the body will also respond to a visual cue—if it is demonstrated in silence. Bypassing the language center of the brain can result in a deeper kinesthetic understanding. To perform a silent demonstration, do the following:

- Tell your class you will be demonstrating in silence, and tell them why.
- Ask them also to be silent.
- Move into the posture you are demonstrating with the breath.
- Point to the part of the body that is the focus of your demonstration and perform the approach you are highlighting.



- Move out of the posture before you begin speaking again.

### Demonstration with Counts and Breathing

Rehearsing regular, careful breathing can be empowering and calming and can also assist with anxiety related well-being issues ranging from panic attacks to digestive issues. Since breathing is something we can manage, it's an essential tool for achieving a clear and relaxed state of mind.

Breathing practices comprise counting (which is one of their reflective qualities and you require focusing on the numbering to stay with the practice) of couple of things:

- The timing of each portion of the breath and the quantity of seconds in every breath.
- Counting the number of breaths.

### Timing breaths

*Pranayama* practices depend on timed breathing and the length of every breath is demonstrated in seconds. So for a successful practice you are going to require perceptible sound made by something. The least complex technique is a mechanical clock that makes a perceptible clicking noise every second. One of the alternative solutions for timing is a metronome.

### Counting breaths

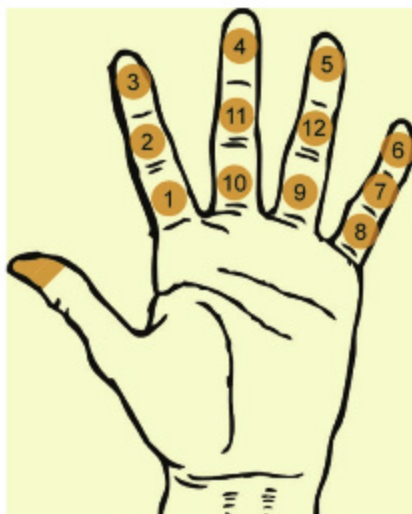


Fig. 7.12: Counting Breaths

To count breaths we will use left-hand. By using left-hand technique we can count number up to twelve. It is easy to do by placing and moving the thumb over twelve numbered areas on the hand. We begin a counting sequence by placing the thumb on the first location and every time we begin a new breathing cycle by inhaling, we move the thumb one position forward. With certain practice you will become habitual with the connection of fingers and numbers.



Fig. 7.13: Counting on Fingers

Take a seat in a calm position with the head slightly inclined forward and the spine straight.

Gradually take deep breath and close your eyes gently. Then try the breath to come naturally without trying to affect it. Ideally it would be slow and quiet, but rhythm and depth might be varied.

- To begin the exercise, count “one” to yourself as you exhale.
- The next you exhale, count “two,” and so on up to “five.”
- Then begin a new cycle, counting “one” on the next exhalation.

Do not count higher than “five,” and do not count at the time of inhale, count only when you exhale. You will know the attention has wandered when you find yourself up to “eight,” “twelve,” even “nineteen.”

## Limitations of Practice

**Managing, injury illness, and scheduled days off:** As yoga instructor/teacher, if we do not teach, we do not get paid. This means we need to be careful about getting sick, do everything we can to take care of ourselves. Be cautious about anything that may cause accident or injury and be judicious and organized about taking days off.

**Finding you do not have sufficient time in the day to practice yoga for yourself:** The funny thing about being a yoga instructor/teacher is that there are several days when you will wonder, as an instructor/teacher, you will need to practice what you teach as well as make your own practice a priority, being creative about how and when you will do your own yoga.

One of the most essential ingredients for being a good yoga instructor is to have your own regular and strong practice. Being a good instructor means, creating an environment in which your students are able to learn and really open up their hearts. This can happen when there is a rapport between the teacher and student.

## Explaining Subtle Points

Understanding the human body that is, its limitations and its capabilities that can help instructor/teacher understand how to carefully and safely instruct students. It is necessary to create modifying postures and balanced sequences totally depend on a student's capabilities. By placing all the focus on the body we ignore several benefits to the spirit and mind. If *asana* are done correctly, the breath is paired with attention and movement is focused on a *drashti* (point of focus).

The following are the certain points which must be considered by every yoga instructor/teacher/trainer and communicated to yoga students:

1. **Holding Your Breath:** Staying cautious towards how breath is of utmost importance

when practising yoga. Yoga teacher/instructor always points out this one major mistake that must be avoided.



### Example

Cardiac patients need to be particularly more careful not to hold the breath when practising *asanas*. This is more like gently monitoring what works for the body, beyond what an instructor can teach. Yoga translates into good life and good health given that you practise it carefully.

2. **Pushing Too Hard:** Certain yoga poses may seem simple and easy relatively from the outside, they work on deeper muscles and tissues, and must be practiced with care and awareness. Students mainly need to push themselves at the outset, driven by pride and require proving themselves fit and fine. Unluckily, this brings about soreness the next day. So listen carefully to the instructions of the instructor/teacher and also do not force yourself.



Fig. 7.14: A Person Pushing Too Hard



3. **Comparing Yourself with Others:** Every group or class has that one super-adaptable yogi who appears to master each move smoothly. Fight the inclination to compare and get down on yourself. On the off chance that you get tripped up examining yourself against everyone else in the class, not only will you get a crick in your neck, you will also get a crimp in your fun. You will become disappointed and perhaps even convince yourself that yoga is not for you.
4. **Coming to Class with a Full Stomach:** When you have a full stomach, not only are most yoga postures uncomfortable, but also blood supply is channeled to your stomach to process the supplements from your food, leaving your muscles shortchanged on the energy they require for a fruitful practice.
5. **Comparing Yourself with the Person on the Next Mat:** To injure yourself in a yoga class is to try doing what the individual next to you is doing and match his/her reach or stretch. We all have distinct body shapes, which vary according to injuries in the past, age, genetics, diet, etc.



### Did You Know?

If you are copying or imitating the person who is performing next to you, it might cause injury to you because stretching limit varies in each person.

6. **Focusing Yourself:** Every class has intelligent, average and poor students, so do the yoga classes. Your class may also have super-flexible yogis who seem to perform it effortlessly without actually showing any strain. And, they have a core that you can't even match. If you get yourself engaged in measuring yourself against others in the class, you will ruin your yoga session. You will more

likely become more frustrated and may even think that yoga is not meant for people like you. This wrong notion should never cross your mind, rather understand the fact that yoga is for everyone. For this, you need to focus on your personal session that is not about anyone but you. Always remember that everyone is different and yoga poses are about treating their individual bodies.

## Questions and Answers Session

Many students have doubts about yoga. The question and answer session gives them a preferable way to the procedure, practices and principles so that they can learn about them.



### Example

#### Questions Discussed during the Group Yoga Session

##### Warm up

- How long have you been practising yoga?
- Where have you been practising?
- Do you practise alone or with a partner or friend?
- What is your definition of yoga? How would a person who practises yoga define it?
- How would a person who doesn't practise yoga define it?
- What did you expect when you started to practise yoga?

##### Starting Yoga (Cues to Action)

- How do people make the decision to start yoga?
- What makes them continue to practise?
- What was it like for you when you started out?

##### Perceived Benefits

- What health benefits, if any, do people expect when they practise yoga?
- What illnesses or health concerns might yoga help? Are there any *asans* which would not help or would make things worse? Does any one of you practise yoga to help you with a specific illness or health concern? How has yoga affected this condition?

*Contd...*

- Does yoga prevent diseases?
- Do you think yoga helps people like you to sleep better?
- What do you think are some of the benefits of practising yoga?

#### Perceived Barriers

- Why don't people in general practise yoga?
- When people don't practise yoga as often as they'd like, why do they do so? How does that make a person feel?
- What expenses do you associate with yoga? How do people perceive the financial cost of yoga?

#### Close

- Would it be okay to contact you if we have follow-up questions?
- Are there any other thoughts about yoga that you would like to share with us?

## Lesson Plan

1. Observe students and match the practice to their requirements. Reflection and observation are essential to determine the objective of the practice i.e., to determine what is required.
2. Identify the objective of practice: spiritual, therapeutic, preserving health, mind control, and so on.
3. Always use one tool instead of many. This often leads to good insight.
4. Always keep things simple.
5. Adapt for special situations, conditions, and concerns and design to fit a specific context.
6. Move from gross to subtle.
7. Set up something and then take it deeper, subtler.
8. Set the intention.

## 7.8 Managing and Executing Yoga Classes

In the sections given below, you will understand how a teacher/instructor will manage and execute his/her yoga classes.

### Format of Lesson Plan

Theme/Focus: \_\_\_\_\_

Centering: \_\_\_\_\_

Pranayama (may go at the beginning or end): \_\_\_\_\_

Meditation (may go at the beginning or end): \_\_\_\_\_



Warm-ups: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Opening postures/building heat: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Challenging Postures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cool-down Postures: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Shavasana*: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Closure: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Preparing Daily Routine for Aspirants

Dividing the session into different parts aids in comprehension of the demonstration of a yoga session. The divisions of the session are mentioned below:

- **Introducing the class:** Greeting pupils with expressions of inspiration and gradual advancement into pre-warm up.
- **Groundwork:** Pre-warm up includes gentle stretches and a general idea to the sort of yoga postures that will be observed in the warm up course.
- **Warm Up:** Generally, atleast 20 minutes of yoga practices are followed in continuation to promote cardio-vascular and cardio-respiratory fitness. A warm-up course does not generally have anything too vigorous but motivates incessant motion to generate inner warmth, improving internal blood flow and decreasing the chance of harm.
- **Meditation:** Several meditation methods are there that you can practice to monitor you in your yoga class.
- **Relaxation:** Typically, *shavasana* is a posture that includes lying down on your backbone and relaxing. Trainer can stay quiet; he can provide some guidance, or thorough supervision during this stage. It is pleasant to lie down as trainer/ instructor at the end of

a yoga class but practitioner will need some supervision.

## Class Objectives

A class objective mainly deals with the aspects of teaching and yoga class. It is a comprehensive subject. Following are the examples of class objectives which must be dealt carefully in a balanced class.

1. **Toning major muscle groups:** During a yoga class, toning must be done effectively, efficiently and safely. It is important for all high quality yoga session.
2. **Stretching main group of muscle:** Safely stretching generally involves long time durations at a stretch. Many practitioners often get tired and bored. They feel that they are not progressing when an instructor selects to stretch the muscles safely and correctly. Flexibility is important for the progress of students.
3. **Inspire practising good breathing:** At the time of yoga session, it is the duty of an instructor to encourage students to practise good breathing. While doing yoga, sometimes students' breathing can become non-existent and shallow. So, observing students while practising it is essential to give them suggestions frequently on breathing.
4. **Protecting the practitioners:** In this, it is the duty of an instructor to find out the students who are highly risked. Highly risked students are those who are the beginners, injured or frail. So, in order to minimize the chances of any injury, he/she should provide them special assistance.
5. **Teaching good meditation:** For an instructor, it is important to learn how to teach good meditation, as it is the essence of yoga practising.

6. **Present-day yoga in a clear and an understandable manner:** Trying to learn the essence of present-day yoga in a clear and an understandable manner is a sign of a great yoga instructor/teacher.

## Maintaining Records of Aspirants



Fig. 7.15: Maintaining Records of Aspirants

Records refer to the evidence related to the process which the instructor takes in order to discharge his/her duty and responsibility. Following are the records which must be maintained:

- Maintaining records of physical capacity and strength along with the experience of students
- Registers
- Questionnaires related to students' health
- Maintaining records of incidents/accidents
- Risk Assessment Checklist
- Emergency Procedures Checklist
- Work structures with respect to teaching along with session plans depicting the practices taught and changes offered. (If during the session any modification is done should be recorded.)



For maintaining records of the aspirants the following points must be worked upon:

1. **Enrolment:** Enrolment records of students should be kept for a certain period of time. These are done for those students who take prior appointments. Records are be confidential and are maintained by the school authorities.
2. **Attendance:** Many classes use a student sign-in – sheet for each yoga session. The teacher/ instructor simply notes the number of students signed-in and compares it to a quick count of people in the class. Information from these sheets can be transferred to individual student cards that include name, address and phone number, and a statement that the student waives any claim against the yoga class for bodily injury. The back of this card is then used to note the date of each session attended.
3. **Progress Report:** It is the duty of the yoga teacher to maintain truthful and adequate notes on each class/session/students' progress.

## Measuring Class Effectiveness

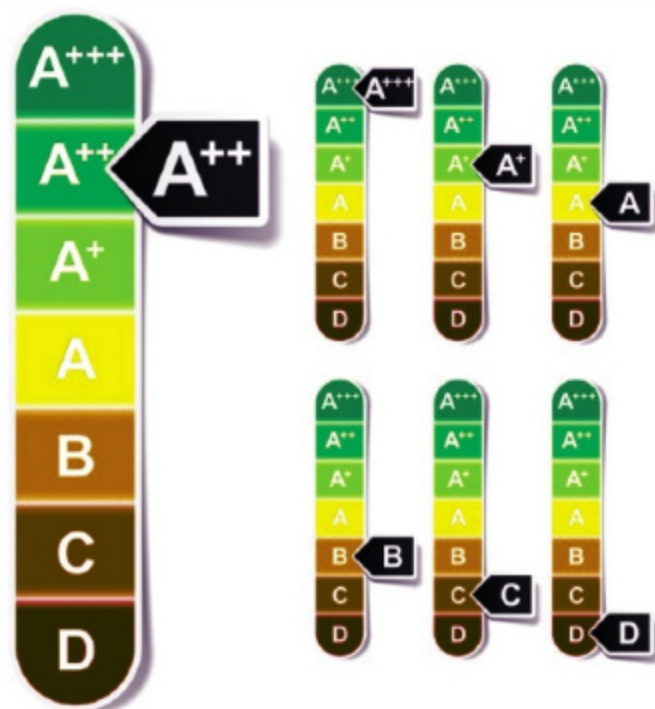


Fig. 7.16: Parameters of Measuring Class Effectiveness

Progress of a yoga teacher can be identified and measured by the practitioners of the class to see how they move independently while doing flawless poses throughout the session. A yoga teacher must view the abilities and qualities of their participants over time in order to measure his/her overall performance.

In order to find out and identify the progress of students, it is important to implement and understand their clear goals for attending yoga session. Successfully telling and informing the practitioners of their goals along with observing their attempts while attaining those goals is regarded as “The Art of Living”. Thus, when practitioners attain those goals, we can identify our qualities and abilities to permit perfect students.

Identify different methods so as to evaluate the effectiveness of being a yoga teacher by figuring out the flexibility as well as the endurance and muscle – strength of the students. This flexibility can be seen in the students through the postures they are doing. Therefore, with the help yoga postures muscle endurance of the students can also be measured.

## Feedback



Fig. 7.17: Feedback

Before joining the class, the students should be made to fill an Enrollment Form. At the end of the class and course, the students are requested to



fill a Feedback Form. It can be concluded from the Feedback Forms that the students have benefited from the yoga class, or not.

## 7.9 Teaching Techniques



**Fig. 7.18:** Teaching Techniques and Aids

Over the years, classes of yoga have changed a lot. Today various techniques of teachings such as presentations have entered new heights of insight and wisdom. You can find various teaching methods of yoga but the practitioners may learn either by hearing, feeling, seeing or by combination of senses. Some of the practitioners may have dominant sense so it is important for any yoga teacher to be aware of that while teaching. This is the main reason for the integration of teaching methods for yoga. Some of your students may not like your method of teaching, so it is your responsibility to communicate effectively with students.

### Observation

Observation mastery is a teaching art form and a highly effective way to help advance your students' poses, assist them with their form and build trust in the student – teacher relationship. Safety is a huge priority in a yoga class and it's essential that students feel secure, nurtured and well – attended to. It's our job as a teacher/instructor to

encourage consistency in practice and a healthy curiosity about the body. That is why being able to be a good observe and teach your students what you observe.



**Fig. 7.19:** Students Being Observed by Teacher

The moment students enter into the room, yoga teacher must watch their facial expressions and body language to analyze their state of mind. This will help you to understand how well you are aware of your students. You may be able to understand if any of them is having physical issues, as from the manner they hold their shoulders and arms, move their feet, position their neck along with their energy sense, such as if they are feeling calm, dragging or agitated.

Yoga teacher will get some general information about their students when they begin to move. Some of the information is given below:

- Student's abilities
- Weak spots
- Range of motion
- Understanding of the poses
- General body awareness

The above information is important while deciding who wants help, what needs to be changed and how much challenge the group can face.





### Example

Here's an example of the things that you should watch before you begin your session.

Physical	Walking Pattern, Posture, Ease of Movement, Body Asymmetries, Tension Areas, Sitting Position and so on.
Physiological	Complexion, Total Energy, Pattern of Breathing, and so on.
Mental/Emotional	Pattern of speech, Focusing ability, Mood and so on.

Important observation skills required by the yoga teacher/instructor are as follows:

1. After giving instructions, observe and monitor students whether they are performing as per your instruction.
2. Teach them from what you have observed and monitored.
3. Analyze what is right according to you and then try to improve it.
4. After instructions have been given, try to pause for sometime and then observe them. And if instructions are not properly followed then you must "Repeat, Rephrase and Try again".
5. Walk around the whole room so that you do not miss observing any student.
6. Find out those students who have some limitations or special concerns.
7. Observe form, eyes, energy, facial expression, skin, breath, attitude, etc.
8. Monitor whether the practitioners are touching their bodies, which will help you examine where exactly they feel pain or discomfort.

## Instructions

Proper instructions must be given to all the students both beginners as well as advanced. Instructions are of two types:

1. Command – creates power - firm, ground, lengthen, extend, draw, press.
2. Passive – produces the state of the pose – allow, release, sense, feel.

So while giving instructions, some of the points that must be followed are given below:

1. Clarity while speaking.
2. Use simple and plain language.
3. Define and use specific terminologies whenever required, such as Sanskrit words and anatomy terms.
4. Explain the intentions which are associated with postures and cautions.
5. Give correct and accurate information and try to be economical
6. Provide one thing which needs to be focussed.
7. Try to be precise and direct while giving instructions, such as "stand in Tadasana."
8. Select those words which are related to students' experience.
9. Try to be direct and avoid using words or expressions like: "If you feel like..." or "If you want to..."
10. Emphasis must be laid on the experiences of the students instead of prescriptions.
11. Try to deliver specific instructions, that is, instructions must be made clear when they are specific or general for a student by using their name.
12. Pause and repeat after instructions are given.
13. Direction of Movement
  - ❖ Relate to left/right leg or front/back leg.

- ❖ Acknowledge whether the students are being observed by you or not.
  - ❖ Use some portion of the room area for reference such as windows, front, back, and doors.
  - ❖ Usages of comparisons like move this way and that way and finally experience and understand the change.
  - ❖ Ask queries such as “Is the front knee turned in or out?”
2. Convey specific traits such as kindness, safety, sensitivity, confidence, professionalism and authority.
  3. Slowly release touch so that the practitioners do not become shocked or unbalanced.
  4. Apologize if you unintentionally touch an inappropriate part of the practitioners’ body and go ahead.

## Demonstration

## Touch

Touch is also regarded as one of the tool of teaching yoga. This is another technique of guiding and informing the students. With this touch technique used by yoga teachers, the practitioners can very well sense what exactly they are performing. They can also learn and understand the actions which are significant in a posture in a concrete manner. At times, touch is about protecting the individuals who might be at risk of injury and also support them in a difficult pose while balancing. Therefore, for emotional reasons also touch is important as a method to acknowledge practitioners and make a connection with them.

## Types of Touch

1. Appropriate - comforting, investigating, alerting, directing, stabilizing, adjusting.
2. Unethical/Inappropriate - invasive, sensual, unnecessary, random such as touching sexual, vulnerable or sensitive areas.

There are some rules which must be followed by a yoga teacher, such as:

1. Before touching, take permission from the student.



**Fig. 7.20:** *Pranayama* Demonstration Pose

Yoga techniques are difficult and complex and these qualities can vary from just a simple to probably a complex one. Yoga instructor’s/ teacher’s one of the important tasks is to make the posture execution process as simple as possible. A little more focus and step by step practice is required from teacher’s end when it comes to teach students about complex poses or techniques such as *pranayama*. If an instructor/ teacher wants easy and smooth movements, he/ she must have concise verbal cues and accuracy in physical demonstration. Before starting with demonstration of yoga techniques, it would be



good and advantageous if some information related to background of yoga and its postures is given to students. The information should comprise yoga technique history, posture's purpose, and description of technique's precision. Along with benefits, students should also know about possible risks and concerns of different yoga techniques. Before starting up with new poses or techniques, initially make students watch the whole technique performed by you. Then ask them to perform the technique by following the verbal cues they noticed during the demonstration. New yoga poses should be practiced a few times prior to adding them in daily routine.

The following are the important points in demonstrating techniques:

1. Although demonstrations are useful and beneficial, but lengthy ones can slow down the rhythm of a class.
2. Timing of the demonstration – before or after students do a pose.
3. Get props ready before demonstration.
4. Be in that position so that you are visible by all the students. The students who are sitting in front either sit or kneel down so that the students at the back can see.
5. Wait until everyone is present before starting the demonstration.
6. Make eye contact to ensure students are watching.
7. Name the pose (Sanskrit/English). Talk about the pose benefits.
8. Demonstration must also include some changes first and then final pose, wherever applicable.
9. Point or gesture to the body part that you are concentrating on.

10. Demonstration must be concise and clear, that is, short demonstration is more effective than a long one.
11. Repeat demonstration concisely once or twice to make your points clear.
12. Make sure that verbal instructions must match with the physical movements.
13. Demonstrate the procedure of moving in and out of a posture. More injuries occur when coming out of a pose.
14. Try to demonstrate the misalignments after you have witnessed them and not before.
15. If you cannot demonstrate what you are teaching, select and request a practitioner so you can be effective and clear. Lastly, acknowledge the practitioner for demonstrating.



### Caution

An excessive amount of demonstrating can make some yoga students feel like they are only an augmentation of their workout. Demonstrating can be troublesome when you are walking around the room making physical adjustments and assists. While you are walking around the room, there are times, when it is best to quickly exhibit in an area where students who don't normally have the best angle can get a chance to see you. As your yoga classes expand in size, it is savvy to have other instructors in the class to support with adjustments. This additional consideration from an assistant gives each yoga student the ideal learning experience.

Liability is a part of the responsibility being a yoga teacher/instructor. With a specific goal to ensure that each of the students is safe, you should know your students. Yoga teacher/instructor needs to be mindful if a student has an injury, health problem, and a few other areas of concern. When you know your students, you can give particular props, and advice than how to modify postures

that may pose a risk. It is also essential to break down more complex yoga poses into simple steps. Until the posture is complete, show each step and demonstrate how to proceed to the next step.

## 7.10 Motivation and Adherence Techniques

Motivating students and encouraging them to return is essential to extend the progress of participants and the size of training classes. Combine the proven sound techniques, latest research and practitioner's requirements to design the most influential cutting-edge yoga class. Yoga classes must surround the following elements:

- Cardio-respiratory yoga practices
- Muscle strengthening yoga practices
- Flexibility improvement yoga practices
- Breathing practices
- Muscle endurance yoga practices
- Mental practices
- Relaxation

For students, blend of the above elements together in an effective and safe yoga class is required to depict a balanced healthy experience. The amount and type of information that can be understood by a student totally depends on his/her current stage of progress in yoga.



### Learning ACTIVITY

Critically examine the programme prepared by you to teach the beginners in your class and the way it will help your students to overcome their injuries.



### SUMMARY

- Communication lies at the heart of having the capacity to explain others about yoga.
- Yoga instructors additionally need to approach students in a non-intimidating and friendly manner.
- When you teach, the key to better communication in the classes is to demonstrate the first round.
- A yoga class environment should exude good energy to enhance the students learning.
- Practice is a process for being present in the moment with an abiding sense of wholeness and freedom that brings about an experience of being fully energized, alive and blissful.
- Demonstrating a posture or an approach can be very instructive because a student cannot see the form of his/her own posture.
- Practising yoga art assists in controlling the person's body, mind and soul.
- Over the years, yoga classes have altered and grown permitting teaching methods, presentations, and techniques to enter new heights of insight and wisdom.
- Observation mastery is a teaching art form and a highly effective way to help advance your students' poses, assist them with their form and build trust in the student-teacher relationship.
- Touch is an alternative way of guiding and informing students as well as a teaching tool, and of being supportive to them.





## KEYWORDS

**Communication:** Communication is the act of conveying intended meaning from one entity to another group through the use of mutually understood semiotic rules and signs.

**Verbal Communication:** Verbal communication is the process of exchange of information or a message between two or more persons through written or oral words.

**Teaching Skills:** The teaching skills are defined as a group of teaching acts or behaviours intended to facilitate students learning directly or indirectly.

**Pacing:** Pace of class establishes the tone for the practice, produces different effects for the mind and body and moulds the experience of the students.

**Course Schedule:** The course schedule is published before advising and beginning of the registration.

**Demonstration:** It involves depicting by proof or reason, explaining or making clear by use of experiments or examples.

**Practice:** Practice is the act of rehearsing the behaviour over and over, again, or engaging in an activity again and again, for the purpose of improving or mastering it.

**Warm Up:** It commonly comprises a steady increase in intensity of joint mobility exercise, physical activity and stretching.

**Observation:** It is the process of watching someone or something.

**Motivation:** It is an internal process that makes a person move towards a goal.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. As a yoga teacher/instructor, what are your working activities?
2. What are the do's and don'ts of the environment of your yoga classes?
3. Discuss demonstration through counts and breathing with respect to practising yoga.
4. What are the tips to make your question and answer session more effective?
5. How will you prepare daily routine and lesson plan for your students?
6. What is the motivation and adherence techniques?
7. Why is maintaining records important for students?
8. Define silent demonstration.
9. How will you convey subtle points to your students?

### Long Answer Questions

1. Do you think that communication plays a very important role while taking yoga classes? If yes, give reasons to support your answer.
2. What is the style of the training that will make you a versatile teacher/instructor?
3. Discuss how you feel about the role of a teacher/instructor?

4. “Teaching a Yoga class is composed of observation skills, cueing skills, assisting, and showing modifications when needed. You never want to turn your back on your students and to your own yoga practice. It is a wonderful thing when one can perform a technique, but a teacher is being tested for his or her ability to lead a class.” Elucidate.
5. Describe various teaching techniques while taking a class.
6. How will you prepare your daily routine and lesson plan for the students?
7. How will you measure the effectiveness and performance of your students?
8. Highlight the general pointers while teaching a yoga class.
9. What is the most important thing for you in life and how do you imagine teaching Yoga can relate to this?



## FURTHER READINGS

*The complete illustrated book of Yoga* – Swami Vishnudevananda

*Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha* – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Teaching Practices* – Book Published by Kaivalyadhama.



# CHAPTER 8

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## FAMILIARITY WITH BODY JOINTS AND VYAYAMA

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 8.1 Movement of Key Joints
  - 8.2 Sukshma Vyayama
  - 8.3 Shat Kriyas
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Reading



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Understand the movement of key joints of the body while doing *yogasanas*
- Discuss the importance of *sukshma vyayama*
- Understand the details of *shat kriyas*



## Introduction

Movement of joints in an individual's body is useful for learning yoga. Human body has various joints which require movements and lubrication. Lubrication is supplied by the food that we consume every day and movements in joints are provided by yoga and other activities. In our day-to-day life, some of the joints in our body are rarely used and some of them are overused which may result in creating problems at the later phase of life. Therefore, basic movements in joints are essential in order to maintain them healthy and in proper condition.

Doing yoga does not make any changes in our fluids but it helps in moving our fluids around whole body. Yoga helps in circulating the fluid in our joints. This helps in keeping the joints supple, healthy and strong. As blood in our body circulates in veins and arteries, and lymph flows around all cells through the spaces, they help in its cleansing of metabolic by-products, and blood gets replenished with nutrient and oxygen. The practice of yoga helps in developing the mind and body as a whole, though it is not a substitute for any medicine.

As a daily practice, adoption of yoga makes the body mentally and physically fit. It is a way of living a healthy life, which is natural and free from all side effects. It improves the quality of life and restores strength and energy in the body.



## 8.1 Movement of Key Joints

Joints are the place in our body where two or more than two bones are connected with each other which help us to swing, turn and bend our head, torso and limbs. These movements in our body help in making the various poses of yoga. Also, joints are vulnerable to many injuries. Hence, it is important to understand the benefits of performing yoga so as to prevent and heal the joint injuries.

By improving flexibility and muscle tone, yoga makes sure that joints work smoothly and well in regular doings and also during sports. *Yogasanas* help in maintaining the balance of strengthening and stretching which lengthens ligaments, tendons and muscles. Regular routine of yoga helps in preventing conditions such as osteoarthritis in which the cartilage protects the joint to deteriorate. Repetition of exercise will help in squeezing nutrients and blood in the cartilage in order to be healthy and compress body joints.

One of the first and foremost advantages of yoga is improved flexibility. Continuous practice of yoga may loosen the muscles as well as connective tissues which are adjacent to the joints and bones. Thus, this is the main reason why yoga helps in reducing pains and aches. Yoga assists in maintaining strength of the muscle and building muscle – mass which help in protecting them from conditions like back pain, osteoporosis and arthritis. According to various studies, meditation, *asana* or combination of these two help in reducing pain in people who are suffering with chronic conditions, back pain and arthritis.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yoga is universal and same for everyone.

This is yet another popular misconception. Each body is different, so are the needs of every individual. All the *asanas* can be modified, to a certain extent, keeping in mind the requirements of each person.

## Bones

The most essential part of our body that forms the structural framework is the bones which consist of blood vessels, cells, connective tissue, and calcium salts. These have different sizes and shapes and are acted upon by the muscles. Thus, the bones shape reflects its function. There are different kinds of bones in our body which are as follows:

### Flat Bones

- These bones consist of protective function that is skull.
- These bones give wide surfaces for muscular attachment that are shoulder blades.

### Long Bones

- These bones are found in the limbs.
- These bones act as levers for locomotion and support.
- Short bones function for compactness and strength.

Daily practice of yoga helps in strengthening of bones as it involves weight-bearing exercise in different directions.

## Joints and Ligaments

Bones are connected with one another with the help of joints. Few joints don't bend like the sacroiliac joint which have either little movement or no movement. While other joints may allow bones to form levers and move freely that pivot or hinge with each other. Such joints are known as synovial joints as they have synovial fluid that permits them either to move or glide against each other and lubricates the opposite surfaces. There are various types of synovial joints such as:

- Hinge joints



- Ball as well as socket joints (bi-axial and multi-axial)
- Gliding joints
- Pivot joints
- Saddle joints



### Example

Following are the examples of various kinds of joints:

- **Hinge**
  - ❖ Elbow, knee.
  - ❖ This type of joint permits a wide range of movement in only one plane.
- **Multi-Axial Ball and Socket**
  - ❖ Shoulder joint and hip
  - ❖ This joint permits movement in all planes that is; it allows a wide range of movement and rotation.
- **Bi-Axial Ball and Socket**
  - ❖ Wrist, jaw and fingers that is among the proximal row and radius of the carpal bones
  - ❖ This joint permits movement without any rotation in two planes.
- **Gliding**
  - ❖ Spine, wrists carpal bones
  - ❖ This joint allows less gliding movement where bones glide past with one another.
  - ❖ This bone joint is characterized by the two flat bony surfaces that butt against one another.
- **Pivot:**
  - ❖ Top of the neck (rotation of the radius at the radioulnar joint)
  - ❖ This joint allows rotational movement around a long axis.
  - ❖ Here bones can twist or spin around other bones.
- **Saddle**
  - ❖ Thumb
  - ❖ This joint allows ball as well as socket movement with very less rotation that is from side to side and back and forth.

The place where bones articulate, in actual they do not touch each other. Cartilage covers the articulating surfaces which allows the movement in joints and helps in protecting the bone. Also, cartilage absorbs the fluids which lubricate the body joint. Thus, this helps in keeping the fluid from dissipating.



### Caution

Postures that involve excessive bending of the knee can be hard on the joints and aggravate a knee condition.



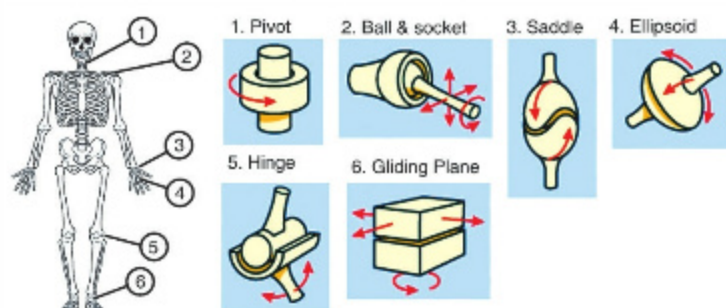
### Did You Know?

An exercise helps in strengthening the joints by keeping the muscles resilient around body joints in order to build strong joint stability. Thus, strengthening of joints refers to strengthening of muscles which supports the joints.

All joints in our body are bound together through muscles and ligaments which connect one bone to another. Ligaments get torn because of too much stress on joints that may occur due to ankle and knee injuries. Muscles in our body are attached to cartilage and bones through ligaments or tendons. Muscles make movement by contracting. Therefore, muscles may function as motors and bones as levers. A tendinous fibre which connects underlying structures and skin to the muscles is called Fascia. The terms “origin” and “insertion” indicate the place where the bones are attached by muscles for the most common joint movement.

- “Origin” of the muscle is on the bone which is relatively stationary
- “Insertion” of the muscle is on the bone which is most often moved

For example: In flexion of the elbow, forearm is mostly moved. Therefore, biceps as well as the triceps mostly take their origin from the upper shoulder and arm, then insert on the forearm.



**Fig. 8.1:** Various Body Joints

## Neck Joint

The part of the spine which is found inside the neck is known as the cervical spine. This spine is more susceptible to injury. Other spines are protected from every injury as they are surrounded by the torso. Cervical spine is enclosed with few ligaments and muscles, but is essential to have wide range of motion. Many people experience neck strain because of prolonged or repetitive neck flexion or extension which mainly occurs due to:

- Wrong posture while standing or sitting
- Cradling a mobile/phone between ear and shoulder
- Awkward position while sleeping

You can minimize the strain by gradually stretching and strengthening the muscles of the neck. While doing this, it is important to note that you should not roll your head while stretching your neck.

## Shoulder Joint

The body's most movable joint is the shoulder.

Each of these contributes to shoulder and arm movement via a process known as joint "coupling."



Shoulder joint is considered as a ball and socket joint but the socket part of the joint, Glenoid Fossa, is not as deep as that of the hip joint. This puts the joint at a greater risk for acute and severe injuries.

Shoulder work is a foundation for nearly all poses of *Hatha Yoga*. Pain in upper portion of the back stems from the tendency to slump in the spine and also around the shoulders. This slump may cause the blades of the shoulder to slide away from the spine which may causes weakening of muscles. Ultimately, these muscles get harden into tough bands in order to protect them from such continuous strain.

The pain in the upper portion of the back is reduced marginally by having common shoulder stretches, but sometimes they can even make the problem worse. This is due to the stretching which may often focus on pain without addressing its deeper causes. Main cause of slumping is usually found in the front part of your body which lies in the upper chest of the shoulder area.

Stiffness in the muscles of the upper chest pulls the shoulders both down and forward, though rotating the upper portion of the arms inward. Thereby, the most insistent reason of chronic back pain in the upper portion could be diminished through releasing the tension in muscles.



### Notes

Most of the problems in the shoulder are due to the breakdown of soft tissues. Excessive use of shoulder can break down the soft tissue faster as individuals get older.



### Did You Know?

The purpose of warming up is to increase the temperature and improve circulation of joint structures and muscles so as to make movement of the body easier, less stiff along with minimizing the injury risk. The body will feel relaxed and somewhat warmer, if a person is successful in doing a warm-up. A person can do stretching after every session of an exercise to cool down. Many people like to do stretching only after their warm-up.





### Did You Know?

*Vyayama* can be broken up into three or four 10-minute sessions per day. *Vyayama* (moderate intensity), if it is done on most days of the week, is proved to be one of the most effective exercise. However, doing *vyayama* once or twice per week is better than no *vyayama* at all.



### Notes

Most symptoms of sciatica can be alleviated and usually, entirely prevented by a consistent, safe, intelligent and therapeutic yoga practice.

## Trunk Joint

The body where the femur – the thighbone – meets pelvis, is called hip bone. It is actually a hip joint of a person.

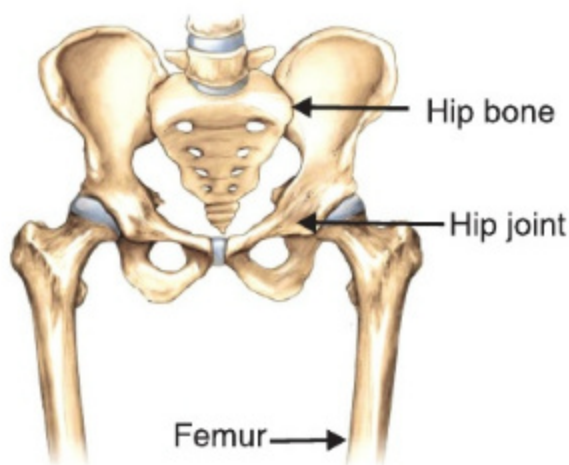


Fig. 8.2: Trunk Joint

A movable and flexible part of the body is a hip joint. Motion takes place at the hip point where both the pelvis and femur move in relation to one other. You can find many movements at hip joint which includes:

- **Hip extension:** In *shalabhasana*, moving the thigh behind you

- **Hip flexion:** Think diving forward from *tadasana* to *uttanasana*
- **Hip abduction:** Moving thigh out to the side such as back leg in warrior 2
- **Hip adduction:** Moving the thigh toward your midline and imagine pose of eagle
- Rotation both internal as well as external

Ideally most of the motions would be fluid. Sometimes, the movement of the hip joint is limited to one or more planes which results in hips, that we experience as “tight”.

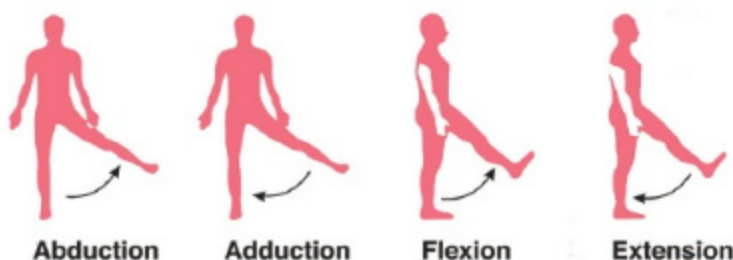


Fig. 8.3: Hip Joint Movement I

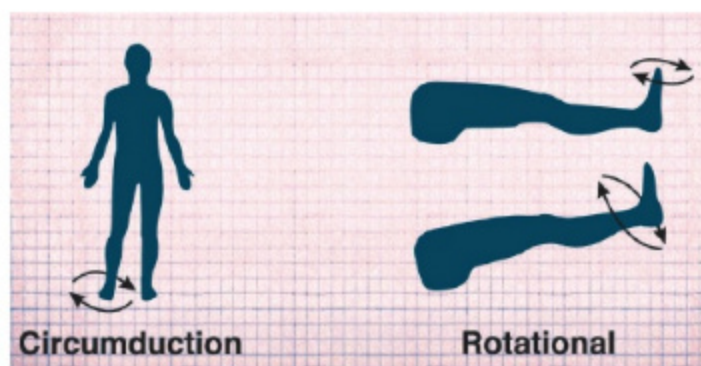


Fig. 8.4: Hip Joint Movement II



### Notes

While standing when you bend forward, you are bending from your waist and this will contract abdominal muscles only. And if you are bending from your hips then both your erector spinal muscles and abdominal muscles will contract (strengthen/use).

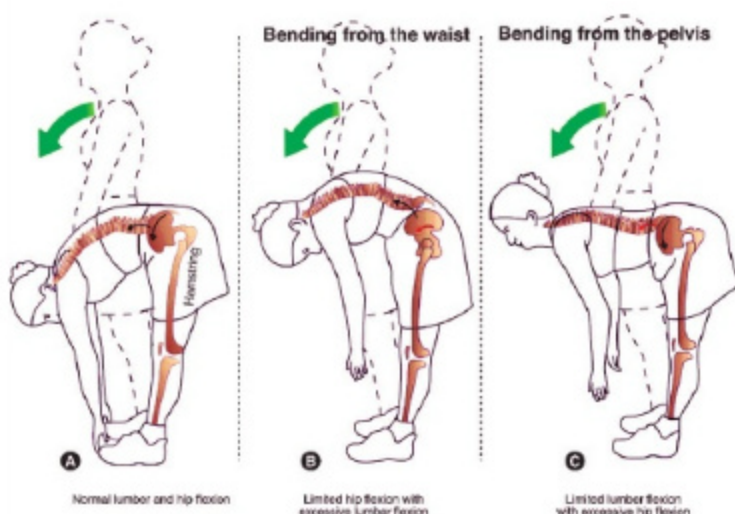


Fig. 8.5: Hip Joint Movement III

## Knee Joint

The main function of kneecap in the femur is to slide along with a groove. So, in order to perform better, it has to move well and smoothly within that groove. In case, it is moving on “off track” and it sometimes does then it destabilizes the knee along with grinds away at the cartilage underneath. This results in knee replacement surgery where many people think that its essential cartilages are “gone.” The fact about cartilage is that it can grow back and albeit slowly. In this, the major problem is that if imbalance pulls of muscles on the kneecap and is not corrected timely then it will continue to grind the cartilage down faster than the time it takes for the body to replenish it.

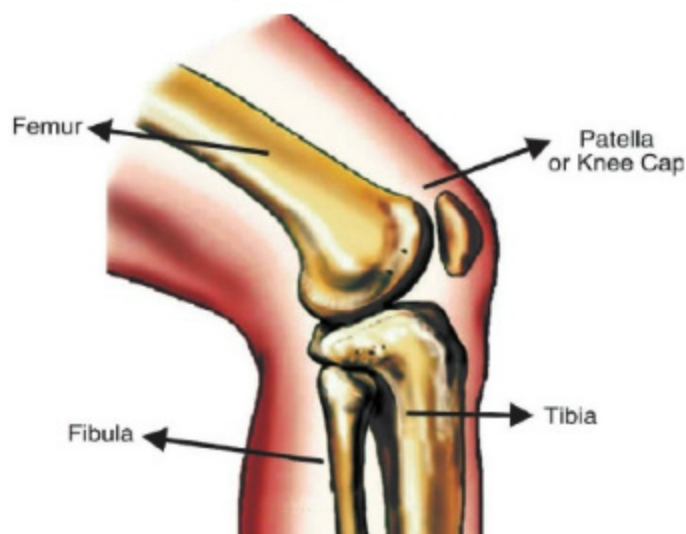


Fig. 8.6: Knee Joint I

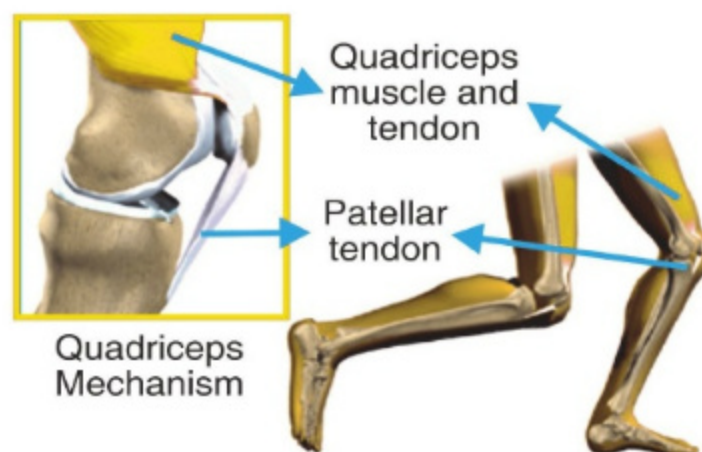


Fig. 8.7: Knee Joint II

The reason why the kneecap goes off track is that it mainly lies in the quadriceps. Quadriceps is the group of 4 muscles which join above the knee into a single quadriceps tendon. Kneecap is attached and surrounded by this tendon. It continues down below the kneecap as the patellar ligament and is attached to the shin bone which is called tibia. The kneecap is passed by the quadriceps tendon just like a rope over a pulley. Like a pulley, kneecap enhances the quadriceps strength so as to straighten the leg by 30%. Kneecap is regarded as having one of the most significant mechanical functions. For leg straightening, both the kneecap and the quadriceps form the “extensor mechanism”. Misalignments arise where the “rope” of quadriceps exerts a sideways pull on the kneecap “pulley” which creates friction in this mechanism.

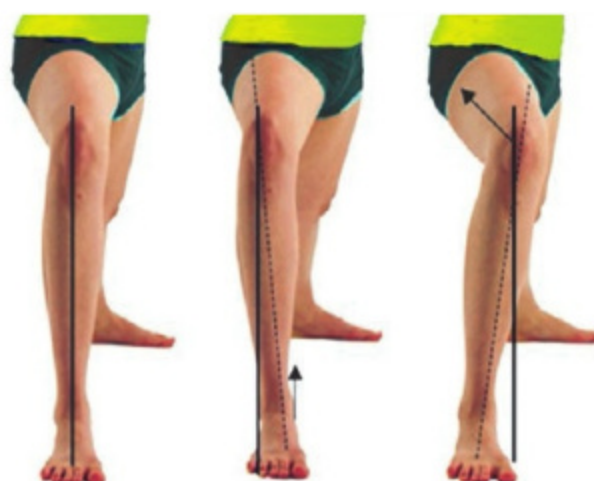


Fig. 8.8: Knee Joint III



Misalignment can get corrected by doing *Hatha* yoga where standing poses are specifically effective. Misalignments in several *asanas* can increase the chance of imbalances which may result in injury. It can sometimes worsen prevailing problems rather than improving them. Good alignment as well as accurate tracking is easy to attain once you are aware of what consideration to be taken care of.

### Ankle Joint

There are three bones which are involved while articulating the ankle -

- Tibia
- Fibula
- Talus

The longest bone is tibia and fibula which is found in the lower leg. The bone which is lateral to tibia and relatively thinner is fibula. Both of these bones are tied together by the interosseous membrane and the ligaments. The bone which is in wedge-shaped is talus which fits into the mortise created by the bound tibia as well as fibula. The articulation of tibia, fibula and talus bones is maintained by muscular attachments, multiple ligamentous attachments and a fibrous capsule.

Lateral part of the ankle joint is stabilized by three separate ligaments which are:

- Anterior talofibular
- Calcaneofibular
- Posterior talofibular ligaments

Mainly, the deltoid ligament is a ligament where most of the support is derived from a collective group of ligaments.

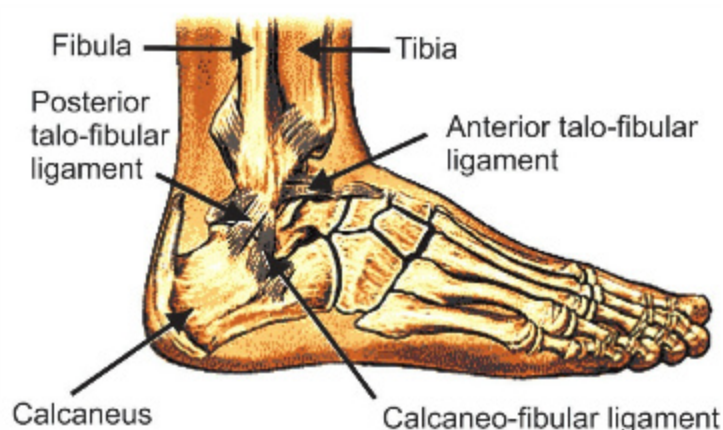


Fig. 8.9: Ankle Joint

## 8.2 Sukshma Vyayama

*Sukshma Vyayama* is the system of the physical and breathing exercises which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body to warm it up. This system has a strong purifying effect on body energy of a human.

In this world, the oldest element in yoga which is unknown to many yoga schools today is *Sukshma Vyayama* which was propagated, designed and developed initially by Maharishi Karthikeyaji Maharaj of the Himalaya. He had great compassion and empathy for humanity and taught Swami Dharendra Brahmachari (1924-1994), who in turn propagated it across the modern world.

However, literature of the *Hatha Yoga* is full of references to the philosophical importance which is attached to the *mudras* and *bandhas*. Both in India and abroad, many of the yoga schools in the modern era have ignored comfortably this aspect maybe because of their own unfamiliarity and ignorance of this particular subject. *Mudras* and *bandhas* in fact are very complex. They can only be practiced by the modern yogis in the original form which is prescribed in the texts of yoga such as *Siva Samhita* and *Hathayoga Pradeepika*.



### Did You Know?

In *Sukshma Vyayama*, every little activity or movement releases stress. A person can start understanding and knowing the *prana* (energy) movement mechanism within himself/herself.

In the world, the most important and beautiful facet of *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is that it is only the system of exercises where every body part, such as every muscle, joint and organ is taken into consideration. Here a specific exercise or even a set of exercises which is linked with a particular kind of breathing in a particular kind of position having particular point of mental concentration is recommended.

Therefore, firstly we cover the head which is at the top, then:

1. The neck
2. The shoulders, elbows, wrists, arms, fingers and toes
3. The trunk
4. The hip joint
5. The knees, ankles, foot and toes

Hence, the sequence mentioned above which actually covers from top to toe is something which is very exceptional in the whole world (past, present as well as perhaps the future too).

Thus, by its name *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is only applied to the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*) which is prescribed to the gross body (*sthula sarira*). One of the separate exercises which is successful in gross body is *sthula vyayama*.

*Sukshma vyayama* is same as other gross exercises like running and swimming, several cultural and physical exercises. However, *Yogic Sukshma Vyayama* is at a different footing. According to

Indian traditional philosophy, it is only meant for those human beings who have a subtle body.

Following are the important components or features of *Sukshma Vyayama* –

1. Breathing
2. Concentration point
3. Actual exercise includes motion (many times yet not always)

Different kinds of breathing include - very deep, very light or even very fast, mostly through nose or at times through mouth. Thus, it is just a brief of *Sukshma Vyayama*.



### Notes

There is no preparation or time required for *Sukshma Yoga*. Such less exercise accelerates subtle channels of energy. For example in a session of 7 minutes, a person can feel an extremely palpable change.

The benefits of *Sukshma Yoga* once again are immense and are direct and immediate. The following are some noteworthy points about *Sukshma Yoga*:

1. Preferably it must be carried out twice a day that is both morning and evening, or even once a day in the morning
2. Can be done either after bath if water is cold or before bath if water is warm
3. Can be done before the intake of any type of food
4. Can be done on a comfortable surface
5. Can be done either indoors or in open air
6. Can develop extraordinary levels of faculties and capabilities both physical and mental of different traits of the personalities.



For those who have maladies and problems of different kind, *Sukshma Vyayama* alone is capable of curing and preventing without taking the help of *keriyas*, *asanas* or *pranayama*. Though we do not prohibit the other aspects, *Sukshma Vyayama* is solely capable of handling the problems that is both preventing and curing, enhances and improves the energy (*vigour*) and strength of different systems and organs in the human body.

Therefore, *Sukshma Vyayama* is nonetheless a minor exercise, which is done from the toes to the head. Whole series of joint movements is mentioned below.

### Sukshma Vyayama from Head to Toe<sup>1</sup>

A person must practise joint movements before doing any *asana* so as to make flexibility in body and fit for any *asana*.

### Greevasanchalana (Neck Movements)

**Aim:** To increase the flexibility of neck joints.

**Precaution:** An individual who is having problems in neck such as spondylitis must avoid bending forward.

**Procedure:** Following are the steps which need to be followed:

For *Greevasanchalana* I –

- Stand or sit in a relaxed posture
- Keep your neck straight
- Then gradually without jerk, bend your neck forward as much as you can
- Then come back to your normal and relaxed posture
- Then bend your neck backward
- Then back to normal
- Then to the right and to the left

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.

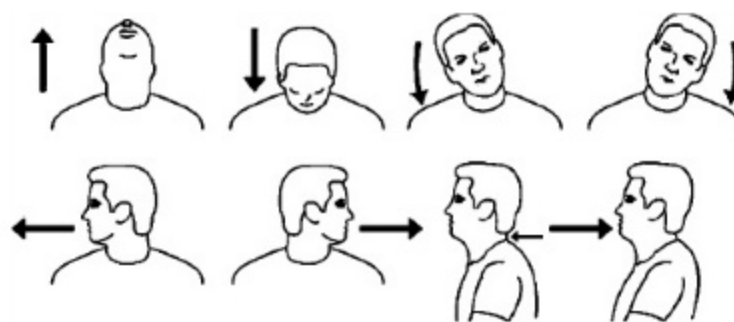


Fig. 8.10: *Greevasanchalana* I

For *Greevasanchalana* II –

- Keeping the neck straight
- Gradually without any jerk, clockwise rotate your neck from left shoulder to backwards and then to the right shoulder and to front
- Beginning from your right shoulder, start repeating this in anticlockwise direction

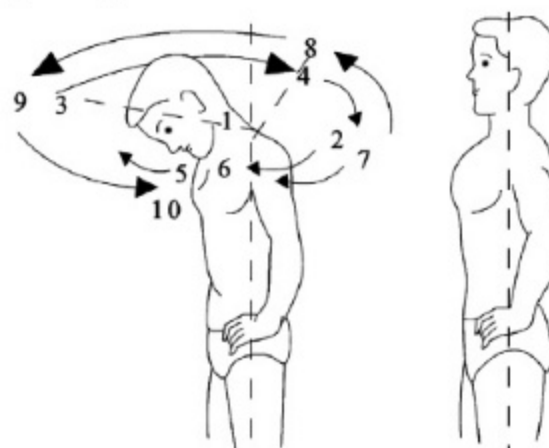


Fig. 8.11: *Greevasanchalana* II



Fig. 8.12: Common Neck and Shoulder Stretches

## Neck and Head Movements

### 1. Head

- ❖ Keep one hand on forehead while other on back.
- ❖ Then five times press your head.

### 2. Neck

- ❖ Firstly, your fingers must be interlocked. Then, place your fingers on the back of your neck. After that, push your neck in forward direction. Perform this at least five times.
- ❖ Sit straight and take the neck first towards the right shoulder and then towards the left shoulder. Subsequently, bend your neck forward so as to touch your chin to your chest. Then as far as possible bend backwards. Finally, neck should be rotated in both directions.
- ❖ Placing the palms against the respective ears, press the head in between the palms 4-5 times.
- ❖ Interlock the fingers of the hand such that the palms are against the sides of the head, and the fingers are on top of the head. Now, press the head and release the same 4-5 times.

- Then, gradually without any jerk, lift both your shoulders upwards near your ears as much as you can
- Finally, come back to your normal and relaxed posture

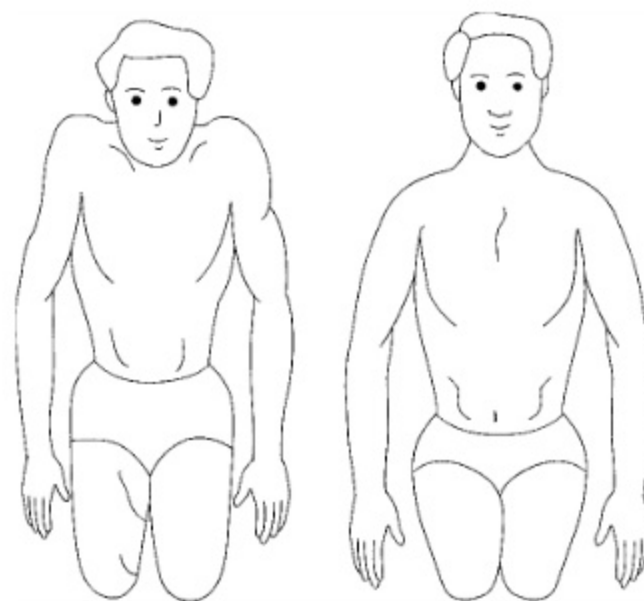


Fig. 8.13: *Skandhasanchalana 1*

For *Skandhasanchalana 2* -

- Firstly, your body must be straight
- Then, fold your hands. Place your left fist on your left shoulder and right fist on your right shoulder.
- Then, bring together your elbows near your chest
- Then, gradually without any jerk, rotate both the arms in an opposite direction that is anticlockwise left arm and clockwise right arm
- Finally, repeat this in an opposite direction that is anticlockwise left arm and clockwise right arm

## Skandhasanchalana (Shoulder Movements)

**Aim:** To increase the flexibility of shoulder joints.

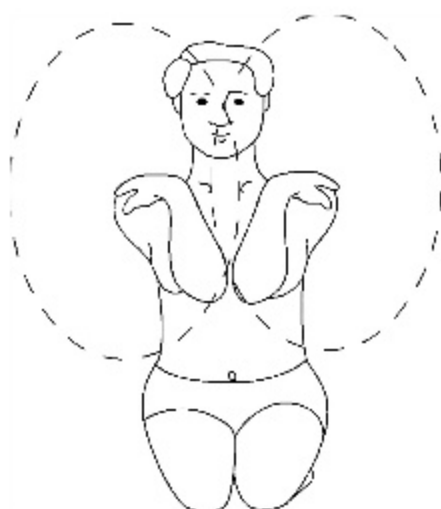
**Procedure:** Following are the steps which need to be followed:

For *Skandhasanchalana 1* -

- Stand or sit in a comfortable and relaxed posture
- Then, straighten your body with arms by side

**Benefits:** This position is effective for people suffering from back problems.





**Fig. 8.14:** *Skandhasanchalana 2*

### Elbow Movements

Place the palms on the shoulders and bring the elbows together in front of the chest. Now, separating the elbows, rotate each elbow separately so that the chest expands and contracts, the shoulder joints are completely exercised, and the neck muscles are equally exercised.

#### 1. Finger movements

- ❖ Make the hands into fist form tightly and release them.
- ❖ Bend and straighten each finger separately at the finger joints.

#### 2. Wrist movements

- ❖ With hands in fist form, thumb inside; rotate each wrist clockwise and anti-clockwise 5-10 times.

#### 3. Elbow movements

- ❖ With both the hands stretched straight in front, slowly bend hands at your elbows and bring the fingertips to the shoulders. Repeat 5-10 times. This can be done keeping the hands separate or together.

#### 4. Hand movements

- ❖ Place the hands straight in front of you with fingers in fist form and slowly rotate the hands keeping the elbows straight. Repeat 5-10 times.

- ❖ Hold the hands straight in front, palms facing downwards and slowly raise the hands up above your head and bring them down. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Holding the hands on the sides in line with each other, palms facing upwards, fold them at the elbows to bring the fingers touching the shoulders. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ By holding your hands in front and place palms facing each other. Now, breathe in and take the hands away from each other, in the process expanding the chest and taking the hands as much back as possible. Repeat 5-10 times.
- ❖ Interlock the fingers of your hands at the back of your neck, elbows in line with each other. Now, breathe in and twist to the left side, elbows remaining in a straight line. Breathe out and revert to the starting position. Repeat it on the right side. Repeat 5-10 times.

### Waist Movements

Stand with legs slightly apart. Place the palms on the respective waist and slowly start rotating the waist in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. Repeat 5-10 times in each direction.

### Knee Movements

Stand comfortably with both the legs joined together. Now place your palms on the respective knees and slowly bring the buttocks slightly down. In this position, slowly rotate the knees together. A slightly different version involves rotation of the knees with the knees going apart in opposite directions and then coming together.

### Leg joint movements

- For the toes.
- Stretch one ankle and stretch the foot toes also. Now, bend the toes downwards and then take them upwards. Repeat with both feet.

### Ankles and the total leg:

- Press the soles of the feet and release while sitting.
- Then, sit with both of your legs stretching out in front. After that fold your right leg at your knee and put your right ankle on your left thigh. Now hold your toes and the heel of your right leg and rotate your right ankle. Similarly, hold with one hand your right knee and your right ankle with another hand and try to rotate the lower leg from the knee to the ankle. Do similarly with the left leg folded at the knee.
- Sit down and stretch both your legs as wide apart as possible. Now raise both the hands up, upper arms touching the ears. Slowly turn towards the left side and bringing the trunk down, try to hold the left toes with both the hands, the forehead coming as close to the left knee as possible. Similarly, repeat this on the right side.
- This involves rotation of the ankle joints one at a time either standing or sitting. The rotation should be done both, clockwise and anti-clockwise. Further, the ankle joint can also be exercised by simultaneously stretching the toes as far away from the ankle joint as possible and bringing the toes as close to the shin as possible.

#### 1. For the legs:

- ❖ Stand comfortably with your palms at the respective waist. Now raise slowly your right leg up as much as you can by keeping your knees straight as well as bring it back. Repeat with the other leg.
- ❖ Stand comfortably with your palms at the respective waist. Now raise the right leg up and keeping the knees straight, rotate the right leg clockwise and anti-clockwise. Repeat the same with the other leg.

#### 2. For the knees:

- ❖ First, sit down on the floor. Together bring the soles of your feet. Hold the toes with both the hands. Now make the movements of the knees up and down like the flapping of the butterfly wings.
- ❖ Stand comfortably with both the legs together. Now place your palms on the respective knees and slowly bring the buttocks slightly down. In this position, slowly rotate the knees together. A slightly different version involves rotation of the knees with the knees going apart in opposite directions and then coming together.
- ❖ The complex of *Sukshma Vyayama* exercises can be performed as a separate self-sufficient practice lasting one and a half or two hours, allowing to work out the whole body, or as a warm-up which will help loosen up muscles and joints before performance of *asanas*, and will make *Hatha Yoga* practice more effective.
- ❖ Uniqueness of *sukshma vyayama* is safety from traumas and its availability for different categories of people both for young and elderly. Despite simplicity, *sukshma vyayama* is very effective and can be performed by both healthy and sick.



#### Example

If the condition of health does not allow a person to practice *asanas*, he can start with regular practice of *Sukshma Vyayama*, which can gradually help him to get rid of many illnesses. *Sukshma Vyayama* is an excellent practice for the beginners who will prepare themselves for more difficult practices and also for experienced yogis who can raise efficiency of their practice.



Benefits of regular *Sukshma Vyayama* practice:

- Removes blocks and tightness in muscles, strengthens them
- Increases flexibility of ligaments
- Increases body mobility and makes it flexible
- Develops coordination and equilibrium
- Improves blood circulation and metabolism
- Strengthens immunity
- Increases vital lung capacity
- Increases endurance
- Facilitates cleaning of *nadis*
- Activates energy centres (*chakras*)
- Prepares for practice of more complex *asanas* and *pranayamas*



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

Yet another misconception is that women who are pregnant must refrain from practising yoga. There are various *asanas* and each *asana* has specific assistance for a pregnant woman. When a woman is pregnant, yoga helps her in keeping both her mind and body comfortable and relaxed. So, unlike other exercises, it is important for any pregnant woman to take advice from a yoga instructor before doing any form of exercise.

## 8.3 Shat Kriyas

*Shat Kriyas* are designed to make human body both healthy and strong. In *Hatha Yoga*, they are also known as the six purification techniques.

- ‘*Shat*’ refers to six
- ‘*Kriya*’ refers to a technique or a method

*Shat kriyas* are regarded as the preliminary steps towards advanced practices of meditation, *pranayama* and *asanas*. The ancient Rishis identified the significance of healthy body for each and

every activity, whether spiritual or worldly. The main aim of *Hatha Yoga* is to make both mind and body fit for higher practices of the *raja yoga* (as explained in the text *Hatha Yoga Pradeepika*).

There are six techniques in *shat kriyas* which make the body strong and clean, improve concentration, eliminate toxins and help in making our body free from diseases. Also, it can improve the movement of *prana* into the organs and the *pranic* meridians or *nadis*. Following are the six techniques: –

- *Dhauti*
- *Basti*
- *Neti*
- *Trataka*
- *Nauli*
- *Kapalbhati*

All of the above techniques must be learned from a knowledgeable and an experienced instructor. Now, we will discuss each of these techniques briefly one by one.

1. ***Dhauti/Kunjali***: *Vaman dhauti*, *danda dhauti* and *vastra dhauti* are the three popular *dhauti/kunjali kriyas*. It is practised in early morning with an empty stomach so as to make the stomach clean. It is a technique of eliminating undigested food particles from the former day's meal that had resulted in sticking of food on the stomach lining. These cause digestion problems. The person practising *kunjali* must drink warm saline water about 1-1½ litres (In 1 litre of water adds one table spoon of salt approximately). Then the person vomits the whole water out. The best position to vomit is to bend over along with put his/her 3 fingers at the tongue root. The vomit reflux is made by stimulating the tongue root which throws the salt water with the impurities out of the stomach. This is continued until all water is removed.



Fig. 8.15: Vaman Dhauti

In *danda dhauti*, a hollow rubber tube of about 14 inches is used. After consuming about 1-1½ litres of saline water, this rubber tube is slowly inserted into the stomach through the mouth. Then the practitioner bends slightly forward, the entire water comes out from the rubber tube as if from a tap, thereby cleansing the stomach completely.

In *vastra dhauti*, a cotton cloth around 22 feet long is dipped first in the saline water. This is then carefully swallowed. After that, it is slowly pulled out. In this manner, it cleans the inner linings of both food pipe and stomach. All this must be done under the supervision of an expert.



Fig. 8.16: Vastra Dhauti

2. **Basti\***: *Basti* basically signifies the cleaning of the bowels (intestines). It nowadays corresponds to enema. While practising it, usually water is drawn in from the anus into the colon by contacting with abdominal muscles. In this process, a rubber tube can also be taken. After that water must be thrown out of the anus, therefore cleaning the colon of particles which may stick for a long period of time in the large intestines of human body. This is known as yogi's "enema" method.

Another method in yoga of cleaning the intestines is known as *Sankha Prakshalana* which involves drinking slightly warm saline water around 5 litres. This saline water does not get absorbed by the intestine. It rather pulls out toxins and waste from the intestinal walls and throws it out with the help of the rectum. Today, the most common practice is to perform the smaller version of *Shanka Prakshalana* known as *Laghu Shanka Prakshalana*. In this, only 2 litres of saline water is taken. A person has to go to the toilet many times for example, 3 – 5 times until plain water is released from the rectum. Therefore, this helps in a completely cleaning of the intestinal tract.

3. **Neti**: *Jala neti* and *sutra neti* are the two common forms of *neti* practices. *Jala neti* is the procedure of cleaning the nasal by taking a small pot called *Neti* pot which has a long spout on one side and is filled with warm saline water. Then the spout is put in the left nostril. The person who is practising it bends his head towards right side and allows the water from the left nostril into the nasal cavity, which is then released out from the right nostril. Again the pot is filled with the saline water. This procedure is again repeated by putting the spout in the right nostril



and then tilting the head towards the left side. This procedure cleans the sinus cavities and the nose. Therefore, this helps in relieving sinusitis, allergies, migraine and mild headaches. With the help of a rubber catheter (*sutra*), *neti* can also be performed which is known as *sutra neti*. In this, the catheter is put into one nostril and then it is pulled out from the throat as well as out of the mouth. The nostril passage is cleaned by using gentle motion of to and fro of the catheter tube. Same is repeated with the other nostril. Thus, both methods of *neti* have the effect of de-sensitizing the membranes in the nose, hence relieving rhinitis, allergies, and so on. Also, *neti* stimulates few nerve centers in the upper passage of nasal. *Neti kriya* is performed as a *pranayama* practice preparation. *Jala neti kriya* must also be followed by the *kapalbhati*. It is done so that there is no remnant of saline water in the nasal cavities.



Fig. 8.17: Jala Neti

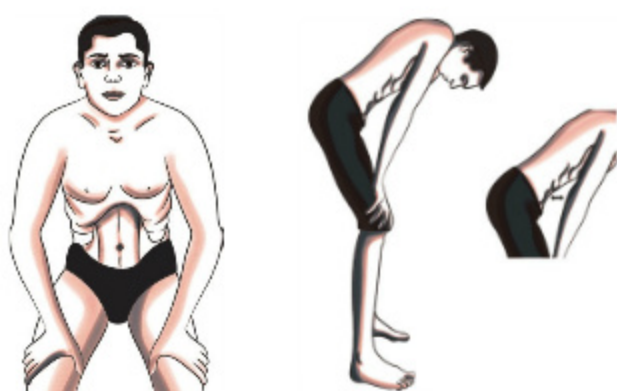
Fig. 8.18: Sutra Neti

4. **Trataka:** Steady gazing on any object is called *trataka*. The two basic types of *trataka* are *antar trataka* and *bahya trataka*. It eradicates mental disturbances and develops memory power and concentration. It includes gazing steadily at a point. On a steady candle flame, gazing is performed without blinking of the eyes. Such practice helps in steadiness of mind and improves the eyesight.



Fig. 8.19: Trataka

5. **Nauli\*:** The practice of churning the abdominal muscles by taking the 3 bulks of abdominal muscles in a sequence that is right, center and left and giving the impact of the abdomen being churned is called *nauli*. Also, rotation of the muscles is practiced both clockwise and anti-clockwise. This helps in removing digestive disorders along with toning up of the entire organs in the abdomen. This practice may take a few months for someone to become its master as it is regarded as a difficult practice for the beginners. This procedure includes isolating the abdominal muscle which is also known as the rectus abdominus muscle which is done on both sides of the abdomen and then using it to move and churn the organs internally. Thus, it helps in improving the functions of each and every organ of the abdomen. Four kinds of *nauli* which should be practised are *vama nauli* that is using left abdominal muscles, *dakshina nauli* that is using right abdominal muscles, *madhya nauli* that is using both left as well as right abdominal muscles and churning, that is, rotating of abdominal muscles both clockwise as well as anti-clock wise.



**Fig. 8.20:** Nauli (Front View) **Fig. 8.21:** Nauli (Side View)

6. **Kapalbhati:** *Kapalbhati* may be technically known as frontal brain cleansing. It involves forceful rapid exhalation. In *kapalbhati*, we reverse the natural breathing pattern in which inhalation is active and exhalation is passive. However, many take *kapalbhati* as a kind of *pranayama*. In the *Hatha Yoga* texts, its classification comes under the *shat kriyas*. *Kapalbhati* is regarded as one of the most powerful process of cleaning where the air is expelled forcefully from the lungs by taking out stagnant CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) which is accumulated in the lower parts of the lungs. The exhalation is forceful in *kapalbhati* whereas the inhalation is passive. Thus, this procedure is repeated for few rounds. *Kapalbhati* is one of the healing practices for several diseases. *Kapalbhati* is said to be an effective technique for reducing weight because it results in raising the Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) in the body.

Though *kapalbhati* is considered as a *kriya* in *Hatha Yoga* texts, it involves breathing and therefore may be considered as a *pranayama* practice. Incidentally, *pranayama* is considered as *parama tapa*, i.e., the highest form of purification practice.



**Fig. 8.22:** Kapalbhati

The *Shat Kriyas* must be practised with the help of an experienced and knowledgeable yoga teacher/instructor. Daily practices can aid in maintaining good health. It can also purify the whole body.

### Caution

While performing *kunjla/dhauti*, drink water in sitting posture. Lukewarm water with a little salt added to it should be preferred. *Kunjla* should also not be practised by persons who are suffering from high blood pressure, any kind of heart disease.

### SUMMARY

- The practice of yoga helps in developing the mind and body as a whole, though it is not a substitute for any medicine.
- *Yogasanas* help in maintaining the balance of strengthening and stretching which lengthens ligaments, tendons and muscles.
- Joints are the places in our body where two or more than two bones are connected with each other which help us to swing, turn and bend our head, torso and limbs.



- Bones are connected with each other with the help of joints.
- All joints in our body are bound together through muscles and ligaments which connect one bone to another bone.
- Shoulder joint is considered as a ball and socket joint but the socket part of the joint, Glenoid Fossa is not as deep as that of the hip joint.
- The movable and flexible part of the body is a hip joint.
- The main function of kneecap in the femur is to slide along with a groove.
- There are three bones which are involved while articulating the ankle – Tibia, Fibula and Talus.
- *Sukshma Vyayama* is the system of the physical and breathing exercises which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body, and warms it up.
- *Shat kriyas* are regarded as the preliminary steps towards advanced practices of meditation, *pranayama* and *asanas*.
- There are six techniques in *Shat Kriyas* – *dhauti*, *basti*, *neti*, *trataka*, *nauli* and *kapalbhati*.
- *Sukshma vyayama*: It is a system of the physical practices which helps to sequentially work out all joints of a body, and warms it up. This system has a strong purifying effect on the energy of human beings.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. What is the difference between bones, joints and ligaments?
2. Mention *sukshma vyayama* for neck joint.
3. What do you understand by *Greevasanchalana*?
4. Name the six purification practices in *Hatha Yoga*.
5. What is *neti kriya*? Write down its procedure.
6. Name the three popular *dhauti kriyas*.

### Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the significance and benefits of *Sukshma Vyayama*.
2. Explain some *Sukshma Vyayama* for shoulder joints.
3. Discuss the significance and benefits of *shat kriyas*.
4. Discuss the benefits of *kapalbhati*.
5. Name the types of *trataka* and discuss the benefits of *trataka*.



## KEYWORDS

- **Asana:** A posture in *Hatha Yoga*.
- **Ligaments:** Ligaments are bundles of connective tissue that connect one bone to an adjacent bone.
- **Shat kriyas:** This includes six purification techniques in *Hatha Yoga* designed to make the body strong and healthy.



## FURTHER READING

Hatha Yoga texts – various authors





# CHAPTER 9

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## SURYANAMASKAR AND ASANAS

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## Structure



- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 9.1 Introduction to Suryanamaskar (The Sun Salutation)
  - 9.2 Technique of Suryanamaskar Practice
  - 9.3 Asanas
  - 9.4 Five Spinal Movements in Yoga
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Understand the esoteric importance of *suryanamaskar*
- Learn the technique of *suryanamaskar* practice
- Grasp the technique of practising yoga *asanas* and identify their benefits
- Understand the different spinal movements related to yoga *asanas*



## Introduction

*Suryanamaskar* and the yoga *asanas* are a blessing bestowed on mankind by the ancient sages who devised practical methods to tame the body and mind for higher spiritual and material pursuits. According to the sages, body and mind are interrelated. An unhealthy body will house an untamed mind. Hence, it makes sense to keep the body healthy so that the mind is fit enough to succeed in all its beneficial undertakings. Yoga *asanas* make that possible in a very scientific manner. Although it is important to learn the *asanas*, the practitioner must know the right technique and contra-indications of *asana* practice as well. This chapter discusses the advantages of doing *suryanamaskar* and then it goes on to describe different *asanas* and movements of the spine.



## 9.1 Introduction to Suryanamaskar (The Sun Salutation)

The *suryanamaskar* or offering salutations to the sun, is practised in the early morning or evening, facing the sun. The sun is the revered and celebrated deity for health and long life. Being the immensely radiant and life-giving force on the earth, the sun is the representation of the invisible Supreme Power that nurtures and sustains the universe.

A well-balanced growth of the body and mind alone is an essential pre-requisite for a human being to live in the world in peace, and fulfil his or her aspirations. According to the sages of ancient India, a sickly body makes it impossible for the mind to reach the higher realms. In other words, a diseased body is a serious obstacle in the path of spiritual development. A healthy and strong body, housing an underdeveloped or diseased mind, is not helpful either. A healthy body and a keen mind, with the inner spirit in deep slumber are like a castle of sand prone to destruction by the gushing waves of the sea. It is ideal to strive for a balanced development of the body, mind and spirit to achieve perfection. *Suryanamaskar* is a great tool to realize this goal.

*Suryanamaskar* is a well-devised mixture of yoga *asanas* and breathing. Before practitioners undertake the practice of advanced yogic postures and breathing exercises in *pranayama*, the spine and body muscles should be flexible enough. The series of postures in *suryanamaskar* reduce visceral fat, bring flexibility to the spine and limbs, and also enable the practitioner to breathe right.

All in all, there are twelve postures each stretching various ligaments and giving different movements to the vertebral column. The vertebral column is bent forward and backward alternately with deep inhalation and exhalation of breath and a little of retention of breath in some cases. Whenever

the body is bent forward, the contraction of the abdomen and diaphragm throws out the breath. When the body bends backward, the chest expands and deep inhalation occurs automatically. In this way the body becomes flexible and the lungs begin to function which results in correct breathing. In addition, the mild but effective postures boost circulation of blood. At the same time, the sun's life-giving rays play on the man's body, sucking away the toxins along with perspiration invigorating circulation and imparting life to the human organism – the life which the sun alone can give. The life – giving *suryanamaskar* exercise renders the inflexible muscles and spine of a person devoid of any stiffness.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is believed that *suryanamaskar* should be practised only during day time facing the sun but the fact is that it is not mandatory to practise *suryanamaskar* before the morning sun. Busy office-goers and other people can practise it at any time of the day or in the evening with an empty stomach.

Thus, *suryanamaskar* is a boon for the mankind to attain perfect harmony between the body, mind and spirit.



### Did You Know?

In different schools of yoga, *suryanamaskar* is practised differently.

## 9.2 Technique of Suryanamaskar Practice<sup>1</sup>

It is customary, though not mandatory, for every practitioner to offer a prayer to the Divine before

<sup>1</sup> The 12 poses mentioned to be verified.



commencing the *suryanamaskar* practice; because as the wise ones say, it is the Divine Grace that makes any positive endeavour a success.

## Prayer to the Sun

*II Om Suryam Sundaralokanathamamritam  
Vedantasaram Sivam,*

*Jnanam Brahmayam Suresamamalam Lokaikachittam  
Svayam;*

*Indradityanaradhipam Suragurum Trailokyachudanim,  
Brahmavishnusivasvarupabridayam Vande Sada  
Bhaskaram.II*

**Meaning:** I always adore *surya*, the sun, the beautiful Lord of the World, the Immortal, the auspicious, the absolute knowledge, of the form of *Brahman*, the Lord of the gods, ever-pure, the one true consciousness of the world itself, the Lord of *Indra*, the gods and men, the preceptor of the gods, the crest-jewel of the three worlds, the very heart of the forms of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*, the giver of light.

Besides, the practitioner should mentally chant the *mantra* associated with every *asana* of *suryanamaskar*.

**Note:** Chanting of mantras is not mandatory in the performance of *suryanamaskar*.



### Caution

While practising *suryanamaskar*, one's movements should be slow, not jerky. The breathing should be steady and rhythmic. Forceful inhalation, exhalation and retention strain the lungs and should be avoided.

**Posture No. 1:** If working out in the morning, stand at the edge of your mat facing the sun with folded hands in the prayer pose. Keep the legs together and stand straight. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.1: *Pranamasana*

**Chant:** *Om Mitraya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is affectionate to all)

**Posture No. 2:** Keeping the palms in the prayer position, slowly inhale and raise the arms above the head. Stretch the arms backwards as much as you can. The inhaling and raising of hands should be in unison. As you progress, tilt the pelvic slightly forward. Make sure that you are reaching up with your fingers when you bend backwards. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.2: *Hastottanasana*

**Chant:** *Om Ravaye Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the cause for change)

**Posture No. 3:** Slowly exhale and bend forward till the palms are kept flat in line with the feet. Touch the knees with your head keeping the legs straight without bending. In the beginning, you may bend the knees to bring the palms down to the floor, or you may touch your feet with the finger tips in the final posture. But after practising for a few days, make a gentle effort to keep the legs straight. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.3: Padabastanasana

**Chant:** *Om Suryaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who induces activity)

**Posture No. 4:** After slow and deep inhalation, push your right leg back in a long backward step and gently place your right knee on the floor. Keep the hands and the left foot firmly on the ground without moving sideways; raise the head, and look upward. The left knee should be between the hands in the final posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.4: Vama Asvasanacalanasana

**Chant:** *Om Bhanave Namah* (Prostration to Him who diffuses Light)

**Posture No. 5:** Exhale, lift the hips and the tail bone up, chest downward in an 'inverted V' posture. Try as much as possible to keep your heels in contact with the floor. Look towards the navel or your knees in the final posture. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.5: Parvatasana

**Chant:** *Om Khagaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who moves in the sky)

**Posture No. 6:** Exhaling slowly, lower the body and let eight limbs of the body—two toes, two knees, two hands, chest and chin—touch the floor. The abdominal region is to be kept slightly raised. Breathe normally.



Fig. 9.6: Sashtangaasana

**Chant:** *Om Pushne Namah* (Prostration to Him who nourishes all)

**Posture No. 7:** While inhaling, slowly raise your head and bend the spine backward as much as possible. You may keep the elbow bent for a few days of practice. Look up toward the sky or the ceiling in the final posture. Breathe normally.





**Fig. 9.7:** *Bhujangasana*

**Chant:** *Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who contains everything)

**Posture No. 8:** Exhale, lift the hips and the tail bone up, chest downward in an 'inverted V' posture. Try as much as possible to keep your heels in contact with the floor. Look towards the navel or your knees in the final posture. Breathe normally.



**Fig. 9.8:** *Parvatasana*

**Chant:** *Om Marichaye Namah* (Prostration to Him who possesses rays)

**Posture No. 9:** Inhale and bring the left foot along the level of the hands. The right foot and knee should touch the ground. Look forward (Same as Posture No. 4).



**Fig. 9.9:** *Daksbina Asvasanālanāsana*

**Chant:** *Om Adityaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the son of *Aditi*)

**Posture No. 10:** Exhale, bring the right leg also forward and come back to Posture No. 3.



**Fig. 9.10:** *Padabastanasana*

**Chant:** *Om Savitre Namah* (Prostration to Him who produces everything)

**Posture No. 11:** Inhale and raise the hands overhead and bend backward as in Posture No. 2.



**Fig. 9.11:** *Hastottanasana*

**Chant:** *Om Arkaya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is fit to be worshipped)

**Posture No. 12:** Slowly bring your hands as in the first Posture. Exhale and relax in *Pranamasana*.



**Fig. 9.12:** *Pranamasana*

**Chant:** *Om Bhaskaraya Namah* (Prostration to Him who is the cause of lustre).

### Notes

*Suryanamaskar* prepares the body for *asana* practice. Hence, it should be performed by the practitioner before the yoga *asanas*.

These 12 poses repeated twice make one round of *suryanamaskara*.

After completing *suryanamaskar* practice, lie down flat on the ground on your back and relax each and every limb one by one from the toes to the crown of the head. This is called *shavasana* (the corpse pose). If one feels tired or nauseous after a few rounds, the practitioner may stop with that and increase the number gradually (one every day or every two days), while ensuring that the body does not undergo discomfort during the practice. The number may be increased according to each one's capacity. Advanced and physically fit practitioners are capable of doing 108 rounds of *suryanamaskar* at a stretch without much strain.

### Caution

Generally, *suryanamaskar* should not be practised by people suffering from acute case of high blood pressure, hernia, heart diseases, and those who have had a stroke. People with back problems should practise it after consulting a yoga expert. It should not be practised during fever and inflammation. *Suryanamaskar* should be avoided during menstruation as well.

## 9.3 Asanas

The practice of yoga *asanas* purifies, heals and strengthens the psycho-physiological structure. It enables grasping the subtle truths about life and the realm beyond. For the ardent spiritual aspirant, *asanas* make the practice of *yama* and *niyama* easier. It prepares you to deal with the modern day lifestyle problems. It sharpens the intellect and enhances the memory. Words cannot describe the glory of yoga *asanas*. It is for the sincere practitioner to realize it for himself or herself. *Asanas* could be classified into easy *asanas* and tough *asanas*.





### Did You Know?

*Sarvangasana*, *shirshasana* and *paschimottanasana* are a few of the *asanas* propagated by the seers and yoga *gurus* as the ultimate *asanas* for keeping perfect health. They are more than enough to save your doctor's bills. They offer benefits which no modern exercise can bestow.

## Easy Asanas

1. **Matsyasana (The Fish Pose):** *Matsya* in Sanskrit means "fish". By assuming this posture, the practitioner floats like a fish on water. Therefore, this *asana* has been named *Matsyasana*. This *asana* is best performed immediately after *sarvangasana*.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit in *padmasana* on a mat spread on the floor.
- ❖ Slowly move back by resting the elbows on the mat.
- ❖ Arch the back by lifting the chest and trunk and bend the neck backwards.
- ❖ Draw the head back and rest it on its crown.
- ❖ Catch hold of the big toes and gradually increase the arch by pressing further back the position of the crown of the head and pulling the toes by the hands.
- ❖ Focus on the heart *chakra*, the throat *chakra*, the crown *chakra* and the rear end of the spine. Breathe normally.
- ❖ Retain the posture for 20 seconds to one minute. Release the toes by resting on the elbows and rest the back of your head on the ground. Slowly get up and sit in *padmasana* and release the legs one by one.
- ❖ The duration of the posture may be increased as one progresses in practice.



Fig. 9.13: *Matsyasana*

### Variation

Beginners can stretch their legs and keep their palms under the hips and practise this *asana*, in case they are unable to sit in *padmasana*. The palms may also rest on the thighs during practice.

### Benefits

- ❖ Stretches the chest and dorsal portion of the spine is expanded well, and breathing becomes better.
- ❖ Removes spasms from bronchial tubes.
- ❖ Helps the patients who are suffering from asthma.
- ❖ Tones the thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary and pineal glands.
- ❖ Improves flexibility of pelvic joints.

**Contra-indications:** People with high or low blood pressure can avoid this *asana*. Migraine and insomnia patients should also refrain from doing the Fish Pose. Those who have had serious lower-back or neck injuries, cervical problems, etc. are strongly recommended not to practice this pose.

2. **Paschimottanasana (Seated Forward Bend):** *Paschimottanasana* is so called because *paschim* refers to the back and *uttana* means stretching. Hence, *paschimottanasana* means stretching of the back. There are many benefits of this posture; the main and most obvious one is to provide a complete stretch of the entire backside of the body from the back of the head to the heels.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit on the mat with legs stretched out in front of you.
- ❖ Keep the spine erect and legs flexed toward you.
- ❖ Catch the toes with the thumb, index and middle fingers and bend the upper body forward.
- ❖ Exhale and slowly bend to touch your forehead to your knees; try bending as much as possible.
- ❖ Draw your belly button towards your spine as you exhale and bend.
- ❖ Stretch the arms out in front of you. Hold the pose for 5-10 seconds to begin with and gradually increase the time duration.
- ❖ Inhaling, come back up to the sitting position.
- ❖ Breathe out and lower the arms.



Fig. 9.14: *Paschimottasana*

### Variation

Beginners can keep the face between the knees while bending forward.

If you find it tough to do the complete *paschimottasana*, perform the partial pose with right leg and right hand and then with the left leg and left hand.

### Benefits

- ❖ Helpful for weight-watchers in reducing abdominal fat.

- ❖ Cures enlargement of the spleen and liver.
- ❖ Stimulates endocrine glands, kidneys, liver and pancreas.
- ❖ Increases the peristalsis of the bowels.
- ❖ Diabetes and piles are cured, and the back muscles are rendered flexible.
- ❖ It is said that in *paschimottasana*, the *anahat nada* can be heard by an expert practitioner.

3. ***Trikonasana* (The Triangle Pose):** The Sanskrit meaning of the term *trikona* is triangle. When *trikonasana* is demonstrated, the body appears like a triangle. It is a very easy *asana* and can be done by novice practitioners as well.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Stand straight keeping your legs wide apart as seen in the picture (Fig. 9.15).
- ❖ Now stretch your arms wide horizontally in line with the shoulders and parallel to the ground.
- ❖ Slowly, bend toward your right keeping the left knee straight.
- ❖ Touch the right toe with the fingers of the right hand.
- ❖ Bend the neck slightly to the right. It is alright if it touches the right shoulder.
- ❖ Now raise the left arm toward the sky.
- ❖ Fix your gaze upward.
- ❖ Remain in this pose for a minute. Breathe slowly.
- ❖ Come back to the original position and repeat with the other side.
- ❖ Do this *asana* for 3-6 times on each side.





Fig. 9.15: *Trikonasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ Renders the *Meru Danda* or the spine flexible.
- ❖ Reduces anxiety, stress, back pain and sciatica.
- ❖ Increases peristalsis of the bowels and improves appetite.
- ❖ Stretches and opens the hips, groins, hamstrings, and calves; shoulders, chest, and spine

**Contraindications:** This pose should not be practiced by those suffering from migraine, diarrhoea, low or high blood pressure, or neck and back injuries. Persons with high BP can practise this pose without raising the head toward the sky.

4. ***Bhujangasana* (The Cobra Pose):** The Sanskrit meaning of *Bhujang* is “cobra.” When this posture is demonstrated, the raised trunk

and head of the practitioner resembles the raised hood of a cobra. Hence, this posture is known by the name of *bhujangasana*.

### How to Perform

- ❖ On a mat, lie flat on your stomach.
- ❖ Relax your muscles.
- ❖ Place the palms firmly on the ground just below the shoulders.
- ❖ Raise your elbows pointing them towards the sky.
- ❖ Now inhale and using the strength of your arms and the back, raise the head and the upper body just like a cobra.
- ❖ Let the body from the navel downwards to the toes touch the ground.
- ❖ Stretch the spine backward vertebra by vertebra. Tilt your head backward and look toward the sky.
- ❖ Hold this pose for 5- 10 seconds.
- ❖ Now exhale and slowly return to the original position. Relax.
- ❖ Repeat this process 3-4 times, if you are a beginner. Advanced practitioners can repeat it for 6-7 times.



Fig. 9.16: *Bhujangasana*

### Points to Remember

- ❖ It is important to keep the shoulders relaxed while holding the pose. Beginners may keep the elbows bent slightly. Advancing practitioners can keep the arms straight to deepen their practice.
- ❖ Keep your feet close to each other. Breathe and smile to reap in the full benefits of the *asana*.

### Benefits

- ❖ Relieves hunchback, back pain, lumbago, myalgia of the back and constipation. Makes the back spinal column flexible like the snake.
- ❖ Awakens the *Kundalini Shakti* that is sleeping dormant in the *Muladhara Chakra* or the Root *Chakra*.
- ❖ Improves the appetite by rousing the digestive fire.
- ❖ Helps women in toning the ovaries and the uterus.
- ❖ Cures amenorrhoea (absence of menstruation), dysmenorrhoea (painful or difficult menstruation), leucorrhoea (white discharge), and various other utero-ovarian diseases.
- ❖ Makes delivery easy and normal in women.

### Contraindications

- ❖ *Bhujangasana* should not be practised by pregnant women or those with fractured ribs or wrists.
- ❖ People recovering from abdominal surgeries must avoid practising this posture till full recovery.

5. ***Shalabhasana* (The Locust Pose):** *Shalabha* in *Sanskrit* means “locust.” When this *asana* is demonstrated, the body looks like a

locust. Hence, we call it *shalabhasana* or the locust pose.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie on the mat on your stomach.
- ❖ Make sure you rest your chin on the ground.
- ❖ Your toes should be in contact with the floor.
- ❖ Now place your hands on the ground below your inner thighs.
- ❖ Now lift up your head a little. (You can inhale or breathe in and then lift the legs. This pose can also be maintained by holding the breath.)
- ❖ Using the strength of your arms, raise the legs in the air and hold them in that position.
- ❖ Rest your body on your abdomen.
- ❖ Hold for 5 seconds and then bring down the legs to the mat.
- ❖ This completes one round of *Shalabhasana*. You can repeat it 6-7 times.



Fig. 9.17: *Shalabhasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ Tones the muscles of the abdomen, thighs and legs.
- ❖ Clears the intestines of the accumulated decaying faecal matter.
- ❖ Works on the abdomen and back to make them stronger.



- ❖ Burns visceral fat, *i.e.*, fat surrounding the liver, pancreas, kidneys, etc.
- ❖ Cures sluggishness of liver and hunchback.
- ❖ Removes lumbago and dyspepsia.
- ❖ Improves appetite.

**Contraindications:** Pregnant women and those recovering from abdominal surgery must avoid performing this *asana*.

6. **Dhanurasana (The Bow Pose):** *Dhanurasana* has been named so because in Sanskrit, *dbanur* stands for “bow”. This posture makes a wonderful combination with *bhujangasana* and *shalabhasana*. These three *asanas* beat sloth and inertia like nothing else. They can be performed as counter poses after *halasana* and *pashchimottanasana* (forward-bending poses).

#### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie on your stomach with the face downward.
- ❖ Keep the arms at the sides.
- ❖ Gently fold your legs so as to bring them towards the hips.
- ❖ Raise your hands backwards and catch hold of the ankles with the hands (and not the toes).
- ❖ Raise the head and chest.
- ❖ Now try to stretch the upper body and the legs as much as possible.
- ❖ See to it that the body weight is on the abdomen, not the pubic bone.
- ❖ Keep the arms and forelegs straight.
- ❖ Make sure your body forms a convex arch in the final position.
- ❖ Breathe normally and repeat this process 5 or 6 times.



Fig. 9.18: *Dhanurasana*

#### Benefits

- ❖ Benefits the abdominal region by curing indigestion and other gastro-intestinal diseases.
- ❖ Cures chronic constipation, dyspepsia and sluggishness of liver.
- ❖ Removes hunchback, rheumatism of legs, knee-joints and hands.
- ❖ Reduces body fat, energises digestion.
- ❖ Alleviates congestion of blood in the abdominal viscera and tones them.
- ❖ Prevents premature ageing of bones.
- ❖ Relieve menstrual disorders.

**Contraindications:** *Dhanurasana* should not be practiced by persons suffering from high or low blood pressure, hernia, neck injury, pain in the lower back, headache, migraine or a recent abdominal surgery.

Women should avoid practicing this posture during pregnancy.

7. **Ardh Matsyendrasana (Half Spinal Twist Pose)\*:** In Sanskrit, *ardha* implies “half.” This pose has been named after the great Rishi Matsyendra, who first taught this *asana* to the students of *Hatha Yoga*. Matsyendra was a blessed disciple of Lord Shiva.

\* Denotes that the content is specific to level 2 yoga aspirants.

*Ardha matsyendrasana* is half as compared to *matsyendrasana*. This pose bends and twists the spine from side to side, and thus renders it perfectly flexible.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit up with the legs stretched out in front on the mat, keeping the feet together and the spine erect.
- ❖ Now bend the left leg and place the heel of the left foot beside the right hip (optionally, beginners can keep the left leg straight).
- ❖ Take the right leg over the left knee.
- ❖ Place the left hand on the right knee and the right hand behind you.
- ❖ Twist the waist, shoulders and neck in this sequence to the right and look over the right shoulder.
- ❖ Keep the spine erect.
- ❖ Hold and continue with gentle long breaths in and out.
- ❖ Breathing out, release the right hand first (the hand behind you), release the waist, then chest. Finally, the neck and sit up relaxed, yet straight.
- ❖ Repeat the other side.
- ❖ Breath the same with out, come back to the front and relax.



Fig. 9.19: *Ardha Matsyendrasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ Cures lumbago and other muscular pains of the back.
  - ❖ Improves the elasticity of the spine.
  - ❖ Massages the muscles and organs of the abdominal region.
  - ❖ Benefits those suffering from constipation and dyspepsia.
  - ❖ Tones the nervous system and the vertebrae of the spinal column.
8. ***Padahasthasana* (Standing Forward Bend):**  
In Sanskrit, *pada* means “feet” and *hastha* means “hands”. Since this *asana* is demonstrated by touching the feet with the hands, it is known as *padahasthasana*. It is similar to *pashchimottasana*. The only difference between the two *asanas* is that *padahasthasana* is performed while standing.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Stand straight with your hands down close to the body.
- ❖ Keep the heels close and toes apart.
- ❖ Now inhale and raise the hands above the head.
- ❖ Slowly, exhale and bend the body downwards bringing the hands to catch hold of the toes.
- ❖ Make sure you draw the belly in as you exhale while bending.
- ❖ Keep the knees stiff and straight.
- ❖ Keep the forehead between the knees.
- ❖ Try using the strength of your trunk to get closer to the knees.
- ❖ Hold the pose for 2 to 10 seconds.
- ❖ Come back slowly to position one.





**Fig. 9.20:** *Padabastasana*

### Variation

People with inflexible bodies or fat people may find it difficult to touch the toes with their hands due to abdominal fat and stiffness of muscles. In such cases, bend the knees slightly and then catch hold of the toes. However, straighten the knees after catching hold of your toes.

### Benefits

- ❖ Dissipates *tamas* or laziness.
- ❖ Eliminates excess fat around the abdomen and thighs.
- ❖ Purifies and strengthens *sushumna nadi*.
- ❖ Lengthens the legs after three months of practice.

**Contraindications:** Forward-bending is strictly prohibited for people with lower back problems.

9. **Vajrasana (The Adamantine Pose):** *Vajra* in Sanskrit means “diamond.” Due to the regular practice of this *asana*, the practitioner

attains a strong body. The spine or *Meru Danda* becomes firm and strong as a diamond. Hence, this posture is known by the name of *vajrasana*.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit on a mat resting the hips on the heels and the thighs on the calf muscles.
- ❖ Keep your hands on your knees and keep the head straight.
- ❖ The part from the toe to the knee should touch the ground.
- ❖ The whole burden of the body is put on the knees and ankles.
- ❖ Beginners may feel slight pain in the knees and ankle joint. No need to worry as it is a passing pain. Massage the paining parts and the knee and ankle joints with the hands.
- ❖ Keep the knees quite close.
- ❖ Sit like this, keeping the trunk, neck and head in one straight line.
- ❖ This is the most common *asana*.
- ❖ You may sit in this *asana* for as long as you want, especially after dinner for better digestion of food.



**Fig. 9.21:** *Vajrasana*

## Benefits

The health of knee joint depends on the secretion of Synovial Fluid. *Vajrasana* boosts blood circulation in the knees and maintains its secretion even in old age.

- ❖ Helps in digestion and removes flatulence.
- ❖ Benefits dyspeptics.
- ❖ Strengthens the nerves and muscles of the legs and thighs and heals sciatica.
- ❖ Myalgia in the knees, legs, toes and thighs disappears.



## Did You Know?

*Vajrasana* is the only pose which is prescribed to be performed even after eating a meal.

**Contraindications:** People with knee problems are strictly prohibited from doing *vajrasana*.

## Variations

Keep the heels a bit separate. The anus and the hips are kept between the two heels and the legs by the side of the two thighs. Now perform the following poses:

10. **Kurmasana (Tortoise Pose):** Press the buttocks firmly with the soles. Keep the head, neck and trunk erect. Keep the hands on your hips or on the knees or on the sides of the chest.

## Ardha Kurmasana

Sit in the same *vajrasana* and stretch your hands to your face level, palms facing together and slowly bend and lie down on the ground on the support of your hands.

These *asanas* heal sprain and pain of muscles and joints.

11. **Garudasana (The Eagle Pose):** The Sanskrit word *Garud* translates into “eagle.” When this pose is demonstrated, the body looks like that of an eagle. Hence, this *asana* is popular by the name of *garudasana*.

## How to Perform

- ❖ Stand up straight.
- ❖ Now raise the left leg and take it round the right leg from the front of the body like a creeper.
- ❖ The left thigh should cross the right thigh.
- ❖ Now, follow the same procedure with your arms as well.
- ❖ When you stand as instructed above, steadily bend and try to keep the toe of left foot facing downward.
- ❖ Hold the pose for a few seconds and return to the original position.
- ❖ Repeat while standing on the other leg.



Fig. 9.22: *Garudasana*



### Variation

Advancing practitioners can deepen their practice by looking at the tips of their thumbs once they are in the full pose. Typically the thumb tips point a little bit off to the side of the upper arm. Press the mound of the upper thumb into the bottom hand and turn the thumb tips so they point directly at the tip of your nose.

### Benefits

- ❖ Strengthens the nerves and bones of legs and hands.
- ❖ Cures sciatica, rheumatism of legs and hands.
- ❖ Nourishes and develops the bones of the vertebral column.
- ❖ Cures hydrocele and swelling of the testicles.
- ❖ Builds up the calf muscles.

**Contraindications:** People with recent knee, ankle or elbow injury should avoid practising this pose.

12. **Baddha Padmasana (The Locked-up Lotus Pose):** In Sanskrit, the word *baddha* means “locked-up” and *padmasana* “lotus pose.” It is a type of *padmasana*. This *asana* must be practised daily for a period of six months to derive its full benefits.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit in *padmasana*<sup>2</sup> with legs crossed.
- ❖ The heels should touch the lower abdomen.
- ❖ Then take your right hand behind the back.
- ❖ Catch hold of the right leg with the forefinger and middle finger of the right hand.

- ❖ Then take your left hand behind the back and catch hold of the toe of the left leg with the forefinger and middle finger of the left hand.
- ❖ Now press the chin against the chest. Look at the tip of the nose. Breathe slowly.
- ❖ Hold this position for as long as you can. The longer, the better.



Fig. 9.23: Baddha Padmasana

### Variation

People who find it tough to hold both the toes at the same time can practise *ardha baddha padmasana* (half-pose) to start with for one month. As they progress, they can practice *purna baddha padmasana* (full-pose). Practise *ardha baddha padmasana* on the right as well as on the left side.

### Benefits

- ❖ Cures chronic diseases of the stomach, liver, spleen and intestines.
- ❖ Improves health, vigour and vitality.
- ❖ Removes hunchback.
- ❖ Purifies nerves of the waist, hips, feet and legs.
- ❖ Stimulates the Solar Plexus or the *Manipura Chakra* located behind the navel and energizes the practitioner.

<sup>2</sup> *Padmasana*: Refer to Chapter 10.

- ❖ Helps in maintaining *brahmacharya* among striving yogis.

13. **Shavasana (The Corpse Pose):** *Shavasana* has been named after the Sanskrit word *shava* or “corpse.” It is performed at the end of *asana* practice simply for unwinding and relaxation.

#### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie down on the mat.
- ❖ Keep the hands on the ground by the sides with palms facing upward.
- ❖ Stretch the legs straight and keep them close to each other.
- ❖ Close the eyes. Breathe slowly.
- ❖ Relax all muscles, nerves, joints, etc.
- ❖ Start the relaxation process from toes to head.
- ❖ Imagine tiredness getting removed from every part of your body.
- ❖ You may repeat “OM” or any holy mantra or remember God.
- ❖ Do not sleep.
- ❖ Continue being in this state for 10 minutes and then finish your practice.



Fig. 9.24: *Shavasana*

#### Benefits

- ❖ Gives comfort to the mind and body.
- ❖ Cools down the body.

- ❖ Relaxes muscles, joints and all organs after a strenuous practice.

### Tough Asanas

1. **Shirshasana (The Headstand):** The headstand is called the king of *asanas*. It is a cure for almost all physical maladies. The name *shirshasana* has been derived from the Sanskrit word *shirsha* meaning “head” and *asana* meaning “posture.”

#### How to Perform

- ❖ On a mat, sit on both the knees.
- ❖ Interlock the fingers and place the finger-lock on the ground up till the elbow.
- ❖ Now, keep the top of your head on this finger-lock or between the two hands.
- ❖ Slowly raise the legs till they become vertical.
- ❖ Retain this pose for five seconds in the beginning. Increase the time duration gradually to 15-30 minutes.
- ❖ After holding the pose, slowly bring the legs down.



Fig. 9.25: *Shirshasana*



### Benefits

- ❖ Illumines the psychic faculties and awakens the *Kundalini Shakti*.
- ❖ Removes intestinal disease and increases mental power.
- ❖ Purifies blood and works as a wonderful nerve tonic.
- ❖ It improves vision, concentration and memory.
- ❖ Cures diseases of eyes, nose, head, throat, stomach, genito-urinary system, liver, spleen, lungs, renal colic, deafness, gonorrhoea, diabetes, piles, asthma consumption, syphilis, etc.
- ❖ Stimulates the digestive fire also known as *Jatharagni*.
- ❖ Slows down ageing process.
- ❖ Eases out uterine and ovarine troubles and removes sterility.

**Contraindications:** Practitioners suffering from abnormal blood pressure, glaucoma, detached retina, chronic thyroid disorders, neck or shoulder injuries, must consult a trained yoga expert before performing the shoulder stand.



### Notes

- *Shirshasana* must be practised under the supervision of a trained teacher only.
- While performing this *asana*, avoid jerky and hasty movements.
- Ask someone to assist you in performing this pose or take the support of a wall initially.
- Breathe through the nose and not through the mouth.
- People who are good at balancing can easily do this *asana*.
- It is important to practise this *asana* for 2-3 months at a stretch to master it.

2. ***Sarvangasana* (The Shoulder Stand):** The word *sarva anga* in Sanskrit means “the whole body.” Since, this *asana* works on the entire body, it is named *sarvanga asana*. This is an important *asana* and a highly beneficial one. The Shoulder Stand is also known as the queen of *asanas*.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie down on the yoga mat on your back.
- ❖ Slowly raise the legs lifting the trunk, hips and legs vertically.
- ❖ Support the back with two hands.
- ❖ Rest the elbows on the ground. Press the chin against the chest and form a chin-lock firmly known as *Jalandhara Bandha*.
- ❖ Allow the back, shoulder portion and neck to touch the ground closely. Do not allow the body to shake from side to side.
- ❖ Keep the legs straight.



Fig. 9.26: *Sarvangasana*

- ❖ Hold this posture for 30-60 seconds in the beginning and gradually increase the duration to 30 minutes.
- ❖ Breathe normally in the final position.
- ❖ Once you finish, bring the legs down very slowly in a graceful manner, without any jerks.



### Notes

This *asana* can be done every morning and evening. It should immediately be followed by *matyasana* (the fish posture). This will relieve pains in the back part of the neck and enhance the benefits of *Sarvangasana*.

### Benefits

- ❖ Stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands and normalizes their functions.
- ❖ Preserves the youth by keeping the spine elastic.
- ❖ Helps the yogis who strive to achieve sexual continence.
- ❖ Improves circulation of blood to the brain.
- ❖ Stretches the heart muscles by returning more venous blood to the heart.
- ❖ Cures constipation, indigestion, diabetes, visceroptosis, varicose veins and menstrual disorders.
- ❖ Awakens *kundalini* and stimulates the digestive fire.
- ❖ Helps in achieving perfect health.

**Contraindications:** Practitioners suffering from abnormal blood pressure, glaucoma, detached retina, chronic thyroid disorders, neck or shoulder injuries must consult a trained yoga expert before performing the shoulder stand.

3. **Halasana (The Plough Pose):** In Sanskrit, *bala* means plough; hence, this pose is called *balasana*.

### How to Perform

- ❖ On the mat, lie flat on your back.
- ❖ Keep the hands at the side of your body with palms facing downward.
- ❖ Keep your feet together and lift them very slowly without bending the legs.
- ❖ Do not raise the arms or the trunk.
- ❖ Draw your legs up to make a 90 degree angle.
- ❖ Now slowly lower the legs to bring them on the ground above the head; try touching your toes to the ground.
- ❖ The knees should be kept straight while holding the posture.
- ❖ The legs and thighs must be in one straight line.
- ❖ Press the chin against the chest.
- ❖ Breathe slowly through the nose.
- ❖ Hold this position for 5-10 seconds.
- ❖ After finishing the practice, slowly bring your legs down to the mat.



Fig. 9.27: *Halasana*

### Variations

- ❖ Practitioners who find it tough to lift their waist can practice placing pillows under it.



- ❖ Those who are unable to touch the floor with their toes can use a chair or a stool to place their big toes on it for a few days of practice.
- ❖ Advancing practitioners can slowly bring their hands to catch hold of the toes.
- ❖ Beginners may feel pain in the lower back while practising *halasana*. However, they need not worry as the pain will go away after a few days of practice.

### Benefits

- ❖ Prevents degeneration of bones, thus promoting longevity and youth.
- ❖ Nourishes spinal nerves, bones and muscles of the back due to the flow of blood.
- ❖ Treats *myalgia* (muscular rheumatism), lumbago, sprain and neuralgia.
- ❖ Renders the vertebral column or *meru danda* soft and elastic.
- ❖ Keeps the practitioners agile, alert and nimble.
- ❖ Tones the abdominal, rectal and thigh muscles.
- ❖ Cures obesity, chronic constipation, congestion, spleen and enlargement of liver.

**Contraindications:** People suffering from lumbago, neck pain, spondylitis and high blood pressure are not advised to practise *Halasana*.

4. **Chakrasana (The Wheel Pose):** *Chakra* stands for “wheel” in Sanskrit. This posture has been named *chakrasana* because the human body appears like a wheel or a semi-circle in the final position of this *asana*. Young girls and boys with a flexible spine can easily demonstrate this posture.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie down on the back.
- ❖ Keep the feet and palms of the hand firmly on the ground.
- ❖ The palms must be kept by the side of your head and the elbows pointing upward.
- ❖ Now walk your feet closer to your hips and raise your body off the ground by using the strength of your arms, thereby making a curve of your spine.
- ❖ Hold the posture for 5 seconds to begin with.
- ❖ Now, carefully and slowly bring your body down to the floor without any jerk.
- ❖ First release the hips, followed by the lower back, the upper back, the neck and finally the head.
- ❖ This posture can be practised 2-3 times in a session.



Fig. 9.28: *Chakrasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ Uplifts the mood of the practitioner.
- ❖ Prepares the practitioner for active work.
- ❖ The muscles of the back and abdomen become strong.

- ❖ Abdominal organs including the digestive, excretory and the reproductive organs, get toned.
- ❖ Benefits all the parts of the body.



### Notes

If the practitioner experiences pain in the neck and shoulders after practising *sarvangasana*, he/she should immediately perform *chakrasana* to counter the pain.

**Contraindications:** Those suffering from heart diseases, high blood pressure, vertigo as well as those who have undergone any surgery in the recent past should refrain from doing this *asana*.

5. **Kakasana (The Crow Pose):** *Kakasana* has been named so as in Sanskrit the name implies “the crow.” When *kakasana* is demonstrated, the body resembles like a crow.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Stand with your feet hip-width apart.
- ❖ Keeping the knees bent, bend down and place the hands on the floor directly below the shoulders. Spread the fingers well on the floor.
- ❖ Flex your elbows and keeping your weight on the mounds of the feet, take the knees towards the upper arms, close to the armpits.
- ❖ Contract the leg muscles and press the legs towards the sides of the body. Contract the pelvic muscles and the hips together and feel the compactness and lightness on your feet.
- ❖ Maintaining the posture thus, tilt the pelvic slightly forward. The head and the torso also move forward and the feet feel even lighter.
- ❖ Pressing the palms firmly on the floor, focus on a point in front of your hands.
- ❖ As you are balancing on your toes, the feet feel light as there is hardly any weight on them.
- ❖ Squeeze the hips and the legs inwards and contract the abdomen.
- ❖ Adjust the weight on the hands by lifting or lowering the pelvis so that you are comfortable.
- ❖ Keeping the knees high on the arms and the thighs and legs close and well aligned, focus your attention on your breathing. This will help to stabilize the body and maintain balance.
- ❖ As breathing becomes smooth and rhythmic, the body will begin to feel stable, alert and light.
- ❖ With the abdomen held firmly and the body weight distributed equally on both hands, shift the torso forward so that the feet are towards the buttocks.
- ❖ Lift one foot at a time so that you don't lose your balance and hit your nose on the floor.
- ❖ Lifting the chin up so that the head is kept up will also prevent such a disaster.
- ❖ Once you are able to balance your body, try to straighten the arms as much as possible and then lift the head, trunk and legs up keeping the lower part of the body firm. Breathe normally as you hold the pose for 4 to 5 seconds.
- ❖ To come out of the posture, first bend the elbows and then slowly lower the toes onto the floor.



- ❖ Go back to squatting position and then release the posture.
- ❖ Tension in the wrists can be relieved by rotating them.
- ❖ Stand up, close your eyes and become aware of the energy flowing through the arms, shoulders, chest and pelvis.



Fig. 9.29: *Kakasana*

### Variation

Beginners can keep a folded blanket on the floor in front until they have mastered the pose.

### Benefits

- ❖ Increases physical and mental balance.
- ❖ Develops mental tranquillity.
- ❖ Strengthens the wrists and forearms.
- ❖ The working of the energy systems in the body are changed because the body stands on the hands instead of the legs.

**Contraindications:** Persons with wrist or arm injuries are not advised to practise this pose. Consult a yoga expert before practising it.

6. **Mayurasana (The Peacock Pose):** The name of this *asana* is derived from the Sanskrit words *mayura* meaning 'peacock' and

*asana*, meaning posture. A beginner may find it difficult to do this *asana*. Yet with a little practise over a few weeks, one can master this *asana*. All one needs is patience and perseverance.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Sit on folded legs with the knees wide apart. Then fold the arms and join them together from the elbows to the wrist in front of you. Let the palms face upwards.
- ❖ Lean forward and place the palms on the floor so that the fingers point to the body. Bend the hands slightly at the elbows and let the arms and elbows touch each other.
- ❖ Now press the elbows to the upper abdomen or the midriff area.
- ❖ Then keeping the abdomen firm, drop the head gently to the floor.
- ❖ Slowly straighten the knees, and take the legs back, one at a time keeping the metatarsals on the floor.
- ❖ Hold the buttocks firmly. Keep the shoulders rounded facing slightly downwards.
- ❖ Now raise the head up and look in front of you.
- ❖ Next, shift the weight of your body forward by pushing the buttocks forward. Ensure that legs are held firmly.
- ❖ As you shift the body weight forward, the feet should come off the ground.
- ❖ Keep the body aligned so that it is balancing on the hands and is parallel to the floor.

- ❖ Maintain the posture for about 10 seconds initially and slowly but steadily increase the duration to one minute.
- ❖ Then very slowly, take the feet and then the head down to the floor. Repeat the *asana* 2 or 3 times.



Fig. 9.30: *Mayurasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ By doing *Mayurasana*, the entire digestive system gets toned. Organs like the stomach, liver, intestines, kidneys, pancreas and the spleen get revitalised.
- ❖ *Mayurasana* ignites the digestive fire. Digestion becomes so effective that one is said to be able to digest any kind of food, even poisonous food. The *asana* helps to reduce toxins produced by undigested food in the intestines. As such, it is an effective detox pose.
- ❖ The *asana* increases one's energy and sexual vitality.
- ❖ It strengthens the muscles of the arms and shoulders, and helps in treating conditions like constipation, piles and diabetes.
- ❖ *Mayurasana* can truly be said to be the gateway to perfect health.

**Contraindications:** This *asana* should be avoided if you have medical conditions like hernia, high blood pressure, heart problems and ulcer. Also women should avoid it during

menstruation and pregnancy. Always attempt this *asana* on an empty stomach.

## Other Asanas

1. **Tadasana:** *Tadasana* gets its name from the Sanskrit words *tada* meaning a palm tree and *asana*, meaning posture. One resembles a palm tree in this *asana*. By practising this *asana* regularly, one's posture improves. It also helps to increase height in children. *Tadasana* stretches the arms, chest, abdominal muscles, spine and leg muscles along with giving a sense of balance.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Stand with your feet planted firmly on the ground. See that your feet and legs are touching each other.
- ❖ Straighten the hands by the sides of your body and focus your attention to a point in front of you.
- ❖ Raise your toes, balancing yourself on your heels. Remain thus for 5 to 10 seconds.
- ❖ Then, slowly bring the toes back to the floor tilting the pelvic bone slightly forward.
- ❖ Lift the entire trunk up from the sides and let the chest open out.
- ❖ Hold the head erect so that the crown of the head is parallel to the ceiling. Lift from the base of the skull so that the neck gets lengthened in the process.
- ❖ Then pressing your toes firmly on the ground, raise the legs up – first the ankles, then the calves, the thighs and the finally the entire torso from the hips upwards.
- ❖ Maintain the posture for 1 to 2 minutes focussing your attention on your breath, which should be steady. When you inhale,



you should feel as though the breath is rising from the floor and travelling up your legs to your stomach all the way up to your head.



Fig. 9.31: *Tadasana*

- ❖ When you exhale, feel as though your breath is travelling down from the head through your stomach, down to your feet.
- ❖ Relax the body and repeat the process once again.
- ❖ In the next attempt, as you raise your legs, lift your arms up over your head and bring your arms down along with the legs as you exhale.

### Benefits

- ❖ *Tadasana* improves the posture of the body.

- ❖ It improves the flexibility of the ankles, knees and hip joints.
- ❖ The regular practise of this *asana* will make the spine supple.
- ❖ One's balance improves with regular practice. *Tadasana* is also said to increase height.
- ❖ It is beneficial to those suffering from visceroptosis or pain in the backbone.
- ❖ Respiration, digestion and elimination of waste from the body improve with regular practice.
- ❖ The practitioner gets proper control over his muscular movements.
- ❖ Over a period, the entire nervous system gets strengthened with this practice.
- ❖ Modified *Tadasana* is one of the poses used during the practice of *shankaprasakshalana* or the cleaning of the stomach and intestine. This quickly moves the saline water which one drinks during the process to the lower intestine and rectum, thereby quickening the cleansing process.



### Notes

Ensure that your breathing is in rhythm with the raising and lowering of your arms.

**Contraindications:** *Tadasana* should not be performed if you experience giddiness or suffer from vertigo, low blood pressure or have a severe headache.

2. ***Utkatasana:*** This *asana* is also known as Chair Pose, Fierce Pose or Powerful Pose. The term *utkat* means intense or powerful. *Utkatasana* is an intense or powerful pose. The practitioner performing this *asana* looks like he is sitting on a chair. The intense pose is so powerful that it strengthens the body.

## How to Perform

- ❖ Stand erect as in *tadasana*.
- ❖ Keep the big toes and heels of the feet slightly apart.
- ❖ Suck the abdomen in towards the spine – this will give support to the spine. Open out the chest by pushing the dorsal vertebrae forward. Take the shoulders and the upper arms down.
- ❖ Then, with a deep breath, lift the arms above the head. The arms can either be kept facing each other with the palms joined or they can be kept parallel to each other.
- ❖ Then bend the body, taking the lower ribs close to the pelvis. Exhale, bend the knees and try to make the thighs parallel to each other as much as you can. See that the feet are behind the knees and the torso is leaning slightly over the thighs so as to make a right angle with the upper part of the thighs. Keep the inner thighs parallel to each other and press the top of the thigh bone firmly into the heels.
- ❖ Fixing the shoulders firmly in their sockets, bring the tailbone down towards the ground and towards the pubis. This will elongate the lower back.
- ❖ Maintain the pose from 30 seconds to one minute. Release the pose by straightening out the knees with an inhalation and with an exhalation bring the arms to the sides of the body in *tadasana*.

## Benefits

- ❖ The muscles of the spine, hips and chest get exercised.
- ❖ The muscles of the torso and the lower back get strong.
- ❖ The muscles of the thighs, knees, calves and ankles get toned.
- ❖ It keeps the body in a state of balance and the mind, resolute.
- ❖ Reduces symptoms of flat feet
- ❖ Stimulates the heart, diaphragm, and abdominal organs



## Notes

A tip for beginners: Practise a few inches away from a wall so that when you get into the pose, the tailbone will get the support of the wall.



Fig. 9.32: *Utkatasana*

**Contraindications:** This *asana* should not be performed if one suffers from chronic knee pain or problems concerning the knees, arthritis, sprained ankles, damaged ligaments, headache or insomnia (sleeplessness). In case you are going through your menstruation cycle or you have some lower back pain, you may do *utkatasana*, but very carefully.

3. **Ushtrasana:** *Ushtra* means camel in Sanskrit, and this pose resembles the shape of a camel's body. It is known to open up the heart



*chakra*, and increase strength and flexibility. *Ushtrasana* is performed on the knees. This *asana* gives the body a good backward bend and hence, it is used as a preparatory pose for deeper backbends.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Begin the *asana* by kneeling on your mat and placing your hands on your hips.
- ❖ You must ensure that your knees and shoulders are in the same line and the soles of your feet are facing the ceiling.
- ❖ Inhale and draw your tailbone in towards your pubis. You must feel the pull at the navel.
- ❖ While you are doing that, arch your back. Gently slide your palms over your feet and straighten your arms.
- ❖ Keep your neck in a neutral position. It should not be strained.
- ❖ Hold the position for about 30 to 60 seconds before you release the pose.



Fig. 9.33: *Ushtrasana*

### Benefits of *Ushtrasana*

- ❖ This *asana* helps improve digestion as it massages the internal organs.
- ❖ It opens up the chest and frontal portions of the torso.
- ❖ It strengthens the back and shoulders.

- ❖ It helps alleviate pain in the lower back.
- ❖ It makes the spine more flexible and also helps in the betterment of your posture.
- ❖ It relieves menstrual discomfort.

**Contraindications:** *Ushtrasana* is not advisable for those suffering from low blood pressure, insomnia or migraine. Don't do it even if you have problem in the lower back or an injury in the neck. Remember to always work within your capacity and if you have any medical problem, discuss it with your doctor before practising yoga.



### Notes

When you are starting off, it may be difficult to reach for your feet with your palms, without causing a strain to your back or neck. Turn your toes and elevate your heels. If you still can't reach for your legs, use a wooden block and place both your hands on them.

Make sure you do not hold this pose for more than 20 seconds when you are a beginner.

4. ***Pavanamuktasana:*** *Pavanamuktasana* is also known as Wind Releasing Pose. It is beneficial to cure gas problems and poor digestion. Regular practice of *pavanamuktasana* helps to stimulate the bowel movement which is very necessary for removing waste material.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Lie flat on your back and keep the legs straight and breathe deeply and rhythmically.
- ❖ Inhale slowly and lift the legs and bend in the knee. Bring upwards to the chest till your thigh touches to stomach. Hug your knees in place and lock your fingers.
- ❖ Try to touch the knee with your nose tip. This is not easy at the first time. But with regular practice you will be able to do this.

- ❖ Hold this position for 20 to 30 seconds. You can extend it till 1 minute as per your capacity.
- ❖ Now exhale slowly and come back to the original position, that is in *shavasana* (Lie straight).
- ❖ This is very beneficial for stomach abs. The results are very impressive. Practice 3 to 5 cycles each day.



Fig. 9.34: *Pawanmuktasana*

### Benefits

- ❖ *Pawanmuktasana* cures acidity, indigestion and constipation.
- ❖ *Pawanmuktasana* is an excellent practice to strengthen the abdominal organs.
- ❖ All kinds of gastrointestinal problems can be cured with regular practice of this *asana*.
- ❖ People having problem with passing gas, acidity, arthritis, pain in the waist and heart problem get good relief in this *asana*.
- ❖ It not only strengthens the back muscles but also relieves back pain.
- ❖ It helps to remove flab around the abdomen.
- ❖ This *asana* is good for the reproductive organs and gives good relief in any menstrual problems.

**Contraindications:** Anyone who has undergone abdominal surgery should not do this *asana*. Even people suffering from hernia or piles should avoid this *asana*.

Pregnant women are advised not to practice this *asana*. Those who suffer from pain, stiffness or have injury in the neck should do the *asana* keeping the head on the floor.

5. **Vrikshasana (Tree pose):** *Vrikshasana* is also known as the Tree Pose. *Vriksh* in Sanskrit means tree. The posture resembles a strongly rooted tree and hence the name. When one does this *asana*, one's body looks steady, balanced and graceful like a tree. The *asana* warms up the body and prepares it for more difficult poses.

### How to Perform

- ❖ Stand in *Tadasana*. Lift the right leg up and place the sole of the right leg on the inside of the left thigh close to the groin with the toes pointing down.
- ❖ Now, raise your hands up and at the same time give a good upward stretch to your body by lifting it up from the sides. Then join the palms on top.



Fig. 9.35: *Vrikshasana*



- ❖ Stretch up the hands as far as possible. Hold as long as you can while breathing deeply.
- ❖ Fixing your eyesight on some fixed point in front of you will help you in maintaining the balance.
- ❖ Then slowly, bring the hands down and then bring down the right leg on the floor next to your left leg.
- ❖ Now lift up the left leg and place the left foot on the inside of the right thigh.
- ❖ Lift both hands and join the palms above your head.
- ❖ Hold the pose as long as you can.
- ❖ Bring the arms down and put the leg down and relax.



### Notes

While doing all balancing poses, eyes should be kept open.

**Contraindications:** Those who suffer from high blood pressure should not raise their arms above the head for a long period of time. They can be held at the chest in the *anjali mudra* (hands folded in prayer). It is best that you avoid practicing this pose if you suffer from insomnia or migraine.



### Notes

In the beginning, you might find it difficult to bring the left foot above the right knee. In such cases, you can place your foot below the knee. But, as mentioned earlier, never place the foot on your knee. Also, initially it might be hard to stay steady and keep your balance. You could practice this *asana* by holding the wall for balance.

To enhance and aid concentration, take several deep breaths before the practice and also fix your gaze on an object right in front of you.

## 9.4 Five Spinal Movements in Yoga

Yoga addresses the five different movements of spine: it flexes, extends, bends to the side, rotates and lengthens; also called Axial Extension. To achieve good health, practise yoga poses that focus on the back and neck, and perform the five movements of the spine.

### Flexion

Bend forward and touch your toes. That is flexion, a movement of the spine that boosts circulation of blood in your brain and vital organs, and stretches your legs and back muscles. Yoga poses that emphasize flexion include *marjariasana*, *padahastana* and the *shishu asana* (child's pose). To enter the child's pose, kneel on the floor, sitting on your heels with your big toes together and your knees separated about the width of your hips. Reach your arms in your front, palms facing down, and lay your torso in between your thighs, with your forehead resting gently on the ground. Exhale and inhale several times, expanding your ribcage and back wide.

### Extension

Extension is a movement of the spine that involves reaching your spine upward while your spinal discs expand in front and compress in the back. Yoga works extension with backbend postures, such as *bhujangasana*, *setubandhasana* (bridge pose), *chakrasana* and *ushtrasana*. These extension postures stretch and strengthen the secondary curve of the cervical and lumbar spines, and are natural stress-reducers. *Bhujangasana* protects you against injury and relieves stubborn back pain as well. (This *asana* has already been explained above).

### Lateral Flexion

Your spine is in lateral flexion whenever you bend to your right or left side. Your spinal discs expand

on your left and compress on your right when you bend to the right and vice versa. Bending to the side also strengthens your oblique muscles, improves your balance and encourages a flexible spine. *Trikonasana* is one of the poses that work lateral flexion.

## Axial Rotation

Axial rotation involves twisting or rotating your spine. You twist and turn your body throughout the day and if the spine is not kept in great shape, a quick movement, such as a look behind you, could become a disastrous injury. Yoga implements different twisting postures that lubricating the spine and increasing your range of motion. *Vakrasana* and *ardhamatsyendrasana* are examples of *asanas* which involve axial rotation.

## Axial Extension

Axial extension is a movement of the spine that straightens and lengthens your spine, allowing you to expand your breathing, stretching your back muscles and lengthening your spine upward. *Tadasana* may be an example of axial extension.



### Learning ACTIVITY

Maintain a diary of the changes you observe in your body and mind after *asana* practice. Track your progress every month.



### SUMMARY

- The *suryanamaskar* or offering salutations to the sun, is preferably practiced in the early morning or evening facing the sun.
- A well-balanced growth of the body and mind alone is an essential prerequisite for a

human being to live in the world in peace and fulfil his or her aspirations. *Suryanamaskar* is a great tool to realise this goal.

- There are twelve postures in *suryanamaskar* each stretching various ligaments and giving different movements to the vertebral column.
- The life – giving *suryanamaskar* renders the inflexible muscles and spine of a person flexible.
- *Suryanamaskar* reduces visceral fat, brings flexibility to the spine and limbs, and also enables the practitioner to breathe right.
- *Suryanamaskar* is a boon for the mankind to attain perfect harmony among the body, mind and spirit.
- *Suryanamaskar* practice should ideally begin with a prayer to the Sun God.
- *Sarvangasana*, *shirshasana* and *paschimottanasana* are a few of the *asanas* propagated by the seers and yoga *gurus* as the ultimate *asanas* for keeping in perfect health.
- *Halasana*, *chakrasana* and *ardha matsyendrasana* are ideal for keeping the spine flexible.
- *Shavasana* must be performed at the end of *yogasana* practice.



### KEYWORDS

**Kundalini:** The coiled up serpent-like divine energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine is called *Kundalini*. *Kundalini* can be awakened by *pranayama*, *asanas* and *mudras* by *Hatha Yogis*; by concentration and training of the mind by *Raja Yogis* and by devotion and perfect self-surrender by *Bhaktas*.

**Matsyendra Nath:** The *Vedic* sage who was turned into a human from a fish by Lord Shiva



after the former overheard the Lord revealing the secret divine knowledge of Yoga to his consort Parvati.

**Suryanamaskar:** Salutation to the sun or prostration to the Sun.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. How many steps are there in one round of *suryanamaskar*?
2. Name two visible and subtle benefits of *suryanamaskar* practice.
3. Write down any two conditions under which *suryanamaskar* should not be done.
4. Name any four postures that keep the spine elastic and supple.
5. Which posture is performed at the end of *asana* practice?
6. Name the tough *asanas* and easy *asanas*.
2. Write about any five yoga *asanas* and their important benefits.
3. Write down the significance of contraindications and complementarity in performing of *asanas*.
4. Discuss the significance of *asanas* in curing modern day lifestyle problems.
5. According to the science of yoga, what are the five spinal movements? Explain briefly with suitable example.
6. Explain the contraindications of *shirshasana* and *mayurasana*.



## FURTHER READINGS

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

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

*Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha* – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Yoga Asanas* – Swami Kuvalyananda

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

### Long Answer Questions

1. What is the importance of *suryanamaskar*?



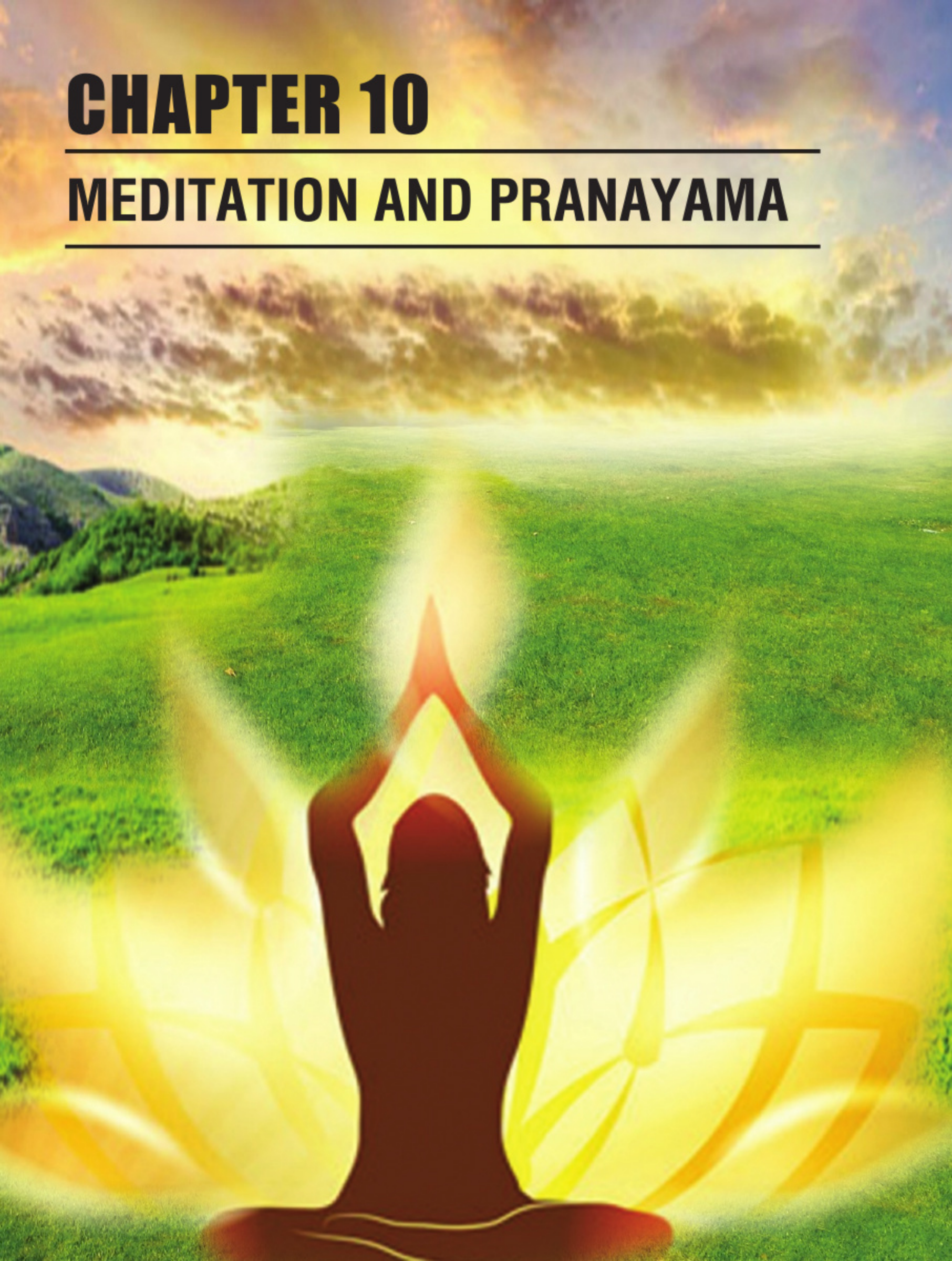


# **CHAPTER 10**

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## **MEDITATION AND PRANAYAMA**

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 10.1 Introduction to Pranayama
  - 10.2 Meditation – The Concept
  - 10.3 Practical Techniques of Meditation
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Define and understand the concept of *pranayama*
- Comprehend the concept and ability of full *yogic* breathing
- Understand the importance of meditation
- Appreciate the benefits of meditation
- Appreciate the concepts of *mudras*, *mantra*, and *japa*



## Introduction

Accessing your inner power with the help of breath is a useful tool. It will help you live life to its fullest. *Pranayama* is the control and extension of the breath, which awakens *prana*, or the life force. Practising the way you inhale and exhale can help you manipulate your vital energy to successfully activate or soothe your mood.

It may be interesting to note that only sixty seconds of intentional breath work can help you shift your mood dramatically. Simple controlled breathing exercises can allow you to channelize and redirect your energy in the positive direction, and help you achieve results you never imagined possible. In this chapter, we will discuss the correct methods to perform breathing exercises, along with understanding the significance of *pranayama* and meditation in improving our daily lives.



## 10.1 Introduction to Pranayama

Breathing is a vital process that starts at the time of birth and stops when a person dies. During breathing, the life sustaining oxygen is provided to all parts, organs and cells of the body. *Pranayama* is the formal practice of controlling the breath, which is the source of our *prana*, or vital life force. The word *prana* represents the vital energy responsible for life or life force, while *ayama* means “control (by stretching/expanding)”. Hence, *pranayama* translates to “control of the life force”. This is accomplished by manipulating breathing. One can control the rhythms of *pranic* energy with *pranayama* and attain a healthy body and mind.

When we breathe, we take in vital energy and remove waste products or toxins out of the body and mind. Breathing includes inhalation and exhalation, which is called *puraka* and *rechaka* in *yoga shastra*, respectively. *Pranayama* or breath control involves retention of breath (known as *kumbhaka* in Sanskrit) wherein air is retained internally or externally. The halt of breath or retention of air after inhaling is called *abhyantara* or *antara kumbhaka*, while that after exhaling is called *bahya kumbhaka*. Retention of air increases the level of *prana* (energy) in the body, and also regulates the flow of *pranic* energy throughout the body. *Pranayama* is thus a means to channelize energy in the body thereby removing ailments and slowing down the aging process of the body.

In *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, *pranayama* lays emphasis on breathing (inhalation, exhalation and retention), whereas in *Hatha Yoga*, *pranayama* is equated with *kumbhaka* or retention.



### Did You Know?

In his *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali mentions *pranayama* as a means of becoming fit for doing *dharana* (concentration) practice, as also for removing the shroud of impurities covering our inner light.

For further details please refer “*Pranayama Rahasya*” by Swami Ramdev (Patanjali Yogpeeth Publication)

## Sitting Postures for Pranayama

*Pranayama* and meditation can be performed in five classical sitting positions or postures. The order of the poses should be as follows:

- *Siddhasana*
- *Padmasana* and *Ardha Padmasana*
- *Swastikasana*
- *Sukhasana*
- *Vajrasana*

***Siddhasana* (The Accomplished Pose):** Sit with the legs straight. Bend the right leg and place the heel of the right foot touching the perineum region. Now bend the left leg and place the left foot on top of the right calf such that the small toe and the fourth toe are in between the calf and thigh muscles of the right leg. Now, bring the big toe and the second toe of the right foot between the calf and thigh muscles of the left leg. In this position, the ankles of both the feet are placed one over the other. If it is difficult to keep the body upright or the knees do not rest on the floor, then sit on a cushion, at a appropriate height.



### Notes

*Siddhasana* is given a place of the pride among all the *asanas* in *Hatha Yoga*. As a meditative pose, it provides the widest base of support; hence, it provides maximum balance and stability. The heel touching the perineum region stimulates the *muladhara chakra*, thereby facilitating the awakening of *kundalini*. In the case of females, this *asana* is referred to as *siddhayoni asana*.



Fig. 10.1: *Siddhasana* Pose





### Notes

The movements during breathing are no longer separated. One Full Yoga Breath includes one smooth, continuous flow of breath in and out, involving non-jerky movement of the abdomen, chest, and collarbone.

**Padmasana (The Lotus Pose):** With spine erect, legs outstretched on the floor or on a mat, bend the right knee and place the right foot on the left thigh. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on the right thigh. This pose can be performed with either knee first, then the other knee to follow. The soles of both feet should face the ceiling and the heels should be brought close to the abdomen. With both the feet firmly planted on the opposite thigh in a cross, place your hands on the knees in chin *mudra*. You can also adopt *padma mudra*, with the right palm placed on the left palm rested on the heels, thumbs in contact with each other. Head, back of the neck and spine must be in one straight line. Chin should be parallel to the floor.



Fig. 10.2: Padmasana

**Ardha Padmasana (The Half Lotus Pose):** Sit erect, bend the right knee and place the right foot close to the left thigh on the floor. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on top of the right thigh. Try to bring the left heel as close to the abdomen. Alternately, the left knee may be bent first. Both the knees should be grounded. You

may even place a folded blanket under the bottom to give the spine a lift. Hands in chin *mudra* or *padma mudra*. This pose may be adopted by those who cannot do *padmasana*.

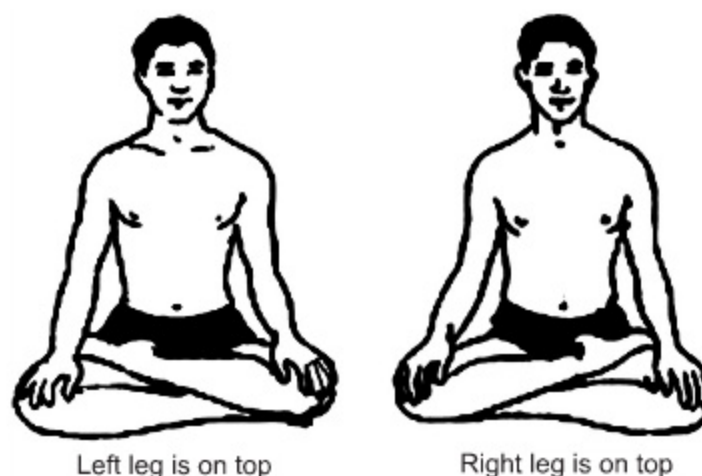


Fig. 10.3: Ardha Padmasana

**Swastikasana (The Auspicious Pose):** Sit on the floor, bend the left knee and bring the sole of the left foot in contact with the inside of the right thigh. Bend the right knee and place the right foot between the left thigh and calf muscle. Ensure that both the heels do not touch the pubis. The toes of the left foot must be pulled up slowly to rest in between the right thigh and calf. Place your hands on the knees in chin or *jnana mudra*. Spine must be erect. Close the eyes and observe the breath.



Fig. 10.4: Swastikasana

**Sukhasana (Simple comfortable cross-legged pose):** Sit down on a mat and place the right foot under the left thigh and the left foot under, or in front of, the right calf on the floor. If it is difficult to keep the body upright then sit on a cushion at an appropriate height. This posture is recommended for those who have difficulty sitting for a long period of time in *siddhasana*, *vajrasana* or *padmasana*.



Fig. 10.5: *Sukhasana*

**Vajrasana (The Adamantine Pose):** Fold both the legs, keeping your hips on the heels. Let your toes point out behind you; the big toes should be touching each other. Sit over the gap formed by the parted heels. Keep the head, neck and spine in a straight line. Place the palms on the thighs.



Fig. 10.6: *Vajrasana*



### Notes

#### Check list for *pranayama* practitioners

- The eyes should be closed during *Pranayama* practice.
- The upper body should be straight and erect.
- The head, neck, and back should be aligned.
- The shoulder and abdominal muscles should be relaxed.
- The hands should be resting on the knees in any comfortable *mudra*.
- The body remains motionless during the practice.
- The mood should be tranquil and relaxed.

## Full Yogic Breath – Concept and Demonstrated Ability

A normal breath is distinguished by three phases – inhalation, exhalation, and pause after exhalation. These three put together is what is referred to as respiration. One phase follows the other. The inhalation forms the active part of the breath. The exhalation is the passive part of the breath – the phase of relaxation. The pause in breathing arises naturally at the end of the exhalation phase and lasts until the impulse to inhale occurs of its own accord.



### Notes

The exhalation in *pranayama* practices should last approximately twice as long as the inhalation.

Quiet, rhythmic, and deep breathing is decisive for our health. It has a harmonizing and calming effect on our body and mind. On the other hand, breathing that is too rapid and shallow has a negative influence on us, as it can intensify nervousness, stress, tension, and pain. Therefore, all exercises in yoga, including breathing exercises, should be performed gently with full awareness. Avoid breathing through the mouth, instead



breathe through the nose. The nostrils act as a passage for filtration, moistening, and warming the air.

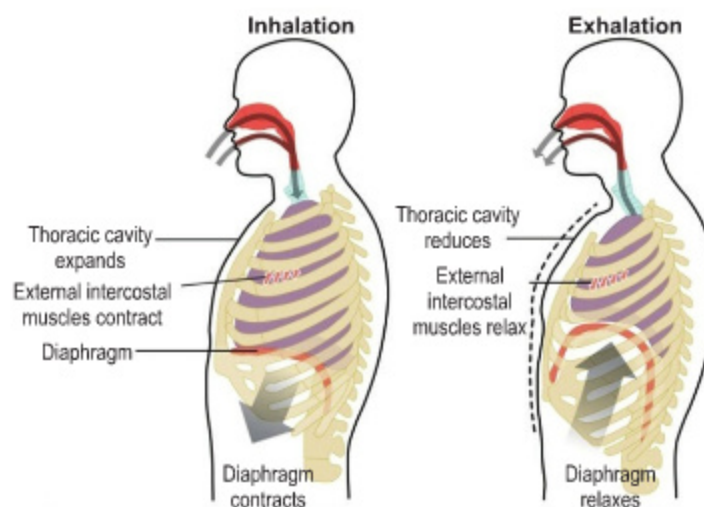
### ! Caution

A frequent mistake made with regard to breathing is to draw the abdomen. Sucking in the abdomen during inhalation hampers deep breathing. Comfortable clothing must be donned during practice.

What was once normal and rhythmic breathing during infancy has, over a period of time, got vitiated due to habitually incorrect breathing without awareness. The full yogic breath can help us restore healthy breathing practice. In fact, The full yogic breath has become more of a fundamental requirement to improve our breathing than merely a corrective health technique. The full yoga breath involves three types of breathing, namely abdominal or diaphragmatic breathing, chest or thoracic breathing, and collarbone or clavicular breathing. Let us understand each of these individually, along with the correct method to perform them.

## Abdominal Breathing

**Abdominal breathing or vertical breathing** is the natural way of breathing, in line with the structure of our organic body. Inhalation pushes the diaphragm down, thereby releasing the abdominal organs outward. There is a resultant expansion of the belly. Exhalation pulls the diaphragm upwards, flattening the abdomen. While inhalation is dynamic, exhalation is passive. Abdominal breathing optimizes the lung capacity and makes the breath rhythmic and relaxing.



**Fig. 10.7:** Movement of the Diaphragm during Breathing

### Notes

The functioning of the diaphragm must be optimal, since it is linked to vital organs like the heart, lungs, liver, spleen, pancreas and stomach. Correct movement of the diaphragm results in better intake of oxygen without exertion.

## Step-by-Step Guide to Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Either lie down or sit on a chair with feet firmly grounded or sit in cross legged position. While lying down, place the hands in line with the shoulders, palms facing the ceiling. Gently close your eyes.

### ! Caution

Just like in a seated position, in a supine position also, the head, neck and the spine must be in a straight line. When lying down, lift your head and take a look at your feet to check that the head, neck and the back are in a straight line.

2. Relax your body and place the palms of your hands on the abdomen with your fingers pointed toward your navel. Place your

stretched out fingers on either side of your abdomen with the middle fingers at the navel.

3. Inhale and allow your diaphragm to move downwards. Feel the expansion of your abdomen. Do not put any pressure on your abdomen muscles; let them expand naturally.
4. When you are ready to exhale, simply repeat the movement in your mind. Your abdomen will deflate as the air is expelled. Ensure that your exhalation is as slow as possible. This will help you to breathe rhythmically.
5. Once you start breathing in a natural flow, start deepening, lengthening and extending your breathing. In simple words, let the abdomen expand fully as you inhale and deflate it completely on exhalation.
6. Practise this until you feel your abdomen expanding without any tension or effort.



Keep the chest still during this entire process of breathing; only move the abdomen.

### Chest or Thoracic Breathing

In thoracic breathing, there is a heaving of the chest or rib cage. The rib cage expands in all directions with an inhalation. With an exhalation, the ribs revert to their original position. The intake of oxygen is lower than abdominal breathing and the breath tends to be fast. In moments of stress and worry, our breathing becomes heavily chest – oriented instead of the more relaxing abdominal breath. The unconscious use of this more rapid form of breathing creates a heightened state of tension. To break this unfavourable cycle, slow and deep abdominal breathing is of great assistance. Thoracic breathing is a powerful breath technique for healing respiratory ailments.

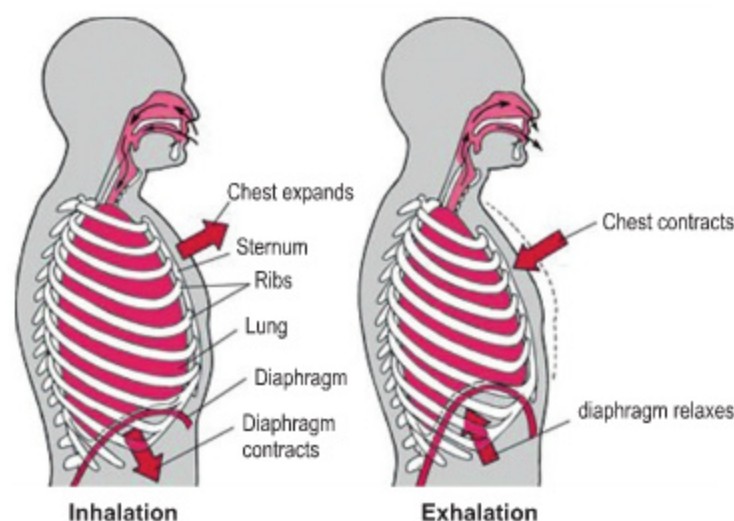


Fig. 10.8: Chest Movement during Breathing

### Steps to Perform Thoracic Breathing

1. Take the same position as the one during abdominal breathing and stay relaxed.
2. Place the palms of your hands lightly on your ribcage with your fingers stretched out. Your little fingers should touch the lower ribcage, while your fingertips should be holding your ribcage. The thumbs should be facing the armpits at the top of the ribcage.
3. Do not keep your shoulders lifted or tense; they must be completely relaxed.
4. Start breathing normally. You will observe that your chest moves slightly up at inhalation and down with exhalation. Observe this pattern for a few moments.
5. Remember to keep the abdomen still, moving only the chest while breathing.
6. Once the desired pattern of breathing is set, begin to deepen, lengthen and extend that movement. On inhalation, expand and lift the rib cage, filling the lungs completely with air. Then on exhalation, let the lungs collapse fully.
7. Practise this till the time you feel relaxed and confident about breathing through the chest.





### Did You Know?

With thoracic breathing, you will feel more power in your breathing when it is done correctly. This expands the entire chest cavity, fills the middle of the lungs with air, and frees the heart from pressure. There is more resonance to the voice when the ribcage is open and relaxed, which is an invaluable technique for singers and speakers.

### Collarbone or Clavicular Breathing

This is the last step before the One Complete Yoga Breath. With this type of breathing the air flows into the top of the lungs. With inhalation, the upper part of the chest and collarbones are lifted, and with exhalation, they go lower. The breath is very shallow and rapid. This type of breathing occurs in situations of extreme stress and panic, or where there is great difficulty in breathing.

### Steps to Perform Clavicular Breathing

1. Take the same position as during abdominal and thoracic breathing and keep your body relaxed.
2. Place your fingertips gently on the part of your collarbone where the bone juts up and out.
3. Inhale and let your chest expand and rise at the same time that your collarbone rises. The centre of the collarbone (in the area of the larynx) will create an “indentation” in your throat if you are doing it right.
4. Slowly exhale and let your chest and collarbone return to their normal position.



### Caution

Prevent your shoulders from rising up and down; only the collarbone should rise while breathing.

In a healthy and natural breath, all these three variations, i.e., diaphragmatic breathing, thoracic breathing and clavicular breathing occur. Each is united with the other into a flowing wave, which proceeds from the bottom to the top of the lungs with the inhalation, and from the top to the bottom with the exhalation. With the inhalation, the abdomen extends forward and the chest is expanded. With the exhalation the chest and the abdomen return to their original position. When one practises this type of breathing utilizing the full lung capacity naturally and without any force, one is said to be practising the full yogic breath.

### The Full Yogic Breath

The full yogic breath is a wonderful combination of the three types of breathing discussed above.

1. Take the position that you followed in the above breathing exercises. Check the position of your head with the rest of your body to be sure it is centred and straight.
2. Begin slowly by inhaling through the nose, while keeping the mouth closed. Let the air fill your lungs without stopping the movement.
3. Continue to inhale smoothly until your ribcage has expanded sideways.
4. Without stopping the breath, continue until your chest has expanded and your collarbone has risen.



### Notes

The movements during breathing are no longer separated. One Full Yoga Breath includes one smooth, continuous flow of breath in and out, involving non-jerky movement of the abdomen, chest and collarbone.

5. Feel the air filling your chest. Retain your breath, but only for as long as you are completely relaxed and comfortable.

6. Now start exhaling slowly in exact reverse motion. Allow the breath to flow out and your abdomen to sink.
7. Continue to exhale as slowly as you can, fully focus on your breath being expelled upward and now reaching for your ribcage. Feel the energy of your breath move through the ribcage as you continue to exhale and expel the energy from your ribcage into your larynx.
8. Continue to exhale, and feel how all the energy of your breath has left your body. Your chest and collarbone are now fully relaxed.
9. It is completely normal if you feel slightly dizzy or lightheaded after practicing the Full Yoga Breath. In fact, this indicates that your brain is being filled with more oxygen than usual, and is a sign that you are doing it right.



Yogic breathing must be practised in a physically and mentally relaxed state. A physically relaxed state is essential, as it is only then that the body muscles can stretch and relax properly without creating any kind of tension. A mentally relaxed state is necessary for full concentration, relaxation, and proper breathing. By exhaling consciously, one can considerably assist in the relaxation of the muscles.

## Different Types of Pranayama – Knowledge, Benefits, and Precautions

This section discusses different types of *pranayama* along with the correct method of their practice, benefits, and precautions.

### Anulom Vilom or Nadi Shodhan (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

This practice is also considered as a *kriya* (*nadi shodhana kriya*) particularly when it is not accompanied by *kumbhak* or retention.

*Anulom – vilom pranayama* is one of the most excellent breathing exercises. While performing this *pranayama*, it is recommended to keep the right hand in *pranava mudra*. In this *mudra*, the first two fingers of the right hand are to be fully bent and last two fingers are to be kept straight and held together. Now straighten the thumb and bending the right hand at the elbow, place the curved fingers in such a way that they come near the lips. Keep the hand from shoulder to elbow slightly away from the chest. Keep the right hand thumb on the right nostril and last two fingers on the left side of the nose.

To perform *Anulom – vilom pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit comfortably on a mat.
- Close the right nostril with right thumb and breathe from left nostril. Then close left nostril with the small and ring finger and breathe out from right nostril.
- Now breathe in deeply with right nostril and then close the right nostril and breathe out deeply with the left nostril.
- Repeat the exercise for 10 times to begin with.



Fig. 10.9: *Anulom Vilom Pranayama*





### Did You Know?

The right nostril represents *pingala nadi* (sun principle or energy), whereas the left nostril represents *ida nadi* (moon principle or mind). According to *Hatha Yoga*, many adverse health conditions occur due to imbalance between the *ida* and *pingala nadis*. Alternate nostril breathing balances these two forces.

#### Health benefits of *Anulom – vilom pranayama*:

- Equalizes breathing through both the nostrils, thereby creating a wholesome personality conducive to meditation.
- Facilitates proper supply of oxygen in the body; and carbon dioxide is effectively removed.
- Allows deep breathing and improves lung function. More oxygen is made available per breath, making the breathing most efficient.
- Improves blood circulation and purifies blood. This is useful for patients with heart-related problems.
- Helps in managing stress. Regular practice offers energy in the body and releases stress and anxiety.
- Calms the mind and reduces anxiety, depression and other mental illnesses. It also reduces hyperactive disorders related to the mind.
- Balances *ida* and *pingala*, removes all blockages in the *pranic* energy channels, which may lead to spiritual awakenings.
- Cleanses, strengthens and tones the nervous system, which also helps in improving concentration.
- Prevents diabetes or keeps it under control.
- Removes blockage of arteries, and relieves hypertension.
- Increases the glow of the skin.
- Benefits the patients suffering from asthma, headache, migraine, neurological problems, depression, and gastric problems.

Some precautions to be followed during *Anulom – vilom pranayama*:

- This breathing exercise should be ideally practised in the morning in fresh air with empty stomach.
- People who have undergone heart surgeries, abdominal surgeries, or brain surgeries should consult their medical consultant before starting practice.
- It should be practised after emptying the bowel and bladder.
- Beginners, particularly young children, pregnant women or elderly should practice *Anulom – vilom* only under expert guidance.
- Overstraining of chest muscles should be avoided. Under no circumstances should the breathing be forced.
- Set the duration of inhalation and exhalation as per your physical strength and fitness.



### Example

Start with a duration you are most comfortable with, for example 4 seconds of inhalation and 4 seconds of exhalation. Later, it can be increased up to 20 seconds or even more.

#### **Bhastrika Pranayama (Bellows Breath)**

*Bhastrika* in Sanskrit means ‘bellows’; hence, *bhastrika pranayama* literally means a breathing exercise that resembles the blowing of bellows. It is an excellent breathing exercise that can be practised slowly or fast as per our convenience. In this *pranayama*, the body gets maximum amount of oxygen due to complete inhaling and exhaling.



## Notes

Traditional *bhastrika pranayama* involves two steps: *kapalbbati* and *pranayama*. There are several varieties of *kapalbbati* and *pranayama*, thereby giving rise to several varieties of *bhastrika*. What is described below is the most popular practice of *kapalbbati*, also known as *bhastrika*.

To perform *bhastrika pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit comfortably on flat ground.
- Take a deep breath through both nostrils and fill the lungs with air.
- After full inhalation, quickly exhale with great force making a hissing sound.
- Inhale deeply and exhale completely.
- Gradually increase the rapidity of inhalation and exhalation.



Fig. 10.10: *Bhastrika Pranayama*



## Caution

In *Bhastrika pranayama*, the force has to be applied while breathing in and breathing out. You can determine how much force to apply while inhaling and exhaling respectively, keeping your health and endurance in mind.

Health benefits of *Bhastrika pranayama*:

- *Bhastrika* as described above is the most energizing practice of *pranayama*. It raises the BMR (basal metabolic rate) thereby increasing the calorie consumption in the body.
- Rhythmic inhalation and exhalation stimulates circulation of cerebral fluid, creating compression and decompression in the brain.
- Rhythmic diaphragm movements stimulate heart and lung muscles, thus improving blood circulation and strengthening lungs.
- Accelerated blood circulation and rate of gas exchange in each cell produces heat and washes out gases.
- Relaxes the body and mind and improves concentration.
- Relieves stress, depression and hypertension.
- Increases appetite and provides effective cure for obesity.
- Provides cures against health ailments such as asthma, headache, migraine, neurological problems, gastric problems, arthritis, and throat infection.
- Increases warmth in the body and helps prevent common cold.
- Flushes out toxins from the body and cures illnesses of respiratory track.
- Imparts glow to the skin.

Some precautions to be followed during *bhastrika pranayama*:

- Patients with high blood pressure or heart disease should not practice *bhastrika pranayama*.
- People with low stamina should avoid doing this *pranayama* too often.
- This *pranayama* should be practiced under expert guidance.



### Chandrabhedan or Chandrabhedhi Pranayama

This *pranayama* is called *chandrabbhedhi* as its practice stimulates the cooling process brought about by the stimulation of the para-sympathetic nervous system. It is also called left nostril breathing. While doing this *pranayama*, one should breathe in through the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. To perform *chandrabbhedhi pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.
- Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Close your right nostril and inhale slowly through the left nostril. Fill up your lungs to maximum capacity.
- Inhale from the left nostril.
- Close the left nostril and exhale slowly through the right nostril.
- This completes one round of *chandrabbhedhi pranayama*.



Fig. 10.11: Chandrabhedhi Pranayama



Those suffering from heart disease or asthma should not practise holding of the breath in any *pranayama* for long durations.

Health benefits of *chandrabbhedhi pranayama*:

- Reduces the flow of gall.
- Cools the body and reduces body heat.
- Gets rid of heart burn and laziness.
- Is beneficial in cases of mental tension, agitation, high blood pressure, heart disease, etc.

Some precautions to be followed during *chandrabbhedhi pranayama*:

- This *pranayama* should not be done during winters. It must be practiced only in summers.
- Right nostril should be pressed with thumb of right hand, while left nostril should be pressed with ring finger of right hand.

### Suryabhedana Pranayama

This *pranayama* is also called right nostril breathing. While doing this *pranayama*, one should breathe in through the right nostril and breathe out through the left nostril. To perform *suryabhedana pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.
- Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Inhale slowly and deeply from the right nostril. Fill up your lungs to maximum capacity.
- Open the left nostril and exhale slowly.
- This completes one round of *suryabhedana pranayama*.



Fig. 10.12: Suryabhedana Pranayama

#### Health benefits of *Suryabhedan pranayama*:

- Boosts the nervous system, especially the sympathetic nervous system.
- Helps in regenerating the lung tissues and enhances their capacity.
- Strengthens the immune system and increases the efficiency of digestive system.
- Soothes and invigorates the nerves, and cleans the sinuses.
- Purifies the brain and destroys intestinal worms and diseases arising from excess of wind (*vayu*).
- Cures rhinitis and various sorts of neuralgia.
- Provides relief to people suffering from asthma, cold, low blood pressure, and gastric problems.
- Increases the body temperature and provides warmth; hence particularly useful and effective for people with cold hands and feet.
- Removes the *kapha* (mucus) imbalance in the body.
- Helps in weight loss and is very effective against obesity.
- Beats anxiety, depression, low energy, stress management, and other mental illnesses.

#### Some precautions to be followed during *suryabhedan pranayama*:

- The eyes, temples, eyebrows, and the skin on the forehead should remain completely passive and show no sign of strain.
- Persons suffering from high blood pressure or heart trouble should not hold their breath after inhalation.
- It should not be performed if you are suffering from any kind of fever as it increases the heat in the body.

- Avoid *suryabhedan pranayama* if you are suffering from high *pitta* or acidity, or have recently recovered from diarrhoea.

#### Ujjayi Pranayama (Victorious Breath)

The prefix 'Uj' means upwards or superiority in rank. The word *jay* in Sanskrit means "conquest, victory, triumph or success". In *ujjayi pranayama*, the lungs are fully expanded and the chest is puffed out like that of a proud conqueror. It involves shallow breathing aimed at flexing the diaphragm.



Fig. 10.13: *Ujjayi Pranayama*

To perform *ujjayi pranayama*, follow the steps given below:

- Sit erect in a comfortable position.
- *Ujjayi* involves partial closure of the glottis both while inhaling and exhaling. This is done by tightening the throat region slightly.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils with the generation of a hissing/whispering sound. Fill the lungs to their maximum capacity.
- Exhale slowly, deeply, and steadily again generating the same sound, until the lungs are completely empty.





### Notes

*Ujjayi pranayama*, when performed without the retention of breath and in a reclining position, is ideal for persons suffering from high blood pressure or coronary troubles.

*Ujjayi* is the only breathing practice which is prescribed to be performed while sitting, standing as well as lying down.

#### Health benefits of *Ujjayi pranayama*:

- Aerates the lungs, removes phlegm, gives endurance, soothes the nerves, and tones the entire system.
- Reduces the risk of diseases caused by accumulation of bile, wind or phlegm.
- Stimulates the thyroid gland.
- Eases diseases of the lungs, chest and throat.
- Improves oxygenation needed in many body functions.
- Clears the lungs and nasal cavity and strengthens the vocal cord.
- Helps alleviate indigestion and irregular bowel movements.
- Proves effective in pain reduction, insomnia, and migraine.

Given some precaution to be followed during *Ujjayi pranayama*:

Avoid it if you suffer from cardiac problems.

### **Bhramari Pranayama (Humming Bee Breath)**

The original Sanskrit word for *bhramari* is *bhramar*, or humming bee. This *pranayama* involves creating a sound similar to the humming bee. It is an excellent breathing exercise that helps release agitation, frustration and anger, and is one of the best exercises for calming the mind.



### Notes

The traditional *bhramari* breathing involves generation of the humming bee sound both during inhalation and exhalation.

#### To perform *bhramari pranayama*:

- Sit erect in a comfortable position and close your eyes.
- Raise bent arms to shoulder level and close the ears with your thumbs.
- Place the index finger gently on your eyelids; the middle finger lightly on your nostrils; and the ring and small fingers above and below the lips, respectively.
- Inhale slowly and deeply to fill the lungs completely.
- Exhale slowly through the nostrils.
- Produce the sound of a humming bee (“*bmmmm*”) through larynx (sound box) while exhaling.



**Fig. 10.14:** *Bhramari Pranayama*



### Did You Know?

For best results, this *pranayama* should be practised at night or in early morning.

Health benefits of *bhramari pranayama*:

- Makes voice sweet and melodious and helps in clarity of speech.
- Calms the body, and relieves stress, tension, anger, and anxiety.
- Cures hypertension and depression.
- Helps in controlling high blood pressure.
- Strengthens the vocal cords.
- Increases concentration.
- Very helpful for pregnant women for easy and trouble free childbirth.

Some precautions to be followed during *bhramari pranayama*:

- *Bhramari pranayama* should be done on an empty stomach.
- If you feel dizzy while practising, stop the exercise and start normal breathing.

### Sheetali Pranayama

The word *sheetali* means “cooling” in Sanskrit.



Fig. 10.15: *Sheetali Pranayama*

To perform *sheetali pranayama*:

- Start inhaling through the mouth by rolling the tongue out of the mouth.
- After inhalation, close the mouth and slowly exhale through the nostrils.

Some precautions to be followed during *sheetali pranayama*:

- This *pranayama* can lower blood pressure. Therefore, necessary precautions must be observed during its practice.
- You may feel little cold or tingling sensation in the throat due to cold air, but this is normal.
- Under no circumstances the breathing should be forced.
- Stop the practice if you feel dizzy and continue to breathe normally

Health benefits of *sheetali pranayama*:

- The practice of *sheetali pranayama* calms the mind, reduces the stress or fight – flight response. It cools the body and mind. The blood pressure is also lowered. This *pranayama* is very effective in hyperacidity or even ulcers.
- *Sheetali* breathing reduces the body temperature. This may have positive effect on the endocrine glands and nervous system.
- In the ancient text of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Swami Swatmaram says that the practitioner becomes young and attractive by practicing this *pranayama*. Further, he says that this *pranayama* removes excess heat accumulated in the system, reduces excess bile, corrects the disorders of spleen and cures fever.
- *Sheetali pranayama* gives control over hunger and thirst. It has a calming effect on the entire nervous system, and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system which induces muscular relaxation and is very effective in stress management.



## Sheetkari Pranayama

In *sheetali pranayama* and *sheetkari pranayama*, we breathe through the mouth just like python, hen and offspring of deer.

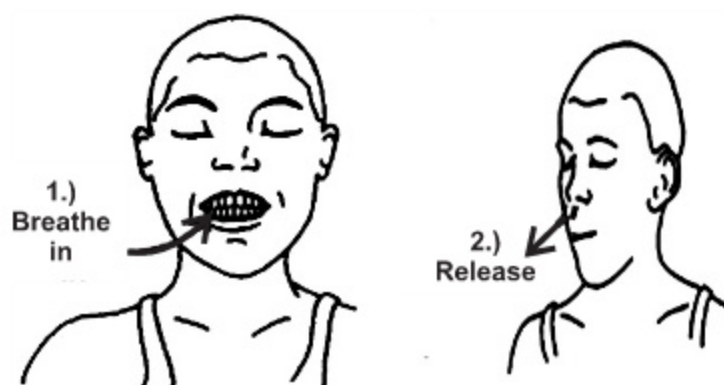


Fig. 10.16: *Sheetkari Pranayama*

The practitioner of *sheetkari* can alleviate his or her thirst in the absence of water. *Sheetali* and *Sheetkari pranayama* are similar; the only difference between them is the technique of breathing used to practise them. In *sheetali*, we breathe by folding the tongue, and in *sheetkari* we inhale through the teeth.

To perform *sheetkari pranayama*:

- Sit in any comfortable yogic posture.
- Fix the tongue on the upper or lower layer of teeth and inhale slowly through the mouth, generating a hissing sound. This breathing is similar to the saliva generated in the mouth when we eat anything hot and spicy.
- After inhaling, close your mouth and breathe out through the nose.

Health benefits of *sheetkari pranayama*:

- Cools down the body temperature.
- Helps curing in spleen and indigestion.
- Effective in dental problems like pyorrhoea.
- Controls body temperature.
- Calms the mind.

- Reduces emotional excitement and stress.
- Beneficial in case of depression.

Some precautions to be followed during *Sheetkari pranayama*:

- If you are suffering from cold and cough, asthma or other respiratory problems, tonsillitis should not practice *Sheetkari* and *Sheetali pranayama*.
- Those suffering from low blood pressure are strictly advised not to perform this *pranayama*.



### Notes

*Sheetkari pranayama* is the variation of *sheetali pranayama*. People who are not able to fold the sides of the tongue in *sheetali pranayama* can perform *Sheetkari pranayama*.

## Benefits of Pranayama

As a technique for control of *prana*, *pranayama* practices result in the stock of *prana* increasing in the body, and the frequency of *pranic* vibrations increasing. The first brings about an increased energy level and the second brings about an increased awareness level.

*Pranayama* practices have benefits at all levels for human beings – physical, physiological, mental and spiritual. Some of these benefits are as described below.

Every organ in the body, including heart, brain, lungs, digestive organs, endocrine glands, and excretory organs have rhythms. Breathing, too, has a specific rhythm. *Pranayama* brings the breath in natural rhythm by controlling the process of inhalation, exhalation and retention. Breathing influences almost all the systems of the body. Hence, it helps to maintain the natural rhythm of all body organs, and allows them to function properly for major part of our lives.



With *pranayama*, one can master the process of breathing more slowly and more deeply. Reduced breathing rate has multiple benefits for the body like slowing down the heart rate, minimizing the wear and tear of internal organs, improving blood circulation lowering blood pressure, and slowing down the aging process.

*Pranayama* increases lung capacity. This is actually helpful for those suffering from respiratory illnesses such as asthma and emphysema to overcome the fear of shortness of breath.

*Pranayama* controls the fluctuations of mind and prepares it for meditation. The combination of *pranayama* and meditation makes the body feel light. It provides inner peace, improves sleep, sharpens the memory and refines concentration.

*Pranayama* helps in increasing oxygen supply to the brain and provides complete relaxation to the nervous system. A fitter and calmer mind is a path to deep relaxation, which also increases the mental and physical powers of endurance.

Research suggests that manipulating the breath can alter how we feel. Breathing has a significant impact on emotions like anger, fear, joy or sadness. Right breathing not only calms the body and mind, but also helps control negative emotions, such as anger, depression, jealousy, hatred, greed and arrogance.

Yogic breathing practices increase the levels of leptin, a hormone produced by fat tissue that signals the brain to inhibit hunger. Intensive yoga practice may benefit health by altering leptin and adiponectin production in the body. Leptin has a pro-inflammatory role, while adiponectin has anti-inflammatory properties.<sup>1</sup>

By combining *asanas* with *pranayama*, deep relaxation and meditation, we shift the balance of

our stress regulation systems in our brain and our body. Practising various Yoga techniques including *pranayama* affects the activity of our genes, lowers our heart rate and blood pressure and decreases the production of “stress” hormones, which reduces the symptoms of mental and physical distress.<sup>2</sup>

Practising *pranayama* on a daily basis can benefit those suffering from respiratory or heart problems, insomnia, nervous disorders, migraines, or any disorder which occurs due to absence of proper relaxation.

## 10.2 Meditation – The Concept<sup>3</sup>

According to the *Ashtanga yoga* of Patanjali, *Dhyāna* is seventh rung of the *yogāṅgās*. *Yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *prāṇayama* and *pratyābhāra* all these five *āṅgās* are considered to be *bahya*, external *āṅgās*; whereas *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are *antarik*, inner *āṅgās*. To enter into the grandeur inner kingdom and build a bridge to the inner and outer worlds, *dharana* works like a bridge whereas *dhyāna*, the meditation is equal to a gateway of the inner world. There may be so many traditions and paths in this world and all of them may have different kinds of practices to follow to reach ultimate goal. But all of them have no differences about meditation. Therefore, meditation is the most essential part of the practice. According to yoga *sutrās* of Patanjali by following *yama*, *niyama* etc., the great steps, mastering the *asanas*, practising different kinds of *prāṇayama*, one becomes able to get rid of the impurities and control on the senses. Then only one can attain concentration or *dharana*, which is the process of holding or fixing the attention of mind onto one object or place:

*desabandhascittasya darana*  
(*yogadarsana* 3.1)

<sup>1</sup> Janice K. Kiecolt-Glaser, Lisa M. Christian, Rebecca Andridge, Beom Seuk Hwang, William B. Malarkey, Martha A. Belury, Charles F. Emery, and Ronald Glaser, “Adiponectin, Leptin, and Yoga Practice”, PubMed Central, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Sat Bir Singh Khalsa and Jodie Gould, “Your Brain on Yoga”, Harvard University, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from *Yoga Tree: Fundamental Principle of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



*Tatra pratyayaiikatânatâ dhyânam'*

(yogadarsana 3/1-2)

The concept of meditation is the most misunderstood or inadequately understood in modern times. Basically, all meditation techniques are related to the mind. They involve controlling the mind to finally transcend the mind. This state of transcendence is referred to in *Hatha Yoga* as *unmani* or *manonmani awastha*. In the wake of practising meditation, several benefits ensue as by-products, such as efficient functioning of the body, a general state of well-being and overall equanimity.

Meditation is commonly associated with practices to still the mind. There are various forms of meditation to suit different levels of practitioners. Interchangeably referred to as contemplation, meditation practices typically involve breath observation, auto suggestion, visualization, *mantra* chanting, rotation of beads in *japa*, concentration on an object of choice and non-judgemental awareness of thoughts. These practices entail training the senses and the mind to disassociate from the object and stand apart as a witness. Thoughts are viewed without any identification, analysis, judgement, resistance or verbalizing. Meditation practice helps in developing concentration or single pointedness.

In its truest sense, meditation is a state of being – one must be meditative in and through all our actions. What starts off as a technique of practice, slowly evolves into a state of being. The softness and tranquillity of the 30 minutes of practice carries itself forward through the rest of the day. Once perfected, the meditative stance percolates and permeates through all thoughts and deeds 24/7.

Naturally once the mind is meditative, the fluctuations of the mind lose their power to overwhelm and sway the individual. There is greater clarity and sharpness in seeing things as they are without the pre-conditioned colouring of

memory and judgement. The reflecting medium of the mind becomes clearer and purer to reveal the light of intelligence. Muddy waters cannot reflect the brilliance of the sun, only pure and placid waters reflect the sunlight. So also, a mind which has been cleared of its dross through the technique of meditation, is tuned to reflect the light of awareness.

Scriptures lay great importance on meditation as the highest vocation for mankind. Training the senses and the mind is a pre-requisite to being meditative. Buddhist monks are known to practice mindfulness in their day to day activities. Mindfulness is referred to being aware of what you are doing at the time of doing, no matter what you are doing.

## 10.3 Practical Techniques of Meditation

For a novice to sit in meditation without any thoughts is an uphill task. Therefore, practitioners are advised to begin with a support such as the breath or a deity of choice. By using a support, the vagrant mind is given a limited field within which it is allowed to meander, like a farm animal tied to a pole has a fixed radius for wandering.

### Concentration – Meditation

The mind needs something to get attached to. Concentration – meditation entails focusing the mind on a single point, such as breath, or a mantra, a candle flame, rotation of beads in *japa*, auto-suggestion for visualization of an object of choice preferably, a deity or *ishta devta*. Concentration – meditation practice takes time to build up, it is advisable to practice for a few minutes initially and continue the practice with fervour and determination.

The mind will wander but try to refocus the mind and bring it back to the object of meditation. Involuntary thoughts will occur, but over a period



of time, the mind gets channelized to remaining focused on the object of meditation for longer durations. You will notice that this practice helps in developing our concentration ability in our daily activities as well.

### Mindful Meditation

Mindful meditation practice entails a free flow of thoughts as and when they come. The practitioner is required to simply stand apart from the thoughts and not to identify with or judge them.

Through this practice, the practitioner slowly realizes that the thoughts by themselves have no power, it is the unnecessary identification with the thoughts that causes any agitation. The mind is a continuous flow of thoughts. By being mindful of the thoughts that occur, their value judgement is withheld, leading to a correct evaluation of the thought. Through mindfulness meditation, you realize that thoughts tend to flow in preconditioned patterns. Continuous practice helps in the development of state of internal harmony and balance.

You can practice a combination of both concentration and mindfulness meditation.

### Simple Meditation Techniques for Beginners

- Make a firm resolve that 'I will meditate daily'. Start off with a daily target of two minutes of sitting still. Gradually, keep increasing the time.
- Try to meditate at a fixed time and a fixed place. The body will slowly get into a groove of meditating and will naturally veer to the spot of meditation at the given time. Ideally, one must meditate in the morning, when the cosmic rhythm is conducive to silence and stillness. The place for meditation must be kept clean and away from noise. If it is not possible to meditate at a fixed time and a

fixed place, choose any time of the day that works best – try not to skip any single day of practice. It's only two minutes – you owe it to yourself.

- If you forget to meditate, set a reminder either on the phone or stick a poster it near your bedside.
- Please do not worry about where to sit, what mat should you use, how should you meditate. You need not sit on the floor – sit comfortably on a chair or on your couch, keeping the back erect. Ensure that there are minimal external disturbances. Wear comfortable clothes.
- Once you are comfortable sitting for two minutes, then start optimizing on the posture. Keep the head, neck and back in one straight line. As you progress, you will notice that you can stay longer and longer in your practice.
- Observe the state of the mind – is it restless, agitated, oscillating? How is the breath – is it smooth, interrupted, deep, shallow? Simply watch and do not try to change anything yet.
- If you feel drowsy, then take a deep breath and forcefully exhale – repeat this a couple of times.
- Gradually increase the time spent in practice. You will enjoy these moments of stillness and want to practice more and more – a self – stroking cycle.
- When your mind wanders, get rid of the futile thoughts immediately.

### The Difference between Dharana and Dhyana

This difference is beautifully brought out in the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali. Here, *dharana* refers to confining the mind to one object and in this process, all the efforts are expended in bringing the mind again and again to the object from its continuous distractions.



When the individual becomes successful in the above process and can hold his attention continuously on one object without any distraction, he is said to be in a state of *dhyana* or meditation.

Incidentally, when this *dhyana* becomes prolonged and intense, wherein the self nature of the meditator is as if not there, and the process of meditation is as if not there and only the object of meditation shines forth, it is said to be *samadhi* state.

Each time the mind evades you, runs here and there and you bring it back that is called concentration. Concentration is trying to fix the mind on one thing – single-mindedness. Meditation is when you have tried concentration and are successful.

## Performance of Mudras, Mantra and Japa

There are various types of *mudras*. These *mudras* can be classified as *hasta mudras*, *maan mudras*, *kaya mudras*, *adhara mudras*, and *bandhas* (*mudras* used in *pranayama*). Some important *mudras* practised in yoga are *ashwini mudra*, *khechari mudra*, *vipritakarani mudra*, *drona mudra*, *padma mudra*, *shambhavi mudra*, *simba mudra*, etc. A brief description of some examples of *mudras* are given below.



### Notes

*Mudra* is defined as *mudam anandam dadati iti mudra*, meaning that which provides delight or joy is *mudra*.

The physical body is made up of five elements namely – Sky or space (*Akash*), Air (*Vayu*), Fire (*Agni*), Water (*Aap*), and Earth (*Prithvi*). Imbalance of these elements disrupts the immunity system and causes disease. The imbalance can be removed by connecting one part of the body with another in a particular manner through *mudras*.

When a finger representing an element is brought into contact with the thumb, that element is

brought into balance, and the disease caused by that imbalance is cured. *Mudras* stimulate electromagnetic currents within the body which balance various constituting elements and restore health. The joining of fingers creates an effect on the human body.

Five fingers for balancing the five elements:

Thumb	Fire
Index	Air
Middle	Sky or Space
Ring	Earth
Little	Water

## Mudras for Health Benefits

### Gyan Mudra

**Method:** Join the tips of the index finger and thumb and keep the other 3 fingers stretched and joined. The same *mudra* when performed with the palms facing downwards is called *chin mudra*.



Fig. 10.17: Gyan Mudra

**Benefit:** Effective in cases of mental ailment, imparts happiness, develops the intellect, and sharpens the memory.

### Prana Mudra

**Method:** Join the tip of the thumb with the tip of the little and ring finger. Keep other two fingers straight.



Fig. 10.18: *Prana Mudra*

**Benefit:** Helps in pumping the life force into your body. Beneficial for all types of diseases. Imparts special power to the eyes.

### Kechari Mudra

**Method:** *Kechari mudra* is a yoga practice where the tongue is rolled up to touch the soft palate initially and then with due practice it is inserted into the nasal cavity behind the palate.

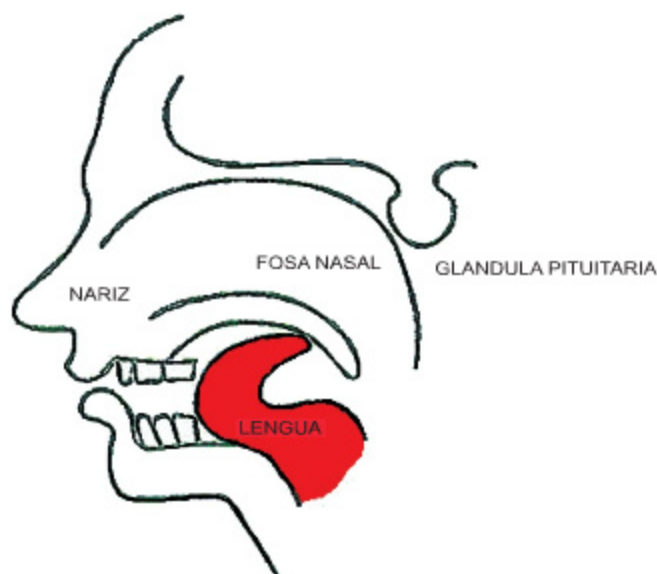


Fig. 10.19: *Kechari Mudra*

**Benefit:** Helps to overcome thirst, hunger, decay and delays death.

### Shambhavi Mudra

**Method:** *Shambhavi mudra* essentially involves gazing at the eyebrow center.



Fig. 10.20: *Shambhavi Mudra*

**Benefit:** Helps to transcend the mind and reach higher states of consciousness. It can help one reach the state of *samadhi*. *Shambhavi* helps to strengthen the eye muscles. By constant practice, the muscles can sustain the position for a long period of time for prolonged meditation. *Shambhavi mudra* activates the *ajna chakra*.

### Ashwini Mudra

**Method:** *Ashwini mudra* is done by contracting the anal sphincter muscles in a rhythmic manner.



Fig. 10.21: *Ashwini Mudra*

**Benefit:** *Ashwini mudra* gives control of the anal muscles just like a horse. It helps to remove constipation. According to *Gheranda Samhita*, the



practice of *ashwini mudra* can awaken the dormant *kundalini shakti*. It also removes all diseases of the rectum.

### When to practice Mudras

*Mudras* can be adopted at any time – while waiting, sitting, standing, talking or walking. The effect of the *mudras* is seen only after long duration of practice. That is the reason why *mudras* are not so popular as compared to other practices of yoga like *asanas* and *pranayama*.

### Japa

*Japa* is the repeated chanting of a *mantra* or a name of a deity. *Japa* can be practised in a meditative posture or while performing daily activities. *Japa* practice makes the mind single pointed. A mind trained in *japa* can reach higher states of consciousness easily. The more one thinks of an object, the more one gets attached to it. *Japa* practice brings about a closer connect with the object of meditation. Start today, start now. *Japa* is the easiest *sadhana* to perform, given our busy lives.

*Mantra* chanting or *japa* of *mantras* can be done in four ways:

1. *Vaikhari* – loud, audible chanting
2. *Upanshu* – whispering chanting, audible only to the person who is chanting
3. *Mansik* – mental chanting
4. *Likehit* – *japa* by writing

*Japa* becomes effortless when practised continuously. *Ajapa japa* is the continuous resonance of a *mantra* in one's being resulting from fervent practice over a prolonged, uninterrupted period of time. It is like an earworm that plays in the background constantly.

## Varieties of Japa

### Mental Repetition

One method of *Japa* is mental repetition of a *mantra* (or “*mantram*”).

### Beads

In order to aid concentration, a support in the form of a string of rosary beads may be used. The *japa mala* may be made of *tulsi* beads or *rudraksha* beads. It usually contains 108 beads or 51 beads. The off-head of the *mala* is called the *meru*. The *mala* must be placed at the conjunction of the ring finger with the thumb. Turn each bead with the thumb and middle finger and repeat the *mantra* with every turn, keeping the index finger apart.

The index finger is typically used in an accusatory manner pointing to the ‘other’. The index finger represents the ego, duality, separateness. Thus the index finger is kept apart in *japa*.

Complete one round of 108 times, do not cross the *meru*. Turn the *mala* at the *meru* and re-start the next round of *japa*. The *meru* is a symbol of the Supreme and as such, must not be crossed before the next round. The *mala* may be kept around the neck or in a cloth bag.

### Mantrachakras

Another form of *japa* practised by Buddhist monks involves the rotation of prayer wheels.

### Mantra

*Mantra* means the combination of two words “*man*” and “*tra*”. *Man* represents mind and *tra* comes from *trayati*, which means “to protect”. Therefore, *mantra* is that which protects the mind – *mananat trayati iti mantra*.

Most of the *vedic mantras* have seers / *rishis* who have given them to the world. For example, Maharishi Vishwamitra became the recipient of the *Gayatri Mantra* and shared it with the world for its spiritual welfare.

*Mantras* may be pure sounds (*bija mantra*) or prayers to God. *Bija mantras* bring about their effect due to the vibrations generated by their chanting, whereas *mantras* which are prayers lead to blessings from God.

There are *Vedantic Mantras* like –  
*Tat Tvam Asi* – That Thou Art  
*Aham Brahma Asmi* – I am Brahman  
*Sivoham Sivoham* – I am Shiva

There are *Pauranic mantras* such as –  
*Om Namah Shivaya*  
*Om Namo Narayana*  
*Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Rama*  
*Hare Rama Hare Krishna*

*Japa* must not be performed mechanically by merely rolling beads or mindless muttering. *Mantra* chanting must be done sincerely with intense fervour and a spirit of surrender and devotion. *Mantras* have the power to bring about a transformation in one's personality. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna proclaims "I am, among the Yogas, the *japa yoga*".

## Some Important Vedic Mantras

### Gayatri Mantra

The *Gayatri mantra* is one of the oldest available divine hymns from the *Rig Veda*. *Gayatri mantra* chanted with the right understanding of its sacred meaning can remove negative tendencies in the mind. This *mantra* is not chanted for the purpose of material gains but it is an appeal to the Pure Consciousness to illumine our intellect, i.e., a prayer to unveil the light of the Self within. The uniqueness of *Gayatri mantra* is that the vibrations generated by chanting *Gayatri mantra* bring about the same effect as when the *Gayatri mantra* as a prayer is fulfilled.

The *Gayatri mantra* constitutes three lines of eight syllables each.

"*Om Bhuh Bhuvah Svaha* (this line represents the *lokas* or fields of consciousness as *vyahrti* and is technically not part of the *mantra*)

*Om Tat Savitur Varenyam*  
*Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi*  
*Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat*"

"We meditate upon the auspicious light of the Lord Sun, may thy heavenly light illumine our intellect."

### Shanti Mantra

"*Om. Sahanavavatu. Saha nau bhunaktu.*  
*Saha veeryam karavahai.*  
*Tejasvinav adhitam astu; ma vidvishavahai.*  
*Om. Shantibi! Shantibi! Shantibi!"*

"*Om.*

*Om*, May we all be protected

May we all be nourished

May we work together with great energy

May our intellect be sharpened (may our study be effective)

Let there be no animosity amongst us

*Om. Peace! Peace! Peace!*

## Benefits of Meditation

Meditation stimulates the para sympathetic nervous system which results in relaxation of the body and mind. The following physical benefits have been noticed –

- Controlled blood pressure
- Better blood circulation
- Normalised heart rate
- Slower respiration
- Less anxiety
- Delay in onset of mental ailments such as depression, alzheimer's disease



These benefits are by-products of the practice of meditation and not the goal of meditation. The goal of meditation is to enable the practitioner sharpen his awareness so that he may discover his true essence i.e., the Divinity within, which is shrouded by a veil of impurities. Meditation practice is about being in the present moment, away from regrets of the past and worries of the future. A seasoned meditator tends to be poised through ups and downs and maintains a sense of balance. He/she is not enslaved by his senses and is relatively free from attachment.

## Obstacles and Ways to Overcome Them

Patanjali says that *antarayas* or obstacles on the path of yoga are so because they are distractions of the mind. These obstacles don't allow the practitioner of yoga to get concentrated. Concentration being the first stage in Patanjali Yoga Meditation, these *antarayas* can be considered as obstacles on the path of Meditation. The nine *antarayas* or obstacles are as follows:

- i. *Vyadhi* (Physical illness),
- ii. *Styan* (Mental languor or listlessness),
- iii. *Samsaya* (Doubt),
- iv. *Pramada* (Heedlessness or misplaced priorities),
- v. *Alasya* (Physical laziness),
- vi. *Avirati* (Stubborn attachment to sense objects),
- vii. *Bhranti Darshana* (Illusion or misunderstanding),
- viii. *Alabhda Bhumikatva* (Non-attainment of firm ground), and
- ix. *Anvasti Tattva* (Non-maintenance of firm ground).

In The *Bhagavad Gita*, the 6th Chapter is entitled as *Dhyana Yoga*. This Chapter explains the obstacles on the path of Meditation. Meditation is walking on the razor's edge of awareness. External obstacles on the path of meditation are generally because of

lack of preparation. This includes inappropriate lifestyle wherein food, sleep, recreation and work are not taken care of. Also, for meditation to be successful, the place of meditation should be such that it is quiet, comfortable, clean, undisturbed and uncluttered. The seat of meditation should be neither too high nor too low and it should not be a bad conductor preventing the flow of energy from the earth. The posture (*asana*) adopted for meditation should be comfortable enough for the practitioner to remain steady for the duration of meditation.

The internal obstacles to meditation pertain to expectations from meditation, agitated mind, worldly fears about meditation, holding to our identity even while meditating, focusing on objects other than the object of meditation, non-regularity in meditation, lack of sustained enthusiasm, etc.

The two most common initial obstacles in meditation are *laya* (sleep) and *vikshepa* (agitations or distractions), either the mind dozes off to sleep or restlessly moves from one object to another.



## SUMMARY

- *Pranayama* is the control and extension of *prana* (life force energy) through breathing.
- *Pranayama* brings the breath in natural rhythm by controlling the process of inhalation, exhalation and retention.
- By combining physical postures and exercises (*asanas*), with *pranayama*, deep relaxation and meditation, we shift the balance of the stress regulation systems in our brain and our body.
- In *pranayama*, one should utilize the diaphragm efficiently to get more oxygen without making more efforts.
- A frequent mistake in breathing is drawing of the abdomen in as the chest expands, rather than relaxing the abdomen forward. Drawing



in the abdomen considerably impairs deep breathing. Often tight clothes inhibit this natural movement.

- *Siddhasana* is given the pride of place among all the *asanas* in *Hatha Yoga* and is best suited for *pranayama* and meditation.



## KEYWORDS

**Pranayama:** It is the formal practice of controlling the breath, which is the source of the *prana*, or vital life force.

**Diaphragmatic Breathing:** It is also called vertical breathing that utilizes the diaphragm and considered as an efficient way to inhale air.

**Chest or Thoracic Breathing:** It is also ribcage breathing, since the ribcage quite literally moves in and out sideways like an accordion and the lower ribs float out with each breath.

**Collarbone or Clavicular Breathing:** This is the last step before the One Complete Yoga Breath. With this type of breathing the air flows into the top of the lungs. With an inhalation, the upper part of the chest and collarbones are lifted and with an exhalation, they lower again.

**Anulom – Vilom or Nadi Shodhana Pranayama:** This is one of the excellent breathing exercises that are performed by inhaling from one nostril and exhaling from the other, thus it is also called Alternate Nostril Breathing.

**Bhastrika Pranayama:** *Bhastrika* in Sanskrit means “bellows”; hence, *bhastrika pranayama* literally means a breathing exercise that resembles the blowing of bellows.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. What are the steps to perform diaphragmatic breathing?

2. Is it normal if one feels a little dizzy after practising the full yogic breath?
3. Define *siddhasana*.
4. Define the concept of meditation.
5. What are the practical applications of meditation?
6. What is unique about *ujjayi* breathing?

### Long Answer Questions

1. Define *pranayama* and its benefits.
2. What is the right way to perform full *yogic* breathing? Discuss.
3. Explain *vajrasana*, *ardha padmasana* and *padmasana*.
4. Describe any three different types of *pranayama*.
5. Describe the significance of meditation.
6. Explain *mudras*, *mantras* and *japa* in your own words.



## FURTHER READINGS

*The complete illustrated book of Yoga* – Swami Vishnudevananda

*Meditation and Mantras* – Swami Vishnudevananda

*Light on Yoga* – Shri BKS Iyengar

*Light on Pranayama* – Shri BKS Iyengar

*Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha* – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Prana and Pranayama* – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Yoga Nidra* – Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Pranayama* by Swami Kuvalyananda

*Hatha Yoga Pradipika* – interpretation by various authors

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra* – interpretation by various authors



# CHAPTER 11

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## TEACHING PRACTICE

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## Structure

- Learning Outcomes
- Introduction
  - 11.1 Teaching Yoga
  - 11.2 Principles and Skills required for Educating Aspirants
  - 11.3 Teaching Yoga in a Group Setting
- Summary
- Keywords
- Self-Assessment Questions
- Further Readings



## Learning Outcomes

**After studying this chapter, you should be able to:**

- Understand the concept of practising yoga
- Explain the objectives, nature and scope of teaching yoga
- Appreciate the importance of teaching principle
- Analyse teaching principles
- Describe the benefits of teaching yoga in a group setting



## Introduction

The purpose of teaching the yoga – practice is to induce change in the student. The basic aim of teaching is to make someone learn. The teacher/instructor merely arranges the environment for learning and stimulates and guides the students' activities in that environment. It is the teacher who teaches, and it is the responsibility of the student to learn by making honest efforts and grasp the facts revealed by the teacher. Teachers simply bring the student into a learning environment and enhance the efficiency of the learning process.

Teaching is a science in the sense that it involves logical and systematic arrangement based on certain principles. It is an art, which means that it cannot be reduced to a formula. It is an art that requires sensitivity to factors affecting the student and his/her environment for learning, which must be suitably modified according to his/her needs.

The entire educational process of teaching and learning revolves around the most important factor – the student. Teaching – practice generally focuses on development by adding something new to one's experiences. There are two phases involved in the educational process, namely teaching and learning. Teacher/instructor is a person who stimulates learning in the students by organizing and guiding certain experiences of the individuals under his leadership. He is essentially an educator who 'brings out' all that is best in the student.



## 11.1 Teaching Yoga

Teaching Yoga transmits dual benefits apart from its wonderful concepts of learning. The person who teaches yoga to others benefits the learners by making a contribution to good health and ultimately happiness in their lives. Yoga teachers themselves are benefited in the form of their self-confidence building, development in communication skills, and getting an advantage of the opportunity to step out of their own mind by focusing their energy on learners. The thought that one can easily get rid of his/her own tensions and can discover happiness and joy in life by serving others is given by the great Siddhartha Gautama.

As yoga practitioners and educators, one of our main tasks is to create a zone of respectful silence, in which others can explore and express their thoughts and feelings, and learning and teaching can happen most effectively. The ancient yoga texts are replete with teachings of the essential role of inner and outer silence as necessary for *svadhyaya* (self-study) and the cultivation of mindfulness and inner peace.

The word ‘silence’ is defined in the *Maitri Upanishad* by many names. According to it silence is “tranquil, soundless, fearless, sorrowless, blissful, satisfied, steadfast, immovable, immortal, unshaken, and enduring.

It is from there that we bring our best selves into the world, acting from places of wisdom, clarity, and self-awareness rather than self-interest. Practising silence allows us to become attuned not only to our inner wisdom, but also to the presence of others and what it is they need from us.

In other words, instead of filling the space, we pause, wait, and listen. This does not mean that we are not participating in conversation—rather we are allowing our interactions with others to flow freely without imposing on our needs, agendas, or anxieties. We learn to pause rather than push. This can be remarkably challenging if our tendency is to help out, or fix things.



Fig. 11.1: Yoga Practice

The practice of *shavasana*, which lasts for a few minutes at the end of a yoga practice in which participants are asked to lie on their yoga mats in “corpse pose,” offers an exceptional opportunity to play with our capacity to pause and create space. Although being still in a state of relaxation sounds appealing, it can be incredibly challenging, particularly in the context of a hectic, non-stop life.



### Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is believed that only slim people can practise yoga. But the fact is yoga can help a practitioner lose weight and live a healthier lifestyle irrespective of his/her body type. Different forms of yoga are available for different people to avail their benefits. Do not be discouraged.



### Notes

Yoga has a long rich history, its emergence could be traced back to some 5,000 years ago. Some eminent researchers take its emergence back to over 10,000 years ago. Innovation, practice and development are the three key parts in which yoga history is divided.



## Environment of Training<sup>1</sup>

The atmosphere of class should be clean and no foul smell should be there.

1. It is appropriate to take yoga classes in the atmosphere where there is no pollution, and the air is fresh and clean.
2. For every practitioner 6 x 3 place is needed to sit and lie on the floor while doing exercises.
3. Mats should be placed in the classroom or the practitioner should bring along with him.
4. Mat should be made of cotton or of a bad conductor (electrically non-conductive material).
5. There are several key points regarding the environment.

For example, heat, social harmony, classification on the basis of intelligence and financial sources. If all are alike, it is most appropriate for conducting the class.

## Yoga – Teaching Steps

The whole yoga – teaching process centres round the most important principle and that is ‘to feel natural and calm’.



Fig. 11.2: Teaching Yoga

The following are some tips for teaching yoga. They will help you feel calm and ready in both favourable and unfavourable conditions.

1. **Be prepared:** Be thoroughly prepared as regards the practices as also the theoretical subjects which you propose to teach. It is a good practice to prepare yourself adequately irrespective of the level of practitioners you are teaching.
2. **Start with enough time while going for the class:** There is nothing worse than getting caught in traffic or missing your bus and arriving out of breath and panicked – or in worst case getting late. If it is possible, do not keep anything pre-planned in the hours leading up to your start time so you are definitely not rushing from one scenario to the next. Arrive well ahead of time.
3. **Introduction:** It is a nice practice to introduce yourself as well as take brief introductions of the students especially in the first session.
4. **Start class with silence or meditation:** It is preferable to start each session/class with a silence and meditative practice. This creates the necessary atmosphere for yoga teaching and learning. This is as much necessary for you as it is for the students.
5. **Be pleasant:** It is always good to maintain pleasantness in your demeanor and speech. This inspires and comforts the students.
6. **Laugh off mistakes:** Did you mix up left and right? While performing warrior techniques or postures did the side of the body get skipped by you? Do not feel awkward because it is natural to do so just laugh out and breathe out the error you made. One should acknowledge his/her error and must do whatever is required to fix it up, with the intention of not repeating it in future and getting the job done in a right way.

<sup>1</sup> Part of the information has been sourced from Yoga Tree: *Fundamental Principles of Yoga*, Patanjali Yogpeeth, Haridwar.



7. **Express thanks to students:** The instructor should thank his/her students at the end of the class or session, it doesn't matter how the instructor feels about expressing thanks to students. One should show the gratitude and grace towards the students for sharing their space with you.
8. **Accept the situation:** In case the class gets messed up by you and in reality the class is not going well, forget the bad thing as soon as possible otherwise it will be tough for you to come back in the same form of teaching and with more confidence. Learn from the good and bad situations arising in the class and accordingly strategies your class.
9. **Keep teaching:** The more a teacher teaches the better he/she gets. The teacher will be able to build up more confidence with his/her better performance and this would result into good teaching. Always recall the main reason and purpose what made you choose as a profession yoga, as this will help you to be on the right track. One should always remember the passion which brought one to yoga in the first place and work on that to let that passion shine.



Preparation is a must for teaching.

## The Scope of Practicing Yoga

1. Training of yoga has a wider scope. Once a person chooses to become a yoga instructor/teacher, he/she is benefited himself/herself more than the others. A yoga instructor can experience a growth in his/her personality. The recent popularity in the field of yoga has provided many new opportunities for yoga professionals to work as instructors in resorts, gym, schools, health centres, tourist resorts, housing societies and also in large organizations. TV channels act as a source to add values to their viewers' lives by hiring proficient yoga instructors and broadcasting their yoga sessions. Self-employment is one more opportunity available to yoga instructors by opening self-owned yoga classes/centres. Nowadays a number of famous people, such as film stars, hire their personal instructors for practising yoga.
2. As far as the remuneration part is concerned, it is usually good as the employers vary from middle class individuals to the wealthy one. On the other hand, it also depends on the teacher's/instructor's expertise to attract students.

## The Need for Referral to Other Professional Services

The yoga instructor/teacher will find the need for referring prospective aspirants of yoga to other professionals in a number of situations which are as follows:

1. When the teacher has enough students and is not capable of devoting sufficient time to the prospective aspirants.
2. When the prospective aspirant is approaching for a purpose which the teacher is incapable of fulfilling.
3. When an aspirant has reached a plateau in his progress with a teacher, the latter can direct the aspirant to another teacher.

## Yoga can Make You Work Faster

Mind of yoga practitioners becomes calm and focused, if they practise it on a regular basis.

This results into an increased level of productivity and efficiency at work, and it also shoots up the



success rates. One might be surprised to see how he/she is able to finish some work in minimum possible time about one-two hours, which took more time when performed earlier. And the effort which you make to achieve this is just 30 minutes of yoga practice in the morning time. One has to begin with stretching his/her body with active yoga postures, and then following up with *pranayama* and after that getting into depth of meditation for a blissful experience.

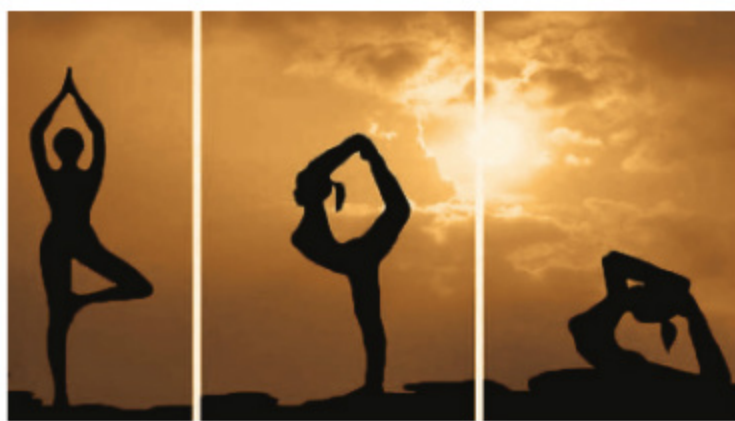


Fig. 11.3: Yoga in Daily Routine

## Observed Capacity for Well-Developed Communication Skills

Some of the essential qualities include attention, awareness, self-examination, intention, and skilful action. Behaving mindfully involves communicating from a place of awareness, while maintaining an intention to hold space for others. But when we feel stressed, excited, threatened, triggered, or defensive, it can be very difficult not to react in ways that serve our immediate needs or interests rather than considering how our responses might best serve our relationships.

### Listening

The instructor/teacher should have the obvious quality of attentive listening.



Fig. 11.4: Listening

While this may seem simple enough, it is one of the most difficult and most essential traits in the teaching profession.

### How to Speak and Communicate

**Express yourself in a Right Manner:** Always convey what exactly you mean and must mean what you had conveyed. One should be concise, to the point and clear.

**Always Explore and Explain:** Always be prepared to provide relevant and appropriate information required by your partner to make him/her understand your view point better. Never expect that others will be able to read your mind without expressing your view point.

**Never Speak Arguably:** This simply means that never make such statements which may provoke arguments. Consider the example, revealing that how to present your fear to your partner without passing arguable statement, one may say: “I feel tensed and scared when you pull me too fast.” This simply conveys that when your partner pulls you during a specific yoga pose with a speed, this gives you a feeling of tension and fear and as what you had said was true so it couldn’t be argued.

**Concentrate on Appreciation:** It has been found in the studies of psychological theories that a ratio of 5:1 for appreciation to complaint is recommended. One should always focus on the positive aspects of the students and encourage them by appreciating it.



**Turn your Criticisms into Requests:** The instructor/teacher can be critical about the student's performance in a way that it stimulates the student to perform better. The instructor/teacher can turn his/her criticisms into polite advice for better performance.

**Never Blame:** Whenever listeners are blamed, they come forward to defend themselves and stop listening. Doing communication without pointing out the faults and blames in one another is vital. Always try to understand the situation and communicator rather than using overpowering tactics.

**Make a Shift from Blame to Wonder:** Analyze yourself and find out that whether any contribution to the communication problem arising is made by you. Think over the problems and situation because this will shift mind from critical thinking to creative thinking which helps in developing a healthy relationship rather than being in a state of 'I am Right'.



Fig. 11.5: Speaking and Communicating

### How to Listen?

**Be Attentive:** When a person pays attention and avoids distractions this shows that he/she is interested in listening to the speaker. It is not possible for a person to express his/her opinions and thoughts in anticipation what the speaker would say.

**Body Language:** Your body language should show that you are listening to the speaker, always

maintain proper eye contact with the speaker, be in the habit of nodding to make sure that you are attentively listening and never cross your arms while listening or talking to some body.

**Be a Generous Listener:** One should react in a proper manner on what the speaker said with accuracy. One must also express respect to the feelings of the person. Listen in such a way that you are able to listen what the speaker was not able to convey.

**Complete Understanding:** Always check whether you are able to understand the message properly. One can check this by converting the message in his/her own words such as "Do you mean...?" "Are you saying ...?" Be attentive and focus at every angle. All these will help you to discover that are you able to understand exactly, what student is saying.

**Open and Welcoming Attitude as well as Respect for What the Other is Saying:** One must agree to the fact that expressing willingness to hear what the speaker is saying is vital. This determines that how much respect the listener has for the speaker. It is better to respect each others point of view.

**Response is must rather than an Answer:** Give a hint to the speaker that you are further interested in listening to his/her point of view. Express this by saying, "Please tell me more about it."

**If required touch and express reassurance:** Communication becomes quite difficult when the presence of strong emotions is felt. One may show his/her support to the speaker just by a touch or a hug if required when one doesn't know what exactly to express or say.





**Fig. 11.6:** Yoga Aspirants Performing Yoga

### Presence

The sign of an accomplished and matured yoga teacher is revealed by his/her ability to communicate realistically and authentically. The communication should be from heart revealing the main purpose. A skillful communication is a combined package of usage of words by the speaker, tactics of speaker to show his/her presence, touch (if and when) required and vision. An expert teacher of yoga has full knowledge of how to do effective communication by telling the beauty and depth of yoga teachings to students by using skills of verbal and non-verbal communication. All this is done keeping in mind to make the class a comfort zone for all levels of participants. Now-a-days advance teaching methods and skills are used to make teachers understand how to serve their students best by accepting them as they are and meeting them as per their convenience, and last but not the least connecting with them with action conscious and be ethical.

Healthy and effective touch has the power to encourage insight at all levels of experience and to cultivate deep presence. As yoga teachers, we use touch to communicate with our students, and invite them to feel the present moment and all that it offers physically, emotionally, and energetically.

The sense of holding space in teachers derives from a thoughtful and sensible understanding of both qualities of touch, *i.e.*, the physical and energetic touch, as well as the powerful experiences that can result from our connection with one another. As we become more fluent in holding space for our own experiences, we gain skills and confidence to hold space for others.

### Directive and Non-Directive Dialogue

The dialogue is probably the most pressing issue for the training because everyone could never be a master of memorization.

What is non-directive dialogue? For example, if someone asks, why do you love yoga? It means he uses non-directive and non-judgmental dialogue. This always comes easily to a person who wants to learn this art. It is something that one should tend to do naturally in life. It feels much more supportive when someone really listens to what the other person is saying rather than trying to think of what he/she is going to say next, or to spit out some pre-conditioned mechanical response that he/she is supposed to say. It feels supportive to have someone say, 'I hear that you are upset, and I am still here supporting you....I see that you are angry, or depressed, or fearful, and I am not going to tell you to "look at the bright side", to "focus on the positive", or to "let it go".' In essence, this is what a skilled yoga instructor does in his classes. He genuinely listens and offers his students support. He does not judge what they are saying or feeling. He does not tell them how to "fix" their problems. He does not suggest that they should look at things differently, or be different. So, how does this work in sessions? The process is actually very simple, and from a practitioner's standpoint, it involves two main phrases: "What's happening now?" and "tell me more."





### Most-common Mis-conceptions

It is a general belief that there is no risk involved in practising yoga. But the point to note here and pay attention to is that the low-impact form of yoga practice is safe for almost all the people practising it only when it is performed correctly. Although risk due to injuries from yoga is less, but in some exceptional cases they may be there. The key to a risk-free and injury-free yoga is to practise it in a proper way and style, be hydrated, modify postures as per your knowledge and skill and pay proper attention to your body.

## Handling of Different Aspirants

Practitioners of yoga are categorized into three levels/degrees: (1) *Adhama Adhikarin*, one who is just initiated into yoga practice, (2) *Madhyam Adhikar* in, one who has been practising yoga for a few year, and (3) *Uttama Adhikarin*, one who is an adept at yoga.

Students are able to learn properly and improve postures when teachers demonstrate the poses properly. Injuries can be prevented when detailed and accurate instructions were given. Practising yoga awakes and realigns the whole body and also helps in building up the strength of the body and movement in stiff areas.



Fig. 11.7: Demonstration of Yoga Poses

Demonstrations from teachers help students learn and improve poses. Accurate and specific instructions also help prevent injuries. Yoga encourages weak parts of the body to strengthen and stiff areas to release, thus awakening and realigning the whole body.

### Vital Need for Moral Strength and Courage

In general a spiritual person has to be prepared to handle and face misunderstanding, calumny and misrepresentation in a bold manner. Any spiritual aspirant who wants or tries to achieve better than his/her fellows has to go through such situations. To cope up with such situation courage and enough strength at moral level is required, this will help aspirant to sustain his/her position as per his/her integrity and thoughts of what is right and what is wrong. Competitors and non-competitors both will try to pull down the person growing in professional life for this people may hate and may maltreat the aspirants. If any aspirant who want to grow spiritually he/she has to work according to his/her own principles having a good reason for the same.

Yoga can be made accessible to a range of student ability. The size of Yoga classes should be kept small so that proper attention can be paid to all the aspirants. The primary aim should be to help the aspirants to find peace and stillness in their work.

## 11.2 Principles and Skills for Educating Aspirants

Teaching is a complex and multifaceted activity. Effective teaching is about helping the students/aspirants to achieve the best results. It requires an instructor to juggle with multiple tasks and goals simultaneously and flexibly.





**Fig. 11.8:** Yoga Instructor

Role of yoga instructors/teachers is not restricted only to teaching aspirants different yoga poses, their role are many in numbers, which are listed below:

- Leading group of yoga aspirants/students in a comprehensive and approachable sequence related to breathing exercises, postures, contemplations and meditations.
- Creating a space which is safe and nurturing which encourages students/aspirants to participate in yoga class.
- Responsibility of giving proper, safe and understandable demonstration and guidance to aspirants/students for a series of postures.

### Principles followed for Educating Aspirants

The principles mentioned below make teaching effective and more efficient:

- Three vital elements of instruction, i.e., learning objectives, instructional activities and assessments must be aligned.
- Skills and knowledge segment chosen to focus on must be given priority.
- Implementing teaching as an important task must go with the subject matter knowledge of teacher.

- Students' involvement and motivation depend on the students – teacher interaction.
- Development of reciprocity and cooperation among students/aspirants should be in place.
- Students/aspirants should relate what they are learning to something in real life.
- Teachers/instructors should set up problem – solving activities in small groups.
- Teachers/instructors should use a wide variety of intellectually challenging teaching procedures.
- Assessment should be promoted as part of the learning process.

### Skills Required for Educating Aspirants

A yoga instructor's role – scope also encompasses creating, developing and implementing such training sessions of yoga which are fit and appropriate as per the level of students in the class. A yoga teacher/instructor should also possess the ability to explain, illustrate, modify and give demonstration of *asanas* in such a way which is approachable and understandable for all participants in the class in that particular session. An expert yoga instructor on his/her individual base should be able to change the postures as per the requirement of aspirant/student.



**Fig. 11.9:** Yoga Training Session



During the training session if instructor notices that some aspirant/student is really finding it tough to get into a certain posture, then it is his/her responsibility to quickly modify and adjust the alignment of the aspirant/student to build up a trust and safe feeling in the aspirant/student for the teacher/instructor. This will help participant to be relaxed and fully attend all the sessions.

## Teaching Principles

Effective teaching depends on the knowledge of important principles of anatomy, physiology, psychology, pedagogy and yoga so that the teacher may be flexible in modifying the method. These principles also provide sound base for selection and formulation of methods.

## Yogic Principles

Let us discuss the yogic principles:

- Yogic practices should not be misunderstood as 'exercises'. Vigorous physical movements are generally applied in exercises. As in the practice of yoga no vigorous movements are involved, so any type of violent action must not be included during yogic practice.
- Yoga practices are of diverse nature and encompass various mechanisms which help in achieving and obtaining results from different yogic practices. Same channels are not used by the meditation, *asana*, *bandhas*, *pranayama*, *mudras* and *keriyas* for achieving the yogic practices results.
- The 'static stretching procedures' which are known for the vital and best yogic practices are known as *asanas*. In order to influence the tonic system of body rather the physical system of body the *asanas* should be practised slowly.
- One should maintain a particular *asanas*' position for certain time by using less effort. The main feature of the *asanas*' technique is

to perform effortlessly and attain maximum relaxation in the final position.

- 'Breathing exercises' are quite different from *pranayamic* practices in terms of purpose and technique. Unlike breathing exercises, *pranayama* practices involve controlling and manipulating of *prana* in the body.
- Practice of Yoga should not be done in such a way that it leads to unnecessary exhaustion. In case fatigue is felt then relaxation by practicing *shavasana* must be achieved.
- The performance of yoga by individuals must be as per the *yathashakti* (own capacity) of the practitioner.



Fig. 11.10: Yogic Routine with Psycho-physical Relaxation

- Practitioners peace of mind must be the main aim of person practising yoga.
- A routine of yoga should start with relaxation in terms of psychophysical or by reciting some prayers actually or centering attention as done in prayers.

## Psychological Principles

- Interest is the best motivation for learning. The teacher should teach in such a way that students maintain their interest and motivation to learn.



- Activity is necessary for learning. Learning is a process of experience. Unless the student is involved in the experience of activity he/she may not be able to learn. Therefore practice is essential, especially for motor-learning or skill-learning. Again it is not mere practice but the correct practice that is important. Complex motor skills require more repetitions of correct practice.
- All learning has a neural basis. Unless proper neuromuscular coordination is formed one cannot expect further developments in any motor skills.
- For efficient learning the material to be learnt must be within the range of experience and abilities of the learner. Learning is highly individualized and results in progressive changes in behaviour. The ability to learn depends upon the innate capacity and previous experiences of the student. All individuals do not learn at the same rate.
- Learning of motor skills is hastened if the performer is able to grasp an intellectual understanding of the nature of the task before beginning the practice.
- Regular practice of an activity resulting in pleasure and satisfaction contributes to the most effective learning.
- Occasional short periods of rest between the practice periods produce superior results in learning motor skills. Brief rest period prevents fatigue in the muscles and efficiency of the muscles is not decreased.



### Did You Know?

The centre of gravity in female bodies is lower than that of in males. This should be taken into consideration in practices involving stability and balance.

## Teaching Methods

The process of teaching several methods have been tried over many years and we find that they fall into two main categories:

- (i) Instructional methods used in the classroom for teaching theoretical subjects.
- (ii) Methods used for teaching practical skill.

The classroom methods are variously named as the lecture method, the recitation method, the project method, the laboratory method, the dramatic method and the group discussion method. The methods for teaching skills or physical activities, however, have not been properly categorized. Each method used in the classroom situation has many implications for teaching physical activities and skills, but they cannot be directly applied to teaching physical activities and skills. Even in respect of classroom teaching, no single method or pattern could serve as the best method for all teaching situations. The method of teaching yogic practices comes closer to that of physical activities rather than of theoretical subjects.

Traditionally, there have been two approaches towards successful teaching: the first is a teacher-centered approach and the second a student-centered approach.



**Fig. 11.11:** Classroom Method of Teaching

The teacher-centered approach was the main method in the past, even in yoga. But today scientific thought focuses its attention on and emphasizes the student-centered approach. So naturally, the principles and concepts which underlie the methods are expected to involve this student-centered approach, the main emphasis of



which is to give due consideration to the needs of the students.

Methods of teaching must be compatible with the goals sought or the outcomes expected. The purpose of any method is to create learning in the student. The teacher should know how a particular method he uses affects the student's learning ability.

The following are some of the basic methods of teaching:

- (a) **Lecture Method:** It is perhaps the oldest method used for formal teaching. It is valuable in organizing large fields on material, separating a particular type of information for immediate use, presenting new information and synthesizing information from a wide variety of sources.

It is more useful with mature students who have a high degree of auditory perception since it involves problems of attention, voice level, clarity, use of rest period and vocabulary level.

The lecture has considerable use in teaching yogic practices. It may be used in presenting any type of information related to particular activity in the perspective of yoga in general. When extensive lecture is necessary for the achievement of a specific goal, the students should be able to hear the teacher clearly. A lecture can be stimulating, interesting and motivating to the students if the teacher prepares it properly.

The lecture method proves of greater advantage when combined with other methods. The use of visual materials is of considerable help in aiding students to retain the content of the lecture.

When using the lecture method the teacher should also be aware of the limitations of this method, which are mentioned as follows:

- (i) It is a teacher-centered activity and may encourage lack of participation on the part of the students.
- (ii) Many students lack ability to learn by this method.
- (iii) It may lead teachers to ignore more effective methods.

The attention span of more immature students is too short to benefit from a long lecture.



Fig. 11.12: Lecture Method

- (b) **Response-to-Instruction Method:** In this method the teacher gives precise instructions which precede, follow or are concurrent with a demonstration, and all students respond to the instructions in the same way.

There is very little attention paid to the individuals. The emphasis is on the subject matter of activity that is introduced. This method has a formal approach. An information approach with this method is more favourable in teaching such activities where there is some



variation in the performance of individuals. This method can be profitably used after due attention to problems of individuals.

- (c) **Individualized Instruction Method:** It is based on the principle that learning is highly individualized. In this method attempts are made to provide by different means for individual differences within the pattern of the group structure.

### Directed-Practice Method

Assignments for extra practice of selected yogic practices out of class hours enhance skill and performance levels of the students. Necessary introduction along with the preliminary practice of selected yogic exercises like *sirasasana*, *uddiyana*, *kapalabhati*, *nauli*, purificatory processes, etc., may be done in the class and the efficiency could be developed through out-of-class practice. The students should be encouraged to do out-of-class practice and the teacher may check the results during subsequent classes and give additional suggestions for further practice. Obviously, the success of this method depends upon the motivation the students get and their rapport with the teacher.

- (a) **Project Method:** The aim of this method is to enable students to put into practice what they have learned in the class. It may also be of help for students to learn related information. When the time is short in the regular schedule the projects such as preparing note-books on the yogic practices undergone, collection of related material from various sources, preparing models and the exhibits of the yogic practices, planned observations of seminars, conferences, as well as visits to different well-known yoga centres represent valuable help to teaching under this method.



Fig. 11.13: Yoga Demonstration in Class

- (b) **Demonstration Method:** Demonstration refers to non-competitive type performances with emphasis on skill and form. Demonstrations are of value, if properly directed to both performer and viewer. Demonstration Method as a technique for the use of the class has some disadvantages. The scope of learning is restricted. It utilizes existing talent rather than developing new skills. However, the Demonstration Method serves as an excellent group method.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no simple formula for selecting the best methods. This depends on the conditions available, such as time, space and equipment. The teacher should have the skill to use a particular method and adapt it to prevailing conditions so that the students receive proper orientation and understanding of the technique and purpose of the method. In other words, a method should always be considered as a means to an end and not the end in itself. The method should allow for individual differences and stimulate both creativity and independent thinking in the students. In yoga, the teaching method has to be eclectic, drawing upon useful vital contributions from several existing methods.



## 11.3 Teaching Yoga in a Group Setting

Teaching yoga in groups is a different ball game. The focus a private yoga teacher can have in a group yoga setting can still be intentional and mindful of the independent needs of the person with regards to individual sequencing. Sequencing to the individual is possible in a group yoga setting. It is not as effective as one-on-one sessions, and it is certainly not easy to address the needs of many at once. You cannot customize a group lesson to please everyone, but you can begin to develop skills of teaching many at once.

Demonstration ability in group depends upon precise instructions by the teacher. Formal instructions are best suited during the initial stage of practice. Instructions could be divided into those that are given verbally before the beginning of the yogic practice, those which accompany performance of the activity individually or by the group and those that are extended by way of information or corrections after the completion of the activity. Initial instructions prevent the student from adopting incorrect habits which might have to be unlearned later. Practical instructions guide the students for correct and efficient performance.



Fig. 11.14: Yoga in Group Setting

The following guidelines in a group setting can help the teacher convey instructions clearly:

- Be sure that you have the attention of everyone in the class before any instructions are given.
- When a long explanation is needed it is better to make the learner sit down and it will be even better if they sit close to the teacher.
- Ideally, explanations can be best provided in the relaxation phase between two *asanas*.
- Make your instructions brief, perfectly clear and your voice must be audible to the learners.
- The instructions should be given for only one thing at a time.
- Try to use different words and expressions to catch the attention of the students. For example, if students do not understand your words in the first attempt, use different words while repeating the instructions.
- Describe the technique and procedure of any activity before the students are actually asked to practice.

If students are provided with suitable lesson content in a competent and stimulating fashion, they will take interest in learning and rarely cause trouble. One essential step which can be taken to reduce the problem of control is to create an atmosphere of natural freedom, friendliness, mutual help and understanding. These qualities in a class should emanate from the leadership of the teacher. This develops social consciousness in students and makes them aware about their responsibility to the group.

The students or participants of yoga may be grouped under the following headings:

- **Beginners' Group:** This group may involve persons of all ages, males and females, young and old and special individuals who are making their first acquaintance with yoga. They need a general background of yogic discipline and motivation to continue with yoga.





Fig. 11.15: Group Programs

- **Experienced or Advanced Group:** This group may consist of persons who have some experiences with yoga and wish to advance further to gain more varied and deeper experience. Their expectation is to acquaint themselves with a greater number of yogic practices and indulge in subtler and higher practices intensively.
- **School Children:** This is a select group ranging from the age of 6 years to 16 years. School children need exposure to the field of yoga based on their immediate needs of their age and temperament.
- **Special Attention Groups:** These individuals can vary on the basis of age like children and adults, on the basis of gender, on the basis of individual problems of health, abnormality or handicaps, etc. All these individuals need special attention which is possible in a homogeneous group but not in a heterogeneous group.

## Designing and Implementing Group Programme

Yoga training programme controlled in a group setting is as powerful as the one managed exclusively, in view of both the subjective perception of the aspirant and objective measurement of performance. One clarification

for the comparable results is that every programme approach has its own objective that actuates constructive outcomes on ability. While individual-based programme is ventured to give the most extreme chance to rehearse with negligible waiting time and diversions from other individuals, group – based yoga training may have its own advantages.

To begin with, the group setting gives chances to social interaction. Besides, practitioners are essentially competitive, and this inspires them to perform better. In the group, a stronger sense of proficiency can be established if a practitioner can effectively exhibit the procured skills in front of his/her peer. Moreover, this apparent skill may facilitate the practitioner's involvement in physical activities influencing fitness.

It has been found that the group setting may give extra social benefits, as group interaction encourages practitioner's motivation to achieve his/her goals and to succeed.

## Communication Skills, Time Management, Priorities and Limits

A proficient yoga instructor/teacher should be competent to explore the mind of each student and one should be a good communicator. The yoga student who learns predominantly by listening will be able to verbally communicate the finer techniques to others in the future.



Fig. 11.16: Communication



Not all yoga students have the same ability to pay attention and grasping power. There are numerous learning ways such as listening attentively to teachers' cues, learning by assistance from teacher and learning just by copying teachers through which different students learn. On the part of a yoga instructor, it is required by him/her to be a good listener when students' ask questions.



Fig. 11.17: Visual Demonstration of Yoga Postures

There is individual difference related to the manner in which various kinds of sensory information are effectively used by the students. Some students have remarkable ability to quickly organize visually presented information. It is desirable that the teacher himself should give the demonstration of a particular yoga practice. The teacher can communicate with his/her students better through the demonstration staged by him/her. At the same time he/she should verbally explain clearly the fundamental principles underlying the yoga practice. Any practice by the students must be preceded by visual demonstration to be more effective.

Yoga offers some great insights and reminders. Yoga can help with time management in the following five ways:

1. **Be Focused:** Remember to be focused. Suppose you are practising balancing in *vrikshasana* or the tree pose, then at that point of time do not ever try to think anything else because this will cause you to lose your balance

and you may fall. Similarly, one would not be able to get work done or practice well the yoga posture if one stops every five minutes to check on social networking sites or emails. So remember to do one thing until that work is finished, and then focus on another task.

2. **Be Disciplined:** Meditation or yoga practice on a daily basis requires a lot of discipline in the practitioner's life.
3. **Giving Priority:** One should prioritize the most significant things to be done on their to-do list and then start with those things which always help in achieving a balanced life. The things which make one satisfied and relaxed, such as practising yoga, eating healthy food, going on long walks, and enjoying and laughing with friends and family, should be given priority, as this will make the person feel happy and have a balanced life.
4. **In need ask for help:** It is not easy for any practitioners to learn the yoga postures without others help, *asanas* integrity and subtle nuances.
5. **Living life as per yoga *asanas* practiced:** It is appreciable for yoga practitioners to do yoga in their own way and avoid any kind of comparisons with anybody else.



### Learning ACTIVITY

Assume that you are a yoga instructor. Some students are not able to do some yoga *asanas* as per your instructions. What will you do in such a situation?

### Question-Answer Session

A small question-answer session is very helpful at the end of the unit to evaluate the effectiveness of the session and remove any difficulties/doubts of the students.



The following hints will be useful in conducting a question-answer or discussion session:

- Encourage the students to ask their questions or address their comments to the group for discussion.
- Never discourage or ridicule any student's question or contribution howsoever small it may be.
- Try to draw all students into discussion rather than those few who are always ready to talk.
- It is wise to limit the discussion to a few important points.
- The teacher is expected to know more than the students on the points of discussion. If the teacher is not prepared to answer any question or does not know about a particular point, he should not hesitate to say so. Instead he should say that he will find out the answer and explain that in the next class.
- Remember that young children are not mature enough to participate in a group discussion so a different approach is necessary to encourage them to share their experiences.
- Exercise some control over the time spent on questions. Steer the discussion to important and relevant questions. Do not sacrifice valuable time on those points that are not important.



## SUMMARY

- Teaching yoga transmits dual benefits apart from its wonderful concepts of learning. The person who teaches yoga to others benefits learners by making a contribution to their good health and for ultimately bringing about happiness in their lives.
- A yoga instructor can experience a growth in his/her personality. The recent popularity in the field of yoga has provided many new opportunities for yoga professionals to work as instructors in resorts, gym, schools, health centres, tourist resorts, housing societies and also in large organizations.
- Activity is necessary for learning. Learning is a process of experience. Unless the student is involved in the experience of activity he/she may not be able to learn. Therefore practice is essential, especially for motor-learning or skill-learning. Again it is not mere practice but the correct practice that is important. Complex motor skills require more repetitions of correct practices.
- Observing capacity is a way of emphasizing attention, awareness, self examination, intention, and skilful action. Behaving mindfully involves communicating from a place of awareness, while maintaining an intention to hold space for others.
- Visual demonstration of the practice is one of the most effective way to enhance the learning of a motor-skill. However, the learning is hastened if the student is able to grasp an intellectual understanding of the nature of the task before the beginning of the practice and is given sometime to integrate the initial cues from observing the demonstration and listening to instructions. Brief, clear descriptions of the activity with repeated demonstrations and pointing out likely faults bring good results in yoga.
- An effective teaching depends on the knowledge of important principles of anatomy, physiology, psychology, pedagogy and yoga so that the teacher may be flexible in modifying the method. These principles also provide sound base for selection and formulation of methods.
- The lecture method proves to be of greater advantage when combined with other methods. The use of visual materials is of considerable help in aiding students to retain the content of the lecture.

- In response-to-instruction method the teacher gives precise instructions which precede, follow or are concurrent with a demonstration and all students respond to the instructions of the teacher in the same way.
- The aim of project method is to enable the students to put into practice what they have learned in the class.
- In group settings, there may be persons who have some experience with yoga and wish to advance further to gain more varied and deeper experience. Their expectation is to acquaint themselves with a greater number of yogic practices and indulge in subtler and higher practices intensively.
- The progress of science in various fields has developed techniques that have made knowledge widely available. These radically alter our systems of communication. The use of computers, for example, has reduced the need for man-power in the area of teaching.
- The teacher is expected to know more than the students on the points of discussion. If the teacher is not prepared to answer any question or he/she is not sure on any point, he/she should not hesitate to say so. He/she should instead say that he/she will find out the answer and explain it in the next class.



## KEYWORDS

**Aspirants:** A person who wants to do or to be something.

**Demonstration:** It is the act of exhibiting the yoga practice as a method of teaching.

**Discipline:** It is a system of rules to conduct the method of practice.

**Principles:** A fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behaviour.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

### Short Answer Questions

1. Write down the difference between a lesson and a session.
2. Name the different methods of teaching yoga.
3. Justify in brief the need of demonstration for a yoga teacher.
4. Differentiate between directive and non-directive dialogue.
5. What are the benefits of group classes?

### Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the factors that go into well-developed communication skills.
2. Discuss various methods of teaching yoga.
3. How do the methods of teaching help students get good classes? Elaborate.
4. Describe sitting arrangement in terms of yoga – teaching classes.
5. How can a yoga teacher deal with difficult students? Discuss.
6. Discuss 'good listening'.
7. Yoga teaching can be a successful career option. Discuss.



## FURTHER READINGS

*Teaching Practices* – published by Kaivalyadham

*The Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice* – T. K. V. Desikachar

*The Yoga of the Yogi: The Legacy of T. Krishnamacharya* – Kausthub Desikachar



## Appendix

### 2.7 Concept of Chakras (Ashtachakrās and its Correlation to stages of Consciousness) (page no. 75)

#### Clearing the doubt about chakrās, whether they are six or eight

In the *Atharva Veda*, there is a description about *chakrās*. The portrayal of *asta chakrās* are can also be seen in *Gorkhbāni*-

*'E ashta kamala kā jānai-bhaesha, āpai karatā āpai daekh.*

*Iti ashta kathamta jatee gorakhanātha'*

After *Shatchakra bhaedana*, the classification of six *chakrās*, it is considered that both *manaschakra* that resides in Consciousness, (*lalanā chakra* or *bindu chakra*) and *sahasrāra chakra*, are the higher centers of apparent consciousness and the central source of the superior power. Hence, undoubtedly, the prime centres (*sakti kaendra*) are eight in number. And it is undisputable that a practitioner has to attain bliss, awakening his inherent power from *mulādhāra chakra* taking up to *sahasrāra*, dispelling the illnesses.

There are eight *chakrās* in a human body. They are the centres of marvellous powers. These *chakrās* are situated in spinal cord beginning from downwards to upwards. In the normal position, these *chakrās* are facing downwards in an unblossoming and undeveloped position. By following *brahmacharya*, practising *pranāyama*, meditation and other yogic methods, these *chakrās* get divine inspiration, and they turn slowly upwards and start blooming. Then so many divine powers are attained by the practitioner. Thus Pelvic Plexus, etc., English names are also do not indicate the actual places of them. They are used only to indicate the points of *chakrās*.

#### Brief description of chakrās

*Atharvaveda described about chakrās like this-*

*Ashtāchakra navadvārā daevānām purayodhyā,*

*Asyām hiranyāyab kosah svargo jyotishāvrtah. (atharvavedam- 10.2.31)*

In this body which is the city of *Ayodhya*, the city of Gods, is unconquerable, equipped with eight circles and nine portals (two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth, anus and genitals). In this city there is *Hiranya kosa*, the treasure of brilliance, which is the source of infinite, unbounded peace and pleasure and an abode of bliss and sojourn of divine radiance, containing the soul full of myriad powers. It is ever marching on to blissful God, surrounded by the realization of the Supreme Being. *Yog* practitioners, who are always in the pursuit of this *divyakosa*, the divine abode, can only achieve it.

Here, we are giving the brief description of *chakrās*:

1. *Mulādhāra Chakra* (Pelvic Plexus i.e. Root Plexus vis-a-vis Reproductive System): The *Muladhara chakra* is situated two inches up to the base anus and two inches down to genital organ. *Sushumna*



(*Saraswati*) *nādi* goes through the centre of *cakrā*, and *idā* (*ganga*) from *vama kona*, the left angle. Hence, this *cakrā* is called *mukta triveni* threefold flow of liberation. *Kundalini shakti*, the power of *Kundalini*, is the serpent that lies in 'coiled' shape. It is the energy centre of the whole body. The meaning of the name *mulādhāra* is self explanatory, as it is the source of whole energy of the body. Health, ability, skill performance like many more benefits can be achieved and enhanced by concentrating on this *chakra*. One can be *urdhwareta*, (the one, whose semen starts upward journey, which is the prime symptom of celibacy), strength, vigour and brightness. All the ailments of body would disappear. This first *chakra mulādhāra* is illuminated by the '*mānas-keiran*', the rays of consciousness, which get stimulus from *savita*, the brightness of mind. The mild brightness, which is observed at this place in the shape of a fountain or torch, has its source in *svādhishthāna chakra*, which ends up in *mulādhāra*. Impenetrable darkness is prevail here all around. Through the practice of *prāna sādhanā*, enacting the life force and *dharana*, concentration, this darkness can be scattered and illuminate *Mulādhāra chakra*. A glimpse of the grossness and subtlety grid of *mulādhāra* can be seen through this mild brightness. This is known as *kundalini jagarana*, awakening of *Kundalini*.

2. *Svādhishthāna chakra* (Hypogastric Plexus vis-a-vis excretory System): The *chakra* is situated two inches upwards near abdomen. Concentrating on *svādhishthāna chakra* one can create, nourish, and destroy anything. Goddess Saraswati speaks through the practitioner's mouth. His word shows the miraculous effect.
3. *Manipura chakra* (Epigastric Plexus or Solar Plexus vis-a-vis Digestive System): The *chakra* is situated in the source place of navel. *Manipura chakra* provides energy to the whole digestive system including liver and nerves and pancreas. According to *yogdarsana*, '*nābhichakrae kāyavyubhājnanam*' (3.22) *sutra*, if we meditate on *nābhichakra*, he can perceive the structure of the body, i.e., the knowledge of different limbs of the body.
4. *Hridaya Chakra* or *nimna Manaschakra* (Lower Mind Plexus vis-a-vis Skeletal System): *Hridaya chakra* is situated in between the two breasts. This heart is not a physical one, hence is not seen with naked eyes. This is an illusionary heart. The Upanishads described this as '*Atma*', the individual soul. *Tantric* scriptures say, 'Concentrating on *hridaya chakra* one can achieve powers like, eloquency of speech, poetic power, winning the senses.' In *śivasāratamtra* it is said that the sound of *anahada* (the unbeaten) sound, which is heard in this *chakra* is nothing but the *udgeetha* (syllable) form of 'Om' of *sadāshiva* (ever auspicious form). Concentration on this *chakra*, is particularly beneficial for women and for the devout practitioners.
5. *Visuddhi chakra* (Carotid Plexus vis-a-vis Respiratory System): The *Chakra* is situated in Throat. By the practice of concentrating and awakening this *chakra*, one becomes a poet, erudite, healthy, griefless. It provides a longlife. When this *chakra* is awakened, ailments related to Thyroid, lungs would be dispelled and do not recur.
6. *Ājñā chakra* (Medullary Plexus vis-a-vis Nervous System): The *Chakra* is situated in between the eyebrows. Concentrating on this *chakra*, by practising *kapālabhāti*, *anuloma*, *viloma* – *prāṇāyāmās*, *nādi sōdhana* like methods, *prāna*, the life force and *mana*, consciousness attain bliss. Then autonomic and voluntary nervous system becomes healthy, gets peace and remains in a balanced state. The whole nervous system is associated with *ājñā chakra*. Hence, when the *ājñā chakra* is awakened, the nervous system would get healthy and becomes strong. All the three channels, namely *ida*, *pingal*



and *sushumna* flow in separate directions from *mulādhāra* to this junction, and unite. Therefore, *ajñā chakra* is known as *triveni*. The *chakra* is situated in throat. By practice of concentrating and awakening this *chakra*, one becomes a poet, erudite, healthy, griefless. It provides a longlife. When this *chakra* is awakened, ailments related to thyroid, lungs would be dispelled and they never occur also.

*Idā bhāgeerathee gangā pingalā yamunā nadee,*  
*taṣṭormadhyagatā nāḍee sushujñākyā sarasvatee.*  
*trivāṇee-samgamō yatra teertharājah sa uchyatae,*  
*Tatra snānam prakurveeta sarvāpāpaiḥ pramuchyatae.*  
*(jñānasamkalineetamtram)*

*Idā, pingal* are known as *Ganga* and *Yamuna*. *Sushumna* nerve goes in between them, and is called as *Saraswati*. This *triveni*, where all the three channels are united, is known as *teertharāja*, the auspicious pilgrimage. Bathing (meditating) in the river *Ganga*, the practitioner can cleanse up all his sins (*karmās*). And this *triveni* is nowhere-else outside, it resides in our inner world. Actually, physically bathing in the Ganges can not make one a sin-free person. This is hypotheses. If such miracle happens, anybody can kill a Brahmin, guru and brother and go directly to the river *Ganga*, and bathe in it to cleanse the sins. Here 'sin' means, crime, in which the other person gets hurt. Hence the result of sin is to be experienced. After committing a crime, eventhough you atone for it, you should suffer the result of the crime and enjoy the result of righteous thing, separately. Therefore, the scriptures say- *avasyamaeva bhoktavyam kṛtam Karma subhāsubham*. Yes, if you really bathe in river *Ganga*, and take an oath that in this life, you would not do any sinful act, and keep your word in future, then you would be saved. But one has to suffer the result of his/her past sinful acts. We are talking this about the river *Ganga*. If one would bathe in the radiant wisdom (*ganga*), through the means of *dhyāna* (meditation) *triveni* by concentrating the mind in perfect devotion in *ajñā chakra*, then one would not think ever about commuting sin. Therefore, if we want to liberate ourselves from misdeeds, we have to restraint our consciousness, practice *yog*, chant *Om*.

7. *Manaschakra* (*bindu* or *lalanā chakra*): This *chakra* is situated in Hypothalamus. The function of this *chakra* is to manufacture necessary cerebrum fluids and salts, etc, associated with the consciousness, according to the emotions, thoughts and culture. We can call this place as *mana*, where all the moods and thoughts emerge.
8. *Sahasrāra chakra* (endocrine system, crown plexus): This *chakra* is situated in mind which is above the palate. It is the centre of the whole divine powers. Concentrating on this *chakra* abstaining the *prāṇa*, the life force and the consciousness and practising- *pramāṇa* (right knowledge), *viparyaya* (indiscrimination), *vikalpa* (verbal delusion), *nidra* (sleep), *smṛiti* (memory), one would attain *Asamprajñāta Samādhi*, cognitive union. All the secretory fluids, including pituitary and pineal glands, are associated with *sahasrāra chakra*. When *sahasrāra chakra* is awakened, the whole endocrine system acquires balance.

## 4.7 Asanas and Their Benefits (Research backing Yoga practices) (page no. 121)

### Evidence Based Effects of Hatha Yoga Practices on Different Systems of The Body

#### Evidence based on yoga practices on Joints and Bones

1. Yoga program shows therapeutic benefits on osteoarthritis [Cheung C.2014.BMC Complement Altern Med. 18.14.160]
2. Complementary therapies (tai chi acupuncture yoga and massage therapy) can reduce pain and improve function in adults with OA [Shengelia R. 2013. Pain Manag Nurs, 14(4):e274-88]
3. Iyengar Yoga along with conventional therapy provides better results in chronic unilateral knee osteoarthritis in terms of pain and functional disability [Nambi GS. 2013, Int J Yoga 6(2):123-7].
4. Integrated approach of yoga therapy is better than physiotherapy exercises as an adjunct to transcutaneous electrical stimulation and ultrasound treatment in reducing pain, morning stiffness, in patients with OA knees [Ebnezar J. 2012. Int J Yoga, 5(1):28-36].
5. Yoga improves range of motion in shoulder abduction, horizontal shoulder extension, lumbar spine flexion, Hip flexion, hip extension, and knee flexion [Goncalves LC, 2011, Arch Gerontol Geriatr, 53(2): 158-62].
6. *Hatha yoga* therapy is better than therapeutic exercises as an adjunct to transcutaneous electrical stimulation and ultrasound treatment in improving walking pain, range of knee flexion, walking time, tenderness, swelling, crepitus, and knee disability in patients with OA knees [Ebnezar J, 2012, J Altern Complement Med, 18(5): 463-72].
7. Yoga shows greater improvement in osteoarthritis of the hands and carpal tunnel syndrome in pain [Garfinkel M.2000, Rheum Dis CLIN North Am, 26(1):125-32].
8. 8 weeks yoga program was effective in providing relief in hand OA [Garfinkel MS, 1994, J Rheumatol, 21(12):2341-3].
9. Yoga postures can contribute to extreme strain on spines with bone loss [Sinaki M, 2013, Pain Pract, 13(1):68-75].
10. Magnetic resonance imaging showed that long-term practitioners of yoga studied had significantly less degenerative disc disease than a matched control group [Jeng CM, 2011, Eur spined 20(3): 408-13].
11. The weight-bearing yoga training had a positive effect on bones by slowing down bone – resorption which was a very essential indicator for human health; because it reduced the osteoporosis risks in the postmenopausal women [Phoosuwan M,2009, J Med Assoc Thai, 92 Suppl5:S102-8].

#### Evidence based benefits of yoga practices on muscles

1. High *Chaturanga asana*, Low *Chaturanga asana* and *Adho Mukha Svanasana* are effective for strengthening external abdominal muscle.



*Utkatasana* and *Virabhadrasana* poses for targeting gluteus muscle, and *Utkatasana* and *Ardha Uttanasana* for strengthening back muscle. And these three muscles could be strengthened by the *Urdhwa Mukha Svanasana* [Ni, 2004, Complement Ther Med; 22(2):235-43].

2. Yoga can improve muscle strength and endurance in the elderly [Fan, 2011, Int Psychogeriatr;23(8):1222-30; Volger, 2011, Int J Yoga Therap;(21):61-72].
3. Yoga can improve peripheral muscle strength in cancer survivors [Yadly, 2015, Integr Cancer Ther;14(2):125-32].
4. High frequency yoga breathing (*kapalabhati*) can improve grip strength [Telles, 2014, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol;58(1):22-9].
5. *Suryanamaskar* can improve muscle strength [bhutkar, 2011, Asian J Sports Med;2(4):259-66].
6. Yoga can decrease musculoskeletal discomfort [Tellas, 2009, Work;33(3):297-306].
7. Yoga can improve hand-grip strength [Madanmohan, 2008, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol; 52(2): 164-70].
8. Yoga training and a single bout of yoga appear to attenuate peak muscle soreness in women [Boyle, 2004, J Strength Cond Res; 18(4):723-9].
9. Yoga can improve hand-grip strength in rheumatoid arthritis patients [Dash, 2001, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol;45(3):355-60].
10. Yoga can improve respiratory muscle function in institutionalized frail older adults [Iranzo, 2014, J Geriatr Phys Ther;37(2):65-75].

### Evidence based benefits of yoga practices on cardiovascular system

1. Alternate nostril yoga breathing increases the heart rate variability and reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure in normal healthy volunteers. {Telles, S. 2014. Med Sci Monit Basic Res 19;20: 184-93}.
2. Alternate nostril yoga breathing reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure in patients with essential hypertension. {Telles, S. 2013. Med Sci Monit. 21:19:61-6}.
3. *Bhastrika pranayama* (respiratory rate 6/min) reduces blood pressure with a slight decrease in heart rate. {Pramnik, T. 2009. J Altern Complement Med 15(3):293-5}.
4. *Bhramari pranayama* (respiratory rate 3/min) decrease systolic and diastolic blood pressure. {Pramanik, T. 2010, Nepal Med Coll J 12(3):154-7.}
5. *Kapalabhati* (respiratory rate 2 Hz) increases sympathetic activity. {Raghuraj, P. 1998. Indian J Physiol Pharmacol. 1998 Oct;42(4):467-72}
6. *Kapalabhati* (respiratory rate at 1 Hz) withdraws vagal activity. {Telles, S. 2011. Biopsychosoc Med 13;5:4}.
7. Headstand (*Sirsasana*) increase sympathetic activity. {Manjunath, N.K. 2003. Indian J Physiol Pharmacol. 47(1):34-42.}

8. *Sarvangasana* practice reduces resting heart rate and left ventricular end-diastolic volume (LVEDV). Konar, D. 2000. Indian J Physiol Pharmacol. 44(4):392-400.
9. Meditation (*dhyana*) reduces sympathetic activity and increases vagal activity. {Telles, S. 2013. J Altern Complement Med 19(1):35-42
10. Following meditation, a significant reduction in mean arterial blood pressure was noted, {Steinhubl, S.R. 2015. Front Hum Neurosci. 2015 Mar 18;9:145}.

### Evidence based benefits of yoga practices on brain

1. *Bhastrika pranayama* reduces reaction time of the practitioners [Telles, 2013, Percept Mot Skills; 117(1):1131-40].
2. Both *kapalabhati* and breath awareness can improve fine motor skills and visual discrimination, with a greater magnitude of change after *kapalabhati* [Telles, 2012, Int J Yoga; 5(1):37-41].
3. Alternate Nostril Breathing has a balancing effect on the functional activity of the left and right hemisphere [Stancak, 1994, Int J Psychophysiol; 18(1)75-9].
4. *Bhramari pranayama* enhances response inhibition and cognitive control [Rajesh, 2014, Int J Yoga;7(2):138-41].
5. Meditation leads to activation in brain areas involved in processing self-relevant information, self-regulation, focused problem-solving, adaptive behaviour, and interoception [Boccia, 2015, Biomed Res Int;2015:419808].
6. Body-mind relaxation meditation induction helps patients construct reappraisal strategies that can modulate the brain activity in multiple emotion-processing systems [Chen, 2015, J Affect Disord; 183:75-82].
7. In older person, yoga improves memory performance (McDougall et al., 2015).
8. Yoga improves primary working memory [Laverestsky, 2013, Int J Geriatr Psychiatry; 28(1):57-65].

### Mental health

9. In older person, yoga improves sleep (Manjunath, 2004, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol;48(3):353-6].
10. Yoga induces positive mental state (Wood, 1993, J R Soc Med;86(5)254-8].
11. Yoga improves GABA level which decrease anxiety and depression level [Streeter, 2007, J Altern Complement Med;13(4):419-26].
12. Yoga practice was found positively correlated with grey matter volume which is associated with the promotion of neuroplastic changes in executive brain systems (Froeliger, 2012, Evid Based Complement Alternat Med;2012:821307].

### Evidence based benefits of yoga for mental health and well-being

1. Comprehensive yoga (including postures, breathing techniques, meditation and relaxation) improves mental health and promotes well-being [Hadi, N., 2007; *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*. 13(4):829-837].



2. Yoga helps in improvements in children's perceived well-being [Berger, D.L., 2009; *Alternative Therapies In Health And Medicine*. 15 (5): 36-42].
3. *Kripalu* yoga benefits in psychosocial well-being in students [Noggle, J.J., 2012; *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*. 33(3): 193-201].
4. Total, general and parental self-esteem improved after yoga in pre-adolescents school children [Telles, S., 2013; *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*. 7:37].
5. *Kapalabhati pranayama* improves attention [Telles, S., 2008; *Indian journal of medical sciences*. 62(1): 20-22].
6. *Anuloma-viloma pranayama* increases spatial memory [Naveen, K.V., 1997; *Psychological Reports*. 81(2):555-561].
7. Right and alternate nostril yoga breathing improves focused and selective attention and increases visual scanning ability [Telles, S., 2007; *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. 104(3 Pt 2):1289-1296].
8. Following *bhastrika pranayama* reaction time decreases [Bhavanani, A.B., 2003; *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*. 47(3):297-300].
9. Breathing through the left nostril increases performance in a spatial cognitive task [Joshi, M., 2008; *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*. 52(2):197-200].
10. *Bhastrika pranayama* reduces impulsivity and inhibits unnecessary responses [Telles, S., 2013; *Perceptual and Motor Skills*. 117(1):89-98].
11. Yoga practice reduces physiological signs of mental stress (e.g., a reduced skin resistance value, reduced heart and breath rates with rhythmic breathing in children [Telles, S., 1997; *Perceptual and motor skills*. 86(1):251-257].
12. Yoga is effective in reducing anxiety [Kuttner, L., 3-2006; *Pain Research Management*. 11 (4) 217-233].
13. The integrated yoga is an efficacious means of improving the quality of life of pregnant women and enhancing certain aspects of their interpersonal relationship [Rakhshani, A., 2010; *Quality of Life Research*. 19(10): 1447-1455].
14. Yoga is valuable in helping to achieve relaxation and diminish stress, and increases the quality of life in cancer patient [Unger, O., 2010; *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*. 16(2): 60-63].
15. Yoga improves work performance by relieving tension and job stress at the workplace [Gura, S.T., 2002; *Work* 19: 3-7].
16. Yoga can be considered as a complementary therapy in the treatment of anxiety disorders in women [Javnbakht, M., 2009; *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*. [15(2): 102-104].
17. Short term yoga based life-style intervention leads to remarkable reduction in the anxiety [Gupta, N., 2006; *Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology*. 50(1): 41-47].

## The benefits of various asanas on different parts of the human body Sirsasana

- The practice of the headstand in a traditional way (without any support) and those who used the support of the wall (a present day adaptation), had an increase in the power of the low frequency component (LF) and a decrease in the high frequency component (HF) of the HRV spectrum, increased LF/HF ratio, and decreased heart rate [Manjunath NK, 2003, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol; 47(1):34-42].

## Group of postures

- Following yoga *asanas* (*suryanamaskar, trikonasana, tadasana, sukhhasana, padmasana, bhastrika pranayama, pashimottanasana, ardhmatsyendrasana, pawanmuktasana, bhujangasana, dhanurasana and shavasana*), a significant decrease in waist-hip ratio and changes in insulin levels were observed suggesting a positive effect of yoga *asanas* on glucose utilization and fat redistribution in Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM). Yoga *asanas* may be used as an adjunct with diet and drugs in the management of Type 2 diabetes [Malhotra V, 2005, Nepal Med Coll J; 7(2):145-7].
- Following four sets of *asanas*: (I) *dhanurasana + matsyendrasana*, (ii) *balasana + vajrasana*, (III) *naukasana + bhujangasana*, and (iv) *setubandhasana + pawanmuktasana*, an increased sensitivity of the B cells of pancreas to the glucose signal was reported [Manjunatha S, 2005, Indian J Physiol Pharmacol; 49(3)319-24].
- Following 2 months of both conventional (Symptomatic treatment with loperamide 2-6 mg/day) and yogic intervention which includes *vajrasana, shashankasana, ushtrasana, marjariasana, padbastasana, dhanurasana, trikonasana in two variation, pawanmuktasana, and paschimottanasana* along with *surya nadai pranayama* two times/day a significant improvement in the functioning of bowel system and a betterment in the state of anxiety was reported. This was accompanied by an increase in electrophysiologically recorded gastric activity in the conventional intervention group and enhanced parasympathetic reactivity measured by heart rate parameters, in yogic intervention group. This indicates a beneficial effect of yogic intervention over conventional treatment in diarrhea-predominant IBS [Taneja I, 2004, Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback; 29(1):19-33].

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