

**Course Name - Bachelor of Physical Education**

**Year - IInd (Part-1)**

**Paper Name - Yoga**

**Topic Name - Pranayamas**

**Topic No. – Section A (2)**

**Paper No. - V**

**Lecture No. – 8**

### **Lecture Title**

#### **Pranayamas**

Pranayamas and its types

Hello everyone, I am back again with a new topic. Today we are going to exchange our views on pranayama and its types.

Pranayama is control of breath. Prana is the breath or vital energy in the body. On subtle levels prana represents the pranic energy responsible for life or life force, and yamas stands for control. So Pranayama means, control of breath. One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayamas and achieve healthy body and mind. Patanjali in his text of yoga sutras mentioned pranayamas as means of attaining higher states of awareness. He mentions the holding of breath as an important practice of reaching samadhi. Hatha yoga also talks about 8 types of pranayamas which makes the body and mind healthy. Five types of prana are responsible for various types of pranic activities in the body; they are prana, Vyan, Udana, apana and samana. Out of these prana and apana are most important. Prana is upward flowing and apana is downward flowing. Practice of pranayama achieves the balance in the activities of these pranas, which results in healthy body and mind.

As people have attraction towards yoga asanas. Similarly they have attraction towards pranayamas. The process of pranayama is concerned with the breathing, indicator of life. And therefore, if it is done wrongly, it may do harm to the person. This fear discourages many from taking up pranayamas. The second reason for its unpopularity is the absence of teachers who can teach it scientifically. However, it is true that if one does pranayama unscientifically, without proper guidance, one certainly suffers. But it does not mean that it is such a difficult process, that it cannot be done by a common man. On the contrary, if it is learnt and practiced under an expert guidance, one learns soon and experiences the wonderful and even unimaginable benefits.

There are 10 types of pranayamas

1. Quiet breathing
2. Deep breathing
3. Fast breathing
4. Tribandha and Pranayamas
5. Nadi shuddhi pranayamas
6. Anuloma- Viloma
7. Suryan Bhedan pranayamas
8. Ujjayi pranayama
9. Brahmari Pranayama
10. Pranayama from hatha yoga

In Patanjali's "Ashtanaga yoga" Pranayama appears at the fourth stage. This means unless one observes yama-niyama and does asanas well, he cannot reach this fourth stage. Even the asanas we are going to discuss here are presented in their preliminary form. Therefore, for doing pranayama, it is not enough to have done the asanas as we are discussing. Even after learning these asanas and having practiced them, one needs some preparation before actually taking up pranayamas. Actual pranayama means the holding up of the process of exhalation and inhalation. And it is not possible to discuss or guide this serious aspect of yogabhyasa in the preliminary discussion. Therefore as the preliminary exercises are discussed and which are to be done before the actual beginning of the asanas: similarly, for pranayama too, the preliminary exercises of breathing are designed and only this part we are going to discuss here.

Before examining the exercises of breathing it is necessary to understand the process of breathing. The breathing process chiefly involves two activities.

1. Inhalation
2. Exhalation

Of these the former is called the "Puraka" and later "rechaka" in yogashastra. These two activities continue non-stop right from the birth to the death of a person. The state when these two activities are made to halt is given the name "kumbhaka" in yoga studies. The halt after inhalation i.e., Puraka is called "Abhyantara Kumbhaka" and after exhalation i.e., rechaka. It is called "Bahya kumbhaka". Two more types of kumbhaka are mentioned. But instead of talking of them in detail, let us turn to the process of breathing.

According to the speed of breathing, It is divided into three parts.

1. The smooth breathing that continues naturally without any effort i.e., quiet breathing.
2. The protracted breathing which is caused by deliberate slowing down of the breathing i.e., deep breathing
3. The quick breathing which is caused by deliberate increase in the speed of breathing. i.e., fast breathing.

Breathing plays an important role in the asanas. With the co-ordination of breathe and asanas, the yoga practice becomes harmonious, the breath deepens of its own accord and the body's circulation and metabolism are stimulated. Use of the breathe generally enhances muscle relaxation by concentrating on tense areas of the body and consciously relaxing those parts with each exhalation.

As most people are in the habit of breathing quite shallow, inadequately filling the lungs, the full yoga breathe is practiced in pranayamas and asanas. Correct breathing is fundamental for the body's optimum metabolic function. With regular practice, the full yoga breathe becomes the habitual and natural way of breathing. Slower and deeper breath improves circulation, nervous functioning and the whole physical condition. It also develops a calm, clear mind.

There are some important principles of practice of the asanasa and pranayamas. They are always performed with the co-ordination of the breath.

- Movements that expand the chest and abdominal cavity are always connected with the inhalation.
- Movements that narrow the chest and abdominal cavity, are always connected with the exhalation.

In the initial stages of practice, the asanas are performed once or twice without holding , so that the movement of the body and the breath are synchronized. In this way it is clearly established with which movement to inhale or exhale. This type of practice calms the nervous system, stimulates the glands, increases the capacity of the breath and frees one from physical and mental stress. The mind becomes relaxed, calm and clear.

Only after this preliminary practice, should an asana be held for a longer time, breathing normally. During practice, concentration is directed to the specific part of the body on which the exercise is working. The breath consciousness is also directed to this region of the body.

After practicing a posture, a counter pose or equalizing posture is carried out. For example, when one part of the body is flexed or contracted, then in the following asana it is extended or

stretched.

Let's move ahead and discuss some of the health benefits of the regular practice of the asanas or pranayamas.

1. flexibility of the spine is increased
2. The joints become more mobile
3. The muscles are relaxed, toned and receive a plentiful supply of blood.
4. Glands and organ activity is stimulated and regulated.
5. the lymphatic system and metabolism are stimulated
6. the immune system is strengthened
7. circulation and blood pressure are normalized and stabilized
8. The nervous system is calmed and strengthened.
9. The skin becomes clear and fresh.

One thing more which I want to discuss is that, the difference between the asanas and gymnastics must be clear. Some people consider a particular form of physical exercise as asanas or pranayamas. It is a grave error to consider asanas or pranayamas or any of such fads present around the world as belonging to any tradition of yoga. They can be gymnastics, aerobics or anaerobic, but not yoga. In contrast to gymnastic exercises, asanas are practiced very slowly to enable mental focus and a conscious understanding of the movement. The number of exercises practiced is not important, but rather the quality of performance. Before, after and in between the exercise, a period of conscious physical and mental relaxation should be included. The objective of the asanas is not the conversion of bottled up energy or tension into movement, rather it is to harmonize the body and mind by consciously observing the physical and mental process as each movement or relaxation is practiced. The body does not become tired or exhausted through the practise of the asanas. On the contrary, with energy recharges and one feels rested and refreshed.

It is said that the second pillar of the yoga exercises is pranayamas. Pranayama is the conscious and deliberate control and regulation of the breath. prana itself means breath, and ayam means to control and regulate. With each breath we absorb not only the oxygen, but also prana. prana is cosmic energy, the power in the universe that creates, preserves and changes. It is the basic element of life and consciousness. prana is also found in food, therefore, it is very important to have a healthy and whole some vegetarian diet. The consciousness guidance of prana in the body gives rise to an increase in vitality, physical detoxification, and improve immunity, as well as the attainment of the inner peace, relaxation and mental clarity.

In mythology, it is said that the length of a person's life is predetermined by the number of breaths. The yogi tries to conserve time and lengthen life by slowing down the breath.

Pranayamas effects our body, not only physically but also mentally and spiritually. Let's discuss some of the physical effects of pranayamas

- Preservation of the body's health
- Purification of the blood
- Improvement in the absorption of oxygen
- Strengthening the power of lungs and heart
- Regulation of blood pressure
- Regulation the blood pressure
- Regulation of the nervous system
- Supporting the healing process and the healing therapies
- Increasing resistance to infection, all these are the physical effects of pranayamas.

pranayamas effects us mentally also .

- It helps us in elimination of stress, nervousness and depression
- It also helps in quieting of thoughts and emotions
- Makes us capable of maintaining inner balance
- Release of energy blockage is also a mental effect of pranayama

also the pranayams effects us spiritually. they helps us in deepening of meditation. pranayams improves the expansion of our consciousness. Also, the awakening and purification of the chakras that are the energy centers of our body are effected by the practice of pranayamas.

He who knows prana knows vedas is the important declaration of srutis. You will find in vedanta sutras. breath is brahma. prana is the sum total of all energy that is manifest in the universe. It is the sum total of all the forces in nature. It is the sum total of all Latin forces and powers which are hidden in men and which lie everywhere around us. Heat, light, electricity, magnetism are the manifestations of prana. All forces, all powers and prana spring from the fountain or common source,'atmah'. All physical forces and all mental forces come under the category of prana. It is force on every plane of being, from the highest to the lowest. Whatever moves or works or has a life is but an expression or manifestation of prana. The prana is related to mind and through

mind to will, and through will to the individual soul, and finally through this to the supreme being. If you know how to control the little waves of prana working through the mind, then the secret of gaining mastery over the universal prana will be known to you. The yogi who becomes an expert in the knowledge of this secret, will have no fear of any power, because he has mastery over all manifestations of powers in the universe. What is commonly known as the power of personality is nothing more than the natural capacity of a person to wield his prana. Some persons are more successful in life and more fascinating than others. It is all due to the power of this prana. Such people manipulate everyday, unconsciously of course, the same influence which the yogi uses consciously by the command of his will.

Prana is actually the link between the astral and the physical body. When the thread link prana is cut-off, the astral body separates from the physical body. death takes place. The prana that was working in the physical body is withdrawn into the astral body.

Pranayama is, thus, the process by which we understand the secret of prana and control it. He, who has grasped this prana, has grasped the very core of cosmic life and activity. He who has conquered and controlled this very essence, has not only subjected his own body and mind, but every other body, mind and power in this universe. thus, pranayama or the control of prana is that means by which one tries to realize in this little body the whole of cosmic life and tries to attain perfection by getting all the powers in the universe.

**Let us come to the Conclusion.** We have discussed about Pranayama and Prana, that is the actual link between the astral body and the physical body. The secret of attaining perfection and the knowledge of all forces, all powers and prana which spring from the fountain or common source, 'atmah'. Also we talked about the sum total of all Latin forces and powers which are hidden in men and which lie everywhere around us. We reviewed how proper breathing improves circulation, nervous functioning and the whole physical condition. We examined how the practice of Pranayamas achieves the balance and results in healthy body and mind. - With this we bring our today's lecture to an end. Thank you very much. Have a good day