

Objectives

- To comprehend the information about Ashtanga Yoga.
- To understand the need and benefits of Yoga.
- To realize the benefits of Pranayama.

Yoga is a timeless practical science that shows the way to the physical, moral, mental, and spiritual, health of human race. It is a lifestyle developed since ancient times in the Indian culture.

In today's age of technology, mechanization has led to the deterioration of human health. There is a need to make conscious effort to maintain good physical and mental health. Practicing yoga regularly will help maintain your health.

The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root word 'Yuj'. Yoga is about joining and uniting.

'Ashtanga' of Yoga

There are different ways of practicing yoga. Here, Ashtanga yoga i.e. Rajyoga, the eight limbs for the purification of body, mind and soul, will be studied.

In order to develop various aspects of human personality, it is necessary to know the eight limbs of yoga and behave accordingly. These limbs are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharna, dhyana and samadhi.

1. Yama : Yama means restraint. It deals with ethical standards,

individual's moral conduct or behaviour. There are five yamas:

- a) **Ahimsa**– 'A' means no. 'Himsa' means to kill or body pain. Not to hurt anyone by words, mind and body.
- b) **Satya** – Speak the truth. Truth is the best way of behaviour.
- c) **Asteya** – 'A' means no. 'Steya' means to steal. Asteya means not to steal.
- d) **Bramhacharya**– Self-restraint of body, words and mind.
- e) **Aparigriha**– 'A' means no. 'Parigriha' means to store. Aparigriha means not to hoard or collect things.

2. Niyama: Niyama is for the purification of soul. There are five types of Niyama:

- a) **Shoucha** – Shoucha means holiness. To keep the body clean and pure.
- b) **Santosha**– Satisfied and happy attitude.
- c) **Tapas**– Tapas means fire or heat, persistence. It means to increase the physical, mental and intellectual fire. Persevering in any situation to achieve a goal in life is Tapas.
- d) **Swadhyaya**– 'Swa' means self, 'adhyaya' means study. Swadhyaya means study of one self. It means to introspect oneself to study self-behaviour.
- e) **Ishwara-pranidhana** – Trustful surrender of ones actions, karmas and will power to God.

3. Aasanas: The position in which you experience stability and happiness is called asana. Asana is a stable and

pleasant pose. Because of asanas the mind and body are rejuvenated and disciplined.

4. **Pranayama:** The meaning of Pranayama is regulation of prana. Prana is the life force in breath. Ayama is to extend, stretch, increase the length or regulate. Pranayama means to hold or control the breath. It regulates all respiratory processes.
5. **Pratyahara:** To conquer the senses. The individual becomes free from external influences and internally focussed. This state called as 'Pratyahara'. It stabilizes the fickle mind and senses.
6. **Dharana:** Concentrate on the goals and get absorbed in them. This absorbed state means 'Dharana'. It trains mind to focus only on the object without distraction.
7. **Dhyana:** Dhyana is sustaining concentration of mind on singular object. It refers to meditation and is focussed inward.
8. **Samadhi :** The extreme of Dhyana is Samadhi. When the state of Dhyana is so deep and the two aspects, the meditator and dhyana disappear and only the goal remains, it is the state of Samadhi.

The first five limbs of 'Ashtanga', the Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara are called 'Bahiranga Yoga'. The next three limbs, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are called 'Antaranga Yoga'

Importance of Yoga:

Study of Yoga is subjective and introspective and so it has great educative value. It brings about self-realization, which could change ones attitude towards life.

Benefits of Yoga:

1. Improves the function of internal organs of the body.
2. Increases immunity
3. Improves blood circulation
4. Spine becomes flexible
5. Body become flexible and agile
6. Increases the enthusiasm for work
7. There is no fatigue
8. You get peace of mind
9. Helps to improve concentration
10. Awareness of maintaining appropriate body posture is created.

Need of Yoga:

Nowadays, there is a considerable awareness about pollution. This pollution is of the external nature. The pollution in nature is manmade, but what about pollution within an individual, the internal pollution? i.e. the pollution of conduct and the pollution of thought. Whenever body, mind, concentration, will, thoughts get polluted, there arises the need for purification of the internal being. Yoga helps to achieve this purification.

Rituals and intellect modify an individual's thoughts, acts, work and deeds. Hence, every deed should be based on purity of heart and maturity. Today's fast-paced life is filled with stress and haste, taking us away from our very basic nature. This is evident from the disparity between our conduct and thoughts. In all areas of life, social and family, people are distancing from each other. The simplicity in life has been destroyed. Dissatisfaction is increasing and patience is lost. Living a tidy simple life and being honest is almost impossible now. When introspecting there is the realization of the internal pollution. Vices like envy,

jealousy, greed, anger has eroded the individual of the foundation of happiness. The greed for happiness and anger resulting from poor tolerance levels is a life-threatening condition. The pursuit of materialistic happiness rather than spiritual happiness is the root cause of mental illness. It is important to know that satisfaction lies in pure spiritual bliss. Therefore, there is a great need of yoga to eradicate these mental illnesses.

Pranayama

‘Prana’ means breath, respiration, life, life force and ‘Ayama’ is to extend or increase the length. To regulate the respiratory process.

From the time an individual is born, breathing is automatic. The process of respiration can occur in different ways depending on the situation. Respiratory flow can occur based on the needs and conditions of the body, mind and internal organs. Sometimes breathing is fast, sometimes slow and sometimes shallow. Breathe can also be held for short duration after inhaling or exhaling.

Basics of Breathing

Breathing occurs naturally. It can also be done voluntarily in a limited form. Respiratory system works to meet the oxygen needs of the time. Normally, awareness is poor when breathing naturally. Awareness sets in when work or exercise increases and the speed of respiration is elevated to meet the increased demand. This means that an increased need for oxygen or a disturbance in its supply diverts attention to breathing.

Breath is the great connector between body and mind. Similarly,

respiration, body posture and thoughts are interconnected. If breathing is normal and slow, automatically mind becomes calm and peaceful.

Breathing is a natural process. Humans have 15 to 17 repetitions of inhalation and exhalation in a minute. In Pranayama, breathing becomes controlled so automatically mind is also controlled. Respiration is satisfied through the process of inhalation and exhalation. An attitude of contentment can be cultivated by connecting self with awareness to the process of inhalation and exhalation. Therefore, the key to satisfaction is ‘Pranayama’.

In this chapter let's learn Ujjayi, Shitali and Anulom-Vilom pranayama along with one cleansing process i.e. Kapalabhati.

1. Ujjayi Pranayama

It is one of the type of pranayama. It involves the process of inhalation, inner retention, exhalation, outer retention. In pranayama inhalation and exhalation should be voluntary for the beginners to avoid retention of breath. There should be constriction at throat and hissing sound should be produced while doing Ujjayi.



While practicing it one should sit in any comfortable asana i.e. any meditative

posture. It can be practiced in standing position. Generally ujjayi pranayam is done in sitting position.

Method to practice Ujjayi in standing position: (For Information)

Stand with legs together. Keep your hand on waist, elbows slightly pulled back and chest lifted. Inhale with the constriction at the throat with hissing sound. During inhalation do not allow the abdomen to bulge out, let the chest expand. After completing inhalation, during exhalation chest should go inside and abdomen should remain steady. Proportion of inhalation and exhalation should be 1:2. If it is difficult to maintain, simply practice controlled inhalation – exhalation for few days.

Starting situation: Attention

Action:

1. Put your hands on waist.
2. Inhale with hissing sound and the constriction at throat, tummy should be tucked.
3. Exhale in the same manner.

Do's:

1. Inhalation and exhalation should be slow.
2. Proportion of breathing is to be 1:2 e.g. if you inhale for 5 seconds try to exhale up to 10 seconds.
3. Do not allow the abdomen to bulge out during inhalation and exhalation as well.
4. Breathe through both nostrils.
5. Sit in any meditative posture.

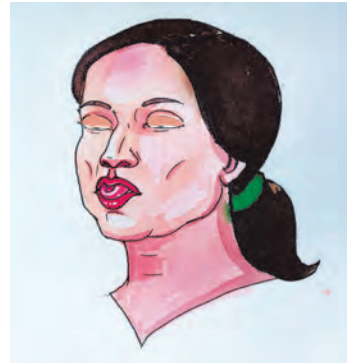
Dont's :

1. Avoid shallow and fast breathing.
2. Do not give any pressure for breathing.

3. Do not continue practice in case of discomfort.

Sheetali Pranayama:

Roll up the tongue, shape it as a tube, and inhale through it. Then close mouth and exhale through both nostrils. It completes one round of sheetali pranayama.



Action:

1. Open your mouth and take the tongue out.
 2. Roll the tongue and shape it as a tube.
 3. Inhale through the tube of tongue.
 4. Take tongue inside and close the mouth.
 5. Exhale through both nostrils.
- Note: Always exhale through nostrils.



(Pranav Mudraa)

Anulom – Vilom pranayama:

It is one of the type of pranayama. In this pranayama, breathing is controlled.

Anu = towards direction, **Loma** = hair, **Anuloma** = towards the direction of the hair. The hair in our nose is designed to filter our breath naturally. The direction

of these hairs is in inside direction. Hence breathing in the direction of the hair is called Anulom.

Vilom = in the opposite direction of the hair. It is also known as Pratilom. Hence exhaling is called Vilom.



In this pranayama, close the right nostril with right hand thumb. Inhale slowly through the left nostril. Now remove your thumb from right nostril and exhale. When exhaling use middle finger to close left nostril. Now inhale with right nostril and exhale through left nostril closing right nostril by thumb. This is one repetition of Anulom-Vilom. Ratio should be 1:2



As mentioned in Ujjayi Pranayama it is advisable to avoid holding the breath in Anulom - Vilom. Hence inhalation

(Purak) and exhalation (Rechak) should be controlled. You should close the other nostril to inhale through one nostril.

In Yoga when practicing pranayama, one has to use the other three fingers without touching the nose with index and middle finger. For this one has to close the index and middle finger and open the other three fingers. Use your thumb to close the right nostril and last two fingers to close left nostril. Sit in comfortable position while keeping the body straight.

Inhale slowly from left nostril while closing the right nostril with the thumb. Close the left nostril with last two fingers and exhale through the right nostril and inhale through the same nostril, close it with the thumb. Release the fingers and exhale through the left nostril. Do this 5-10 times or as many times possible. The tummy should not bulge while inhaling. It should be pulled in. Ratio of inhaling and exhaling should be 1:2

Body position: Sit in swastikasana, padmasana or any comfortable meditative asana.

Action:

1. Sit erect, rest your hands on respective knees.
2. Take your right and fold index and middle finger. Thumb and last two fingers should be straight. It is called Pranav mudra.
3. Close right nostril by thumb and inhale slowly by left nostril.
4. As you complete inhalation by left nostril, close it by last two fingers and exhale slowly by right nostril.

5. Now keep your left nostril close only and inhale by right nostril.
6. Now close right nostril by thumb and exhale through left nostril by removing last two fingers from it.
7. Keep rotating it for five to ten times as you should feel comfortable.
8. Now take your hand down and release the asana.

Do's:

1. Inhalation and exhalation should be slow, calm and quiet.
2. Tummy should be tucked while breathing.
3. As we inhale for five seconds try to exhale up to ten seconds.

Dont's:

1. Do not close your nostrils very easily, do not press fingers on it.
2. Do not make any sound of breath during inhalation and exhalation.

Cleansing process- Kapalbhati:

This is one of the kriyas of purification among the other kriyas in yogic science. This purification is mainly done through controlled use of breathing. This kriya is very easy to perform. It is important to exhale rapidly through the nose during cleansing process. The tummy should be pulled in rapidly for this and left loose after every exhalation. Means the breath is taken automatically. The movement of the tummy in this kriya is like the bellows of blacksmith. Hence, this kriya is called as Kapalbhati. The use of chest should be avoided in this kriya.

Position: Sit with your leg stretched

1. Place the right foot on the left thigh
2. Left foot on the right thigh

3. Place both the hands on the knees
4. Avoid movement of the chest
5. Exhale rapidly through the nose and pull the tummy inside
6. Keep the tummy loose and inhale easily
7. Do 10-12 repetitions of 5th and 6th process
8. Remove the hands over the knees
9. Remove both the feet over the thighs and sit with your legs stretched.

Do's:

1. Keep your backbone straight.
2. Chest should be stable while breathing.
3. Keep your face relax while exhaling.
4. Remain composed while breathing.

Dont's:

1. Do not give excess jerk to abdomen while exhaling.
 2. Do not practice after meal.
 3. Do not practice with speed until you get good command on breath.
- Repeat 10-15 times.



Note: Take tummy in for exhaling and out for inhaling.

Exercise

Q. 1. Fill in the blanks appropriate word.

1. The origin of yoga is in _____ culture.
2. Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi these three limbs are called _____.
3. The study of oneself by self is called _____.
4. The state that gives stability to the body and happiness to the mind is called _____.

Q.2. Match the following:

'A' Group

Answers

B' Group

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|---|
| 1. Tapas | _____ | a) Study of oneself by self |
| 2. Ishwara Pranidhana | _____ | b) to increase ones physical, mental and intellectual fire. |
| 3. Santosha | _____ | c) Trustful surrender of ones karma and will power to God |
| 4. Swadhyaya | _____ | d) Satisfaction and happy attitude |

Q.3. Write whether true or false:

- 1) The digestion system works to meet the need for oxygen.

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2. Asteya means not to steal.

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3. Asana enhances health and rejuvenates the body and mind.

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Q.4. Write in one sentence.

1. Name the Sanskrit word from which Yoga is derived?

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2. What is Dhyana?

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3. Which are the five limbs of Bahiranga Yoga?

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4. What is Pranayama?

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Q.5. Write in brief.

1. Write the benefits of Study of Yoga.

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2. Write information of Asthanga Yoga.

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3. Explain the basics of breathing.

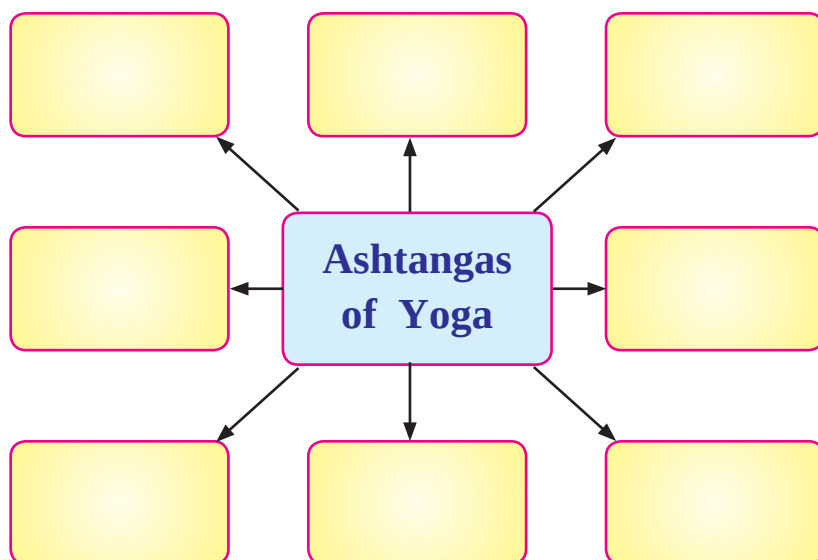
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Q.6. Complete the diagram below.



Q.7. Explain your views.

1. Explain your views on Pranayama, ‘The key to social health’

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2. World Yoga Day - 21st June



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Supplementary Study:

1. Find out about the imaginary energy centers or chakras in the body through the internet.
2. Find out information about World Yoga Day and celebrate it.

