



# PRANAYAMA (REGULATION OF BREATH)



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## 6.0 OBJECTIVES

**After reading this unit, you should be able to:**

- **understand the need to perform the Pranayama;**
- **understand the essential pre-requisites of Pranayama;**
- **learn the process of Pranayama;**
- **demonstrate the technique of Different Kumbhaka/Pranayama; and**
- **enumerate the step of Ujjayi, Surya-bhedan, Sheetali, Shitkari, bharamari and Bhastrika Kumbhaka Pranyama.**



## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

**Pranayama practice is a most important part of *Yoga-sadhana*. All Yogic text emphasizes on the practice and importance of *Pranayama* in Yoga. Pranayama is intermediate Practice between the Physical and Mental Yogic practices.**

**Etymologically, The Sanskrit word "*Pranayama*" consists of two words: Prana and Ayama. Prana is subtle energy force (Life force) that regulates all the vital actions in the body. Ayama is control and extension. Therefore Pranayama is a voluntary process to control and expand the prana in the body.**

**In *Patanjalayogasutra*, Pranayama is the fourth component of *Astangayoga* and**

**Maharishi Patanajali wrote that Pranayama is a process of Suspension of movement of inhalation and exhalation process.**

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## 6.2 GENERAL PHASES OF PRANAYAMA/ REGULATION OF BREATH

### 6.2.1 Puraka (Inhalation)

**It is an important phase during Pranayama practice which regulates the Inhalation. It is a process of breathe drawing inside the body which is supposed to be smooth and continuous.**



**Fig. 6.1 : Puraka (Inhalation)**

## 6.2.2 *Kumbhaka* (Retention)

**It is second important phase during Pranayama practice which is Retention. It is a process when breathe hold inside or outside the body where there is no inhalation and exhalation. Kumbhaka consist of two types:**

**6.2.2.1 Antara Kumbhaka (Retention of air inside the Body) 6.2.2.2 Bahya Kumbhaka (Retention of air outside the body)**

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**Fig. 6.2 : Kumbhaka (Retention)** 6

### 6.2.3 *Rechaka* (Exhalation)

It is final phase during *Pranayama* practice which regulate the Exhalation part. It is a process of breathe drawing outside the body which should be a slow and controlled manner. Some *yoga* practitioner state that *rechaka* is most important *Pranayama* (Regulation of part of *Pranayama* because if the quality of exhalation is not good, then the Breath) quality of whole *pranayama* practice is affected.



Fig. 6.3 : Rechaka (Exhalation)

## 6.3 NADISHODHAN/ PRANAYAMA

*Nadishodhana* is the foremost type of *Pranayama*. The term *Nadishodhana* is a combination of two words *Nadi* means nerves or channel in which energy flows and *Shodhana* means Purification. *Nadishodhana pranyama* is a complete process of nostril breathing. This practice is also known as *Anulom-vilom pranyama* (Alternate nostrils breathing).

### *Technique:*

- *Sit in any comfortable meditative postures.*
- *Keep the spine and head straight and erect.*
- *Slowly close the eyes.*
- *Adopt Jnanamudra, placing the right hand on right knee and left hand on left knee.*
- *Take 2-3 breath with both nostrils.*
- *Then adopt Nasikagra mudra and close right nostril with right thumb.*
- *Inhale with left nostril.*
- *Hold the breath inside the body as per capacity.*
- *Slowly release the right thumb on right nostril.*
- *Press the left nostril with right little and ring fingers.*
- *Exhale through right nostril.*
- *Then again, Inhale through right nostril close right nostril, hold as per your capacity, then exhale through left nostril.*
- *This is a one complete round of nadishodhana pranayama.*
- *Repeat this process 10-20 times.*

## 6.3 NADISHODHAN/ PRANAYAMA



*Fig. 6.4(b) : Nadishodhana pranayama*



*Fig. 6.4(a) : Nadishodhana pranayama 9*

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## Benefits

- **Relaxes whole body.**
- **Maintain Body temperature (homeostasis level).**
- **Create calmness and steadiness in mind and also improve concentration and focus.**
- **Provide sufficient oxygen to whole body. So that every cell functioning properly.**
- **Remove waste product from body in a form of carbon-dioxide and other toxic gases.**
- **Open the nerve channels (*Nadi*) and remove blockages to the body.**
- **It gives strength to the nerves and muscles and one gains control over them.**

# TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA

## 6.4.1 Surya-Bhedana

### *Kumbhaka/Pranayama*

*Surya-bhedana* is a combination of two words: *Surya* means Sun and *Bhedana* means piercing and passes through. It generates heat (a symbol of sun) in our body. This *kumbhaka pranayama* is known as right nostril breathing.

*Hathayogapradipika* describes: During this *Kumbhaka Pranayama*, *Puraka* (Inhalation phase) are done with *Pingala* (Right Nostril) and *rechaka* (Exhalation phase) are done with *Ida* (left) in *Suryabhedana pranayama*.

### Technique:

- Sit in any Meditative posture with close eyes.
- Close the left nostril with right hand's ring and little finger.
- Slowly Inhale through right nostril without making any sound.
- Hold the air inside as per your capacity.
- Then close right nostril with thumb and exhale the air from left nostril very slowly without making any sound.
- This is a complete one round of *Surya-bhedana kumbhaka pranayama*
- Do this *kumbhaka pranayama* as per your capacity.



# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

Benefits:

- It cleanses the frontal sinuses.
- Destroys the diseases occurring due to imbalance of vata humour.
- Removes diseases of worms.

## ***6.4.2 Bhriimart Kumbhaka/Pranayama***

The Sanskrit word *Bhramari* come from the word *Bhramara* which means a Black bee.

While in the practice of *Bhramari pranayama*, a *sadhaka* makes a Humming sound produced though the nostrils that resembles with the buzzing sound of black bee, therefore it is named as *Bhramari*.

Technique:

- Sit in any Meditative posture.
- Spine and neck should be straight.
- Keep the mouth and eyes closed and inhale deeply.
- Adopt shanmukhi mudra.
- Repeat this practice 10-15 times.

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***



**Fig. 6.6 : Bhramari pranayama**

## ***6.4.3 Ujjayi Kumbhaka/Pranayama***

The Sanskrit word Ujjayi is a symbol of Victory. It means the regular practice of *ujjayi kumbhaka/pranayama* create a victory over disease, worry etc.

During the practice, close the mouth and draw the air through both the nostrils, producing a sound in such a way that it is

felt from the glottis, throat to the chest. After that perform *Kumbhaka* as before, and then exhale through Left nostril.

This

removes throat diseases caused by phlegm and increases the gastric fire.

# *TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA*

Technique:

- Sit in any Meditative posture.
- Close the mouth. Inhale slowly through both the nostrils in a smooth manner with a peculiar sound is produced owing to the partial closing of glottis. It should be continuous till the inhalation complete.
- Retain the breath as per your capacity.
- Then exhale through the left nostril by closing the right nostril with right thumb.
- This practice can be done while walking and standing.



**Fig. 6.7 : Ujjayi Pranayama**

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

Benefits:

- This removes throat diseases caused by phlegm and increases the gastric fire.
- It destroys the diseases related to nadi, dropsy and all diseases related to dhatu.

## ***6.4.4 Bhastrika Kumbhaka/Pranayama***

*Bhastrika Kumbhaka Pranayama* is very similar practice of *Kapalbhati*. The Sanskrit word "Bhastrika" means "Bellows". It means *bhastrika* is a rapid, succession of forcible expulsion practice. *Bhastrika* is a forcefully breath movement just like blacksmith blows his bellows.

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*Hathayogapradipika*: As the bellows of the iron-smith dilates and contracts continuously, in the same way, draw in the air slowly by both the nostrils and expand the stomach, then throw it out quickly, making a bellowing sound, after feeling fatigue inhale through the right nostril and fill the thoracic cavity. Retain

the air methodically and after that exhale it through the left

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

Technique:

- Sit in any Meditative posture and keep the spine, neck and head straight.
- Close the mouth and do inhalation and exhalation quickly for 10 to 20 times through nostrils, just like the bellows of the blacksmith. Constantly dilate and contract.
- A hissing sound will be produced during this practice.
- After 10 to 20 times of rapid breath, inhale deeply from the right nostril and hold it as per your capacity, then exhale through left nostril.
- This is one round, take a little rest.
- Repeat this for 2-3 times.



**Fig. 6.8 : Bhastrika pranayama**

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

## **Benefits:**

- It removes the imbalance of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* and their diseases.
- It increases gastric fire in the body.
- It helps in arousal of *kundalini*.

## ***6.4.5 Sheetali Kumbhaka/Pranayama***

The *Sheetali Kumbhaka* is a cooling pranayama because the Sanskrit word *'shita'* means cool/cold. It means regular practice of this *pranayama* make body cool. This *pranayama* shows their effect not only on physical body but also on mental body in the same ways.

*Hathayogapradipika* describe: Drawing in the air through the rolled tongue, then *Kumbhaka* should be practiced as instructed before; lastly, the intelligent *yogi* should exhale the air slowly through both the nostrils.

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

## **Technique:**

- Sit in any comfortable meditative posture.
- Place the hands on the knees in *Jnanamudra*, close the eyes slowly.
- Roll the tongue in a cylindrical shape/ a tube like structure.
- Inhale through mouth (rolled tongue); fill the air fully in lungs as per your capacity.
- Then close the mouth and hold the air inside for a comfortable period of time.
- Then exhale completely through both nostril.



**Fig. 6.9 : Sheetali pranayama**

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***

## **Benefits :**

- It removes the problems of glandular enlargement, diseases pertaining to spleen etc.
- Beneficial in fever, imbalance of *pitta* humour, hunger, thirst and also various poisons.

### **6.4.6 *Sitkari Kumbhaka/Pranayama***

The *sitkari Kumbhaka Pranayama* also generate a cooling effect in our body. The Sanskrit word *Sitkari* consists two words: *Sit* and *kari*. *Sit* means Cool and *Kari* means that which produces. In this practice, the sound of "see" or "seet" is produced while inhaling. This practice also creates a cooling effect in mental and physical body. *Hathayogapradipika* describe: While doing *puraka* (inhalation) from mouth producing the sound 'sit' then exhale through the nostrils. By doing this practice, the *sadhaka* becomes like a second cupid.

### **Technique:**

- Sit in any Comfortable meditative posture.
- Place the hands on the knees in *Jnanamudra* and eyes should be closed.
- Touch the tongue on the palate closely.
- Keep the lips open; close both the jaws with their teeth.
- Draw the air through the mouth with the hissing sound 'see'.
- Retain the breath as long as comfortable.
- Then exhale the air slowly through both nostrils.
- Repeat this practice, 15-20 times.

# ***TYPES OF/PRANAYAMA***



**Fig. 6.10 : Sitkari pranayama**

## **Beneditis:**

- Sadhaka is not disturbed by hunger, thirst, sleep as well as laziness.
- Body becomes disease free and devoid of disturbances.

## 6.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have studied the relevance and importance of Pranayama. We have studied the different types of *Pranayama* and their techniques. Particular attention has been paid to the steps in *Surya-bhedana*, *Bhramari*, *Ujjayi*, *Bhastrika*, *Sheetali* and *Sitkari*. We have gone through the principles and methods of Pranayama with instructions for the trainers.



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# 6.5 LET US SUM UP



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