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Revelations Yoga Vedanta Books & More - Wellness

Prana, Pranayama, Pranamaya Kosa Life force, Control of life force with breath, the Vital Energy Sheath

Prana

The fabric of the entire universe is Prana. All life forms are made up of this life force. Heat, light, electricity, and magnetism are the manifestations of Prana. The prana is related to mind and through mind to will, and through will to the individual Soul, and through the mind then secrets of the universe might be revealed to the individual. When you gain control of the prana fear leaves your being and can gain power over manifesting anything you want in the universe.

Prana means breath, respiration, life, vitality, energy or strength. It denotes certain vital breaths or currents of energy (prana-vayus). 'Ayama' means stretch, extension, expansion, length, breadth, regulation, prolongation, restraint or control. 'Pranayama' this means the prolongation of breath and its restraint.

Warning about Pranayama

Pranayama can remove all diseases if it is done correctly; if it is done incorrectly then it can actually cause illness. Practicing pranayama techniques slowly and systematically is vital.

Pranayama

Pranayama is an art and has techniques to make the respiratory organs to move and expand intentionally, rhythmically and intensively. It consists of long, sustained subtle flow of inhalation (puraka), exhalation (rechaka) and retention of breath (kumbhaka). Puraka stimulates the system; rechaka throws out vitiated air and toxins; kumbhaka distributes the energy throughout the body. The movements include horizontal expansion (dairghya), vertical ascension (aroha) and circumferential extension (visalata) of the lungs and the rib cage. Pranayama is not just automatic habitual breathing to keep body and soul together. Through the abundant intake of oxygen by its focused techniques, subtle chemical changes take place in the participant's body. The practice of asanas removes the obsta-

cles which block the flow of prana, and the practice of pranayama regulates that flow of prana throughout the body. It also regulates all individual's thoughts, desires and actions, gives poise and the tremendous will-power needed to become a master of self.



Breathing is a process that we rarely give any thought to. It occurs naturally without our awareness, yet most of the time it is something that almost all people do incorrectly. If breathing is a spontaneous function of the body,

Why slow breathing?

The advantages of deep breathing are apparent, but what about slow breathing? Why not breathe deeply and quickly? The reason is simple. Time is required to transfer oxygen from the lungs to the blood and for carbon dioxide in the blood to be transferred into the lungs for expulsion into the air. If one breathes rapidly, then the optimum oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange is not reached in the lungs. If the respiration is slow then the optimum transfer can be achieved. This is why depth and speed of breathing are so important in relation to each other. The deep breathing is so important in relation to each other. The deep breathing allows optimum exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

The advantages of deep breathing

How does Prana Flow?

Prana flows through subtle channels called Nadis. The Prana has five facets called panca prana. The downward force called Apana is responsible for functions like defaecation, urination, menstruation, ejaculation 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 nerve impulses, blood circulation, and cellular activity in all cells.

Pranayama Continued

how is it possible to do it incorrectly? The answer is that our respiratory muscles become lazy and cease to give optimum inhalation and exhalation. And due to self consciousness of the individual about the body, one holds the stomach in and breathes in through the chest in a shallow way. Therefore by short and shallow breathing practices participant is creating unhealthy breathing patterns.

Pranamaya Kosha

Life Force/Vital Sheath is very subtle. It does not follow any laws. Prana that flows into the gross body like electricity, sound, light, radio, x-ray, etc are bound by energy laws. The body may be there but without life or prana it is useless. A uniform harmonious flow of Prana to each and every cell of the annamaya kosa keeps them alive and healthy. Mind influences the Pranic layer when stress is not dealt with effectively. If the thoughts are haphazard and the energy flows in wrong direction or have constrictions or blocks it facilitates dis-ease in the physical body.

Why So Many Pranayamas?

Many asanas have been developed to exercise various parts of the anatomy- muscles, nerves, organs and glands – so that the entire organism works in a healthy and harmonious manner. Same way many types of Pranayama have been created and evolved to meet the physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual requirements of the individual under constant changing conditions.



BE BLISSFUL!

“There are no conflicts in Life. Life is conflict free.”

Technique

BHRAMARI PRANAYAMA

- Preparatory Practice of M-kara and N-kara.
- In order to chant M-kara, you can chant any word ending with 'M' such as 'Om', 'Mum', 'Swim', etc. but stretch the 'M' part only. This will result in 'M-kara' chanting.
- Chant 'MM' a few times and observe that while chanting your lips are closed, rows of teeth are separated and the tongue is just behind the lower set of teeth.
- (N-kara)
- In order to chant N-kara, you can chant any word ending with 'N' such as 'King', 'Ring', 'Sing', etc and stretch the 'N' part only. This results in the 'N-Kara' chanting.
- Chant 'NN' a few times and note that your lips are separated during this chanting.
- While practicing Bhramari, we need to use this sound of 'N-kara' and not 'M-kara' whereas while practicing nadanusandhana we use the 'M-kara'.

Posture: Vajrasana

PRACTICE:

- Assume Cinmudra.
- Inhale deeply
- While exhaling produce a low pitched sound resembling the humming of a female bee.
- Feel the vibrations in the entire head.
- This is one round.
- Repeat nine rounds.

Note:

- ✓ During the practice of Bhramari use 'N-kara' and not 'M-kara'.
- ✓ Touch the tongue to upper (hard) palate
- ✓ Initially the sound vibration is felt more at the throat region only.