

Pranayama

Teachers Training

Level 1 2023

Pranayama

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श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ॐ

Om Om Om

Sri Gurubhyo Namah Harih Om

Salutations to the Gurus!

ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

oṃ saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu
saha vīryaṃ karavāvahai
tejasvi nāvadhītam astu mā vidviṣāvahai
oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

May that Brahman protect us together. May it nourish us together. May we both gain great vitality. May our learning be brilliant. May we never argue. Om peace, peace, peace.

Breathing is the most crucial life support function

1. We can live without food for weeks,
without water for days,
but without air - only for a few minutes
2. Breathing is so important that it is automatic
3. We do not think about it
4. Pranayama is the art of paying attention to breathing
5. It enables you to do the maximum with the minimum

Prana & Pranayama from “*The Science of Pranayama*” by Swami Sivananda

Prana is the sum total of all energy that is manifest in the universe.

It is the sum total of all forces in nature and powers which are hidden in people and which lie everywhere around us. Heat, light, electricity, magnetism are the manifestations of Prana.

Whatever moves or works or has 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 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 subjugating universal Prana will be known to you. The Yogi who becomes an expert in the knowledge of this secret, will have no fear from any power, because he has mastery over all the manifestations of powers in the universe.

Pranayama - Levels of Organization

1. Causal - Karana Sharira

Source - point of origin and return.

2. Subtle - Sukshma Sharira

Pranas, Nadis, Indriyas, Antahkarana

3. Physical - Sthula Sharira

1. Biomechanical

Respiratory, Cardiovascular, Myofascial & Lymphatic Systems

2. Biochemistry

Oxygen, Carbon dioxide, Nitric oxide, Blood pH

3. Psychophysiology

Nervous and Endocrine Systems

Yoga is said to be the steady holding of the senses.

Tham yogam iti manyante sthiram indriya dharinam

Katha Upanishad 2.6.11

Yoga is the mastery of the fluctuations in the field of consciousness

Yogaschittavritti nirodhah

Patanjali Yoga Sutras 1.2

Yoga is said to be a remedy for calming the mind

Manah prashamana upaya yoga ityabhidhiyate

Yoga Vasishtha 3.9.32

Yoga is equilibrium of mind

Samatvam yoga ucyate

Bhagavad Gita, 2.48

**chale vate chalam cittam nischalam nischale bhavet |
yogi sthanutvamapnoti toto vayum nirodhayet ||**

When the breath moves, the mind moves. When the breath is without movement, the mind is without movement. That yogi who masters vayu obtains steadiness.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 2.2

**pavano badhyate yena manastenaiva badhyate |
manascha badhyate yena pavanastena badhyate ||**

One who binds prana indeed binds the mind. For one who binds the mind, indeed prana comes under control.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4.21

**hetudvayam tu cittasya vasana cha samiranah |
tayoh vinashta ekasmin tao dvavapi vinasyatah ||**

There are two causes for the activity of the mind, vasanas and breath. If one is destroyed, both are destroyed.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4.22

**mano yatra viliyate pavanastatra liyate |
pavano liyate yatra manastatra viliyate ||**

Where the mind is stilled, there the breath is suspended
Where the breath is suspended, there the mind is stilled.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4.23

Definition of Prana

The etymology of prana comes from the statement “*anati gacchati*,” which means the breath is that which goes, or moves.

“Pra” is elucidated in the statement “*prakeshena anati gacchati*,” which means prana is that which causes movement.

What is it that moves in the universe? Everything.

Definitions of Prana

Prana is not energy

Prana is:

1. Bioelectric energy
2. Vital force
3. Animating force
4. Life force or principle
5. Breath
6. Mind
7. Organizing principle of creation

Bioelectricity

Bioelectricity is one of the fundamental forms of energy in the human body. It is the basis for such central bodily functions as conduction of motor, autonomic, or sensory messages along the nerves; muscle contraction; and brain function. Specifically, motor nerve signals result in muscle contractions. Autonomic nervous signals control such basic functions of the body as breathing and heartbeat. Sensory nerve signals collect input from the outside world, including warnings of damage to the body in the form of pain.

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/medicine/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/bioelectricity#:~:text=The%20most%20important%20difference%20between,is%20a%20movement%20of%20electrons>

Prāṇa (प्राण)

Prāṇa (प्राण).—

1. Breath, respiration
2. The breath of life, vitality, life, vital air, principle of life (usually pl. in this sense, the Prāṇas being five; *prāṇa, apāna, samāna, vyāna* and *udāna*)
3. The first of the five life-winds or vital airs (which has its seat in the lungs)
4. Wind, air inhaled
5. Energy, vigour, strength, power; as in प्राणसार (*prāṇasāra*)

Prāṇa (प्राण)

6. The spirit or soul (opp. *śarīra*)
7. The Supreme Spirit
8. An organ of sense
9. Any person or thing as dear and necessary as life, a beloved person or object
10. The life or essence of poetry, poetical talent or genius; inspiration
11. Aspiration; as in महाप्राण (*mahāprāṇa*) or अल्पप्राण (*alpaprāṇa*)

Prāṇa (प्राण)

12. Digestion

13. A breath as a measure of time

14. Gum-myrrh

15. Life, living (*jīvana*)

16. Food (*anna*)

17. Name of *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and other gods [including *Hanuman* who we will discuss more about later]

Pranasya ayamah pranayamah

Pranayama is the lengthening, expanding, enhancing and directing, of prana

That (asana) having been perfected, regulation of the flow of inhalation and exhalation is pranayama 2.50

It has the external operation (vashya-vritti), internal operation (abhyantara-vritti) and suppression (stambha-vritti). These, again, when observed according to space, time, and number become long and subtle 2.51

The fourth pranayama transcends external and internal operations 2.52

By that the veil over the manifestation (of knowledge) is thinned 2.53

The mind acquires fitness for dharana. 2.54

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 2.1-5

“Posture becoming established, a Yogî, master of himself, eating salutary and moderate food, should practice pranayama, as instructed by his guru.

Respiration being disturbed, the mind becomes disturbed. By restraining respiration, the Yogî gets steadiness of mind

So long as the air stays in the body, it is called life. Death consists in the passing out of the air. It is, therefore, necessary to restrain the breath.

The breath does not pass through the middle channel (suṣumnâ), owing to the impurities of the nadis. How can then success be attained, and how can there be the unmani avastha?

When the whole system of nadis which is full of impurities, is cleaned, then the Yogî becomes able to control the prana.

Therefore, pranayama should be performed daily with an intellect free from excitement and laziness in order to drive out the impurities of the central channel.”

Patanjali Yoga Sutras

tasmin sati śvāsa-praśvāsyor-gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ || 49 ||

bāhya-ābhyantara-sthambha vṛttiḥ deśa-kāla-sankhyābhiḥ paridrṣṭo dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ || 50 ||

bāhya-ābhyantara viśaya-akṣepī caturthaḥ || 51 ||

tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśa-āvaraṇam || 52 ||

dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasaḥ || 53 ||

<https://yogasutrastudy.info/yoga-sutra-translations/ysp-sutras2-41-2-55/>

<https://shlokam.org/texts/yogasutra-2-49/>

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 2.1-5

athāsane dṛdhe yoghī vaśī hita-mitāśanaḥ |
ghurūpaḍiṣṭha-mārgheṇa prāṇāyāmānsamabhyaset || 1 ||

chale vāte chalaṃ chittaṃ niśchale niśchalaṃ bhavet ||
yoghī sthāṇutvamāpnoti tato vāyuṃ nirodhayet || 2 ||

yāvadvāyuhḥ sthito dehe tāvajjīvanamuchyate |
maraṇaṃ tasya niṣkrāntistato vāyuṃ nirodhayet || 3 ||

malākalāsu nāḍīṣhu māruto naiva madhyaghaḥ |
kathaṃ syādunmanībhāvaḥ kārya-siddhiḥ kathaṃ bhavet || 4 ||

śuddhameti yadā sarvaṃ nāḍī-chakraṃ malākulam |
tadaiva jāyate yoghī prāṇa-saṃghrahaṇe kṣhamaḥ || 5 ||

prāṇāyāmaṃ tataḥ kuryānnityaṃ sāttvikayā dhiyā |
yathā suṣhumṇā-nāḍīsthā malāḥ śuddhiṃ prayānti cha || 6 ||

<https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/hyp/hyp04.htm>

Categories of pranayama

1. **Purifying** nadi shodana, nadi shuddhi (kriyas)
2. **Stimulating** kapalabhati kriya, bhastrika, surya anuloma viloma
3. **Cooling** sheetali, sitkari, chandra anuloma viloma
4. **Harmonizing** brahmari, resonance (not pranayama)

References

1. Prana definitions from <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/prana>
Source: The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary
2. Excellent online dictionary source:
<https://shlokam.org/sanskrit-glossary/>

History of Pranayama - Periods

1. **Vedic Period** Indian dates 5000 BCE, Western dates 1500-800 BCE
2. **Upanishadic Period** 800 BCE-200 CE (Indian dates earlier)
3. **Epic Period** 500-200 BCE Mahabharata, Ramayana
4. **Classical Yoga Period** 200-400 CE (Patanjali Yoga Sutras)
5. **Hatha Yoga Period** 1100-1700 CE (Hatha Yoga Texts)

History of Pranayama - Upanishadic period

1. **Chandogya Upanishad** 6.8.2 nadis mentioned 6th/7th century BCE
2. **Brhadaranyaka Upanishad** 6th/7th century BCE
3. **Taittiriya Upanishad** 3.3 5th/6th century BCE
4. **Svetasvatara Upanishad** 1st/2nd century BCE
5. **Prashna Upanishad** multiple mantras on prana, beginning of CE

History of Pranayama

Pranayama during the Vedic and Upanishadic Period

1. Emphasis on ritual, used within religious ceremonies
2. Prana as universal life force
3. Used to harmonize oneself with the cosmos
4. No breath holding or ratios (such as nadi shuddhi)

Smriti Period

1. Pranayama with Gayatri mantra or meditation on Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara, used as a part of a religious ceremony

Puranic Period

1. Pranayama with Om
2. Not attached to religious ritual, but used independently for sadhana.
3. Breath holding and ratios introduced

History of Pranayama

Yoga Sutra Period

1. Pranayama becomes a practice within a science of liberation.
2. Four types of pranayama introduced
3. Repetition of Om abandoned
4. Emphasis on cessation of breath

Hatha Yoga Period

1. Eight varieties of pranayama, with bandhas and mudras.
2. Physiological benefits of practices introduced.
3. Recaka, puraka, kumbhaka become new terminology.

History of Pranayama

Vedas/Upanishads Ritual

1. Universe is prana, individual is the universe

Patanjali Practice

1. Mind is covered in avidya, removal of avidya is knowledge

Hatha Yoga Purification

1. Subtle channels are filled with blockages
2. Purification of the blockages allows prana to flow in the central channel

History of Pranayama

1. **Classical Yoga period**, pranayama was the cessation of the breath
2. **Hatha Yoga period** the holding of the breath
3. **Patanjali** used svasa, prashvasa, vritti, and stambha
4. **Hatha Yoga** uses rechaka, puraka, and kumbhaka
5. **Hatha Yoga** defines pranayama as kumbhaka, or holding of the breath
6. **Patanjali** defines pranayama as effortless ceasing of the breath

M.L. Gharote. [*Kumbhaka Paddhati Of Raghuvira: Science Of Pranayama*](#). Lonavala, 2016.

Swami Kuvalyananda. *Pranayama*. Kaivalyadhama, 2005 (11th Edition).

History of Pranayama

Purposes of Pranayama

1. In **Hatha Yoga** pranayama is to still the mind and prepare to move kundalini shakti into sushumna nadi
2. **Patanjali** does not discuss kundalini - pranayama is to prepare for dharana, dhyana, and samadhi

References in Ancient Texts

There are many references to prana in the **Vedas**, including the **Prana Sukta of Atharva Veda**

(Book 11, Hymn 4 <https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/av/av11004.htm>)

The **Baudhayanadharmas Sutras** are a group of texts that cover dharma and daily ritual (among other things), dating from 1000 BCE, and include pranayama with Gayatri within rituals:

<http://brahminrituals.blogspot.com/2011/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baudhayana_sutras

Manusmriti Section 7, 6.70-85 (circa 3500 BCE)

प्राणायामा ब्राह्मणस्य त्रयोऽपि विधिवत् कृताः ।

व्याहृतिप्रणवैर्युक्ता विज्ञेयं परमं तपः ॥ ७० ॥

prāṇāyāmā brāhmaṇasya trayo'pi vidhivat kṛtāḥ |
vyāhṛtipraṇavairyuktā vijñeyaṃ paramaṃ tapaḥ || 70 ||

Even three ‘breath-suspensions,’ accompanied by the three ‘vyāhṛti’-syllables and the syllable ‘om’, when duly performed, should be regarded as the highest austerity for the Brāhmaṇa.

दह्यन्ते ध्मायमानानां धातूनां हि यथा मलाः ।

तथेन्द्रियाणां दह्यन्ते दोषाः प्राणस्य निग्रहात् ॥ ७१ ॥

dahyante dhmayamānānām dhātūnām hi yathā malāḥ |
tathendriyāṇām dahyante doṣāḥ prāṇasya nigrhāt || 71 ||

Just as the impurities of metallic ores are consumed when they are blasted, even so are the taints of the senses consumed through the suspension of breath.

<https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/manusmriti-with-the-commentary-of-medhatithi/d/doc200632.html>

Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana

Jaiminiya Upanishad Brahmana a very interesting Upanishad that discusses, among other things, pranayama, vayu, chanting of Om, Gayatri, the Devas, and spiritual liberation (book 3 is especially relevant). This text forms a part of the Kena Upanishad, and dates to 6th century BCE.

[chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?
pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.safarmer.com%2FIndo-Eurasian%2FOertel-Jaiminiya.pdf&cLen=7038631&chunk=true](chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.safarmer.com%2FIndo-Eurasian%2FOertel-Jaiminiya.pdf&cLen=7038631&chunk=true)

Mahabharata 12.294.7, 8

(Dated somewhere between 1924 BCE and 3137 BCE,
see <https://www.ece.lsu.edu/kak/Mahabharata11.pdf>)

योगकृत्यं तु योगानां ध्यानमेव परं बलम् । तच्चापि द्विविधं ध्यानमाहुर्वेदविदो जनाः ॥ ७ ॥

yogakṛtyaṃ tu yogānāṃ dhyānameva paraṃ balam | taccāpi dvividhaṃ dhyānamāhurvedavido janāḥ || 7 ||

Of the practicing yogis, dhyana is the greatest strength; of these there are said to be two paths of dhyana among people.

एकाग्रता च मनसः प्राणायामस्तथैव च । प्राणायामस्तु सगुणो निर्गुणो मनसस्तथा ॥ ८ ॥

ekāgratā ca manasaḥ prāṇāyāmastathaiva ca | prāṇāyāmastu saguṇo nirguṇo manasastathā || 8 ||

One pointedness of mind and pranayama are indeed are two methods of mastery of mind; pranayama is with form, and the ekagrata without form.

Bhagavad Gita 5.27-28

स्पर्शान् कृत्वा बहिर् बाह्यांश् चक्षुश् चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तर-चारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥
यतेन्द्रिय-मनो-बुद्धिर् मुनिर् मोक्ष-परायणः ।
विगतेच्छा-भय-क्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

sparśān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṃś cakṣuś caivāntare bhruvoḥ |
prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā nāsābhyantara-cāriṇau || 27 ||
yatendriya-mano-buddhir munir mokṣa-parāyaṇaḥ |
vigatecchā-bhaya-krodho yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ || 28 ||

He who is free from desire, fear and anger completely removes external sense objects, such as sound and touch, from his mind. He then fixes his vision between his eyebrows and suspends the movement of the inward and outward flowing life-airs, which move through the nostrils. In this way, he balances the life-airs, controls his senses, mind and intelligence, and dedicates himself to attaining liberation. Certainly, such a sage is ever-liberated.

<https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/shrimad-bhagavad-gita/d/doc419925.html>

Bhagavad Gita 4.29-30

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापान-गती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायाम-परायणाः ।

अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ॥ २९ ॥

apāne juhvati prāṇaṃ prāṇe'pānaṃ tathāpare |
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇāḥ |
apare niyatāhārāḥ prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati || 29 ||

Others, who are steadfast in controlling the life force, offer the up-going breath into the down-going breath and conversely offer the down-going breath into the up-going breath. Having stopped both the up-going breath and the down-going breath, they dedicate themselves to controlling the various life-air. Others, while checking the eating process, offer their up-going breath into down-going breath itself, as a sacrifice.

Vayu Purana, 300-500 BCE

Vayu Purana, 300-500 BCE (one of the oldest Puranas, mentioned in the *Mahabharata*)

Chapters 10 and 11 are fascinating early accounts of pranayama in what is called

Pashupata Yoga:

Five eternal dharmas are proclaimed by the great lord.

These are pranayama, dhyana, pratyahara, dharana, and smarana. 10.72

Controlling the vital breath is called pranayama 10.74

A lion or an elephant or any other wild animal of the forest on being captured and tamed becomes mild and quiet. Similarly, though the vital breath is difficult to be controlled in the case of non-self-possessed persons, it can be controlled by practice of yoga if done regularly. 10.78-79

<https://archive.org/details/VayuPuranaG.V.TagarePart1/page/n153/mode/2up>

Vocabulary

Shruti - Revelation; that which has been heard by the rishis in their meditations (the mantras of the Vedas)

Smrti - That which has been told and remembered; the epics such as Mahabharata and Ramayana

Vedas - From the root vid, to know; knowledge; the collection of mantras that form the basis of Hinduism, categorized into four books, Rig, Yajus, Sama, and Atharva

Upanishads - Lit. “to sit near”; the metaphysical teachings found at the end of each Veda

Sutras - A literary form that conveys philosophical positions in short, terse, sentences, further elaborated on in commentaries

Samhitas - Lit. “put together”; a collection of mantras found in the earliest parts of the Vedas. Post Vedic times, samhita refers to a systematic compilation of knowledge

Pradipika - Lit. “Light on...”; a text that illuminates a particular doctrine.

Puranas - Lit. “ancient or old.” A literary form that encompasses over 400,000 verses in 18 major and 18 minor texts. Based on Vedic teachings, but classified as smriti.

Itihasas - Lit. “And so it happened;” a class of purana where the author witnessed the events him or herself (such as the Valmiki Ramayana, or Mahabharata.)

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

oṃ sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ
sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu
mā kaścid duḥkha bhāgbhavet
oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

May all be happy, may all be free from disease, may all see goodness,
may none suffer from sorrow.

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ॐ तत्सत् ॥

asato mā sadgamaya
tamasomā jyotir gamaya
mrityormāamritam gamaya
Om śhānti śhānti śhāntiḥ harih om tat sat

Lead me from changing existence to unchanging being,
lead me from the darkness of tamas to the light of knowledge,
lead me from death to immortality. Harih om that is truth.