

# Physiological Benefits and Types of Pranayama

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**Abstract – Pranayama is really a technical procedure and we must understand the purpose and the technique properly before we start to practice. The Hatha yoga texts say: “if Pranayama is properly and judiciously done .we can remove all the abnormalities, all the abnormal functions of the body, but if it is done injudiciously, it is inevitable that all kinds of abnormalities arise”. So Pranayama must be practiced with great care and, in the beginning, at any rate, the breath-holding phased must be avoided until one is ready. As a result of this, the volume of the thorax decreases. Because this decreased pressure is then less than the atmospheric pressure, the air is drawn into the lungs. When the pressure equalizes and the thorax does not expand any more, there is pause. So these are the phases of normal breathing. The control of prana through the concentration of thought and regular breathing is called ‘Pranayama’ It is through pranayama that each part of the body can be filled with prana.once one is capable of performing it , one is master of the body and can dominate illness and suffering. Prana is accumulated where our mind is concentrated.**

## INTRODUCTION

Breath is life and life is breath. We are born when we first breath in and we breathe last when last when we die. But although we cannot exist without breathing, we are rarely conscious except when our breathing gives us some trouble. If we get bronchitis or asthma, for instance.

The process of breathing is known as respiration and it is important to know how it works. Normal breathing depends on the movements of the diaphragm, the dome shaped muscle which separates the cavity of the thorax from that of the abdomen .When the diaphragm contracts, the ribs are elevated and the thorax and lungs expand. As a result of this, the volume of the thorax decreases. Because this decreased pressure is then less than the atmospheric pressure, the air is drawn into the lungs. When the pressure equalizes and the thorax does not expand any more, there is pause. So these are the phases of normal breathing .The most important role in breathing is played by the diaphragm so if the functioning of the diaphragm is disturbed, the breathing process cannot work smoothly.

## MEANING OF PRANAYAMA

Respiration can be affected by three factors .The first is physiological. Changes that occur in the body influence respiration .The body, of course, adjust itself automatically to additional demand. “Prana;’ is a Sanskrit word which means ‘vital force’. It also

signifies ‘life’ or breath. ‘Ayana means the control of the prana so pranayama means the vital force (prana) by concentration and regulated breathing.

Prana is the vital power or force which is motivating every element on the earth and is the origin of the force of thought. There is a deep affinity between prana and mental force, between mental force and intellect, between intellect and soul, and between soul and God. The prana not only ensures the proper functioning of the body (inclauding the glandular system), but is also the regulator and animator of the psyche .It is a remedy for several physical and psyche disturbances of which modern man is the victim.

Pranayama is really a technical procedure and we must understand the purpose and the technique properly before we start to practice. The Hatha yoga texts say: “if Pranayama is properly and judiciously done .we can remove all the abnormalities, all the abnormal functions of the body, but if it is done injudiciously, it is inevitable that all kinds of abnormalities arise”. So Pranayama must be practiced with great care and, in the beginning, at any rate, the breath-holding phased must be avoided until one is ready.

In all from of life, from the highest to the lowest, the prana is present as living forces All the force is based on prana: it is the origin of movement, gravity, magnetism, physical action, the nerve currents and the force of the thought. Without prana there can be no life, for it is the soul of all

force and energy. It is found in the air, water and food. Prana is the vital force inside each living being, and thought is the highest and most refined action of prana. As we breathe, the movement of the lungs inhaling air is the expression of prana. pranayama is not simply the breathing but the control of the muscular force activating the lungs.

The control of prana through the concentration of thought and regular breathing is called 'Pranayama'. It is through pranayama that each part of the body can be filled with prana. Once one is capable of performing it, one is master of the body and can dominate illness and suffering. Prana is accumulated where our mind is concentrated.

## TYPES OF PRANAYAM

- Surya Bhedana Pranayama
- Sheetakari pranayama
- Bhastrika pranayama
- Moorchha Pranayama
- Sama vatti Pranayama
- Plavini pranayama
- Ujjayi pranayama
- Sheetali Pranayama
- Kapalabati Pranayama
- Nadi Sodhana Pranayama
- **Surya Bhedana pranayama :**

Surya is the Bhedana is derived from the root, bhid meaning to pierce, to break or pass through. The surya Bhedana exercise stimulates that part of the brain which contains the life force (vital force) the practice of Pranayama produces heat in body.

In surya Bhedana pranayama, the breath is inhaled the right/left nostril. This the pranapasses through the pingala of surya nadi. A Kumbhaka is performed and the breath is exhaled through the left /right nostril which is the Ida nadi.

- **Ujjayi Pranayama :**

This means upward or superiority in rank. It also means blowing or expanding. It conveys the sense of pre-eminence and power. This Pranayama produces heat in the body. Ujjayi means conquest, victory, triumph or success. It is the process in which the lungs are fully

expanded and the chest puffed out like that of a proud conqueror.

- **Sheetakari pranayama :**

The practice of Sheetakari has a cooling effect on the body. The tongue is not curled. The lips are kept slightly parted and only the tip of the tongue protrudes between the teeth. The tongue is kept flat as in its normal state.

- **Sheetali Pranayama :**

Sheetali means cool. This pranayama cools the system i.e. body and mind. In this protrude the tongue out and curl it like a pipe. Breathe with a sibilant sound Si-si-si fills the lungs completely. Hold the breath for as much time as possible. Then slowly exhale through both the nostrils.

- **Bhastrika Pranayama :**

Bhastrika means a bellows used in furnace the air is forcibly drawn in and out as in a black smith's exhalation completes a cycle of Bhastrika. The sound made resembles air rushing through bellows.

- **Bharmari Pranayama :( humming bee bee breath )**

Sit in a padmasana or sidhasana. Close the eyes and relax the whole body for a short time. The lips should remain gently closed with teeth slightly separated throughout the practice. The sound vibration is heard and felt more distinctly in the brain. Raise the arms and bend the elbows, bringing the hands to the ears with middle or index finger. Breathe in through nose. Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep steady humming sound like that of the black bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of exhalation. The sound should be soft. Breathe deeply at the end of exhalation. This is one round, repeat the process.

- **Moorchha Pranayama : ( swooning or fainting breath )**

Sit in a padmasana or sidhasana. Keep the head and spine straight. Relax the whole body. Observe the breath until it becomes slow and deep. Keep the arms straight by locking the elbow and pressing the knees with the hands. Retain the breath inside for as long as is comfortable. Exhale while relaxing the arms close the eyes and slowly bring the head back to the upright position. Relax the whole body, This is one round, repeat the process. Moorcha means to faint. Through this the experiences of conscious

Unconsciousness is meant to arise. This is to expand the consciousness and store prana.

#### ➤ **Kapalabhati Pranayama**

Kapalabhati (Kapala is skull: bhati is light, luster) is a milder form of Bhastrika Pranayama. In Kapalabhati. The inhalation is vigorous; there is a split second of retention after each exhalation.

#### ➤ **Sama Vrti Pranayama:**

Sama means the same or identical, straight. Entire, whole and complete, also similarly or in the manner.

Vrti means action, movement, function or operation, a course of conduct or method. In this pranayama an attempt is made to achieve uniformity in the duration of all the three processes of breathing, namely puraka or inhalation, Kumbhaka or retention, and Rechaka or exhalation in any type of pranayama.

#### ➤ **Nadi Sodhana Pranayama :**

Nadi is a tubular organ body organ of the body like an artery or a vein for the passage of prana or energy.

Sodhana means purifying or cleansing, so the object of Nadi Sodhana Pranayama is the purification of the nerves. A little obstruction in a water pipe can cut off supply completely. A little obstruction in the nerves can cause great discomfort and paralyse Limbic organ.

#### ➤ **Plavini Pranayama (Gulping breath):**

In this the inner part of the abdomen being completely filled with air, and one floats like a lotus leaf on water. Plavini means to 'float'. It is an unusual form of pranayama and is similar to Vatsara Dhaut, except the air is retained in the stomach and intestines and not expelled immediately.

#### **PHYSIOLOGICAL VALUES OF PRANAYAMA**

- Pranayama soothes the nerves and tones entire system.
- It increases digestive power, invigorates the nerves and cleans the sinuses.
- The body receives a larger supply of feels refreshed. The nerves are calmed and purified.
- Pranayama activates and invigorates the liver, spleen, pancreas and abdominal muscles.

- The sinuses are drained and soothes the eyes and ears.
- Pranayama cools the system and soothes the eyes and ears.
- It benefits persons suffering from low blood pressure and high blood pressure.
- It keeps the body fit and healthy.
- One can live a long life with Pranayama. It improves the power of memory and eliminates mental disorder.
- It purifies tubular channels and removes sluggishness from the body.
- The constant practice of Pranayama strengthens the nervous system; the mind becomes calm and capable of concentration.
- The constant practice of Pranayama rouses spiritual power. It gives spiritual joy, spiritual light, and spiritual peace.
- It clears the skull, the respiratory system and nasal cavities.
- It eliminates the cough accumulated in the wind pipe and cures the asthma.
- It tones up the heart and activates the respiratory system, and the circulatory system.
- It purifies the body.
- Pranayama controls ageing.
- Pranayama makes oxygen circulation smooth, helps in weight regulation by melting fat as more oxygen burns fatter.
- Pranayama is the key of intelligence.
- It provides lightness to the body; acts as a disease destructor, brings vigour and power.
- Pranayama helps in lung expansion thereby improves its efficiency and makes it healthy.
- It also helps in controlling blood pressure and heart diseases; makes digestion smooth.

- It cures the phlegm, mucus and tonsillitis problems. Makes your gums and teeth healthy.
- Pranayama brings stillness and calmness to the mind, increased concentration and stability of mind. Pranayama is good for physical, mental and spiritual happiness.
- It makes you free from constipation and indigestion problems.

Pranayama stimulates autonomic nervous system, sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous systems. It helps to ease stress, anxiety and tension. It also eases depression, dullness and lethargy.

## CONCLUSION

Regular practices of meditation helps to improve the function of the human body that is physiological benefits of Pranayama in meditation Regular practices of yogasanas, pranayama psychological factors which are more powerful than physiological factors meditation helps in improving all psychological factors.

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