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I - Semester

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PRINCIPLES OF YOGA PRACTICES

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Units (1-14)

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most commonly recognized and easily popular forms of exercise that one can find around themselves in this day and age is Yoga. This unique practice is meant to harmonize the physical, spiritual and mental practices of the humans. Yoga as a practice has been a part of Indian culture for centuries. In fact, it is a crucial part of the six ancient hindu philosophies. What distinguishes yoga from other forms of exercises is the fact that it integrates the achievement of spiritual wellbeing alongside the physical wellbeing. The practice of yoga is based on the foundation of certain principles like breathing, proper exercise, diet, meditation and realisation.

Yoga can be integrated in school education by incorporating it as a part of physical education. The techniques of teaching yoga are also another field crucial to the practice of yoga. Yoga is beneficial as a preparatory exercise for different sports. There are many different yoga asanas, and applications of yoga which must be learnt so as to make the best out of yoga as an exercise more smoothly. The benefits of yoga are not limited to only physical benefits but also psychological benefits. It is important to learn about the different methods and practices of yoga.

This book, *Principles of Yoga Practices*, is written with the distance learning student in mind. It is presented in a user-friendly format using a clear, lucid language. Each unit contains an Introduction and a list of Objectives to prepare the student for what to expect in the text. At the end of each unit are a Summary and a list of Key Words, to aid in recollection of concepts learnt. All units contain Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises, and strategically placed Check Your Progress questions so the student can keep track of what has been discussed.

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BLOCK - I
APPLICATION OF YOGA

**UNIT 1 BASIC PRINCIPLES
OF YOGA**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Yoga word comes from the Sanskrit word 'Yog' which means union, the union between God and humans. Yoga is the practice where the mind, body and soul, gets involved with the ultimate. Yoga is the practice to eliminate all the negative force around the life and to elevate the 'Kundalini' (life force) to dissolve the spirit with the Almighty. When it is on physical ground, we practice 'Asanas' or postures to keep fit. There are breathing techniques or 'Pranayama' and meditation or 'Dhyana' to bring back the serenity and purity of the mind.

In India, yoga practice is a part of the culture and tradition. From millions of years, the saints and sages have practiced yoga. There are myths and stories about yoga. The importance of yoga in human life is an established truth. People around the world are now getting inclined to yoga. The Western World has accepted the importance of it and now, it is being practiced around the world. In this unit, we will learn about the basic principles of yoga.

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1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the basic principles of yoga
- Identify the importance of nutrition for individuals, families and community
- Explain the significance of proper relaxation, exercise, and breathing
- Describe the proper diet
- Examine the importance of positive thinking and meditation

1.2 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF YOGA: AN INTRODUCTION

Before starting yoga, knowing its basic principles will help to open the door of the heart and mind. Saint Patanjali was the compiler of the Yoga Sutras. Yoga Sutras are the compilation of the axioms of yoga practice. According to Patanjali, the yogic path involves two stages to calm the inner thoughts:

- **The First Stage:** These are the methods of developing positive qualities into one's own self. If such qualities are not built up, especially during meditation, then the inner peace will be disturbed by the chaos of the outside world.
- **The Second Stage:** This is path of meditation. This is the stage to practice meditation to transcend the self and attain enlightenment.

These stages are achieved by practicing the ten principles of yoga. Here are those:

- 1. Ahimsa (Non-violence):** According to this principle, one must not kill another being. One has to be meek and peaceful.
- 2. Satya (Truthfulness):** This is one of the most vital basic principles of yoga. A yoga practitioner's life is based on truth. To be precise, one should be honest with oneself and with others. The yoga principle says, one can only tell a lie in a well-justified situation. For example, if you are telling a lie to save someone's life, then it is justified. Once you practice telling truth always, you will radiate truth. Liars always give negative vibes.
- 3. Ateya (Righteousness):** The next principle of yoga is walking on the path of righteousness. One should not cheat and steal anything, ever. Life should be illuminated with the power of honesty. A true yogi/yogini will not look for unwanted advantage. Rather, he/she should always go for fairness in life.
- 4. Brahmacharia (Wisdom):** This means one should always live with a spiritual focus. Instead of money, one should be devoted towards inner happiness and look for the inner peace that will bring the true happiness in life.

5. **Aparigraha (Simplicity):** When it comes to external extravaganza, one should be simple and moderate. Once a yogi attains that simplicity, they will feel an inner peace, which will cleanse their body from the inside. Such practices will bring the light of knowledge one day.
6. **Ishvara-Pranidhana (Worship of the Spiritual Goal):** According to this principle, one should never leave the spiritual path. One should remind oneself about the spiritual goal to attain in life, and owning this spiritual life means dedication towards the almighty. One can worship an idol, follow the guidance of the spiritual persons or chant a mantra. Whatever one does, one should do it with a clear mind.
7. **Shaucha (Sacrifice the Ego):** This principle means self-cleansing. Ego is the evil of the mind. Attaining yoga can purify the soul just by killing the ego. Through true sacrifice, one can attain that the enlightenment.
8. **Tapas (Self-discipline):** This means leading a disciplined life. One must have a clear goal in life and follow it by setting a clear path to achieve it.
9. **Svadhaya (Reading):** One can chant a mantra or go for mediation. Regular reading encourages the mind to stay on the spiritual path, cleanses the soul and makes it possible to establish a contact between practitioner and the enlightened masters.
10. **Santosh (Contentment):** Finally, this principle suggests that one must learn to be happy with what one has.

These are the ten basic principles of yoga that helps in finding the true self by delving deep into the soul while also assisting in connecting with the Almighty.

1.2.1 Proper Relaxation in Yoga

In yoga, proper relaxation is known as 'Savasana'. Life is full of upheavals. Stress and tension are our regular companion. Therefore, proper mental and physical relaxation is needed. Once you relax your five senses (seeing, tasting, hearing, touching and smelling), the senses are cleansed. To attain good health, inner peace and vitality, it is quite important to follow these proper ways of relaxations:

1. Physical Relaxation

The underlying meaning of this is not wasting energy unnecessarily. With yoga asanas and proper relaxation method, one can relax each part of the body. People, who practice asanas regularly, feel energetic and well rested even after getting little sleep.

2. Mental Relaxation

With a tired mind, it is impossible to focus into anything. If the mind is full of sensory impressions, it will get tired easily. If you are anxious about anything, that destroys your energy faster than physical exhaustion. Whenever you feel you are

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mentally tired, you should breathe slowly. Learning the breathing techniques can help you to deal with your tension and anxiety.

3. Spiritual Relaxation

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One can only attain complete mental and physical relaxation just by finding the connection of the soul with the higher power. Spiritual relaxation will help in learning to feel the happiness within yourself and grab the positivity around you. By practicing yoga postures and meditation, it is possible to relax the body, mind and soul.

1.2.2 Proper Exercise

To stay fit, yoga is effective. If you are a beginner, you need to know that the 'Asanas' are the form of yoga exercise. Along with that, one needs to know the breathing techniques. There are different types of yoga poses, which should be practiced every day to be fit. Following are the best yoga poses, which are the proper exercise for the entire body.

1. Malasana (Garland Pose)

This is a kind of squat. If someone is suffering from back pain and bulging belly, this pose is very effective. This pose opens the hips, releases stress from the lower back, and strengthens the spine. Practicing the pose every day can cure the pain in the back and lower back portion.

2. Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation)

This is one of the most essential yoga poses where the entire body is engaged into the position. With seven postures involved in the exercise, each of the limbs gets movement and is quite effective in burning fat with the stretching involved. Surya Namaskar works on the seven major chakras and fills up the body with lots of energy. Besides, it calms the body and mind from inside.

3. Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-limbed Staff Pose)

This asana also includes the entire body and tones up the core muscle. This asana should be practiced under the guidance of an experienced practitioner. It is important to be slow with this pose at the beginner stage to avoid injury.

4. Utkatasana (Chair Pose)

If someone is feeling lethargic and lacking energy, this asana can instantly build heat in the body and boost up the energy level for the next go. This asana is effective for making the core muscles strong and it gives strength to the legs.

5. Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose)

This is a classic yoga pose for the practitioners. Beginners should not try to touch the ground with the hands, but concentrate to make the pose right just by placing the palm on the shin below the knee. Such a pose can put pressure on the lower back and strengthen it. It also helps to expand the body and mind.

6. Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Facing Dog)

If there is not much time in the morning for exercise, then doing this can make one feel active and energetic. As the entire body is engaged in this asana, it will give many benefits. It strengthens the core muscle, reduces fat from belly, waistline, and hips and gives a toned body.

7. Virabhadrasana (Warrior Pose)

One needs to just give 30 seconds to this pose and will feel the difference instantly. This yoga asana activates the core, legs, and strengthens them. Practicing this asana can boost up the solar plexus chakra, Manipura in the body and fills it with willpower, confidence, and determination.

8. Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of Fish Pose)

This is another classic yoga pose for practicing every day. As it is a twisting posture, it works on the spine and helps to get rid of love handles. Other than that, it stimulates the inner organ of the body, detoxifies and promotes healthy digestion.

9. Sirsana (Headstand)

Initially, it may seem like a difficult exercise. It is important to practice balancing well before doing it properly. Inversions are actually interesting to do. This asana strengthens the core muscle, legs, and arms.

10. Savasana

Finally, one should practice this ultimate asana after doing every asana. For this asana, one needs to concentrate on the natural breathing technique and think about positive things in life. This relaxation method is very important to gain back the energy.

These were the top 10 yoga asanas that one should practice every day to expand the mind, body, and soul. It is always better to do the asanas under the guidance of some experts who can assist in pursuing the correct pose and know the actual breathing technique.

1.2.3 Proper Breathing

Yoga is quite different from mere physical exercises. The yoga poses or asanas are the media to bringing one's body, mind, and soul into a single alignment so that one can feel his true self and are connected to the almighty. Meditation is one of the vital elements of the yogic practice. Besides physical exercises, breathing exercises are also very important here. Breath is one of the pivotal parts of yogic feats. It regulates the mind, helps to stay focused and concentrated and controls the emotions. Learning the breathing control helps to make one feel calm, composed and energetic. Following the below given yogic breathing techniques can bring lots of physical and mental benefits:

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- 1. Abdominal or Diaphragmatic Breathing:** In this type of breathing technique, one should breathe deep in the abdomen. Focus on the expansion of stomach during inhalation and squeeze the stomach during exhalation.
- 2. Clavicular Breathing:** In this type of breathing, one should breathe into the lungs until one feels a pressure due to the expansion of the upper portion of the lungs. During this breathing, the collarbone and the shoulder also move up during inhalation, while the exhalation, should be slow starting from the chest and then through the neck.
- 3. Thoracic Breathing:** Lungs get upwards and downwards during this breathing exercise. It goes upward while inhaling and goes down after exhalation.
- 4. Yogic Breathing:** This is the combination of all types of breathing techniques. Here, the yoga practitioner should breathe deep and slow by filling up the abdominal areas and then exhale it from stomach, chest, shoulder, and neck, respectively.

Breathing Asanas

One can practice the breathing technique in the perfect way by doing the breathing asanas:

- 1. Kapalbhaati:** This is kind of sneezing. According to experts, the practitioner should exhale from the lungs. This is also known as 'Bhasrika'. It is effective in producing heat inside the body and cleanses the frontal brain area (or the forehead).
- 2. Anulom-Bilom:** The yogic gurus call it 'Chandra Vedi Pranayama'. The practitioner breathes in and out with alternate nostrils. Practicing this regularly can keep the body calm and cool, by activating the right side of the brain.
- 3. Sheetal Pranayam:** This is kind of breathing is done by keeping the tongue rolled out. If someone is suffering from high blood pressure, one should try this one.

Breathing Technique While Doing Asanas

While doing asanas, keeping the perfect rhythm of breathing is very important. Here are the main criteria of that:

- Inhale when in the center position
- Exhale while bending sideways
- Also, exhale while bending forward
- If bending backward, inhale
- Experts say people with heart issues or high blood pressure should never try breath retention.

1.2.4 Proper Diet

From ancient time, yoga is closely inter-connected with foods, rather than diet. Practicing yoga asanas will not bring any result if the proper diet is not followed. It can even have a reverse effect on the human body. Here are the best foods one should include in the diet while practicing yoga:

- 1. Dark Leafy Greens:** Usually, they are one of the most nutritious foods in a three-course-meal every day. These leafy greens must be added in more amounts. It is advisable to have spinach, lettuce, cabbage, and other leafy vegetables in maximum quantity, as they are the powerhouse of nutrition.
- 2. Quinoa:** During yoga asana, one needs the energy to stretch body and need a powerful mind to concentrate more on the postures. Quinoa is rich in nine essential amino acids and iron that boost up blood circulation. There is also vitamin B2 that increases energy production in the cells and magnesium can control blood sugar level. This is quite surprising that one can find the mention of quinoa in the ancient manuscripts on yoga and the diets of yogis.
- 3. Berries:** Colourful fruits can increase energy level, which is very important for yoga practitioners. As berries are full of anti-oxidants, they have the potential to fight against killer diseases, like cancer. While exercising, one should avoid hunger pangs. If it disturbs a lot, a handful of berries can do well to the satiate and control the hunger pangs.
- 4. Porridge:** It is beneficial to include fibre-oriented items in the regular diet. Porridge is a high source of fibre and it is low on the glycemic index scale. According to yogi gurus, porridge is the most important food item in the yogic diet and it works the best while having with cardamom or cinnamon powder.
- 5. Lentils:** While you do asanas, your energy level drains out. To keep up the level intact, one should have protein in his/her diet. Having lentil soup can provide enough protein that can keep one energized. A bowl of lentil soup warmed up with spices can make you ready for the next round of exercises.

These are only a few foods one can have regularly while practicing yoga. One must keep in mind to add more fresh fruits and limit the consumption of caffeine and alcohol.

1.2.5 Positive Thinking and Meditation

Yoga is not a mere exercise. It is the way to connect one's body with the soul and mind and finally leads one to the devotion towards the ultimate. It is not a religion. It is a practice depicting when mind, body, and soul feel contented with the amalgamation to the One. It is a way to eliminate all the negative thoughts and vibes around human life and seek ultimate happiness. From ancient times, the yoga gurus have opined the practice yoga to attain the following benefits in life:

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1. Direct Your Mind towards the Right

The mind gets diverted. However, with yoga practice, one can increase the method of directing the mind toward the path of love, affection, truth, and contentment.

2. Eliminate Negative Thoughts

Life is difficult. However, once you find out the key to happiness, it becomes easier to live life truly. Fight against your negative thoughts and purify your thoughts. It is important that when life feels submerged in negative thoughts, like depression, failure, darkness, doubts, weakness, etc., there is an effort to redirect the mind towards positive things, like courage, strength, happiness, and satisfaction.

3. Improve Your Thinking

The main principle of Yoga is to improve the thinking. According to yoga gurus, the thoughts of human play an important role in making him what they truly are. Therefore, one needs to fill one's mind with purity of thoughts to be a good person. In addition, to gain all these, meditation can help you. It is the path that connects one to the universe and to nature. Once a person mediates with complete concentration, one can find the happiness within oneself. One can know himself the best through meditation only. Meditation can help to get the real reflection of oneself in the mirror of their mind.

Check Your Progress

1. Who was the compiler of Yoga Sutras?
2. What does the yogic principle of shaucha means?
3. Name the yoga asana which is used when someone is feeling lethargic and lacking energy.
4. What is thoracic breathing?
5. Mention the food item which can be used to control hunger pangs.

1.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Saint Patanjali was the compiler of the Yoga Sutras.
2. The Shaucha (Sacrifice the Ego) principle means self-cleansing. Ego is the evil of the mind. Attaining yoga can purify the soul just by killing the ego. Through true sacrifice, one can attain that the enlightenment.
3. Utkatasana (Chair Pose) is the yoga asana which is used when someone is feeling lethargic and lacking energy.

4. Thoracic breathing is a technique of breathing in which lungs get upwards and downwards during this breathing exercise. It goes upward while inhaling and goes down after exhalation.
5. Berries are the food item which can be used to control hunger pangs.

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1.4 SUMMARY

- Yoga means union in Sanskrit. The union between God and us. Yoga is the practice where your mind, body and soul get involved with the ultimate.
- Yoga is the practice to eliminate all the negative force around your life and elevating the 'Kundalini' (life force) to dissolve our spirit with the superior power. There are the basic 10 principles of yoga that helps in finding the true self by delving deep into the soul while also assists in connecting with the Almighty.
- In yoga, proper relaxation is known as 'Savasana'. To attain good health, inner peace and vitality, it is quite important to follow the proper ways of relaxations in terms of physically, mentally and spiritually.
- To stay fit, yoga is effective. There are different types of yoga poses, which you should try every day to be fit. There are the top 10 yoga asanas that one should practice every day to expand the mind, body, and soul. It is always better to do the asanas under the guidance of some experts who can assist in pursuing the correct pose and know the actual breathing technique.
- Meditation is one of the vital parts of yogic practice. Besides physical exercises, breathing exercise is important here. Breath is one of the pivotal parts of yogic feats. It regulates the mind, helps to stay focused and concentrated and controls the emotions. Learning the breathing control makes you feel calm and composed and feel energetic.
- One can practice the breathing technique in the perfect way by doing the breathing asanas- Kapalabhaati, Anulom-Bilom, and Sheetal Pranayam
- From ancient time, yoga is closely inter-connected with foods, rather diet. Practicing yoga asanas will not bring any result if the proper diet is not followed. Even, it can have a reverse effect also on the human body. The best foods one should include in the diet while practicing yoga are dark leafy greens, quinoa, berries, porridge and lentils. These are only a few foods you can have regularly while you practice yoga. Add more fresh fruits and limit the consumption of caffeine and alcohol.

1.5 KEY WORDS

- **Yoga:** It comes from the Sanskrit word 'Yog' which means union; the union between God and humans

- **Yoga Sutras:** It refers to the compilation of the axioms of yoga practice
- **Savasana:** In yoga, proper relaxation is known as ‘Savasana’
- **Asanas:** It refers to the forms of yoga exercise

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1.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. Explain the stages involved in the yogic path to calm inner thoughts.
2. What is meditation?
3. Write a short-note on savasana.
4. Briefly explain the concept of positive thinking and meditation.

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the basic principles of Yoga in detail.
2. Discuss some of the crucial elements of proper diet during Yoga practice.
3. Explain the different breathing techniques and asanas in detail.
4. Briefly explain the ten types of Yoga asanas.

1.7 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 YOGA AND ITS APPLICATION

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- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Physical Education
 - 2.2.1 Definitions of Physical Education
 - 2.2.2 Application of Yoga in Physical Education
- 2.3 Application of Various Systems of Yoga
 - 2.3.1 Application of Karma Yoga (Self-less Work for Our Fellow Neighbour)
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- 2.9 Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of yoga is to bring the body and mind together to become a symphonic experience. The physical, spiritual and mental aspect makes a human. All these three aspects are developed with the help of yoga. Yoga can also be called the art of balance between mind, soul and body. The historical origins of yoga can be attributed to the Indian philosophy. What makes yoga different from other exercises is that it causes motion without producing strain and irregularities in the body. Physical activities, like aerobics, are limited in the sense that they are only concerned with physical wellbeing. They are limited as they have nothing to do with the development of the spiritual or astral body. Yogic practices revive the body with infinite energy and facilitate spiritual and physical well-being.

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2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the meaning and applications of physical education
- Discuss the various applications of Yoga
- Describe the various uses of Yoga/Ashtanga Yoga

2.2 PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education can be explained as education through the physical body. The aim of physical education is to strengthen students' physical competence, ensure the safety of their movements and their capacity to use these to perform a broad range of activities along with the development of an effective and healthy lifestyle. The general confidence building skills like team work, communication, creativity, critical thinking, and aesthetic appreciation are also developed with the help of physical education.

2.2.1 Definitions of Physical Education

Physical education program helps children become competent in a variety of motor skills and movements. It helps to them to experience a broad range of movement activities and expand an understanding of movement principles, which incorporates different elements of body awareness, space awareness, and characteristics of the movement.

Physical education program focuses on improved attention on human wellness and healthy living. Teaching for wellness involves exploring concepts that assist students in developing an active lifestyle. The physical education program offers children with an option to participate in activities designed to create and maintain personal wellness through physical activities and fitness. It will help you develop a perception of how to maintain wellness throughout life.

2.2.2 Application of Yoga in Physical Education

Yoga is generally considered to be a practice of physical education with a spiritual element, although the fact is the exact opposite. Yoga is, in fact, a spiritual system with a physical element. The asanas form only a small element in the whole system of physical culture and education known as Hatha Yoga.

Children in classrooms face different levels of stress. The kind of education and levels of training that is being imparted to them is also different. To truly understand the importance of yoga in physical education, it is crucial to weigh different factors including the nature of conflicts, distractions, indulgences and difficulties faced by them. Certain yoga practices and principles of yoga are included in physical education to improve children's learning ability; however, it is important

that the way the teaching is undertaken as well as the objective of improving the entire personality is important for understanding and altering the role of yoga in physical education.

It is imperative that certain important factors like the maturity level of the child, child psychology and the effect of hormones on the emotions and learning capabilities are rightly understood as to give a wholesome education to children.

As per the yogic terminology, there are different faculties of the brain including buddhi or intellect, chitta or consciousness, manas or rational thinking and ahamkara or ego. In the modern education it has been observed that only the buddhi is being developed while all the other aspects of the brain are disregarded. This is not helpful as life is not all about intellect or getting a degree, job and salary.

Yoga when included as a part of physical education brings a spiritual aspect to education. It acts as a complementary or supportive tool to enhance the benefits that can be drawn from education. These benefits include:

- It helps the students become more aware of their activities in the classroom as well as the things that they are learning.
- It helps them achieve a calmer state of mind minus all the high excess energy.
- It helps them gain more willpower with a clear understanding of the situation they are in.
- It relaxes their state of body and mind, which will allow them to let go of any negative or stressful thoughts and make space in their mind to learn more positive things.
- It helps them become mindful of their own actions.
- It helps them respect their bodies and the lifestyle choices they make when they are young.

2.3 APPLICATION OF VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF YOGA

Yoga consists of varied different systems whose practices has varied aims and principles. In this section, we will discuss the application of various systems of yoga including karma yoga, bhakti yoga, hatha yoga, yantra yoga, etc.

2.3.1 Application of Karma Yoga (Self-less Work for Our Fellow Neighbour)

Karma is the sum of all our mental and physical actions, in this life and before. Karma Yoga is the yoga of self-transforming action or service, whereby the yogi directs all activities towards God. By serving God and humanity without ego and selfishness, the heart becomes refined, the ego sinks and over time or even over several lifetimes, one becomes increasingly harmonious and united with God. Wisdom (Samadhi, Nirvana, union with God) is naturally felt through Karma yoga.

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2.3.2 Application of Bhakti Yoga (Union through Love and Devotion)

Bhakti yoga is the yoga of compassion, selfless love, humility, purity, and the desire and firm intention to merge with God. It is nothing else than to comprehend the ‘First Commandment’: ‘to love God with all your core, mind and soul.’

2.3.3 Application of Jnana Yoga

It is the yoga of knowledge—not knowledge regarding intellectual sense, but the experience of Atman and Brahman and the recognition of their unity. Where the believer of God supports the promptings of the heart, the Jnana utilizes the powers of the mind to discriminate between the genuine and the unreal, the permanent and the temporary.

Jnana yoga uses our substantial mental powers to end the duping process, to know that we are even now and have always been free, infinite, perfect, and immortal. Realizing that, we will also identify in others the same purity, the same divinity, and perfection. No longer restricted to the severe constraints of “I” and “mine,” we will see the one Brahman everywhere and in everything.

2.3.4 Application of Hatha Yoga

Ha, and tha, the sun, and moon assign to the two opposite currents that regulate all methods in our body. There is not any mystery about it because anything in our world survives because of a positive and negative charge. Hatha Yoga, Kriya Yoga, and Raja Yoga respective deal with the idea of gaining control over the movement of these life currents.

Hatha Yoga is recognized for the asanas or postures. By improving the body, generating a healthy physical condition, and supporting Kundalini upwards along the spine, the frame fits better ready for yogic awakening. The first effects felt are generally improved health and stimulated the nervous system. Some Hatha Yogis may even display control over blood flow, internal organs, and breathing. The sense of some Yogis to also stop the breathing and heartbeat entirely for a period has been demonstrated under laboratory settings.

2.3.5 Application of Mantra Yoga

Mantra Yoga is the kind of yoga that is functioned through the chanting of mantras. Thousands of mantras survive, and it is understood that the vibrations delivered by these mantras can help a person fulfil their dreams and even counteract diseases. What Mantra yoga concentrates on is learning these mantras in the right direction. These mantras are supposed to have a lot of power, and it will not do for people to chant them any way they want. Some guidance is needed in this sphere, to practice this branch of yoga completely. The practice of Mantra yoga claims some items as well such as incense sticks, rosaries, etc.

2.3.6 Application of Yantra Yoga

It is one of the most traditional recorded systems of yoga in the world. It has come to us from Tibet, a land that holds a vast, rich Buddhist culture and heritage. Yantra Yoga's unique series of poses and movements, coupled with conscious breathing, can ease, coordinate and arrange one's energy so that the mind can rest and find its proper balance. Many positions adopted in Yantra Yoga are comparable to those of Hatha Yoga, but the way to understand and apply them varies significantly. Yantra Yoga uses a series that consists of seven phases of movement, connected with seven stages of breathing. In particular, the position in the central aspect of each change helps create specific retentions of the breath that work at a low, subtle level. For this logic, it is not only the central position but also this holding and the complete movement that are essential.

The practice of Yantra Yoga contains a wide variety of movements that can be practiced by everyone. It is a superb method for attaining relaxation, optimal health, and balance through the coordination of breath and movement. This fundamental and productive method is connected with the heartfelt essence of the Dzogchen Teachings, although a Yantra Yoga practitioner does not necessarily require following an appropriate spiritual path. Therefore, anyone can follow it without limitation. It has been suggested for the help of getting the right natural state.

2.3.7 Application of Laya and Kundalini Yoga

Laya Yoga is calculated among highly recognized art of yoga forms. Practicing this on a regular basis establishes a link between internal peace and conversation with self. This ascertains tuning between one's soul and global energy. The yogic form is considered to have originated ages ago in the Himalayas, followed by yogis for disciplined sustenance and peace of soul during those days of yore. The yoga form focusing on the mind's capabilities and potential has also found significance in the modern living style.

The word Laya in Sanskrit means extinction or merging. The yogic art is also recognized as Kundalini yoga, as Kundalini energy is boosted and is succeeded by deep meditation (Dhyana). In this manner, Laya yoga supports individuals to reach the level of highest consciousness. Like any other yoga form, Laya yoga begins with cantered breathing and gentle stretching exercises. Thereafter, yoga mudra is completed, which is again followed by relaxation exercise.

Kundalini yoga practice is a combination of spiritual and physical. This style is all about delivering the kundalini energy in your body said to be caught, or coiled, in the lower spine. These classes work your core and breathing with fast-moving, invigorating postures, and breathing exercises. These classes are moderately intense and can involve mantra, chanting, and meditation.

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2.3.8 Application of Tantra Yoga

Tantra Yoga had been one of the dominant powers for the spiritual regeneration of the Hindus. When practiced by the unenlightened, ignorant, and unqualified persons, it has led to specific abuses; and there is no doubting that some degraded forms of Saktism have tried nothing but magic, immorality, and magical powers.

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The Tantras are not books of magic spells, sorcery, witchcraft, or any mysterious formulas. They are beautiful scriptures. All persons without the differentiation of caste, creed, or colour may draw inspiration from them and attain spiritual strength, wisdom, and eternal bliss. Mahanirvana and Kularnava Tantras are the essential books in Tantra Sastra. Yoga Kundalini Upanishad of Krishna Yajurveda, Trisikha Brahmana, Jabala Darsana, and Varaha Upanishad are helpful for getting the experience of Kundalini Sakti and the methods to awake it and practice it to Sahasrara Chakra at the top of the head.

The Tantra is, in some of its features, a secret doctrine. It is a Gupta Vidya (secret knowledge). You cannot receive it from the study of books. You will have to get the experience and practice from the practical the Tantric Acharyas, Tantrikas, and Gurus who operate the key to it.

2.3.9 Application of Raja Yoga/Radja Yoga

Raja Yoga means impressive and is sometimes called the crown of Hatha Yoga. Raja adds strength after body and mind are purified and trained to stay calm and attentive. The improvement in our energy of power, because of Raja Yoga, moves all of our concentration toward the source of our being to become that Being. Raja Yoga is a complete system, also referred to as Ashtanga Yoga as of the eight (Astha) limbs (anga) the system rests on.

Check Your Progress

1. What kind of knowledge is dealt with in Jnana yoga?
2. Name the yoga system which has come to us from Tibet.
3. Which yoga system is known as the crown of Hatha yoga?

2.4 YOGA/ASHTANGA YOGA

Ashtanga is a practice of yoga that was introduced to the modern world by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois. If you visit an Ashtanga class at a studio, you will be driven nonstop through one or more of the Ashtanga series, while being encouraged to breathe as you move from pose to pose. Each round is a set sequence of asanas, always in the corresponding order. It is typically vigorous, fast-paced, and physically challenging.

2.4.1 Application of Yama and Niyama

The first two stages of ashtanga yoga are known as Yama and Niyama. Yama indicates to control; Niyama, non-control. These two stages mean the don'ts, and the do's on the religious path.

Their primary purpose is to allow the milk of inner peace to be culled in the pail of the mind by filling holes that have been caused by anxiety, wrong attachments, hopes, and various forms of incompatible living.

The laws of Yama (the Don'ts) are five:

- Non-violence or Ahimsa
- Non-sensuality or Brahmacharya
- Non-lying
- Non-greed or Non-attachment
- Non-stealing

It is exciting to note that all of these virtues are listed in negative terms. The assumption is that when we remove our delusions, we cannot but be helpful, truthful, considerate of others' property, etc. as it is our generation to be good. We act differently not because it is natural for us to do so, but we have embraced an abnormal state of egoistical in harmony:

The laws of Niyama (the Do's) are:

- Cleanliness
- Contentment
- Austerity
- Self-study or Introspection
- Devotion to the Supreme Lord

2.4.2 Application of Asana

The third stage on the Ashtanga is known as Asana, which means, just, attitude. Some writers have attempted to make the point that it refers here to the need for practicing the yoga poses as a preparation for meditation. However, it was talking, not of practices, but of the different stages of spiritual development. Here, then, stance means no particular set of postures, but only the ability to hold the body still as a prerequisite for deep meditation. Any comfortable position will do, as long as the spine is kept erect and the body relaxed. A sign of completion in Asana is said to be the ability to sit still, without affecting a muscle, for three hours. Many people meditate for years without achieving any notable results, just because they have never trained their bodies to sit still. Until the body can be comprehended, higher judgments, so complex that they blossom only in perfect quiet, can never be achieved.

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It is good, of course, to function some of the yoga positions before meditation. These postures help one to attain Asana, or firm belief. Many inception students, however, make the impression of thinking that they must perfect their practice of the yoga postures before even attempting to meditate. This is quite untrue. It is not even necessary to practice the postures at all to learn meditation. The positions are only an aid, though a very great one, to reflection.

2.4.3 Application of Pranayama

The fourth stage is Pranayama. Prana mean breath, but only because of the close connection that exists between the inspiration and the causative flow of energy in the body. The word, prana, refers primarily to the power itself. Pranayama, then, means energy control. This energy control is often affected by the aid of breathing exercises. Hence, breathing exercises can also be known as pranayamas.

Its reference is to the energy control that is achieved as a result of various techniques, and not to the methods themselves. The word signifies a situation in which the energy in the body is accorded to the point where its movement is reversed—no longer outward toward the thoughts, but inward to the Divine Self. Only when all the power in the body can be guided toward one's consciousness be intense enough to comprehend the veils of delusion and enter super-consciousness.

The very energy with which we believe is the same energy that we apply to digest our food. To test this claim, consider how difficult it is, after a heavy meal, to think about weighty problems, and how bright the mind becomes after a fast. To redirect all the energy from the body to the account cannot but increase one's awareness and the insight of one's understanding. To address this energy inwardly is the first step in divine contemplation.

2.4.4 Application of Pratyahara

The fifth stage is Pratyahara, the interiorization of the mind. Once the energy has been redirected towards its origin in the brain, one must then interiorize one's cognizance, so that his thoughts, too, will not wander in endless bypaths of restlessness and misconception, but will be directed one pointedly on the profound mysteries of the indwelling soul. A thread must be assembled to one point before it can be put through the eye of a needle. Similarly, with the mind: It is necessary to concentrate one's thoughts as well as one's energies if he would hope to penetrate the narrow tunnel that leads to divine awakening.

2.4.5 Application of Dharana

The sixth stage is known as Dharana, consideration, or fixed inner awareness. One may have been aware of inner spiritual realities—the inner light, for instance, or the internal sound, or deep mystical feelings—before reaching this stage, but it is only after reaching it that one can give himself entirely to deep concentration on those realities.

2.4.6 Application of Dhyana

The seventh stage is known as Dhyana, reflection, absorption. By prolonged concentration on any phase of consciousness, one begins to assume himself its qualities. By meditating on sense of satisfaction, the Inner Self comes to recognize its happiness with the enjoyment of those pleasures; the person loses sight of the indwelling Self as the real source of his desires. (If anything material were a cause of happiness, it would generate happiness for all men. The fact that it does not determines that it is our reactions to those things, rather than the words themselves, that give us our enjoyment.) Again, by concentration on our faults, we only provide strength to those faults. (It is a severe mistake continually to call oneself a sinner, as many orthodox religionists would have one do. One should concentrate on virtue if he became virtuous.) By focusing on the inner light, then, or upon any other divine reality that one perceives when the brain is calm, one gradually takes on the characteristics of that spiritual reality. The mind loses its ego identification and begins to merge in the vast ocean of consciousness of which it is a part.

2.4.7 Application of Samadhi

The eighth stage is known as Samadhi, means oneness. Samadhi comes after one determines to dissolve his ego awareness in the calm inner light. Once the grip of ego has been broken, and one feels that he is that light, there is nothing to preclude him from developing his consciousness to infinity.

Check Your Progress

4. Define prana.
5. Name the seventh stage of ashtanga yoga.

2.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Jnana yoga is the yoga of knowledge which deals with—not knowledge regarding intellectual sense, but the experience of Atman and Brahman and the recognition of their unity.
2. Yantra yoga is one of the most traditional recorded systems of yoga in the world which has come to us from Tibet, a land that holds a vast, rich Buddhist culture and heritage.
3. Raja Yoga is sometimes called the crown of Hatha Yoga.
4. Prana mean breath, but only because of the close connection that exists between the inspiration and the causative flow of energy in the body.
5. The seventh stage is known as Dhyana, reflection, absorption.

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2.6 SUMMARY

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- The word 'yoga' proposes to bring the body and mind collectively to become a symphonic experience.
- Human is a combination of physical, spiritual and mental being. Yoga helps the stable development of all the three. Yoga helps in learning the art of balance between mind, soul and body.
- Physical education program helps children become competent in a variety of motor skills and movements. It helps to experience a broad range of movement activities and expand an understanding of movement principles, which incorporate body awareness, space awareness, and characteristics of the movement.
- The role of yoga in education is dependent on several factors including the type of training that was being given to children throughout the world as well as the various levels of stress that children encounter in the classroom environment.
- Karma is the sum of all our mental and physical actions, in this life and before. Karma Yoga is the yoga of self-transforming action or service, whereby the yogi directs all activities towards God.
- Bhakti Yoga is the Yoga of compassion, selfless love, humility, purity, and the desire and firm intention to merge with God.
- Jnana yoga uses our substantial mental powers to end the duping process, to know that we are even now and have always been free, infinite, perfect, and immortal.
- Hatha Yoga is recognized for the asanas or postures.
- Mantra Yoga is the kind of yoga that is functioned through the chanting of mantras. Thousands of mantras survive, and it is understood that the vibrations delivered by these mantras can help a person fulfil their dreams and even counteract diseases.
- Yantra Yoga's unique series of poses and movements, coupled with conscious breathing, can ease coordinate and arrange one's energy so that the mind can rest and find its proper balance.
- Laya Yoga is calculated among highly recognized art of yoga forms. Practicing this on a regular basis establishes a link between internal peace and conversation with self. This ascertains tuning between one's soul and global energy.
- Kundalini yoga practice is a combination of spiritual and physical. This style is all about delivering the kundalini energy in your body said to be caught, or coiled, in the lower spine.

- Tantra Yoga had been one of the dominant powers for the spiritual regeneration of the Hindus. When practiced by the unenlightened, ignorant, and unqualified persons, it has led to specific abuses; and there is no doubting that some degraded forms of Saktism have tried nothing but magic, immorality, and magical powers.

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2.7 KEY WORDS

- **Atman:** It refers to the spiritual life principle of the universe, especially when regarded as immanent in the individual's real self.
- **Brahman:** It refers to the ultimate reality underlying all phenomena in the Hindu scriptures.
- **Dzogchen Teachings:** It is a tradition of teachings in Tibetan Buddhism aimed at discovering and continuing in the natural primordial state of being.
- **Saktism:** It is a major tradition of Hinduism, wherein the metaphysical reality is considered feminine and Parvati (goddess) is supreme.

2.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is the definition of Physical Education?
2. Briefly list the principles of Yama and Niyama.
3. What is dharana?
4. Briefly explain the application of yoga in physical education.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the importance of Pranayama.
2. What are the applications of Karma yoga?
3. Examine the uses and meaning of Laya and Kundalini Yoga.
4. Explain the applications of the Tantra, Mantra and Yantra yoga.
5. Describe the applications of Ashtanga yoga.

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UNIT 3 IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*Importance of Yoga in
Physical Education*

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Yoga and Physical Education
- 3.3 Ashtanga Yoga and Its Importance
- 3.4 The Importance of Yama
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- 3.10 The Importance of Dhyana and Samadhi
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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3.0 INTRODUCTION

Being fit is very important in regular life. And to be fit, there is nothing better than physical exercises, activities, and sports. If these are practiced from childhood, one can gain the benefits of them in later life. That is why the physical education must be given utmost importance from school level. School is the place where kids get the best lessons of their life, which play an important part in shaping up their future life. If they understand the importance of physical education at their school, it will help them to get an energetic body and active mind in the future.

Now, if physical education comprises of yoga, then that will be the best for the students. Yoga helps to create balance; it powers up the inner strength, improves postures and breathing technique. Once a student learns these techniques from childhood, he/she can get the benefits of yoga in their future. Yoga not only helps them to stay fit physically, but also regular practicing of asanas can improve their memory and concentration power, which are quite necessary to be focused in their studies and career.

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3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of yoga in Physical Education
- Describe the meaning of Astanga Yoga
- Explain the significance of Samadhi

3.2 YOGA AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The meaning of 'Yoga' is to 'join or yoke together'. While it is a part of physical education, it becomes more beneficial as students get to practice it together at a certain point of the day. Yoga is not a mere form of exercise. It is the practice where the mind, body and soul are merged into one and students get to learn the balancing experience of these three entities. Why is yoga important in physical education? Here are the reasons:

1. Yoga Strengthens the Core Muscle and Improves Flexibility

The importance of physical education is crucial in every student's life. Student life is the time when their mind and body are in the growing process. Yoga helps in this changing phase by improving flexibility and strengthening core muscles and helping in cardio training. Which yoga exercises are of help here? Go for plank and Chaturanga, which target the abdominal muscle and help to flatten tummy.

2. Yoga Helps in Losing Weight

Today, kids do not get enough space and time to play. Mostly, their activities are restricted within the school grounds. In addition, there are also problems of growing obesity among students. Each school should incorporate physical education so that students get involved in and stay fit. Yoga can play a huge part in losing weight. Yoga plays a pivotal role in losing weight. Besides that, yoga practices make body relax. When the body is in relaxed mode, the secretion of cortisol (known as the stress hormone) is limited. It plays a huge role in weight gain. When this is limited, automatically weight will be under control.

3. Yoga Decreases the Risk of Injury

Getting into any sports or physical activities can lead towards injury if someone is not warmed up well. Yoga is the best way to warm up to avoid sudden injuries. If someone is returning to any sports after recovering from an injury, yoga will help to get body back on the track. Today, schools have yoga sessions with expert trainers and yoga therapists. It is important that the students talk to them before starting yoga sessions after getting back from any injury.

4. Yoga Improves Breathing Technique

Following proper breathing technique helps students to concentrate more on studies or any other activities. Breathing exercise or Pranayama helps them to focus on their breathing, improves their posture and strengthens their lung capacity. In the breathing exercise, the nasal passage becomes clean and that keeps the central nervous system calm. This benefits the body and mind improving health both physically and mentally.

5. Yoga Improves Overall Health

If one is suffering from any chronic condition; regular practicing of yoga can eliminate that from a young age. In addition, yoga asanas improve blood circulation throughout the body and remove the toxic elements faster.

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3.3 ASHTANGA YOGA AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Yoga is all about creating balance, improving flexibility, and strengthening in one's body. It also helps the mind to work with enough balance. Yoga can be incorporated in a student's life as physical education. It is always crucial, and holds a greater result in their studies, and later in life too. As one must know, yoga can ward many diseases and helps in stabilizing the mind, it also helps in weight loss, and heals any disease from the inside. There are many types of yoga postures; one of them is Ashtanga yoga.

What is Ashtanga Yoga?

As we have learnt in the previous unit, this yoga stance is also known as eight-limbed yoga. T. Krishnamacharya and Sri K Pattabhi Jois developed it. It is a dynamic stance of yoga, and it connects the body with the breathing process. It helps the body to stay in harmony with its physical and spiritual movements. It comprises of eight practices. They are:

- Yama
- Niyama
- Asana
- Pranayama
- Pratyahara
- Dharana
- Dhyana
- Samadhi

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Everyday practice of Ashtanga asana will get several benefits. Here are the some of its advantages:

1. Advancement of Endurance of the Core

All kinds of back pain can be healed with Ashtanga yoga. Everyday practice of all the stances of this yoga can help get rid of the back pain. It works mostly well with the athletes. They can get the best result from this yoga position. They can feel that their back is getting the best relief from the practice of the same.

2. Increases Flexibility

Ashtanga asana increases flexibility in a huge way. It helps in improving the flexibility of the hamstring and the movement of the trunk. The enhanced trunk movements help in the healthy activity of the spine and assists in the pelvic movement. Daily practice can get the best results for everyone.

3. Bodily Strength

This yoga stance helps in improving bodily strength. Everyday practice can help one get back their physical strength to its best. Yoga helps in increasing the appetite, and it helps in storing energy, along with building physical strength. If anyone practices this yoga, they will get the best results for sure.

4. Spiritual Health

Spiritual health is always important in human life. Ashtanga yoga helps in the enhancement of the level of spirituality, and its health. If spiritual health is intact, one can become happier being and stay in a calm mental environment. Spiritual health helps in increasing the mental state, and it is highly crucial for everyone to take care of that. With everyday practice of this yoga, anyone can achieve their best spiritual health.

5. Heart Health

Ashtanga asana helps in enhancing the health of the heart. Any cardio workout will fail in front of this asana. It helps in providing the best heart health to anyone. Everyday practice of this asana helps in weight loss. Additionally, anyone who wants to stay fit can practice this asana every day and get their desired results.

6. Mental Health

This very yoga helps in achieving mental stability. Mental health is important and practicing this yoga stance everyday will bring back that mental stability and health in full force.

7. Helps in Breathing

It helps in breathing by passing the air through the nostrils without affecting the process. With the daily practice of this asana, one can get back their normal

breathing. The airways of the body start to work properly with the help of this yoga asana.

8. Prevention of Hypertension

Hypertension can be prevented by practicing of this yoga everyday. It helps in lowering the high blood pressure and normalize the blood flow inside the body. People who are suffering from high blood pressure can get rid of it with the daily practice of Ashtanga asana.

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Check Your Progress

1. Who developed by Ashtanga Yoga?
2. List the eight practices of Ashtanga Yoga

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF YAMA

Yama is the first one of the eight limbs of Ashtanga yoga. It means control. It teaches people the base of social behaviour on a spiritual path. It teaches how a yogi or a saint lives their life with all the essential rules based on which the world is moving. This lifestyle is the staple of life, and is in harmony with the earth.

What is Yama?

Yama is also known as the 'five restraints'. These are the observance that a person should practice in their life. These behavioural codes are the moral of life, just as a yogi relates to life. If a person practices Yama, they will be able to live life more peacefully and can balance the same as well. Improvement of relations and character development will happen, as the spiritual state will enhance. Yama comprises five great vows. These vows are universal morals, and so many people in the world honour it today. It can also be referred to as Don'ts to be followed by a yogi. Let us have a look at each of these vows:

- **Ahimsa**

This means non-violence or harmlessness. It calms down a creature and helps them stay in better harmony with other living beings at the same time. It also means that one should maintain friendliness with everyone and try to spread the word of Ahimsa everywhere. It also indicates that everyone should fight the looming dangers or any kind of ill force and keep a mindset that helps in perceiving the potential dangers. The main point of Ahimsa is to refrain ourselves from any kind of harmful violence, that can disrupt the balance of society and the world as well.

- **Satya**

This principle guides a person to restrain themselves from dishonesty or lies. It means the truth. Truth and honesty are the two staple of life, based on which a

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person can build himself a life that is true, and ideal. Satya is the principle that tells a person to clutch on to the truth all the time and refrain themselves from any kind of lie, or dishonesty. If one conveys an upsetting information or lies to another they are breaking this very rule of life, and they are leading themselves towards an unethical lifestyle. It also says that one might beware about the words that might seem catchy but in reality are all lies and this is the worst trait of all. Every person should refrain themselves from truth coated lies, that can harm the life of any living creature. The term 'dharma' has been created for this reason too, where people can be attached to a simple mindset and go in that way, but without harming the other or lying to the other. The term 'Dharma' is far from any kind of harsh rules, but it is a principle of life, that should be followed by almost every living creature.

- **Asteya**

It is the third vow in Yama. This means 'not stealing'. One should never engage themselves in stealing from others. One should always stay on the track of honesty and 'ahimsa'. Stealing from the other is human nature, but to refrain from it becomes a great nature for a human being. Everyone should refrain themselves from stealing from another person, at any cost of living. Stealing also means stealing the trust of a person. A person may have trusted another one, but if they steal that trust and makes them face the utter betrayal, the other will not be able to trust another living being in their life. Therefore, Asteya teaches that non-stealing nature is the best one in life.

- **Brahmacharya**

This is the fourth part of Yama. This means self-control. In human life, self-constraint is highly important. Everyone should learn to constraint themselves in different parts of their lives. A good self-control will help them get all the desired things. Everyone should refrain from greed. Everyone should refrain from the path of lies and find the ultimate truth of life. One should stay away from the relationships that stray a person from the path of honesty and truth. Self-control is the greatest path towards a peaceful life. Brahmacharya is the best way to get all of that in life.

- **Aparigraha**

The last vow of Yama. This means 'non-coveting'. This means letting go of things that one does not deserve. If a person wants and gets all the things that they do not deserve, it will be a practice of dishonesty and unethical way of life. One should always take the path of what they deserve. Wanting more will lead to distractions and disturbed the spiritual and healthy life. Aparigraha teaches that one should always opt for the things they actually deserve. Being greedy and striving for unnecessary things in life will only prove the imbalance and the ill-being of life. Everyone must cling to the right way of living and follow this idea of Aparigraha for a healthier and spiritual path.

3.5 THE IMPORTANCE OF NIYAMA

Niyama is the second limb of Ashtanga. This means observance, a practice of ethical codes, and leading a healthy life through it. This resembles the practice of Yogi's internal health system. This very practice helps one in preserving the positive environment, and it will grow steadily with time.

What is Niyama?

Niyama is considered as the guideline that a person should follow. It helps in building the inner strength that one seeks in themselves. It gives a person the sense of self-discipline, and it enhances the mental strength that they need in the flow of life. It can also be referred to as Dos for a yogi.

There are the five directives that Niyama comprises of:

- **Saucha**

This is the first part of Niyama, and this means the purification. Purification in a sense is the cleanliness of the self. If a person can clean themselves from the impure things that have clogged their mind, then it will help them live their best and ideal life. A purification from the lies, their betraying qualities, the confusions and other such things. A person must purify their inner self from any kind of ill practices. One must also lead a pure life, like consuming pure food, mingling with people who are far from any kind of impurity. People are a mixture of impurity and purity, but one can always differentiate the good things from the bad. The practice of yoga means that one is purifying themselves from the psychological impurity, like rage, envy, etc. Outer cleanliness is as necessary as the inner one.

- **Santosha**

This is the second part of Niyama. This means contentment or satisfaction. One should always be content with their present lifestyle. They should refrain from lingering into the past, shed all the thoughts of the same, and lead the present life with new vigour. Thinking of past will stop a person from going ahead in life and get any satisfaction or peace from life itself. We all should learn from our past incidents and move ahead with the flow of life. This also teaches us that the things we have learned from the experiences will be out of reach for it to happen the next time. It also teaches that materialistic thoughts are futile, and one will be unable to survive forever with their possessed things. So, it is better that a person should practice the rule of life and refrain from being greedy for their earthly possessions.

- **Tapas**

It is the third part of Niyama. It means asceticism. Tapas teaches that one should always be in self-constraint, and not indulge into the allurements of other things like, food, money, status and so on. It also indicates that one should always clean

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their inner self from all the impurities, and the biggest part of this should be greediness. One should refrain from being captured by greed. Tapas offers the proper way of eating and leading an ideal lifestyle. This helps in the respiratory system. Tapas controls the unconscious needs in a human being as it tells us to control the unethical urges through the practice of yoga. It can cure the poor behaviour on social fields and helps in the improvement of mind all the way. Tapas is the way of stabilizing the mind and body, so that any kind of alluring thing stays away from us and lets us only harbour thoughts that are genuine and clean.

- **Svadhaya**

This fourth limb of niyama means the study of self. Self-discovery is always necessary for every person. If one is unable to recognize their self, they will fail to achieve anything in their life. Self-study is always because a person will understand the depth of things and the way they can involve themselves into it. A person has to be aware of their self and contain himself or herself if they have any ill motive or tendency. Self-study is important before one blames another. With self-study, a person can evaluate his or her own self-first then blame the other person for a justified reason.

- **Isvarapranidhana**

This is the last and fifth part of Niyama. It means devotion that we should have towards God and our work as well. Wanting more things that a person deserves in unfair and wrong, and this will lead a person towards the unethical way of life. So, it is highly important that one should always pray for the things they deserve truly, and after that, they should leave all the things to the higher spiritual being (God). Every person should devote at least some moments in their life to the thoughts of a higher spiritual being or God. This will help in uplifting of their spiritual status and will surely have an effect on their health in all the good ways.

3.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF ASANA

There are distinctive sorts of activities in the field of wellness which would help in making the body healthy and sound. Yoga is ordinarily identified as the bending of the bodies however, it is more than that. The different yoga asanas and the breathing systems alongwith the right stance give magnificent alternatives to the people who can adopt them as per their needs. The body alongside the mind is in synchronization while practicing yoga which give the best outcomes.

What Is Asana?

Asana is viewed as very mainstream since individuals are encouraged to remain on their feet with the goal that they ready to adjust the heaviness of the body. Asana generally refers to the postures, but asana in ashtanga yoga as referred to be Patanjali does not merely denote a certain set of poses but actually is just a

discussion about bringing the body to a state of stillness and presence to achieve a level of peace required for meditation.

Ofcourse, asanas on their own have different benefits when they are in the form of different poses and breathing movements. Let's see the importance of asanas through their different benefits.

Importance of Asana

1. Weight Reduction

Losing additional weight is something that a lot of people want. To achieve a sound and fit body, numerous individuals join yoga classes. The aims of proper weight reduction and staying fit is what makes them take up yoga. Surya Namaskar is a blend of different yoga asanas. Routinely practicing asana encourages the body to become more cautious to the sort of nourishment one takes in and be mindful of one's wake-up time, which when followed regularly prompts compelling weight reduction.

2. Keeping up an 'Overall' Fitness

Yoga asana is called as an 'all-rounder', wherein it helps in breathing systems, body posture, and reflections. Henceforth, it is viewed as a bundle of all-encompassing wellness. The customary routine about asana would help enhance one's wellbeing through body detoxification, advancing physical quality, boosting and enhancing mental quality.

3. Change in Immunity

Our body framework is said to function with the right balance between the brain, soul, and body, and any distinctions or abnormality in the body affects the mind. Any sort of anxiety or problems in the brain would prompt ailments in the body. Subsequently, rehearsing asana would help in exercising the different organs in the body alongside invigourating the muscles and enhancing breathing methods. A good invulnerable framework would be extremely dynamic in safeguarding the body against unsafe substances.

4. Achieving Inner Peace

Generally, people scarcely understand that peace can be discovered first inside the body. To discover inward peace, it is required to take a break of only a couple of minutes daily and do certain thoughtful asana or relaxing asana. Consequently, yoga asana is considered as the ideal approach to quiet an over-burden or bothered personality.

5. Soothing Stress

Doing a couple of valuable yoga asana can alleviate one from distressing minutes or considerations that can prompt a disturbance in the mind, body, and soul. Asana

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can be done any time during the day, so one can get help from the aggregated thoughts that are persistently running in the mind.

6. Better Posture and Flexibility

At the point when yoga is instilled in the day-by-day schedule like washing or brushing the teeth, it would assist the body with becoming adaptable and solid from inside to the outside. Frequently practicing different asanas extend the body and tones every single muscle, subsequently making them solid. It additionally enhances body posture while standing, strolling, or sitting. Subsequently, it is a decent method for making tracks in an opposite direction from that undesirable body agony.

3.7 THE IMPORTANCE OF PRANAYAMA

Let us begin understanding the importance of pranayama by first studying the meaning of pranayama.

What is Pranayama?

Pranayama is the ideal control of the life-streams through the proper control of breathing, and is the procedure by which the practitioner comprehends the mystery of prana (or life force or energy) and controls it. The practitioner can barely gain any profound ground without the act of pranayama. One who has received a proper grip on this prana has been on the receiving end of the specific center of enormous life and movement. Through different activities and practice in pranayama, the yogi endeavours to acknowledge in this little body the entire of infinite life, and accomplish flawlessness.

Breath is a physical angle or outside indication of prana, the indispensable power, and accordingly pranayama starts with the direction of the breath. Breath, similar to power, is prana, while prana itself is unobtrusive. By controlling the breath, the practitioner can control the prana – similarly as to control the alternate wheels by controlling or greasing the flywheel of a diesel motor. Control of breath is accomplished through control of the lungs and the breathing procedure. Patanjali stresses that only through the control of the energy that is flowing inside the body can the mind and body be aligned to be in harmony with the Self and Divine self. This is when all the delusions and problems are left behind and the person enters the realm of super-consciousness.

Importance of Pranayama

1. Reduced the Proper Rate of Breathing

With pranayama, it is possible for the practitioner to visualize on the most proficient method to inhale in a mindful and gradual manner. This will diminish the rate of breathing from 15 breaths per minute to 5 to 6 breaths gradually. When the

practitioners have effectively comprehended the procedure about the most proficient method to gradually slow down the breathing rate, it will decrease the 'wear and tear' of the inside organs. It loosens up the body's nerves and strains, brings down pulse rate significantly more.

2. Increases the Lifespan

Based on the theory of yoga, lifespan relies upon the rate of breathing. As the practitioner brings down the breathing rate, as we mentioned in the previous paragraph, it increases the lifespan of the individual. Take for an example, if tortoise just takes 4 to 5 breaths for each minute, it likewise can live for a long time and that is only the tip of the iceberg.

3. Improves Blood Circulation

Breathing lets in the new and oxygenated blood through the inward breath; which goes from the lungs and after that, to the heart. Heart is the organ which pumps the blood through veins and corridors of the body. Therefore, mindful breathing ensures that the blood dissemination can be moved forward and more prana, vast vitality, or oxygen can reach the different parts of the body.

4. Maintaining a Healthy Heart

One of the most dedicated organs in our body is none other than the heart. Heart pulsates just about one-hundred times every day and it pumps blood 'day in' and 'day out' constantly for the entire duration of our life. This one decides the life quality and hope in maturity. Having enough oxygen in the blood implies more oxygen to be found in the heart's muscle.

5. Improving the Mental Health

This training gives the individuals the opportunity to keep stay calm and move away from any destructive and negative mental thoughts, for example, feelings of wretchedness, outrage, indecency, pomposity, or being greedy for money, etc. By practicing pranayama, it is possible to control mind vacillations and set up for ground for profound contemplation. It is possible to encounter internal peace, better focus, better memory, better rest, gentility of the body and much more.

Check Your Progress

3. What is first branch of Ashtanga Yoga?
4. Name the last part of Niyama.

3.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF PRATYAHARA

The fifth appendage of yoga is pratyahara which can be viewed as the scaffold among outer and inward yoga. It moves the expert yoga practitioners toward the

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more inconspicuous specialization of focus and contemplation and lastly towards the stage of Samadhi (illumination).

The derivation of pratyahara proclaims that it comes from two Sanskrit words: prati and ahara, where 'prati' denotes staying away or against and 'ahara' food or anything taken into ourselves. Along these lines, pratyahara essentially specifies, 'to take out you from that which sustains the sentiments.' In yoga, the expression pratyahara means distancing emotions from getting associated with outside things. In the previous limb of pranayama the energy was controlled and in this limb the thoughts are controlled.

Pratyahara is the level at which an expert sees how to administration the 'arms' of mindfulness, which are known as indriyas in Sanskrit. There are different types of Pratyahara along with their particular formations and benefits, which serve different purposes on practicing.

Pratyahara and Ayurveda

Pratyahara is the correct administration of the brain, senses, and is fundamental for all sacred (Dosha) types. It is the most vital factor for mental sustenance of the different individuals.

1. Vata

Vata people tend to display over-the-top tangible and mental action and regularly need a reliable routine practice of pratyahara. Their eagerness usually occupies their senses, aggravates the engine organs and prana. Pratyahara turns around the antagonistic inclinations of vata and helps restore this energy into a positive power of prana.

2. Pitta

Pitta people for the most part have more control of the senses than the others do. Generally, these people are associated more with restrains like exercises in which they stretch both the body and the senses. Their requirement for pratyahara arises to let the 'perfect will' work through them while at the same time loosening up their very own will.

3. Kapha

Kapha people often may encounter unevenness where for the most part one experiences too little movement, including on the tangible level. This likewise infers 'tamasic' attributes of being sluggish, staring at the TV or lounging around the house. They require more mental incitement and advantage from tangible movement of a higher sort.

Different Types of Pratyahara along with its Benefits and Explanations

*Importance of Yoga in
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1. Control of the Senses

Indriya-pratyahara is the most critical type of pratyahara, in spite of the fact that this is not something that we get to hear in our broad communications arranged culture. The vast majority experiences the ill effects of tangible over-burden, the consequences of information overload from TV, radio, PCs, daily papers, magazines, books—and so on. The business society works by fortifying the enthusiasm through the senses. We are always shown splendid hues, noisy clamours, and emotional sensations as customers. We have been raised on each kind of tangible liberality—it is the fundamental type of stimulation in our public.

The issue is that the senses, in untrained youngsters, have their very own will, and are generally instinctual in nature. They instruct the mind. If we do not train them, they rule and exasperate us with their unlimited requests. We are so acclimatized with a barrage of continuous tangible movements that we do not know how to keep our brains calm—we have moved towards becoming prisoners of the universe of the senses and its allurements. We pursue what is speaking to the senses and overlook the higher objectives of life. Consequently, pratyahara is likely the most imperative appendage of yoga for us today.

2. The Right Intake of Impressions

Pratyahara is about the correct admission of impressions. The majority of us are cautious about the nourishment we eat and lifestyle we lead, however we may not practice a similar separation about the impressions we take in from the senses. We acknowledge impressions by means of the broad communications that we could never permit in our own lives. We let individuals into our homes through TV and motion pictures that we would never permit into our homes, in actuality!

We cannot disregard the job tangible impressions play in making us our identity, for they develop the subliminal and fortify the inclinations inactive inside it. Endeavouring to ruminate without controlling our impressions sets our subliminal against us and keeps the improvement of internal peace and clearness.

3. Tactile Withdrawal

Yoni mudra (otherwise called Shanmukhi-mudra) is a standout amongst the most essential pratyahara strategies for shutting the senses. It includes utilizing the fingers to obstruct the tangible openings in the head—the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth—enabling the consideration and energy to move inside. It improves the situation in brief timeframes when our prana is empowered, for example, quickly in the wake of rehearsing pranayama.

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4. Concentrating on Uniform Impressions

Another approach to wash down the brain and control the senses is to put our considerations on a wellspring of uniform impressions, for example, looking at the sea or the blue sky. Similarly, as the stomach related framework gets short-circuited by unpredictable dietary patterns and opposite nourishment characteristics, our capacity to process impressions can be unsettled by shaking or unnecessary impressions. In addition, similarly as enhancing our processing may require going on a quick, trailed by a mono-diet, similar to the ayurvedic utilization of rice and mung beans (khichari), so our psychological absorption may require a time of fasting from impressions, trailed by an eating regimen of regular yet homogeneous impressions.

5. Making Positive Impressions

Another method for controlling the senses is to make positive, normal impressions. There are various approaches to do this: immersing oneself into the nature, for example, getting exposed to trees, flowers, or shakes, and visiting sanctuaries or different spots of journey; these are stores of positive impressions and considerations. Using incenses, flowers, ghee lights, sacred places, statues, and different ancient rarities of reverential love can likewise make positive impressions.

6. Making Inner Impressions

Another tactile withdrawal strategy is to focus the mind on internal impressions, along these lines expelling consideration from outside impressions. It is possible to create an internal impression through the creative energy or we can contact the unpretentious senses that become an integral factor when the physical senses are calm.

7. Representation

Representation is the least difficult methods for making internal impressions. Indeed, most yogic reflection practices start with some kind of representation, for example, a divinity, a master, or a delightful setting in nature. Representations that are more detailed include envisioning divinities and their universes, or rationally performing ceremonies, for example, offering non-existent flowers or pearls to envisioned gods. The artisan assimilated in an inward scene or the performer making music is likewise performing internal representations. These are on the whole types of pratyahara in light of the fact that they clear the psychological field of outer impressions and make a positive internal impression to fill in as the establishment of reflection. Starter perceptions are useful for most types of reflection and can be incorporated into other otherworldly practices.

8. Laya Yoga

Laya yoga is the yoga of the internal sound and light, in which the people concentrate on unpretentious senses. This withdrawal into internal sound and light is a method for changing the concentration of brain and is another type of indriya-pratyahara. It is also known as Kundalini yoga where the upper chakras are recharged and it flows down to lower chakras to illuminate the Kundalini. The Laya yoga leads to samadhi.

9. Control of the Prana

Control of the senses requires the improvement and control of prana in light of the fact that the senses pursue prana. Except if the prana is solid, it will not have the ability to control the senses. If the prana is scattered or aggravated, our senses will likewise be scattered and exasperated. Prana is assembled in pranayama and pulled back in pratyahara. Yogic writings portray techniques for pulling back prana from various parts of the body, beginning with the toes and closure wherever we wish to settle our concentration and finally end at the third eye of the body, also known as the forehead.

10. Control of Action

Karma-pratyahara can be performed by surrendering any idea of individual prizes for what we do and doing everything as a service to God or to humankind. It likewise incorporates the act of severities that prompt control of the internal organs. For instance, asana can be utilized to control the hands and feet, control which is required when we sit discreetly for broadened time periods.

11. Withdrawal of the Mind

The yogis disclose to us that mind is the sense organ, and that it is in charge of organizing the various sense organs. We take in tactile impressions just where we put our mind's consideration. The mind additionally organizes the tactile and primary organs, for instance by connecting what the eyes see with the developments of the hand when we reach for a container from the table. As it were, we are continually honing pratyahara. The mind's consideration is restricted, and we offer thoughtfulness regarding one tangible impression by pulling back the brain from different impressions. Wherever we put our consideration, we normally neglect different things.

3.9 THE IMPORTANCE OF DHARANA

When we are proceeding toward the eight-overlay way of yoga through asana practice, representation and control of the senses, we are prepared to go further and have a deeper research in yoga. This is the place we begin Dharana, the authoritative of the awareness to a solitary point. It refers to attention.

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Dharana is tied in with settling the brain to one particular point. This could be something inward, similar to part of the body or a chakra, or something outside like a photo, statue or another question. It is not very essential what this question or object is that we are concentrating on, the design is to calm the brain with this aggregate fixation.

When the brain is strongly focused on a single point, whatever remains of the mind tends to calm down. When we practice to focus this way, there is less space for different thoughts and recollections that the mind watches out for or is generally occupied with.

Dharana is a vital form of advancement on our way to the following stage, Dhyana or meditation/absorption. It is important to have the capacity to focus the brain before it can move further towards any distraction. Despite the fact that one keeps practicing the three stages on the eightfold way, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are for the most part exceptionally interconnected. These three last advancements speak to the inner yoga, the exercises of the brain, and they are free from the different functions and effects of the physical senses. These three yogas are also called inner yoga.

We first will have the profound centralization of Dharana, through which it is possible to move towards Dhyana, contemplation, lastly Samadhi, association with the Whole.

The Different Benefits of Dharana

1. Keeping Proper Peace of Mind

Dharana aims to set up the mind, by centering it upon some steady element. One great strategy to begin it is by rolling the eyes upward and descending, in one direction to get the focus. Any object or question can be chosen for the practice as it has no relevance to carry out in the contemplation procedure.

2. Avoiding Any Kind of Distractions

The object chosen for concentration is just used to prevent the brain from getting distracted- through recollections, dreams, or intelligent idea - by purposefully holding it steady upon at some static point. This is to ensure that the focus is on understanding the actual nature and not getting away from the real world. When it is possible to achieve a stage of avoiding the different distractions around us, it is at that moment that it is possible to achieve full concentration towards our goals.

3. Keeping the Eye on the Target

Dharana helps in directing one's focus on a specific thing. It ensures that one achieves a level of mindfulness in anything they do, by concentrating on each progression taken. Dharana can add extravagance to one's life. With the assistance of profound concentrations, one can create around themselves the right conditions away from the different complexities of life.

4. Achieving the Right Psychological State

Dharana works with the goal to accomplish a psychological state, where the brain, acumen, and sense of self are controlled. The brain moves toward becoming cleansed by this practice. It becomes ready to centre effectively around one subject or purpose of understanding. Dharana likewise helps in the discontinuance of distractions in our minds.

5. Keeping the Brain Healthy Enough to Face Different Situations

The act of Dharana, at such times like when battling resentment, eagerness or desire would help in facing those battles. Dharana is the act of preparing the brain, to think and centre, in such a way, that we can keep away from disappointments. It is the way, which enables the brain to stay upbeat in any situations and not get excited during complex situations.

6. Keeps the Mind Steady

Concentrating on one point enables the mind to be steady and quiets the unsettling influence of action, which occupy our minds. The source of fixation can be anywhere inside our body or outside. Along these lines, keeping up a settled and centered fixation, all through the training, gives consistency and clearness to our thoughts. It also helps in keeping the end goal of the life fixed without many fluctuations and improves the skill of taking the right decisions.

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3.10 THE IMPORTANCE OF DHYANA AND SAMADHI

Dhyana, as the name suggests is related to the concept of intense concentration. This concentration is not on any particular level of consciousness nor on the sensory pleasures. Both of these are harmful as one leads the person to assume certain qualities about themselves while the other makes one rely on the gratification of the pleasures to attain enlightenment. Instead, the concentration or Dhyana should be on the inner light or the perception of divine reality in a calm state of mind so as to adopt the inner reality and become one with the consciousness of which it is a part.

Dhyana or meditation is achieved when there is a continuous concentration on a desha minus any distractions or a series of individual concentrations on desha. Remember the concentration is not on a bindu but a direction. Additionally, whereas in dharana, the peripheral thoughts may still be present while focusing the chitta on a desha but in dhyans, the peripheral thoughts are absent alongwith the fact that there are also absent any opposing thoughts or vrittis.

Some of the calming dhyana yoga postures are padmasana (lotus pose) which has several benefits like calming the body, keeping the spine straight, restoring

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energy levels and attaining good postures. There are also other poses like bhujangasana (cobra pose) which has benefits like improving blood circulation in the body and paschimottasana (seated forward bend) which helps in reducing irritability and anger. Dhyana assists people in truly understanding themselves with the help of increased concentration. It helps in controlling the thoughts in our minds. This will help people deal with serious and stressful situations through a calm state of mind and approach.

Samadhi is the state of meditation, where only the consciousness of the object remains with the total elimination of the awareness of even the chitta. This is a very difficult state to explain as in this state the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation and there is no consciousness of the object itself. There exists a void or shunya beyond which only the object of meditation is left. Some of samadhi is bringing the person closer to a state of oneness with their spiritual self, increase concentration, become more positive and stable in different situations and have a calm approach overall.

Check Your Progress

5. Which branch of Ashtanga Yoga is viewed as the scaffold among outer and inward yoga?
6. What is Yoni mudra?

3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Ashtanga yoga stance is also known as eight-limbed yoga. It was developed by T. Krishnamacharya and Sri K Pattabhi Jois.
2. Ashtanga yoga comprises of eight practices. They are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Everyday practice of Ashtanga asana will get several benefits.
3. Yama is the first one of the eight limbs of Ashtanga yoga.
4. Isvarapranidhana is the last and fifth part of Niyama.
5. Pratyahara is the branch of Ashtanga Yoga viewed as the scaffold among outer and inward yoga.
6. Yoni mudra (otherwise called shanmukhi-mudra) is amongst the most essential pratyahara strategies for shutting the senses. It includes utilizing the fingers to obstruct the tangible openings in the head—the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth—enabling the consideration and energy to move inside.

3.12 SUMMARY

- The meaning of 'Yoga' is to 'join or yoke together'. While it is a part of physical education, it becomes more beneficial as students get to practice it together at the certain point of the day.
- Yoga is not a mere form of exercise. It is the practice where the mind, body, and soul are merged into one and students get to learn the balancing experience of these three entities.
- Yoga is all about creating balance, flexibility, and strength in one's body. It also helps the mind to work with enough balance. Yoga in student life as a physical education, is always crucial, and holds a greater result in their studies, and later in life too.
- Ashtanga yoga stance is also known as eight-limbed yoga. It was developed by T. Krishnamacharya and Sri K Pattabhi Jois. It is a dynamic stance of yoga, and it connects the body with the breathing process.
- Ashtanga yoga helps the body to stay in harmony with its physical and spiritual movements. It comprises of eight practices. They are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Everyday practice of Ashtanga asana will get several benefits.

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3.13 KEY WORDS

- **Yama:** It refers to the the moral, ethical and societal guidelines for the practicing yogi.
- **Niyama:** It is considered as the guideline that a person should follow. It helps in building the inner strength that one seeks in themselves.
- **Pranayama:** It is the ideal control of the life-streams through the proper control of breathing and is the procedure by which the practitioner comprehends the mystery of prana and controls it.
- **Pratyahara:** It is the correct administration of the brain, senses, and is fundamental for all sacred (Dosha) types.
- **Dharana:** It refers to the yogic practice tied with settling the brain to one particular point or to attain the right position for the concentration.

3.14 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the five restraints in Yama?

2. Write in brief about the importance of Niyama.
4. What are the different types of Pratyahara?

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Long Answer Questions

1. What is the importance of Ashtanga Yoga? Discuss.
2. Describe the importance of Yama.
3. Discuss the importance of Asanas.
4. Describe the benefits of Dharana.
5. Explain the importance of Pranayama in detail.

3.15 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 4 IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN VARIOUS SPORTS

*Importance of Yoga in
Various Sports*

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Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Importance of Yoga in Various Sports: An Introduction
- 4.3 Importance of Yoga for Athletes
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- 4.9 Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Yoga in itself is a word comprising complete definition of physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It is very often considered as a guide to a better way of living. As we already know, our life revolves around an infinite number of things, but it is always the major ones with which we associate ourselves and which become important aspects of our identity. They may become just a part of our lives or sometimes even its sole purpose as well. The moment we realize that we need to devote ourselves or work to improve it - Yoga is the answer!

Because at times yoga can be the key or the means to drive us to progress us on the path of our goals, at the same time it can also be the master to help us achieve those goals.

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4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of Yoga in various sports
- Discuss the importance of Yoga for athletes

4.2 IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN VARIOUS SPORTS: AN INTRODUCTION

Let us say, for a person really associates himself with sports. It means, he will try his best to devote himself to that particular sports and would like to improve his/her game as best as possible. However, the question is how can this improvement be brought about? And where to begin with? The answer to both the question is one i.e. yoga.

We can understand this in the following ways:

- Every sportsperson comes with some inborn talents and previously learned qualities that differ from person to person. Similarly, different sports require a certain different set of skills to master them. Now the task of figuring out the weak areas for the sportsperson and the areas he needs to work upon is a difficult one. But practicing yoga improves not just physical but mental health too. It provides better focus making the person more aware of his surroundings along with an improved self-conscious state of mind thereby helping him understand his own body better.
- Now once a sportsperson is aware of his current capabilities and the areas he needs to work on, it becomes easy to plan out and set the goals he wants to achieve. However, in order to achieve those goals yoga can play a vital role. This is because yoga consists of a variety of Asanas that include exercise of all the body muscles providing strength, flexibility and endurance; in short, an overall fitness.

4.3 IMPORTANCE OF YOGA FOR ATHLETES

Yoga is for everyone and so is also true for athletes. This is stated with such confidence because yoga works on strength, flexibility, balance, agility, endurance, core, and overall strength, among other things which is important for athletes. Yoga complements the job of an athlete by helping him perform better, increasing his efficiency, reducing the injury levels, reducing the physical risks of being indulged in a particular sport for longer terms due to which some muscles become weak and some too tight. Yoga also helps to keep the stress levels low and allows the athletes to cope up with the pressure and extremities in a positive way.

4.3.1 In Running

Runners can use yoga practice to strengthen the balance and train the body and mind. As yoga's internal focus centers our attention on our own body's movements, asanas teach us to coordinate our breath with each subtle movement rather than worrying for an external outcome. While running when we strike our foot on the ground the force of impact is about three to four times our body weight. Powerful impacts existing for a prolonged period of time, along with the imbalances that running causes, exacerbates conditions of bad backs and knees, tight hamstrings, and sore feet arise. Nevertheless, practicing yoga through consistent and systematic asana and body conditioning, we can engage in a process to strengthen and place demands on all of our intrinsic muscle groups, which support and stabilize the skeletal system providing balance and stability. This eventually results in integrated action of body, mind and breath.

Now as we talk about breath, Pranayama plays a vital role in improving our lung capacity and the efficiency of our pumping system to circulate blood around the body for enhanced energy levels available for running. This is crucial as maximum oxygen intake is an important physiological variable determining performance and endurance for runners.

4.3.2 In Jumping

When it comes to jumping as sports, it requires even more intense training and a larger number of muscles working for long time periods. It checks not just strength but also endurance and flexibility. Yoga works to enable the athletes to increase their oxygen intake capacity during endurance training, making yoga a crucial part of training for jumping. However, as said by Ross Rayburn, a certified Anusara Yoga teacher based in New York: 'To reach our potential as athletes, we have to build balanced strength in all of the different muscle groups.' No other workout session comes with such assurances of covering concerns of almost all body muscles as far as yoga justifies. This in return results in an improved range of movement and a lower chance of injuries as yoga poses can easily eliminate muscle fatigue due to overuse.

In addition, movements are proper when performed in coordination to conscious breaths. Yoga Asanas, pranayamas and meditation if included in pre-jumping or post workout sessions can do benefit to any athlete.

4.3.3 In Throwing

The effects of yoga practices on physical fitness parameters such as strength, flexibility and range of motion are readily apparent. However, when it comes to importance of yoga for athletes especially those involved in throwing practices one needs to shift the concern towards the role yoga plays in improving the upper body, basically shoulder strength and performance, along with core strength and overall fitness.

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But here too yoga again proves to be the master as muscular strength has been a common aspect that has been routinely reported to be improving because of practicing yoga. The isometric muscular contractions from static holding of the asanas and the controlled movement between Asanas are believed to be responsible for significantly increased isokinetic muscular strength for elbow extension, elbow flexion and knee extension.

Some studies (by Tylor Edward Holt) reveal that, not just the basic Asanas of hatha yoga but performing Asanas of sun salutation and bikram yoga are collectively effective in improving total body muscular strength. Specifically, upper body and trunk strength. Two vital parameters associated with overhead throwing can be improved in as little as six weeks as a result of biweekly yoga practice.

Check Your Progress

1. Why is yoga important for achieving goals of sportspersons?
2. How does pranayama play a vital role for athletes in running?

4.4 IMPORTANCE OF YOGA FOR DIFFERENT SPORTS

In this section, we will discuss the importance of yoga in specific sports like archery, boxing, wrestling, gymnastics, weight lifting, football, hockey and tennis.

4.4.1 Importance of Yoga for Archery

No archer is new to a normal human life that involves a social life, family, friends, entertainment and what not, but in a cutthroat competition all these casual things can result into mere distractions for a sports person. Nevertheless, here too yoga comes to rescue, making us more aware of our own actions and a super improved focus level. Being able to focus on exactly what our body is doing makes our form a lot more consistent, and we may also find making small adjustments required for the sports to be easier when we start practicing yoga.

To add to this, archery limits the movement to a number of muscles, but proper fitness requires a workout that make use of all muscles because there is no other way to check the complete health of an archer, which is vital to add bonus to his performance skills.

4.4.2 Importance of Yoga for Boxing

Yoga may not help a boxer to learn boxing skills to boast about in a ring, but it helps him to an unbelievable length in his out-of-the-ring rituals including training and the recovery process.

Balance as regarded by boxers provides them the confidence to punch, move, or defend from any position at any moment, as being off-balanced poses as

higher risks of being knocked down. Holding dynamic/static yoga postures for long improves this. Boxing and injuries are never indifferent to each other. In effect to this fact, when training to box, it is important to include steps to reduce injuries or remedies for recovery. Yoga practices consisting of postures for balance training, flexibility and static-dynamic stretching shows considerable improvements in shoulder flexibility, sit-reach, and joint mobility, all of which are vital for keeping boxers healthy.

Boxers are found to suffer from extreme anxiety levels both, in and out of the ring. Even basic pranayamas if practiced routinely can help significantly while proper prolonged meditation is known to eliminate any such anxiety disorders altogether completely. In addition, the benefits of pranayama in improving awareness and providing a better self-consciousness reduces the reaction time of the boxer that in turn builds a good defense.

As the art of boxing also comprises of many unnatural poses and action, the areas of concern are problems like neck and shoulder stiffness, back pain, unrelaxed hand muscle fibers etc. Now it is scientifically proven that yoga has been a staple for treating carpal tunnel syndrome and many other forms of repetitive hand strains for decades. It can also relieve chronic pain due to excessive muscle contractions and can provide short-term pain relief, alleviate back-specific mobility issues, and improve long-term back injuries.

One can also state that yoga can enhance flow, mindfulness, and aspects of sport confidence that can help a boxer to train his mind to perform for longer than the average in a more qualified manner.

4.4.3 Importance of Yoga for Wrestling

Yoga has helped sportspersons gain their stamina, detoxify souls and build concentration over the years. Yoga and wrestling are two activities, which are contradictory to each other. However, wrestling is the sport, which involves building strength, balance, flexibility, footwork, positioning, mental focus and toughness. Yoga helps in increasing body flexibility, mental focus and concentration. Due to some of the similar characteristics, yoga and wrestling are used as complimenting activities by the wrestlers. There are yoga asanas, which have helped the wrestlers in building the lean muscles. These asanas are likely to help in strengthening the muscles of the wrestlers. Yoga helps in empowering the weaker muscles of the wrestler's body. Wrestling requires immense cardiovascular and physical strength, whereas yoga helps in easing pain and reducing injuries. With the help of yoga, wrestlers can work on increasing their shoulder flexibility, work on hamstrings, chest and cervical spine. Yoga helps in affecting a wrestler's ability to focus on the present moment. Yoga also helps in building humility in wrestlers by encouraging the importance of work ethics and stressing on practice and progress.

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The famous yoga positions for wrestlers and their benefits are as follows:

1. **Eight-point shoulder opener:** Used for intense shoulders, chest, neck, arms, and stretching of back muscles
2. **Low lunge (Anjaneyasana):** Helps in stretching of thighs and groin muscles.
3. **Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana):** Helps in strengthening spine, stretching chest, lungs, shoulders and abdomen.
4. **Cow-Face Pose (Gomukhasana):** Help in stretching of the ankles, hips, thighs, shoulders, armpits, triceps, and chest.
5. **Big Toe Pose (Padangusthasana):** Lengthens and helps in strengthening the tight hamstrings and calves
6. **Eagle Pose (Garudasana):** Improves strength, flexibility, and endurance as well as increase concentration.
7. **Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana):** Stretches the hands, shoulders, hamstrings, calves, and arches of the foot.
8. **Figure Four (Eka Pada Utkatasana):** Stretches the muscles and joints around the hips, spine and knees

4.4.4 Importance of Yoga for Gymnastics

Yoga and gymnastics can be called as complementary activity. Both activities require flexibility, improved concentration and focus mind. Gymnasts must undergo strong exercise routine to maintain their strength and improve muscle flexibility, in order to stay strong in their game. With yoga, a gymnast can improve their balancing techniques, enhancing flexibility and practice body balancing acts. The physical impact of gymnastics is dynamic and has a high impact on feet, ankle, knees and the spine. With the help of yoga, the gymnasts can help in building body flexibility. In gymnastics, the hamstring should be one of the strongest and with the help of yoga a gymnast can help in building the muscles stronger. Lower back and shoulder are prone to longevity issues in gymnasts due to improper balance. However, with the help of yoga a gymnast can build better concentration and mental stamina.

The following are some excellent postures for gymnasts:

1. Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I, and II (warrior poses), and Vrksasana (Treepose): Good postures to increase body awareness from the feet to the hips in gymnasts.
2. Utthita Hasta Padangustasana (extended hand foot pose) and Virabhadrasana III (warrior pose): Increases focus and create stillness of mind.
3. Uttanasana and Paschimottanasana (standing and seated forward bend): Poses to help opening the back of the body and the hamstrings
4. Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog pose): To build strength while opening the back of the body.

5. Adho Navasana (low boat) and Lolasana (Pendant pose): Great poses to increase (lower) abs and hip flexor strength.
6. Salambasana (Locust pose) and Bhujangasana (Cobra pose): Lifting the chest and legs away from the floor, the QL muscles in the lower back can be strengthened in poses.

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4.4.5 Importance of Yoga for Weight Lifting

Yoga is one of the amazing activities for the weight lifters, as it helps in building concentration and mental stamina in a person.

Benefits of the weigh-lifting and yoga are:

- **Prevention of injury:** Shortened and tight muscles in a weight lifter causes restriction in the range of motion, and it reduces the joint functionality. It also causes the loss of joint alignment which creates immense wear and tear in weight lifters. Due to the wear and tear, there is a lot of the stiffness, and tightness in the body. However, with the help of yoga one can balance out the shortening of the muscles and enhance the stabilization of joints. Yoga also helps in improving range of motion in the weight lifters, which can serve beneficial in the long run.
- **Balance improvement:** Muscle imbalance is one of the common injuries experienced in weight lifting. With the help of yoga asanas, the body balance can be enhanced and help in strengthening the body balance.
- **Posture and form improvement:** Weight lifting involves correct technique of body postures, which can help in reducing risk of injuries. Yoga can help in improvement of yoga postures, eliminating slouching and slumping in weight lifters.
- **Boosts breathing:** Weight lifters hold their breath during training; however, with the help of yoga breathing pattern can be enhanced to achieve the desired results. Proper breathing is required for keeping a healthy flow of oxygen into the body and the muscles require most of the oxygen in their growth and repair.

4.4.6 Importance of Yoga for Football

Football is one of the sport activities, which involves a lot of stamina and requires a strong breathing pattern in the players. The combination of yoga and football helps in building stamina in players.

Three key ways in which yoga helps the football players:

- Yoga helps in improving flexibility
- It helps in improving game by healing injuries faster
- It improves concentration and mind game

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Yoga Regime recommended for football players:

- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog pose)
- Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I and II (warrior poses) and Vrksasana (Treepose)
- Utthita Hasta Padangustasana (extended hand foot pose) and Virabhadrasana III (warrior pose)
- Uttanasana and Paschimottanasana (standing and seated forward bend)
- Runner's Lunge and Crescent Lunge are also some of the yoga positions recommended for football players.

'Yoga taught me how to move on instead of having a downward spiral' –
quoted by Eddie George (Former American Footballer)

4.4.7 Importance of Yoga for Hockey

Hockey players are recommended to perform yoga for better muscle strength and stamina. It helps in reduction of mental and physical stress in players. The total body inflammation can be reduced with yoga asanas. Yoga helps in improvement of sleep patterns, breathing capacity, balance, and flexibility and improves pain management in players.

The common yoga asanas recommended for hockey players are:

- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward facing dog pose)
- Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I and II (warrior poses) and Vrksasana (Treepose)
- Utthita Hasta Padangustasana (extended hand foot pose) and Virabhadrasana III (warrior pose)
- Uttanasana and Paschimottanasana (standing and seated forward bend)
- Salambasana (Locust pose) and Bhujangasana (Cobra pose): Lifting the chest and legs away from the floor, the QL muscles in the lower back can be strengthened in poses.

4.4.8 Importance of Yoga for Tennis

Yoga has served to be beneficial in most of the sports activities such as boxing, wrestling, football and others. Yoga practice can serve as one of the important tools for tennis, to help in the tightening of muscles and encouragement of tissue resiliency. Each stroke of the racquet during a tennis game exerts force on the shoulder, arm and wrist. There are multidimensional movements, which simultaneously affect the legs, hips, and spine. Yoga asanas can help to address muscle symmetries and muscle tightening.

Some of the common yoga asanas recommended for tennis players are:

- Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I and II (warrior poses) and Vrksasana (Treepose)

- Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half lord of the Fishes Pose): It helps to keep the spine, hips, and shoulder joints limber and flexible.
- Uttanasana and Paschimottanasana (standing and seated forward bend)

Check Your Progress

3. Why is balance important for boxers?
4. Name the yoga asana which helps in stretching of the ankles, hips, thighs, shoulders, armpits, triceps, and chest.
5. Mention one of the most common injuries experienced in weight lifting.

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4.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. In order to achieve the goals set by sportsperson in yoga can play a vital role because it consists of a variety of Asanas that include exercise of all the body muscles providing strength, flexibility and endurance; in short, an overall fitness.
2. Pranayama plays a vital role in improving our lung capacity and the efficiency of our pumping system to circulate blood around the body for enhanced energy levels available for running. This is crucial as maximum oxygen intake is an important physiological variable determining performance and endurance for runners.
3. Balance as regarded by boxers provides them the confidence to punch, move, or defend from any position at any moment, as being off-balanced poses as higher risks of being knocked down.
4. Cow-Face Pose (Gomukhasana) is the yoga asana which helps in stretching of the ankles, hips, thighs, shoulders, armpits, triceps, and chest in wrestling.
5. Muscle imbalance is one of the common injuries experienced in weight lifting.

4.6 SUMMARY

- Yoga in itself is a word comprising complete definition of physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It is very often considered as a guide to a better way of living.
- Yoga is for everyone and so is true for athletes. It could be stated with such confidence because yoga works on strength, flexibility, balance, agility, endurance, core, and overall strength, among other things.
- Yoga complements the job of an athlete by helping him to perform better, increasing his efficiency, reducing the injury levels, reducing the physical

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risks of being indulged in a particular sport for longer terms due to which some muscles may become weak and some too tight that can cause problem.

- Yoga also helps to keep the stress levels low and allows the athlete to cope up with the pressure and extremities in a positive way.
- Runners can use yoga practice to strengthen the balance and train the body and mind. As yoga's internal focus centers our attention on our own body's movements, asanas teach us to coordinate our breath with each subtle movement rather than worrying for an external outcome.
- When it comes to jumping as sports, it requires even more intense training and a larger number of muscles working for long time periods. It checks not just strength but also endurance and flexibility. Yoga works to enable the athletes to increase their oxygen intake capacity during endurance training, making yoga a crucial part of training for jumping.
- The effects of yoga practices on physical fitness parameters such as strength, flexibility and range of motion are readily apparent. However, when it comes to importance of yoga for athletes especially those involved in throwing practices one needs to shift the concern towards the role yoga plays in improving the upper body, basically shoulder strength and performance, along with core strength and overall fitness.
- No archer is new to a normal human life that involves a social life, family, friends, entertainment and what not, but in a cutthroat competition all these casual things can result into mere distractions for a sports person. Nevertheless, here too yoga comes to rescue, making us more aware of our own actions and a super improved focus level.
- Yoga may not help a boxer to learn boxing skills to boast about in a ring, but it helps him to an unbelievable length in his out-of-the-ring rituals including training and the recovery process.
- Yoga and wrestling are two activities, which are contradictory to each other. However, wrestling is the sport, which involves building strength, balance, flexibility, footwork, positioning, mental focus and toughness. Yoga helps in increasing body flexibility, mental focus and concentration.
- Yoga and gymnastics can be called as complementary activity. Both activities require flexibility, improved concentration and focus mind. Gymnasts must undergo strong exercise routine to maintain their strength and improve muscle flexibility, in order to stay strong in their game. With yoga, a gymnast can improve their balancing techniques, enhancing flexibility and practice body balancing acts.
- Yoga is one of the amazing activities for the weight lifters, as it helps in building concentration and mental stamina in a person.

- Football is one of the sport activities, which involves a lot of stamina and requires a strong breathing pattern in the players. The combination of yoga and football helps in building stamina in players.
- Hockey players are recommended to perform yoga for better muscle strength and stamina. It helps in reduction of mental and physical stress in players. The total body inflammation can be reduced with yoga asanas. Yoga helps in improvement of sleep patterns, breathing capacity, balance, and flexibility and improves pain management in players.
- Yoga practice can serve as one of the important tools for tennis, to help in the tightening of muscles and encouragement of tissue resiliency. Each stroke of the racquet during a tennis game exerts force on the shoulder, arm and wrist.

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4.7 KEY WORDS

- **Bikram Yoga:** It refers to a type of hatha yoga characterized by a set series of postures and breathing exercises, performed in a room heated to a very high temperature.
- **Anusara Yoga:** It is also the name of a style of Hatha yoga that was created by John Friend in 1997.
- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:** It refers to a painful condition of the hand and fingers caused by compression of a major nerve where it passes over the carpal bones through a passage at the front of the wrist. It may be caused by continual repetitive movements or by fluid retention.

4.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the benefits of Yoga in sports?
2. Briefly explain the importance of yoga in running and throwing.
3. How is yoga beneficial to jumping?
4. What are common poses for Tennis?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss some important yoga poses which benefits the football players.
2. Explain some of the benefits of Yoga in Archery.
3. Examine the benefits of yoga in weightlifting.
4. Explain application of Yoga in Gymnastic and Wrestling.

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4.9 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - II
GENERAL METHODS OF YOGA

Yoga and its Benefits

UNIT 5 YOGA AND ITS BENEFITS

NOTES

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 General Importance of Yoga in Physical Education and Sports
 - 5.2.1 Physical Benefits of Yoga
 - 5.2.2 Physiological Benefits of Yoga
 - 5.2.3 Biochemical Benefits of Yoga
 - 5.2.4 Psychological Benefits of Yoga
 - 5.2.5 Other Benefits of Yoga
- 5.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Words
- 5.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.7 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Yoga and physical education both have the same objective of keeping the body healthy. Schools, colleges, and military forces, among other institutions, have adopted physical education also known as physical training. Children are given steps to perform and exercise. Usually a period is kept in these cases to make sure children are healthy and active in school.

Incorporating Yoga in daily routines is easily one of the best ways to enhance one's fitness levels and eliminate the stress factor. Yoga comprises of various asanas. Each asana has its own significance and its effect on one's body purely depends on the way one practices it, be it the frequency or accuracy in movements and postures. Apart from keeping the body fit and mind healthy, yoga also focuses on eradicating specific problems.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of Yoga in physical education
- Describe the physical benefits of Yoga
- Discuss the physiological benefits of Yoga
- Examine the biochemical benefits of Yoga

*Self-Instructional
Material*

5.2 GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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Obesity and other diseases have become a major problem among children. Once children reach their teenage, they become prone to pressures from various areas like education, career, and job prospects. This results in developing stress and doubting their own capabilities. This has made schools and educational institutions realize the need to introduce yoga as a part of the physical education and sports curriculum.

Yoga contributes more than a routine workout, or a sports related exercise. Students can work on their weakness and develop their strengths through yoga. Before playing any sport, warm-up with yoga-based stretches can also help in performing better. For better concentration and for sustaining energy while playing sports, yoga comes to aid. Introduction of yoga as a part of physical education will help achieve better sports, mental and physical skills in students and adults both. Let us look at the benefits of yoga in the context of physical benefits, physiological benefits, biochemical benefits, psychological benefits and other benefits.

5.2.1 Physical Benefits of Yoga

Yoga has many physical benefits and it widely became popular owing to the fact that it aids in weight loss and practicing it every day with proper nourishment will make the weight loss irreversible. Weight gain is the most talked about subject. Yoga cures obesity, aids in digestion and helps improve metabolism. Once metabolism gets better, a person can lead an active and a healthy life. It gives strength to do any given activity more efficiently. As mentioned earlier, it helps athletes perform better in sports. It improves flexibility to a great extent.

It helps in improving eyesight, hearing and height in children as well. For these particular postures also known as asana are taken into account. For example, Tadasana is an excellent practice for increasing height. Children who start practicing yoga at a very young age can get rid of all the issues related to their eyesight, hearing, and height, among others. Yoga is important to prevent and fight any heart disease, muscular ailments, or any other issues which may be present. It also helps in faster recovery from aches, diseases, and injuries.

5.2.2 Physiological Benefits of Yoga

Yoga helps improve blood pressure, heart rate due to the postures called asana and breathing exercises. Oxygen reach becomes better and that helps improve blood circulation and lowering cholesterol. Better blood flow results in healthier skin, hair and nails too. It helps in reversing signs of ageing as well.

Yoga is considered as the best exercise to prevent spine and other ortho-muscular degradation. It is regarded as the best-known treatment for arthritis. Again, the sun salutations—Surya Namaskar—are excellent for arthritis and spinal strengthening. It greatly improves flexibility. Breathing techniques like Kapalabhati pranayama helps in both diabetes and heart disease.

5.2.3 Biochemical Benefits of Yoga

Yoga functions at the cellular level. By this, we mean that it helps control hormonal changes. It helps the increase of lymphocytes hence boosting the immune system. Irregular menstrual cycle, can be greatly improved when we control female hormone through yoga. Often particular yoga exercises are incorporated during pregnancy to have a less stressful and safe childbirth. Hemoglobin increase acting at the biochemical level can help in curing many diseases such as anemia.

Yoga helps decreasing cholesterol and sodium levels that help fight stress and heart diseases. Diabetics benefit the most as it lowers blood sugar and improves insulin sensitivity. For example, the asana Supta Matsyendrasana (Recline twist or Reclining Lord of the Fish pose) works on abdominal organs and is one of the most important posture for diabetic patients. Dhanurasana (the bow posture) also regulates the functioning of pancreas and it is good for strengthening spinal and abdominal muscles. It is important to notice that a yoga pose will have many benefits helping all body functions.

Polycystic ovaries syndrome (PCOS) is now one of the most common problems in woman and even young girls are now facing this problem. PCOS causes infertility, weight gain, skin problems as acne, hair fall and excessive masculine hair as well. Yoga helps to balance hormones and keeps the ovaries healthy. Bhadrasana (Butterfly pose) helps work against PCOD (polycystic ovaries disease) and menstrual discomfort too. Other famous asanas for PCOD include Kapalabhaati, Chakki Chalanasana (Mill Churning Pose), Bharadvajasana (Seated Twist), etc. Pranayama as Nadisodhan Pranayama, which help reduce stress, is also very important as PCOD is mainly caused by stress.

5.2.4 Psychological Benefits of Yoga

Having mind free of doubt and knowing what is right and concentration is very crucial during the formative years. Yoga helps to nurture mind and improve concentration in sports and as well as studies. People who practice yoga and meditation tend to have better concentration, memory, coordination, balance and make better decisions. It helps in relaxing the mind, cures insomnia, and in turn reduces stress and anxiety. Yoga and meditation act as anti-depressants and help people cope with problems.

Many schools instead of giving detention are making students practice meditation and the results have been setting up examples for other schools. Apart

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from meditation, some excellent yoga poses help reduce stress. Some of them are Garudasana (Eagle pose), Uttanasana (Standing forward bend), Balasana (Child pose), Vajrayana, Supta Baddha Konasana (Reclining Bound angle pose), etc.

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5.2.5 Other Benefits of Yoga

Yoga helps in boosting emotional health. It helps to become more aware of what you do, eat and drink. It helps build a timetable and helps to adopt a healthier lifestyle. It has been used as a tool to help people to get rid of bad habits like drugs, alcohol, smoking, etc.

Yoga helps a person to be spiritually aware and helps build better relationships. Not only spiritual health it helps in curing infertility issues and builds better sex drive too.

Yoga can be done individually, as couples or in groups; it helps in improving social circle as well. Studying on yoga can increase awareness on what is good and bad for the body as well as making the mind help make better decisions.

Check Your Progress

1. Name a yoga asana which is excellent for arthritis and spinal strengthening.
2. What are the benefits of dhanurasana?
3. What are some of the problems which result from PCOS?

5.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The sun salutations—Surya Namaskar—are excellent for arthritis and spinal strengthening.
2. Dhanurasana regulates the functioning of pancreas and it is good for strengthening spinal and abdominal muscles.
3. PCOS causes infertility, weight gain, skin problems as acne, hair fall and excessive masculine hair as well.

5.4 SUMMARY

- Yoga and physical education both have the same objective of keeping the body healthy. Schools, colleges, and military forces, among other institutions, have adopted physical education also known as physical training.
- Yoga contributes more than a routine workout or a sports related exercise would do. Students can work on their weakness and develop their strengths

through Yoga. Before playing any sport, warm up with Yoga based stretches can also help in performing better.

- Yoga has many physical benefits and it widely became popular owing to the fact that it aids in weight loss and practicing it every day with proper nourishment will make the weight loss irreversible.
- Yoga functions at the cellular level. By this, it means it helps control hormonal changes. It helps increase lymphocytes hence boosting the immune system. Yoga helps to nurture mind and improve concentration in sports and as well as studies.
- People who practice yoga and meditation tend to have better concentration, memory, coordination, balance and make better decisions.
- Yoga helps in boosting emotional health. It helps to become more aware of what you do, eat, drink etc. It helps build a timetable and helps to adopt a healthier lifestyle. It has been used as a tool to help people to get rid of bad habits like drugs, alcohol, smoking, etc. Yoga helps a person to be spiritually aware.

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5.5 KEY WORDS

- **Insomnia:** It refers to Habitual sleeplessness or the inability to sleep.
- **Metabolism:** It refers to the chemical processes that occur within a living organism in order to maintain life.
- **Nadisodhan Pranayama:** It is a breathing technique that helps clear these blocked energy channels, thus calming the mind.

5.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are some of the general importance of yoga in physical education and sports?
2. State briefly the physical benefits of yoga.
3. List some of the yoga asanas for curing PCOD.

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss the bio-chemical benefits of yoga.
2. Describe the physiological and psychological benefits of yoga.

5.7 FURTHER READINGS

NOTES

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UNIT 6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOGASANAS AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES

*Differences Between
Yogasanas and
Physical Exercises*

NOTES

Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Yogasanas and Physical Exercises
- 6.3 Systems of the Body
 - 6.3.1 Locomotors System
 - 6.3.2 Nervous System
 - 6.3.3 Circulation
 - 6.3.4 Heart
 - 6.3.5 Lungs
 - 6.3.6 Gastro-Intestinal Tract
 - 6.3.7 Renal
 - 6.3.8 Endocrine
- 6.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.5 Summary
- 6.6 Key Words
- 6.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.8 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the ancient Indian tradition, yoga is a group of physical, mental and spiritual disciplines combined together. Yoga falls under the six orthodox schools of the Hindu philosophical tradition and culture: Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. The concept of yoga originated in the pre-Vedic age and Rigveda is one of the vedas where yoga was mentioned first. The yoga gurus of India introduced Yoga to the West. In 1980s, yoga asanas became a part of the physical exercise in the Western part of the world. However, in India, yoga is more than physical exercise. It is described as meditative and spiritual core in India. The studies have described yoga as the ultimate goal of attaining moksha (liberation). Yoga has also been described as a modern way of exercise, which is influenced by hatha yoga. With the combination of yoga and physical exercise, mental health and physical stamina can be improved of an individual. Blood pressure, breathing technique and flexibility of a person can be improved with the help of yoga and physical exercises.

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6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the differences between yogasanas and physical exercises
- Explain the yogasanas for the improvement of the locomotor system
- Discuss the yoga postures good for the benefit of the nervous system
- Identify the yogasanas for the improvement of blood circulation
- Recognise the yoga postures for the benefit heart, lungs, gastro-intestinal track, renal and endocrine system

6.2 YOGASANAS AND PHYSICAL EXERCISES

According to research studies, it has been stated that physical exercises and yoga are not the same. There are a series of fitness programs which focus on physical exercises. Exercises help in maintaining body balance, building muscles, physical strength and endurance. With the help of yoga, blood circulation in the body can be enhanced. The oxygen consumption can be increased with the help of yoga asanas. Physical exercise help in increasing the hormonal flow in the body, however yoga helps in maintain a balance in the endocrine system of the body. Physical exercises help in stimulating the sympathetic nervous system, whereas the yoga asanas help in stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system. There are different effects on the body when an individual performs physical exercises as well as yoga.

6.3 SYSTEMS OF THE BODY

In this section, we will have a look at the different yoga postures which are beneficial for the different systems of the body including the locomotor, nervous, circulation and gastro-intestinal tract system, etc.

6.3.1 Locomotors System

The locomotors system or musculo-skeletal system mainly consists of bones, skeletal muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, nerves and cartilage. The system provides framework to the whole body and enables body movement or locomotion.

Yoga helps in controlling the locomotor system. We have already discussed some of these poses in the earlier units. Some of the following major yoga asanas for the locomotors system are:

- **Pranayam:** Pranayam has a major effect on the locomotor system. Pranayam means stretching, modifying and lengthening of the breath. During Pranayam,

the supply of oxygen to the lungs is increased, due to which the cells are transported with high amount of oxygen. Consequently, the blood supply and oxygen supply also increase in the body.

- Eight-point shoulder opener
- Low lunge (Anjaneyasana)
- Cobra Pose (Bhujangasana)
- Cow-Face Pose (Gomukhasana)
- Big Toe Pose (Padangusthasana)
- Eagle Pose (Garudasana)
- Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)
- Figure Four (Eka Pada Utkatasana)

6.3.2 Nervous System

Nervous system comprises of the network of nerve cells and helps in the transmission of nerve impulses throughout the body.

Yoga postures help in stimulating the functioning of nervous system and body relaxation. Some of the yoga positions which help in functioning of nervous system has been described below:

- **Child's pose (Balasana):** The yoga posture helps in enhanced functioning of digestive system, reenergizing the body and stimulation of the nervous system.
- **Plow Pose (Halasana):** It is one of the advanced level postures in yoga. However, it helps in treatment of sinusitis and stimulation of the nervous system.
- **Seated Spinal Twist Pose (Ardha Matsyendrâsana):** It is regarded as one of the best postures for nervous system which helps in detoxification, strengthening of immune system and stimulation of nervous system.
- **Anuloma-Viloma (Alternate Nostril Breathing):** It is one of the famous pranayamas to clear blocked nose and congestion in chest during cold or flu. The posture is also regarded as a good posture for nervous system. It also helps in blood purification and other additional health benefits.
- **Downward-Facing Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasan)**
- **Dirgha Shwasan (Deep Breathing):** The yoga posture helps in improving the oxygen concentration in the body. It helps in stimulating the neurons and improves oxygenation in the body.
- **Reclining Bound Angle Pose (Supta Baddha Kona Asana):** It helps in stimulation of nervous system and other additional health benefits. The posture also helps in overcoming back problems.

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6.3.3 Circulation

Circulatory system is a part of the cardiovascular system of the body. Yoga helps in improving blood circulation in the body with increased oxygen supply to the body cells. Some of the yoga asanas which help in improving circulation in the body are described below:

- Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I and II (warrior poses) and Vrksasana (Treepose)
- Utthita Hasta Padangustasana (extended hand foot pose) and Virabhadrasana III (warrior pose)
- Anuloma-Viloma (Alternate Nostril Breathing)
- Down Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana)
- Dirgha Shwasan (Deep Breathing)

6.3.4 Heart

Heart is one of the vital organs of the body. However, the functioning of heart is important for blood flow in the body. Yoga asanas is important for heart patients as well as for improved blood circulation in the body.

- **Tadasana (Mountain pose):** The yoga posture helps in strengthening the heart and improves body flexibility.
- **Vrikshasana (Tree pose):** The yoga posture calms and provides equilibrium to the mind. It is very important for the healthy functioning of the heart.
- **Trikonasana (Triangle pose):** The yoga posture helps in heart-opening. It is designed to promote cardiovascular exercise and helps in increasing stamina.
- Utthita Trikonasana (triangle), Virabhadrasana I and II (warrior poses) and Vrksasana (Treepose)
- Utthita Hasta Padangustasana (extended hand foot pose) and Virabhadrasana III (warrior pose)
- Anuloma-Viloma (Alternate Nostril Breathing)
- Down Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana)
- Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
- **Dhanurasana (Bow pose):** The yoga posture opens and strengthens the heart region of the body. It helps in stimulating and stretching the whole body.
- **Salamba Sarvangasana (Half Shoulder stand):** The yoga posture pacifies, activate the parasympathetic nervous system. It helps in rejuvenating the body.

6.3.5 Lungs

Lungs perform vital function of the respiratory system. It helps in improved oxygen supply to the body. Yoga helps in controlling the respiratory system including some of the major yoga asanas.

- Pranayam
- Anuloma-Viloma (Alternate Nostril Breathing)
- Down Dog Pose (Adho Mukha Svanasana)
- Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
- Trikonasana (Triangle pose)

6.3.6 Gastro-Intestinal Tract

Human digestive system consists of gastrointestinal tract, accessory organs such as tongue, salivary glands, pancreas, liver and gall bladder. Digestion helps in breakdown of food into small components and absorption of nutrients.

Some of the yoga asanas which help in improved functioning of the digestive system are:

- **Cat or Cow posture:** This yoga posture helps in compression of intestine and lengthening of intestine.
- **Forward fold:** The yoga posture helps in boosting blood flow to the digestive organs in the body. Forward folds help in promoting relaxation and relives stress.
- **Upward dog:** The posture helps in energizing abdominal organs, stretch the torso, stomach and hips.
- **Camel pose:** The yoga posture helps in easing digestional discomfort and helps in opening of torso with the stretching. It also helps in expanding abdominal area and helps in elimination of toxins from the body.
- **Lord of the half fishes:** The yoga posture helps in detoxification of the body. The posture also helps in stimulating the digestive system and cleansing of internal organs.
- **Child's pose (Balasana)**

6.3.7 Renal

Kidneys are one of the vital organs for the body, as it performs the function of detoxification in the body. The functioning helps in functioning of the urinary system, secretion of hormones and maintenance of blood pressure level. It also performs additional function of homeostasis in the body.

Yoga asanas help in stimulating and functionality of various organs in the body under optimal conditions. Some of the yoga postures helpful in stimulation of kidney functioning are as follows:

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- **Salamba Bhujangasana (Sphinx Pose):** The yoga position helps in stretching and strengthening of the abdominal organs. The posture also helps in strengthening the functionality of the immunity system.
- **Ardha Matsyendrasana (Sitting Half Spinal Twist):** The yoga posture helps in stimulating the kidneys and liver functions. It also helps in improvement of the body's immunity level.
- **Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)**
- **Paschimottanasana (Two-Legged Forward Bend):** It helps in stimulating the kidney functions, improves digestion, and relieves from menstrual discomfort.
- **Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose):** It helps in stimulating the abdominal organs. It also helps in controlling high blood pressure and relieves stress.
- **Naukasana (Boat Pose):** The yoga posture helps in strengthening and stimulating the abdominal organs. It also helps in improving digestion and alleviates stress.

Yoga asanas help to increase body relaxation. It also helps in assisting water retention in the body. It enables sound sleep schedules and hence better rest. A relaxed body performs better functions such as water regulation in the body and heartbeat stabilizing.

6.3.8 Endocrine

Endocrine system is one of the important parts of the body, as the hormones are directly secreted in the blood stream and carried to the body cells. The endocrine system is a group of glands, which help in maintaining a balance of the circulatory system in the body. The endocrine system helps in metabolism, growth, sexual development, mineral balance, heart rate regulation, muscular and skeletal system growth. Hypothalamus is a part of brain and also an essential part of the endocrine system. The hypothalamus is responsible for the direct control of endocrine system through pituitary gland. It is also the centre of emotional balance and is affected by strong emotions, odour, powerful thoughts, taste, stress, and laughter. Pituitary gland is the master gland controlling the endocrine system comprising of glands such as thyroid gland, parathyroid gland, thymus gland, adrenal glands, pancreas, ovaries, and testes. The hypothalamus sends signals to pituitary gland which helps in the release of chemicals for the stimulation of hormones.

Yoga helps in controlling the hormonal system including some of the major yoga asanas.

- **Pranayam:** Pranayam has a major effect on the endocrine system. With the help of pranayam, we can control stress and emotions, without disruption of hypothalamus functioning. It also improves the relationship between hypothalamus –pituitary and the other glands. This helps in balancing the activity of the endocrine system.

- **Yog Nidra or Yogic sleep:** Yogic sleep is also a great way to control stress and emotion. It will improve the functioning of brain, hypothalamus and the relationship between hypothalamus and pituitary and other endocrine glands. With the help of yogic sleep, a person can relax and improve concentration. However, this helps in enhancing the functioning of the endocrine system.
- **Yoga asanas:** Yoga asanas such as Sirsasana (standing forward bend) increases blood flow to brain and help in improving the functioning of brain and hypothalamus. Halasana (shoulder stand) improves the functioning of thyroid and parathyroid gland. Ardh matsendra sana and balasana help in stimulating the pancreas for the release of insulin and glucagon from pancreas. Setubandhasana and bhujangasana helps in stimulating functioning of testes and ovaries.

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Check Your Progress

1. What does the locomotors system consist of?
2. Which yoga asana helps in easing digestional discomfort and helps in opening of torso with the stretching?
3. State the benefit of Salamba Sarvangasana.
4. What is Sirsasana?

6.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The locomotors system or musculo-skeletal system mainly consists of bones, skeletal muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, nerves and cartilage. The system provides framework to the whole body and enables body movement or locomotion.
2. Camel pose is the yoga asana which helps in easing digestional discomfort and helps in opening of torso with the stretching.
3. Salamba Sarvangasana (Half Shoulder stand) yoga posture pacifies, activate the parasympathetic nervous system
4. Sirsasana (standing forward bend) is a yoga asana which increases blood flow to brain and help in improving the functioning of brain and hypothalamus.

6.5 SUMMARY

- According to research studies, it has been stated that physical exercises and yoga are not the same. There are a series of fitness programs which focus on physical exercises.

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- Exercises help in maintaining body balance, building muscles, physical strength and endurance. With the help of yoga, blood circulation in the body can be enhanced.
- The locomotors system or musculo-skeletal system mainly consists of bones, skeletal muscles, joints, tendons, ligaments, nerves and cartilage. The system provides framework to the whole body and enables body movement or locomotion.
- Yoga postures help in stimulating the functioning of nervous system and body relaxation.
- Yoga helps in improving blood circulation in the body with increased oxygen supply to the body cells. Yoga asanas is important for heart patients as well as for improved blood circulation in the body.
- Yoga helps in controlling the respiratory system including some of the major yoga asanas. Yoga asanas help in stimulating and functionality of various organs in the body under optimal conditions.
- Yoga asanas help to increase body relaxation. It also helps in assisting water retention in the body. It enables sound sleep schedules and hence better rest.

6.6 KEY WORDS

- **Cardiovascular system:** It refers to the system that circulates blood and lymph through the body, consisting of the heart, blood vessels, blood, lymph, and the lymphatic vessels and glands.
- **Endocrine system:** It is a group of glands, which help in maintaining a balance of the circulatory system in the body.
- **Homeostasis:** It refers to the tendency towards a relatively stable equilibrium between interdependent elements, especially as maintained by physiological processes.
- **Yogic sleep:** Also known as yoga nidra, it is the practice of accessing the deep unconscious mind. Yoga nidra practitioners enter a state of deep relaxation that's distinct from normal sleep and wakefulness.

6.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Question

1. Where was yoga mentioned first?
2. How are Yogasanas different from physical exercise?

3. How does yoga control the locomotor system?
4. Name some yoga asanas for circulation system.

*Differences Between
Yogasanas and
Physical Exercises*

Long Answer Question

1. Explain how yoga is beneficial for the renal system.
2. Explain endocrine system of body in detail and how yoga helps in maintaining hormonal system.
3. What are the yoga asanas for the betterment of the nervous system? Discuss.

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6.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 7 METHODS OF TEACHING YOGIC TECHNIQUES

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- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Steps for Teaching Yoga
- 7.3 Process of Teaching Yogic Technique
 - 7.3.1 Demonstration
 - 7.3.2 Practicing the Asanas
 - 7.3.3 Relaxation and Closing
- 7.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.5 Summary
- 7.6 Key Words
- 7.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.8 Further Readings

7.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of teaching is to make someone learn. The aim is to persuade a change in the learner. The teacher's duty is to ensure an environment for learning and guiding the student. The student's responsibility is to learn the things honestly and grasping the knowledge provided by the teacher. Teachers create a learning environment and develop the efficiency of a learning process.

Teaching is a science and art which involves logic and facts based on certain principles. It also involves sensitivity affecting the students that can be modified according to the student's need. The practice of teaching focuses on the development by adding experiences of own. The person who brings out the best in the student is considered to be as an essential educator.

Teaching yoga has dual benefits. The teacher gives lessons and contributes goodness in the student lives. The teacher themselves get an opportunity to learn more from the teaching. As yoga practitioners, the main task is to create a discipline for yoga practice. Being a yoga teacher is a great responsibility. It is a life-transforming resolution that involves the practice of yoga inducing in others. Yoga practice is not only a physical practice but also a lifestyle. Learner's duty is to obey and learn all the instructions taught by a teacher.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the steps for yoga teaching
- Describe the methods of teaching yogic technique

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7.2 STEPS FOR TEACHING YOGA

The main principle of yoga is 'to be natural and feel calm'. The following steps will help a teacher in teaching yoga:

- 1. Always be prepared:** Yoga teacher must be thoroughly prepared for practical and theoretical classes for teaching yoga.
- 2. Communication skill:** Communication is very important in yoga class. It is important how one engages the class during the practice. The teacher should practice the communication skills for the class.
- 3. Self-Practice:** Before taking classes, the yoga practitioner should practice thoroughly. Self-practice helps in connecting internally and gaining more confidence in taking the class.
- 4. Meditation or Silence:** Always start a class with complete silence or meditation. This helps in creating an environment for yoga teaching.
- 5. Keep learning:** A yoga teacher should always be open to learning new things every day. Continuous learning help in building confidence that results in better performance.

7.3 PROCESS OF TEACHING YOGIC TECHNIQUE

The process of teaching yogic technique can be categorized into two methods:

1. Theoretical Method
2. Practical Method

Theoretical methods: This involve classroom studies. The classroom methods include lecture method, group discussion method, demonstration classes, laboratory method and various other methods to make the students understand the concept of yoga. Method of teaching must be harmonious with the goals and results. The teacher duty is to integrate the proper method in which student can learn and adopt a healthy life transformation.

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Practical methods: These methods are more efficient in yoga teaching. It involves observation, demonstration, practice, and continuous learning. It also involves correcting the faults and giving positive feedback to the students. By practical teaching, students can easily learn, adapt, and can foresee the outcome.

7.3.1 Demonstration

Demonstration refers to the teaching that involves experiments, explanation, and performances with stress on skill and form. Demonstrations play its role when students are not able to connect to theories to the practice or when students are unable to understand the application.

In Yoga, the teaching method has to be active. It should involve the useful vibrant contributions from several existing methods that could benefit the learner. A yoga teacher should be careful in performing a demonstration of yoga and should be well learned before performing it to the students. Demonstration gives a visual image to yogic learners. It increases curiosity among the learner and enhances observing ability. In general, yoga demonstration should last 40-45 minutes to an hour.

7.3.2 Practicing the Asanas

The only way to learn yogic technique is to practice more and more. Both the teacher and student should practice regularly and in a disciplined manner. Every set of asanas has its own level of difficulty, but continuous practice will help in learning the yogic practitioner. A yogic teacher should explain and demonstrate the asanas to the students so that the students can practice. Awareness about each yoga asana and the approach used for teaching yoga is crucial for the technique of yoga practice.

Practicing the asanas will help in achieving the maintaining physical and mental balance helps in achieving flexibility, gaining strength and self-confidence. It also helps in learning the various techniques of yoga.

7.3.3 Relaxation and Closing

Though practicing of yoga is important in teaching the yogic technique, the closing of yoga is as important. Relaxation is a final session. It refers to loosening of physical and mental strain. The instructor will demonstrate it to the learners. Relaxation is the last step or the closing step for practicing/teaching yoga.

Yoga relaxes the body and helps in stimulating the physical and mental balance. The class should end with the deep relaxation named as Shavasana, though it is the simplest form of yoga same time it is also difficult. It involves more mind than the physical strength. It should be practiced daily. The breathing pattern is monitored during relaxation of yoga. The muscles are relaxed in this pose. It keeps equilibrium between physical and mental balance.

Check Your Progress

1. State the main principle of yoga.
2. List some of the classroom methods of teaching yoga.
3. What is the last step or the closing step for practicing/teaching yoga?

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7.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The main principle of yoga is “to be natural and feel calm”.
2. The classroom methods include lecture method, group discussion method, demonstration classes, laboratory method and various other methods to make understand the concept of yoga teaching to the students.
3. Relaxation is the last step or the closing step for practicing/teaching yoga.

7.5 SUMMARY

- Teaching yoga has dual benefits. The teacher gives lessons and contributes goodness in the student lives. The teacher themselves get an opportunity to learn more from the teaching.
- As yoga practitioners, the main task is to create a discipline for yoga practice. Being a yoga teacher is a great responsibility. It is a life-transforming resolution that involves the practice of yoga inducing in others.
- Yoga practice is not only a physical practice but also a lifestyle. Learner’s duty is to obey and learn all the instructions taught by a teacher.
- Steps for Yoga teaching include the following: Always be prepared, Communication skill, Self-Practice, Meditation or Silence and keep learning.
- The process of teaching yogic technique can be categorized into two methods: theoretical method and practical method.
- Demonstration refers to the teaching that involves experiments, explanation, and performances with stress on skill and form. Demonstrations play its role when students are not able to connect to theories to the practice or when students are unable to understand the application.
- The only way to learn yogic technique is to practice more and more. Both the teacher and student should practice regularly and in a disciplined manner.
- Practicing the asanas will help in achieving the maintaining physical and mental balance helps in achieving flexibility, gaining strength and self-confidence. It also helps in learning the various technique of yoga.

- Relaxation is a final session. It refers to loosening of physical and mental strain. The instructor will demonstrate it to the learners. Yoga relaxes the body and helps in stimulating the physical and mental balance.

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7.6 KEY WORDS

- **Demonstration:** It refers to the teaching that involves experiments, explanation, and performances with stress on skill and form.
- **Relaxation:** In yoga, it refers to loosening of physical and mental strain.
- **Shavasana:** It is a position of rest and relaxation, and is usually practiced towards the end of a yoga session – a session that typically begins with activity and ends in rest; a space or pause when deep healing can take place.

7.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answers Questions

1. What are the two methods of teaching yogic technique?
2. Why is self-practice an important step for teaching yoga?
3. What are the benefits of teaching Yoga?
4. What is the meaning of the term 'relaxation' in yoga?

Long Answers Questions

1. Describe the steps for teaching yoga.
2. Explain the demonstration method of teaching yogic techniques, in detail.
3. Explain closing technique in yoga.

7.8 FURTHER READINGS

- Chandrasekaran, K. 1999. *Sound Health Through Yoga*. Madurai: Prem Kalyan Publications.
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UNIT 8 PREPARATORY MOVEMENTS

NOTES

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Meaning of Preparatory Movements
- 8.3 Breathing Practice
 - 8.3.1 Hands In and Out Breathing
 - 8.3.2 Hands-Stretch Breathing
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- 8.4 Stretching Practices (Loosening Exercise)
- 8.5 Mukha Dhauti (Cleaning through a Single Blast Breath)
- 8.6 Bending Practice
 - 8.6.1 Front and Back Bending of Waist
 - 8.6.2 Side Bending and Twisting of Waist
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- 8.7 Physical Activity
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8.0 INTRODUCTION

For any type of body workouts, be it yoga, weights, running, calisthenics, or dance, our body needs to first be prepared and conditioned in order to attain higher levels of practice or *Abhyasa* as we call it. It is not accustomed to start working out all of a sudden and neither is it advisable to do that.

Body preparation involves focusing on accuracy of postures, eating healthy and according to the practice, one is doing and focusing on the goal of such practice. It involves slow movements to warm up our body and aligning them with our breaths. For advanced postures, the basic postures become preparatory in nature. They increase the mobility of specific parts of our body making them more fluid in transitions and help the body sit in deep inside postures. Simple pranayama and breathing exercises are a basic preparation for all yogic Asanas and Kriyas. A simple sitting straight in Sidhasan for 30 minutes is a preparatory for Seated Pranayama postures; it may seem easy but requires a lot of patience and monitoring. In this unit, we will discuss the different preparatory movements including breathing practices, stretching practices, bending exercises and physical exercises.

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8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the preparatory movements of yoga
- Explain the different breathing practices in yoga
- Describe the stretching exercises
- Discuss the concept of Mukha Dhouti
- Explain the importance of physical activity and adherence to exercise

8.2 MEANING OF PREPARATORY MOVEMENTS

Preparatory movements condition our body to slowly enter into deeper practice of Asanas and Kriyas. They warm-up our body, increase lung capacity, lubricate our joints, increase the elasticity of muscles for strenuous practice further. Preparation does not mean that just a few minutes before *Abhyasa*, some exercises are done to prepare the human body over a period to be able to enter into other Asanas. As a simple example – one does not just start running 15kms on Day 1 of practice; they begin with 1km and go on to 3km, 5km until they reach their goal. Therefore, 1km is preparation for 15 or even 50.

Similarly, preparatory movements like breathing accurately, forward and backward bending, being conscious about breath during movements, body twists, practices like Surya Namaskar, are in nature of body conditioning towards bigger goals.

8.3 BREATHING PRACTICE

We rarely pay attention to breathing practice, although this is essential to every Asana, Kriya, mudra and bandha practice that is undertaken in a yogic practice. The entire concept of Yoga and pranayama stands on the principal of breathing correctly.

- A breathing cycle involves inhaling, holding breath and exhaling. This is one complete cycle. For normal Asana or Kriya one has to inhale and exhale normally, albeit deep, but without concentration of retracting or holding it.
- For all activities that involve body contraction in any manner, like forward bending, or contracting into some posture, one is supposed to exhale to facilitate the body's natural contraction and not contradict it, else the lungs and diaphragm will push the body outwards and the posture will push it inside, creating counter pressure.
- For activities involving expansion of thoracic cavity, like opening of chest, bending backwards, and one needs to breathe in deeply and compliment

the expansion of chest, the posture will otherwise not be possible to do and create a negative pressure on the body.

Preparatory Movements

Let us have a look at some different breathing practices.

8.3.1 Hands In and Out Breathing

This involves movement of hands to accentuate the thoracic cavity and thus increasing the lung capacity to inhale more than normal volume of breath. The preparatory posture involves placing the palms on thighs and then expanding them upwards and outwards with deep inhalation. Hands are then slowly lowered until mid-back and outstretched backwards, to induce a stretch in the rib cage; palms should be facing inside towards each other. The head is supposed to be tilted backwards to facilitate stretch from all directions. This expands the lung capacity to hold a larger volume of air. One must hold breath up to five breath counts and come back by exhaling, bringing hands back in a circular motion as they went out and placing back on thighs. Repeat posture.

There are multiple variations of this pose. Like one can place hands in on the waist, bent at elbows and push the elbows backwards, simultaneously bending back a little, it has the same effect as the previous posture, except with more back stretching.

8.3.2 Hands-Stretch Breathing

Urdhava Hastasana is a very basic preparatory pose, but not as simple as it looks. Mastering this paves the way for better back bends and arm balancing postures.

It begins with standing with the feet together and feeling the grip with the ground. Breathing is normally done with chest and not with stomach. The arms are extended upwards towards the sky, such that the upper half of the body feels stretch up and lower half is pulled down. The shoulders should be relaxed so that the muscles in the upper body do not tense. Normal breathing shall proceed.

When the body gets comfortable, the arms are converged over the head by bringing the palms together and tilting the neck slightly to look up at the fingers pointing up. In case of cervical or spinal problems, one must keep head straight until further advancement is possible.

8.3.3 Ankle-Stretch Breathing

Ankle stretch breathing is an advanced level of *Urdhava Hastasana* and can be related to Tadasana. In this along with stretching hands upwards, the entire body is stretched up by lifting the body at ankles. The subject is supposed to inhale as it goes up and exhale when it comes down. When lifting the body is lifted at ankles, feeling the stretch in calf muscles, squeezing the hip muscles inside, sucking the stomach in and stretching the spine up. The hands accelerate the spinal stretching up. To ease the process, one can hold hands and stretch upwards as in Tadasana.

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8.4 STRETCHING PRACTICES (LOOSENING EXERCISE)

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Stretching is the most important preparatory exercise set. However, stretching itself is second level preparatory work out. Before stretching can be initiated, the body must be warmed up enough through a set of yogic Kriyas like Hridaya gati or mild jogging or running and twisting exercises. This is important to prevent muscle spasms or shocks in the body that could also lead to damage and muscle tears or ruptures.

Once warmed up, the subject can do basic stretches like:

- Urdhava Hastasana – standing stretch
- Uttanasana – forward fold
- Adho mukh savasana – downward dog
- Bhujangasana- cobra pose
- Parsvottansa – intense side stretch
- Uthita hasta padangustasana- extended hand to toe
- Trikonasana- triangle pose
- Virasana – thigh stretch
- Gomukhasana – hip openers
- Suryanamskar sequence

Stretching opens the body and makes it ready for more advanced Abhyasa. It enables blood flow and energy flow by opening blocked Granthis and removing toxins form nadis and balances our chakras.

8.5 MUKHA DHAUTI (CLEANING THROUGH A SINGLE BLAST BREATH)

Dhauti is a Sanskrit word which means Purification (dhoo means to wash). Mukha Dhauti is a technique of forceful cleansing of respiratory tract by, emitting a single blast of breath.

A standing posture involves standing with legs about a metre apart, leaning forward and resting the palms on thighs. The spine should be kept straight, without a slouch and inclined forward.

Inhale deeply and expel the air forcibly as in a jet through the mouth continuously, prolonging the exhalation process by diaphragm contraction. The Kriya is supposed to be repeated several times. If dizziness begins, one should stop.

8.6 BENDING PRACTICE

The body is as young as our spine is flexible, so bending practice is a very essential part of Yoga. Forward and Backward bending are always done one after the other, to keep a counter pose check. Before entering into any sort of Asanas that require bending, one must do a full body warm up, whether it be through a mild run, a few jumps, twists and very mild stretches.

Bending makes us flexible and releases endorphins making us happier, more pain resistant and calm. It facilitates the body in doing a lot of Asanas and Kriyas, which have multiple positive effects on our body.

8.6.1 Front and Back Bending of Waist

Forward bending is easier to start with as it is normally done in day-to-day activities. However, it requires a pace of development, which comes with preparatory exercises. One must be patient and resilient in one's approach. Too much forward bending and being unable to understand one's capacity can injure the muscles around lower back and cause spasms. Therefore, warm up is essential, and going into deep forward bend should be slow paced. The postures can be classified as basic or beginners, intermediate and advanced.

Some basic preparatory forward bending postures are:

- Pashimottanasan – seated forward bend
- Uttanasana – standing forward fold
- Janu Sirsasana – seated head to knee
- Parsva Upvasthi konasana – side seated angle
- Upavistha yoga mudra – seated yoga seal
- Balasana – child pose – Most important counter pose for back bends
- Dandiyamana Mudrasana – standing seal
- Prasarita Paddotanasana – wide legged forward bend
- Adho Mukh Shavasana – downward dog
- Urdhva Uttanasana – upward fold
- Bitilasana – cow pose

There are numerous other forward bending postures, but the aforementioned are basic preparatory asanas that everyone can do and slowly work upwards to more difficult levels in *Abhyasa*.

Backward bending postures are comparatively strenuous and can induce dizziness during the first few times. One must just come back, bend forward in a normal toe touch or a Balasana, or do a Bitilasana to relax the back. Backward bending opens the lung capacity and helps us inhale in more. Since it is accompanied

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with inhaling, it accelerates the process of bettering our breathing in capacity. As we come back to normal from the back bend, we breathe out.

Back bends should be done religiously and very slowly. The subject must concentrate on the bending of every vertebra in the spine, go only as far as the body allows, and start exerting pressure only after a couple of days of practice, else it can lead to fatal injuries. People with cervical and sciatica problems or any medical issue concerned with spine should consult before doing bending postures, because it can trigger pain, nausea and dizziness.

Some basic preparatory backward bending postures are:

- Ustrasana – camel Pose
- Variations of Bridge Pose
- Dhanurasana – Bow Pose
- Urdhava Dhanurasana – upward
- Bhujangasana – cobra pose
- Bitilasana – Cow pose
- Salabhasana – Locust pose
- Matsayasan – Fish Pose
- Urdhava Mukh Svasana – upward dog
- Variations of Rajakapotanasan (Advanced)

It is imperative to note that forward and backward bending should be done in pairs, to avoid injury and induce easy recovery of back muscles by avoiding spasms or pain at later stage. Unless one has perfected back bends, they should be done in guidance of a Guru, to avoid injury.

8.6.2 Side Bending and Twisting of Waist

Side Bending and twisting at the waist, enables mobility of side muscles, which are otherwise not worked out in day-to-day life, resulting in stiffness and accumulation of fat cells. Bending and twisting makes us flexible and releases good hormones to keep hormonal check on the body.

Some preparatory side bending and twisting exercise are:

- Urdhava Hastasana – standing upward salute
- Variations of Trikonasan – triangle
- Ardha Mandalasan – half circle
- Supta Garudasana – preparatory sidebend variation
- Utthita parvakonsana
- Standing twists

8.6.3 Twist with Bending

Preparatory Movements

Twist with bending can be done after one has mastered many preparatory poses to come to this level.

1. Parivritta Janu Sirsa: It is a twist with a bending posture involving twisting in the variation of forward bend of Janu Sirsanana. It enables extreme stress release from body, which is the reason why twists and bends are practiced. However, the preparatory postures include:

- Upavistha Konasana (Wide-Angle Seated Forward Bend)
- Utthita Parsvakonasana (Side Angle Pose)
- Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward-Facing Dog)
- Baddha Konasana (Bound Angle Pose)
- Supta Padangusthasana (Reclining Big Toe Pose)
- Uttanasana (Standing Forward Bend)
- Vrksasana (Tree Pose)
- Janu Sirsasana (Head-of-the-Knee Pose)

2. Parvratna Parsva Kona: In the Utthita Parvakonasana, extreme flexibility is applied to touch the hand to ground facing flat and extending the other arm upwards. Preparations for this challenging twist include:

- Parivrtta Trikonasana
- Baddha Konasana and
- Upavistha Konasana
- Virasana – thigh stretchers and its reclining variation;
- Gomukhasana – hip openers

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8.7 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Doing physical activity means, doing activities which involve the movement of our physical bodies over and above our daily limitations of activity. For example: if one has a desk job their body movement is very limited, so even walking once or twice a day is good activity for them, or playing a game or two. Someone who practices yoga may require 3-4 or even upto 6 hours of abhyasa daily. It is subjective, but necessary for everyone. It keeps us fit, active and aware, strengthens our heart, and reduces risk of stress depression, cholesterol, obesity and other related issues. Daily activity reduces the risk of many unforeseen problems like hormonal imbalance, accumulation of toxins in our body. It is believed, daily physical activities retard if not eliminate development of cancer in body too. Most important of all it keeps us occupied and makes us happy; happiness being the core of everything we want and do.

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8.7.1 Adherence to Exercise

Any form of exercise one follows, should become a religious ritual for the person. Yoga schools instil concepts of puja, mantra chanting, gyaan and guru in the student practitioners. It closely knits them with their daily *Abhyasa*, and it should, only then it becomes a *Discipline*. Adherence to exercise is very important to reap its benefits. Daily practice conditions our body slowly and prepares us for braver challenges without us knowing how far we have come in practice.

Our progress can be seen in the way we practice and transform, mentally, physically and spiritually. It is not as difficult to start working out, as it is to maintain a constant regime and stick to it. In addition, it is a preventive as well therapeutic treatment for our mind and body, and releases stress busting chemicals and induces secretion of positive hormones in the body, that rid us of many psychological issues.

8.7.2 Systems of Physical Exercise

There are numerous exercise techniques at our disposal. One can practice, Yoga and meditation, do aerobics, Zumba/Dance, Weight training, running, jogging, walking, playing sports or a combination of all of the above, which is more in trend these days, considering the varied requirements of human body. Let us discuss some of these systems of physical exercise in detail:

- **Cardio/High fat burning Exercises**

These exercises involve sets of workouts with rigorous body movement, the ultimate aim of which is to burn more fat in less time. They are good for your heart and good for your brain as well. Exercises like Aerobics, Dance classes, Zumba training or any similar high intensity workout improves brain function and repairs damaged brain cells. Most of all it strengthens the heart, because the heart needs to pump more blood and at a much higher pace than normal. They also give a feel good factor since they are done in groups.

- **Yoga and Meditation**

A common notion is that Yoga is a great way to increase stretch and improve flexibility. When Yoga is combined with meditation, it helps to be focus. In addition, meditation reduces stress, which allows the brain to function better.

However, Yoga when actually done properly teaches us more about our body compared to any other workout technique. Since practicing yoga involves a lot of concentration and introspection. It requires constant attention to breathing and muscle movements. Unlike other workouts, it cannot be done callously or with a no care attitude, that way it will not benefit. One has to be fully aware of every movement, including toe tips while lying in a Shavasana. So, Yoga brings us close to our internal body and soul, it educates us about our capacity and helps us

increase it. It increases mobility of body muscles individually; making us conscious of even the little parts in our body, and further increases our stretching and flexibility. Mobility is more important than flexibility here.

Meditation and Pranayama practices help us in deeper cleansing of our systems, most other exercises concentrate on cleansing by perspiration, Yoga focuses on internal cleansing, energy cleansing and equips us to control our energy flows.

- **Walking/Jogging/Running**

This is an all age exercise, and everyone should do it, no matter what type of exercise regime one follows. Walking or running is a full body workout, not just legs. It is very good for our heart, for activating brain and stress busting. Many people with issues like cervical, spinal pains are not recommended to do any strenuous physical exercise, and thus walking is the best option for them to do a full body workout followed by some mild Pranayama.

- **Weight Training**

This is strength training with external weights. Where yoga actually trains one with own body weight, one can graduate to higher levels of exercise with external machines and weights to increase their strength, cardiovascular capacity etc.

Check Your Progress

1. State the principle on which Yoga and pranayama are based.
2. What is the most important preparatory exercise set?
3. What must be done before stretching can be initiated?
4. Why is it imperative that forward and backward bending be done in pairs?

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The entire concept of Yoga and pranayama stands on the principal of breathing correctly.
2. Stretching is the most important preparatory exercise set.
3. Before stretching can be initiated, the body must be warmed up enough through a set of yogic Kriyas like Hridaya gati or mild jogging or running and twisting exercises.
4. It is imperative that forward and backward bending be done in pairs, so as to avoid injury and induce easy recovery of back muscles by avoiding spasms or pain at later stage.

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8.9 SUMMARY

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- For any type of body workouts, be it yoga, weights, running, calisthenics, or dance, our body needs to first be prepared and conditioned in order to attain higher levels of Practice or *Abhyasa* as we call it.
- Our body is not accustomed to start working out all of a sudden and neither is it advisable to do that. Body preparation involves focusing on accuracy of postures, eating healthy and according to the practice, one is doing and focusing on the goal of such practice.
- Preparatory movements condition our body to slowly enter into deeper practice of Asanas and Kriyas. They warm-up our body, increase lung capacity, lubricate our joints, increase the elasticity of muscles for strenuous practice further.
- The entire concept of Yoga and pranayama stands on the principal of breathing correctly. A breathing cycle involves inhaling, holding breath and exhaling. This is one complete cycle. For normal Asana or Kriya one has to inhale and exhale normally, albeit deep, but without concentration of retracting or holding it.
- Hands in and out breathing involves movement of hands to accentuate the thoracic cavity and thus increasing the lung capacity to inhale more than normal volume of breath. *Urdhava Hastasana* is a very basic preparatory pose. Ankle stretch breathing is an advanced level of *Urdhava Hastasana*, and can be related to *tadasna*.
- Stretching is the most important preparatory exercise set. Stretching opens the body and makes it ready for more advanced *Abhyasa*. It enables blood flow and energy flow by opening blocked Granthis and removing toxins from nadis and balances our chakras.
- *Dhauti* is a Sanskrit word which means Purification (dhoo means to wash). Mukha Dhauti is a technique of forceful cleansing of respiratory tract by, emitting a single blast of breath.
- The body is as young as our spine is flexible, so bending practice is a very essential part of Yoga. Forward and Backward bending are always done one after the other, to keep a counterpose check. Forward bending is easier to start with as it is normally done in day-to-day activities. Backward bending opens the lung capacity and helps us inhale in more. Side Bending and Twisting at the waist, enables mobility of side muscles, which are otherwise not worked out in day-to-day life, resulting in stiffness and accumulation of fat cells.

- Bending and twisting makes us flexible and releases good hormones to keep hormonal check on the body. Twist with bending can be done after one has mastered many preparatory poses to come to this level.
- There are numerous exercise techniques at our disposal. One can practice, Yoga and meditation, do aerobics, Zumba / Dance, Weight training, running, jogging, walking, playing sports or a combination of all of the above, which is more in trend these days, considering the varied requirements of human body.

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8.10 KEY WORDS

- **Mudra practice:** Yoga mudras are symbolic gestures often practiced with the hands and fingers. They facilitate the flow of energy in the subtle body and enhance one's journey within.
- **Bandha practice:** In yoga, it means to lock, close-off, to stop. In the practice of a Bandha, the energy flow to a particular area of the body is blocked.
- **Mukha Dhauti:** It is a technique of forceful cleansing of respiratory tract by, emitting a single blast of breath.
- **Janu Sirsanan:** From Sanskrit, janu means "knee," sirsa means "head" and asana means "pose."
- **Zumba:** It refers to an aerobic fitness programme featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music.

8.11 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is preparatory movement in Yoga?
2. What is Mukha Dhauti?
3. List some of the preparatory side bending and twisting exercises.
4. What are the benefits of adherence to daily physical exercise?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain different breathing practice in detail.
2. Describe the varied bending postures.
3. Discuss the different systems of physical exercise.

8.12 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - III
TYPES OF ASANAS AND PRANAYAMA

UNIT 9 THE SURYA NAMASKAR

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- 9.8 Further Readings

9.0 INTRODUCTION

The welfare of body and soul has been an indispensable part of ancient Indian traditions. Across centuries, exercise or physical workout has been the main medium of taking care of human body. There are numerous practices, which the modern world has inherited from ancient era. The most common practices prevalent in the world of healthcare and wellness are asanas, yoga and meditation. All these practices aim to bring balance to our body to help us lead a healthier, happier and better life. Most of these traditional practices have made their way to the modern world in order to keep us benefited by our rich heritage. In this unit, we will discuss the Surya Namaskar and its effect on the human body.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the Surya Namaskar

- Discuss the Solar Tradition
- Explain the effects of Surya Namaskar on the human body

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9.2 THE CONCEPT OF SURYA NAMASKAR

Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is a form of physical exercise, which is a combination of twelve different variety of asanas. It is best known for its calming effect on body and soul. It is believed that this yoga sequence is dedicated to expressing gratitude to sun. Immense positivity and energy are some of its most prevalent results. It is one of the most popular combination of asanas for a sound health.

9.2.1 The Solar Tradition

The energy of the sun is believed to drive the very essence of life. The sun salutation is designed in a way that our body cycle matches with that of the sun. It begins with Pranamasana and follows Hasta Uttanasana, Hastapaadasana, Ashwasanchalana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Ashtanga Namaskar, Bhujangasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Ashwa Sanchalanasana, Uttanasana, Hasta Uttanasana and Pranamasana. The twelve constituting asanas are to ensure that our physical cycle tries to align with sun's twelve-and-a-quarter year's cycle.

Although there are many variations done by practitioners, yet every form ensures an abundance of physical and mental benefits. The variations are made in order to suit the need and medical conditions of the person doing it. The smooth flow of the movement remains the key element of all accepted variations of this sequence that is why it must always be done under an expert supervision.

9.2.2 Salute to The Sun

The entire phenomenon revolves around the belief that the sun is the source of all life form. The postures are designed in a way that they gracefully address the sun, expressing gratitude for keeping the life form alive on the planet. The salutations have a healing effect on a human body's mental health too, as it induces the feeling of thankfulness towards the Mother Nature. Sun salutations are a way of maintaining the balance between physical and mental health by managing movement and breathing patterns.

9.3 EFFECTS OF SURYA NAMASKAR

Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is known for its positive effects on human mind, body and soul. The following list incorporates the major effects:

- Strengthening of the physical and mental health of a human body
- It cures cardiovascular issues

- It is a great stimulant for the functionality of nervous system
- Ensures an enhanced flow of oxygen across the human body
- It helps building the stamina
- Helps in combating stress
- Improves flexibility and stamina
- Enhances blood flow and treats blood pressure

Now that we have learnt about the overall benefits of Surya Namaskar, we will discuss the effects of Surya Namaskar on different systems of the human body.

9.3.1 Respiratory System

Our respiratory system, comprising of the nose, lungs and air passages, is the primary system, which gets affected during doing the sun salutations. The breathing pattern followed during the asanas aim to open up all the three elements and bring an equilibrium by balancing all the elements with each other. Each part of our respiratory system is benefited differently and adds to the wellbeing of our body.

Effect on the nose: Due to the exhaustive demand of air in the body during asanas, our nostrils tend to open up and embrace maximum amount of oxygen. It is highly recommended that the entire breathing should be done through nostrils and not the mouth.

Effect on the lungs: The small openings of the lungs called bronchioles tend to become more active during the sun salutations. It is so because the body starts demanding the absorption of oxygen from the breaths at a much faster rate than usual times. In order to absorb more oxygen from the air, our lungs tend to operate more efficiently.

Effect on the air passages: The air passages tend to expand during sun salutations because of the constant expansion and contraction of the muscles. More flexibility in air passages result in better airflow in the respiratory system, and hence better health.

9.3.2 Circulatory System

The circulatory system primarily ensures the blood flow across the body i.e. an uninterrupted flow of blood from head to toe. Heart is the most vital organ of the circulatory system, which makes sure that enough amount of blood is pumped in our body to keep us going. Sun Salutation effects our cardiovascular health in the following ways:

- Increases the blood flow
- Helps reduce the strain on heart
- Increases mental alertness

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- Decreases levels of stress hormone-cortisol
- Reduces blockage of arteries

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9.3.3 Digestive System

Our digestive system is primarily made up of four components, namely mouth, stomach, small intestine and large intestine. Each part has a different role to play in the absorption of nutrients from the food we take. A regular practice of Surya Namaskar helps in the proper functioning of the digestive system in the following ways:

- It increases the blood flow to the entire digestive track
- Helps improve the abdominal issues
- Ensure better digestion
- Improves the absorption of nutrition from the food
- strengthens the core muscles
- Ensures a proper bowel movement
- Detoxifies the body

9.3.4 Skin

A healthy skin is important for healthy body. Sun Salutations add to the good health by improving blood flow, hormonal balance, digestive issues etc. The Surya Namaskar are known to heal the skin issues like wrinkles, ageing and acne. The benefits that our skin receives are as follows:

- It helps in release excessive heat and induce cooling effect in the human body
- Detoxification of body by sweat removal etc.
- Nourishes the texture of the skin
- Adds to the glow and radiance
- Postpones the signs of ageing
- Reduces existing dark spots and irregular pigmentation
- Helps in combating acne, pimples, breakage etc.

9.3.5 Nervous System

The complex structure of nerves spanning across the body constitute the human nervous system. Due to excessive stress and unhealthy lifestyle, our nervous system tends to breakdown in different degrees causing spinal dysfunctions and neural diseases. Surya Namaskar brings the necessary stretch that our nervous system needs.

Sun Salutations contribute to the wellbeing of our nervous system in following ways:

- Helps stimulate the spinal cord
- Improves the corrective posture
- Protects the body from fatigue
- Protects lower back from excessive strain of sedentary lifestyle
- Helps loose extra weight and hence improves metabolism

9.3.6 Endocrine System

Endocrine system is one of the most vital systems of our body. It is responsible for all chemical balances and imbalances in our body. It is a system, which acts as a messenger of chemicals for our body. As the hormones are directly released into the blood stream to be transported to targeted cells, it becomes extremely essential that this system function smoothly.

This is how Sun Salutations contribute to the wellbeing of our endocrine system:

- The breath modulation relieves the entire system of the stress
- Helps adding the balance to the level of hormones
- Keeps the mood fresh
- Reduces the emotional stress levels
- Increases the blood flow towards the brain
- Maximizes the flow of oxygen in the system

9.3.7 Pituitary Gland

It is known as the ‘master gland’ of the body as it is responsible for the entire hormone production in the body. It is located in the brain and is situated at the base of it. It has two sub-divisions: anterior lobe and posterior lobe. The pituitary gland is responsible for not only the hormone production, but also its absorption.

Surya Namaskar is known to help pituitary gland in the following ways:

- Stimulates the hormone secretion
- Enhances the balance of hormones across the other glands
- Harmonizes the gland and relieves it of stress
- Enhances the storage and production of hormones

9.3.8 Pineal Gland

Pineal Gland is a crucial tiny endocrine gland, which is responsible for the secretion of melatonin in the body. It is a hormone, which helps in regulating sleep patterns.

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It is positioned between the two hemispheres of the brain. Surya Namaskar has a very prominent effect on this gland. The most evident effects are:

- Stimulates pineal gland for balanced hormonal production
- Helps preventing pineal degeneration
- Reduces hormonal imbalances
- Aids decalcification of the gland

9.3.9 Pancreas

Pancreas play important part in our digestive system. It is located in the abdomen and secretes pancreatic juice as well as multiple digestive enzymes, aiding the process of digestion. It is responsible for converting our consumed food into energy, which we consume in doing everyday chores. It functions largely on the blood flow it gets from the heart. Regulating blood sugar level is also one of its most crucial function.

Regular inflammation and abdominal pain is usually linked to a pancreatic disorder. Most of the minor issues with pancreas can be dealt with the help of a regular practice of Surya Namaskar. This is how it helps:

- Balances the secretion of juices and digestive enzymes
- keeps the body weight in control and hence adds to healthy digestion
- Prevents the excessive urge to over eat
- Boosts insulin production

Check Your Progress

1. Why are there twelve asanas in the Surya Namaskar?
2. Name the primary system of our human body which gets affected due to the Surya Namaskar.
3. Which gland is known as the 'master gland' of the human body?
4. Mention some of the pancreatic disorders.

9.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The twelve constituting asanas of the Surya Namaskar are to ensure that our physical cycle tries to align with sun's twelve-and-a-quarter year's cycle.
2. Our respiratory system, comprising of the nose, lungs and air passages, is the primary system, which gets affected during doing the sun salutations.
3. Pituitary Gland is known as the 'master gland' of the body as it is responsible for the entire hormone production in the body.

4. Regular inflammation and abdominal pain is usually linked to a pancreatic disorder.

9.5 SUMMARY

- Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is a form of physical exercise, which is a combination of twelve different variety of asanas. It is best known for its calming effect on body and soul. It is believed that this yoga sequence is dedicated to expressing gratitude to sun.
- Immense positivity and energy are some of its most prevalent results of Surya Namaskar. It is one of the most popular combination of asanas for a sound health.
- The sun salutation is designed in a way that our body cycle matches with that of the sun. It begins with Pranamasana and follows Hasta Uttanasana, Hastapaadasana, Ashwasanchalana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Ashtanga Namaskar, Bhujangasana, Adho Mukha Svanasana, Ashwa Sanchalanasana, Uttanasana, Hasta Uttanasana and Pranamasana.
- The twelve constituting asanas of Surya Namaskar are to ensure that our physical cycle tries to align with sun's twelve-and-a-quarter year's cycle.
- The entire phenomenon of Surya Namaskar revolves around the belief that the sun is the source of all life form. The postures are designed in a way that they gracefully address the sun, expressing gratitude for keeping the life form alive on the planet.
- Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is known for its positive effects on human mind, body and soul. It has several different benefits for the different systems of the human body including respiratory, circulatory, digestive, nervous, endocrine systems along with pituitary, pineal gland and pancreas.

9.6 KEY WORDS

- **Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation:** It is a form of physical exercise, which is a combination of twelve different variety of asanas.
- **Pineal Gland:** It is a crucial tiny endocrine gland, which is responsible for the secretion of melatonin in the body. It is a hormone, which helps in regulating sleep patterns.
- **Pancreas:** It is an organ in the human body which is responsible for converting our consumed food into energy, which we consume in doing everyday chores.

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9.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. What is Surya Namaskar?
2. What are the 12 asanas in Surya Namaskar?
3. What are the effects of Sun Salutation on cardiovascular system?
4. State the benefits of Sun Salutation on skin.

Long Answer Questions

1. Describe the Solar tradition and the concept of salute to the sun.
2. What are the effects of Surya Namaskar on the respiratory system?
3. How does Surya Namaskar benefit our nervous system?
4. What are the effects of Surya Namaskar on pineal glands and pancreas?

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 10 ASANAS

Structure

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 The Concept of Asanas
 - 10.2.1 Objective of Asanas
 - 10.2.2 Common Asanas
- 10.3 Classification of Asanas
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10.0 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of any exercise is to increase the endurance and physical strength by strengthening and building the muscles. Every type of exercise involves performing, holding and repetition of certain movements. When it comes to Asanas, they are a part of yoga that focuses more on the well-being of the mind as well as the body. While yoga is a group of exercises that involve physical, spiritual and mental practices, asanas are a part of yoga where comfortable seating and various other yoga postures are practiced for meditation.

In today's life, people lead a very busy lifestyle and are perpetually on the go. It has been often observed that the connection between the mind, body, and breath is lost, resulting in various health and mental issues. In such situations, the asanas, a form of yoga, are found to be extremely effective in bridging the disconnections that are developed due to the contemporary daily lifestyle. Improving the core strength and balance of the body, asanas are important for increasing the flexibility and strength of the body as well.

In this unit, we will discuss what exactly asanas are, what the term 'asanas' mean, along with the purpose of practicing this yoga form.

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10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the objective of Asanas
 - Explain the classification of Asanas
 - Discuss the different types of Asanas
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10.2 THE CONCEPT OF ASANAS

The term ‘asana’ is a Sanskrit term that refers to ‘pose’ or ‘physical postures’. In general, asanas refer to comfortable and steady postures or seat that can justly cater to the purpose of meditation. Asanas are certain physical positions that cannot only be performed in a comfortable manner but also can be held for a long period in a relaxed manner.

Many people consider yoga and asana to be the same. However, while yoga refers to a group of exercises, asana is a form of it. Therefore, in order to establish the connection between yoga and asanas and to interpret how they are related, it can be said that if yoga is the path to achieve a reunion between the body and the mind, asanas are the poses that can help in reaching the goal. Asanas are the very first steps of learning and benefiting from the process of yoga.

Many people tend to associate asana with some complex and fancy pose. However, asana is a form of yogic exercise that can be practiced by anyone, whether the individual is a beginner or an expert or intermediate. In order to suit an individual’s practice desires and requirements, the asanas can be modified.

10.2.1 Objective of Asanas

Asanas are not practiced because they are comfortable and the majority of them comes with easy to do postures. Asanas are practiced because they have a number of benefits to offer to both the human body and mind. Here are some of the primary objectives of asanas:

- One of the primary purposes of asanas is to prepare the mind and body for going forward through yoga’s next stages, which are ‘pranayama’, ‘dharana’ and ‘pratyahara’. It is through asanas that both the mind and the body is trained and achieve a state of equilibrium, flexibility, and connection that is necessary for excelling in the further stages of yoga.
- Asanas also help in unblocking the channels through which energy in the human bodies flow, ensuring the uninterrupted and equal flow of pure energy throughout the body and maximizing the performance of daily tasks.
- Improving the posture is another major objective of asanas.

- Increasing the body's intake of oxygen, asanas also aims at enhancing the function of the body systems like digestion, excretory systems, respiration, reproductive systems, endocrine etc.
- From relaxing the tension and stress from the muscles to ensuring the mind's calmness, offering positive effects on the emotions is also another objective of asanas.
- Asanas take special care of the flexibility, coordination, agility, and strength of the muscle. Asanas improve the muscles' range of motion.
- Asanas also focus on curing manic depressions, nervous breakdown and behavioural disorders.
- Asanas recondition the psycho-physiological mechanisms of the body, so that can improve the functionality of both the body and mind.
- Asanas also aim at reducing the disturbances caused by the tonic rhythms of the body and factors associated with it, preventing discomfort or uneasiness when sitting in a posture for a long time.
- No matter how trivial the imbalance of the muscular tone is, asanas ensure it is removed or corrected.
- Ensuring long-term health, overall well-being, self-healing (mental and physical), and vitality are some of the other objectives of asanas.
- Lastly, asanas are not just meant to be mere physical exercise as they are more of a mind-body practice that intends to holistically improve mental, physical and spiritual health.

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10.2.2 Common Asanas

The term common asanas refer to those asanas that are widely practiced by people of different age and gender. Some of the names of common asanas are:

- Padmasana or the lotus posture
- Savasana or the corpse posture
- Sukhasana or the easy posture
- Tadasana or the mountain posture
- Vrksasana or the tree posture
- Ardha-Matsyendrasana or the half lord of the fishes
- Januirsasana or the head to knee posture
- Adho-Mukha Svanasana or the downward-facing dog posture
- Bhujangasana or the cobra posture
- Bakasana or the crane pose
- Utkatasana or the chair posture

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- Balasana or the child's posture
- Trikonasana or the triangle posture
- Virabhadrasana or the warrior pose
- Chakrasana or the wheel posture
- Navasana or the boat posture
- Setu Bandha Sarvangasana or the bridge posture

10.3 CLASSIFICATION OF ASANAS

Asanas can be classified in various ways. Usually, the classification of asanas depends upon their purpose or their application. Depending on the difficulty level of practice and the physical conditions or postures they consist of asanas can also be divided.

Depending on the purpose or effect, asanas can be divided into two main levels, i.e. cultural and meditative. The cultural levels can be divided into two other categories, physical asanas, and relaxative asanas. Here is a look at them with examples:

- **Cultural asanas**
 - (i) Physical asanas (Sarvangasana, Sirsasana, Bhujangasana etc.)
 - (ii) Relaxative asanas (Makarasana, Shavasana etc.)
- **Meditative asanas** (Siddhasana, Samasana, Padmasana, Svastikasana etc.)

Depending on the mode of performing asanas, here is the classification of asanas:

- (i) Static asanas:** Static asanas are those that focus on opening up the higher levels of consciousness and developing inner awareness. Just as the name suggests, static asanas are characterized by maintaining the postures, slowness, and continuity in the movement. These asanas focus on bringing calmness to the nerves. Examples of static asanas are Vajrasana or the tiger pose, Agnistambhasana or the fire log posture.
- (ii) Dynamic asanas:** Dynamic asanas refer to those asanas that involve the articulation of the spine. These asanas intend to introduce a positive transformation to the body structure. As the name suggests, dynamic asanas are associated with repetition and speed. Example of dynamic asanas is Ustrasana or the camel posture, Gaja Asana or the elephant posture.

We will discuss these asanas further in this section.



10.3.1 Classification on the Basis of Starting Position

Asanas

When it comes to the starting point of the asanas or the positions that are involved with the performance of the asanas, asanas can be classified into four categories, which are:

- Standing asanas
- Sitting asanas
- Prone asanas
- Supine asanas

1. Standing Asanas

As the name suggests, standing asanas refers to those yoga postures that require practicing while in a standing position. There are various postures of standing asanas and they are considered to help in posture correction as well as in improving the balance of the body. Standing asanas are also known to be the building blocks of the yoga practice. In order to perform standing asanas, a person requires both strength and flexibility. Standing asanas are considered to fall into the advanced asanas category. Compared to other asanas, the duration for which the pose of standing asana is held is shorter.

The popular standing asanas or poses of standing yoga are:

- Utkatasana or the chair posture
- Padangusthasana or the big toe posture
- Garudasana or the eagle pose
- Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana or the hand-to-big toe pose
- Ardha Chandrasana or the half-moon posture
- Vrksasana or the tree pose
- Dolphin posture
- Natarajasana or the dancer posture
- Parsvottanasana or the intense side stretch pose
- Anjaneyasana or the low lunge pose
- Tadasana or the mountain pose
- Hasta Utthanasana or the raised arms pose

Regular performance of standing asanas not only improves the blood circulation in the body (especially in the legs and head) but also reduces complications associated with health conditions like thrombosis, asthma, cervical pain etc.

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NOTES**2. Sitting Asanas**

Sitting asanas are those that are practiced while in a sitting position. Sitting asanas are known to not only help in toning the muscles but also for improving the flexibility of the spine. These asanas also help in relieving anxiety and stress. People who face difficulty in performing standing asanas usually find sitting asanas very beneficial. From increasing the stamina to strengthening the abdomen region, thighs and lower back, sitting asanas has a number of benefits to offer. The various sitting asanas also help in massaging the internal organs, toning the belly and relieving the pain in the lower back.

The common sitting asanas are:

- Sukhasana or the easy pose
- Paschimottanasana or the seated forward bend posture
- Vajrasana or the diamond pose
- Padmasana or the lotus pose
- Ardha Matsyendrasana or the half spinal twist posture
- Baddha Konasana or the butterfly pose
- Bharadvajasana or the seer pose
- Shishuasana or the child pose
- Janu Shirasana or the one-legged forward bend posture
- Chakki Chalanasana or the mill churning posture
- Paripurna Navasana or the upward boat pose
- Gomukhasana or the cow face pose
- Virasana or the hero pose

Sitting asanas being easy to perform, as they do not require the balance and strength like that of the standing asanas, anyone can do it. Sitting asanas are ideal for people who are beginning to learn and practice yoga. Offering various easily adaptable postures, sitting asanas can be practices of people of any stamina.

3. Prone Asanas

Prone asanas refer to yoga postures where the belly is positioned downward or lying on the stomach is involved. Prone asanas are usually practiced to boost the body strength in the abs and lower back. The majority poses of prone asanas involve backbends; however there also inversions, standing postures, seated postures, reclined postures etc. During yoga practices, prone asanas are done as a restorative break. Prone asanas can also be practiced at the end of yoga practice to settle the mind and the body. Prone asanas are considered to be extremely helpful in toning the kidneys as well as energizing the body. They also help in reducing fatigue, stress, anxiety while boosting the digestion process and posture.

The common prone asanas are:

- Bhujangasana or the serpent posture
- Makarasana or the crocodile posture
- Dhanurasana or the bow posture
- Salabhasana or the locust posture
- Ananthasana or the one-sided posture
- Ardha Sarvangasana or the half shoulder stand
- Balasana or the child pose
- Dandasana
- Adho Mukha Mandukasana or the frog posture
- Ashtanga asana or the eight-limbed posture
- Salamba Bhujangasana or the sphinx posture
- Urdhva Mukha Svasana or the upward facing dog posture

Anyone can perform prone asanas, as the various poses are very much simple for the beginners as well. However, holding the poses for longer periods can only be achieved with time and regular practicing of the prone asanas.

4. Supine Asanas

Supine asanas refer to certain yoga postures that are performed on the back while the belly is positioned facing the upwards. Supine asanas are considered a great way of ending a yoga practice and they have impressive restorative qualities. The various Supine Asanas not only help in releasing stress, but these asanas also promote the flexibility of the body. Supine Asanas also play a crucial role in integrating a yoga practice. They are also practiced for strengthening both the back as well as the front of the body. The various supine poses are easy to do as they can be performed using a wall as a support.

The popular supine asanas are:

- Pavanamuktasana or the wind relieving pose
- Uttanpadasana or the double leg raise pose
- Setubandha Sarvangasana or the bridge pose
- Suptabaddha Konasana or the butterfly pose
- Suptamatsyendrasana or the reclining spinal twist

Supine asanas can be done by anyone, as they are not only versatile but also beneficial to people of all ages, skill level, and gender.

10.3.2 Meditation Asanas

Meditation asanas, also known as the meditative asanas, refer to yoga postures that help in improving the concentration and meditative power. Usually, meditation

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asanas are practiced while in a standing or sitting position and in complete comfort to prevent muscle proprioceptors from causing any interference. Meditation asanas are performed for longer durations to enable the body and mind the meditative benefits. The very purpose of meditation asanas is to achieve the yoga postures in such a way that the limbs of the body stop sending stimuli to the yoga practitioner's mind so that the practitioner can fully concentrate on meditation. Various standing and sitting asanas fall under the meditation asanas category.

The common meditation asanas are:

- Swastikasana or the auspicious pose
- Virasana or the hero posture
- Siddhasana or the accomplished posture
- Bhadrasana or the gracious pose
- Siddhasana or the adept's pose
- Vajrasana or the thunderbolt posture
- Padmasana or the lotus posture
- Sukhasana or the comfortable posture

Meditation asanas can be practiced by anyone as the primary focus of these asanas is to offer complete comfort while trying a yoga posture. However, the duration of holding the yoga pose or the depth of concentration can only be achieved after regular and long-time yoga practice.

10.3.3 Relaxation Asanas

Relaxation asanas refer to a group of asanas that focuses on releasing tension from all the muscles in the body while offering a deep repose. After a few hours of practicing relaxation asanas, they are considered to make one feel more energetic and achieve greater mental piece. The relaxation asanas can be performed at the very beginning, at the middle, or at the very end while practicing any other yoga postures. Though the relaxation asanas initially found to help the muscle relax, in order to free the muscles completely from all the tension, these asanas require regular practicing. People who suffer from spinal issues have often been seen to find great comfort and solace by practicing the relaxation asanas.

The common relaxation asanas are:

- Shavasana or the corpse pose
- Makarasana or the crocodile posture
- Bhujangasana or the snake pose
- Shavasana or the reversed corpse posture
- Dradhasana or the firm pose
- Ultrasana or the camel pose
- Halasana or the plow pose

- Ardha-Kurmasana or the half-tortoise posture
- Jyeshthikasana or the superior posture
- Matsya Kridasana or the flapping fish posture
- Garbhasana or the child's pose

Relaxation asanas can be practiced by anyone, as there are various easy postures available. However, only after practicing the relaxation asanas rigorously and regularly that the true muscle relaxing effect can be attained as doing them properly and effectively can be a difficult task.

10.3.4 Cultural Asanas

Often termed as the 'daily physical exercise' postures, cultural asanas focus on correcting or rectifying postural defects. The name 'cultural asanas' comes from the objective or the role that these asanas play in forming the physical culture of well-being through practicing yoga exercises. Cultural asanas also help in obtaining mastery of the mind and body and its organ system.

Cultural asanas can be divided into two sub-divisions, namely, relaxative asanas and physical asanas. While physical asanas focus on ensuring good health, relaxative asanas work on improving the level of concentration by relaxing and freeing the muscles from tension.

The common examples of relaxative cultural asanas are:

- Shavasana or the corpse pose
- Supine asanas
- Makarasana or the crocodile pose

The common physical cultural asanas are:

- Surya Namaskar or the sun salutation pose
- Sarvangasana or the shoulder stand pose
- Sirsasana or the headstand pose
- Dhanurasana or the bow pose
- Trikonasana or the triangle pose
- Paschimottanasana or the seated forward bend pose
- Vriksasana or the tree pose

With various types of cultural asanas being there, anyone can opt for it as per their body flexibility and comfort.

10.3.5 Backward Bending Asanas

Backward bending asanas are those that involve the yoga practitioner to bend the body in the backward direction. Backward bending or back bending asanas are considered to have therapeutic effects. Backward bending asanas not only helps in correcting the posture but also prevents the shoulders from slouching down that

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may trigger a number of problems such as slip disc, bad breathing habits, back pain, neck pain, sciatica etc. These asanas also help in rectifying and relieving the spine's residual stress.

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When done regularly, the expansion of the abdominal muscles gets through backward bending asanas, psychosomatic disorders, and deep-seated emotional tension and stress is relieved. Studies have shown backward bending asanas to be extremely helpful in combating depression and general stress. These asanas also stimulate the expansion of the chest that results in better inhalation.

The common backward bending asanas are:

- Bhujangasana or the cobra posture
- Ardha Chandrasana or the half-moon pose
- Shalabhasana or the locust posture
- Urdva Dhanurasana or Chakrasana or the wheel pose
- Ushtrasana or the camel posture
- Ardha Shalabhasana or the half locust posture
- Bhekasana or the frog posture
- Dhanurasana or the bow pose
- Bhujangasana or the cobra posture
- Marjariasana or the cat pose
- Saral Bhujangasana or the sphinx posture

10.3.6 Forward Bending Asanas

Forward bending asanas are those that involve the body bending towards the front. Creating space and length in the spine, forward bending asanas promote spinal health. These asanas also work towards making the tight and stiff muscles flexible. When it comes to promoting flexibility of the lower body part, forward bending asanas play a significant role.

The common forward bending asanas are:

- Bitilasana or the cow pose
- Janu Sirshasana or the seated head to knee pose
- Naman Pranamasana or the prostration pose
- Dandasana or the staff posture
- Krounchasana or the heron posture
- Padangushthasana or the big toe posture
- Balasana or the child's pose
- Baddha Konasana or the bound angle posture
- Kurmasana or the tortoise posture

- Halasana or the plow posture
- Sasangasana or the rabbit posture

For beginners to do forward bending asanas with accuracy and holding the pose for a longer time, regular practice is necessary. In addition, practicing the forward bending asanas requires caution for those who have tight hamstrings. While performing the forward bending asanas one should never forcefully do the postures as it might lead to back pain and cause damage to the lumbar spine and the lower back. To perform various postures of these asanas, the flexibility of the body is also required.

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10.3.7 Spinal Twisting Asanas

The spine is one of the body parts that have crucial importance. Moreover, the spinal twisting asanas are meant to take care of it. The spinal twisting asanas also focus on restoring the natural motion range of the spine while stimulating the blood circulation and cleansing the organs of toxins. Also, when it comes to boosting the digestion process or offering relieve to back pain issues, spinal twisting asanas are considered extremely effective and helpful.

The spinal twisting asanas are:

- Parivrtta Trikonasana or the revolved triangle pose
- Jathara Parivartanasana or the belly twist posture
- Sucirandhrasana or the eye of the needle posture
- Parivrtta Natarajasana or the Shiva twist posture
- Parivrtta Utkatasana or the chair twist posture
- Supta Matsyendrasana or the supine spinal twist
- Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana or the revolved half-moon posture
- Pasasana or the noose posture
- Namaskar Parsvakonasana or the prayer twist posture

10.3.8 Inverted Asanas

Inverted asanas refer to those asanas that reverse the gravity's action on the body. In simpler words, defying the action of gravity on the body, in inverted asanas, the orientation of the body is shifted towards the head instead of being drawn towards the feet. Practicing of the inverted asanas is considered revitalizing as well as refreshing. Boosting the blood flow to the brain, inverted asanas help in flushing out toxins from the body and nurturing the neurons. Reduced anxiety and stress levels, massaging of the organs in the abdomen, and improved concentration power, are also among the benefits of practicing inverted asanas regularly.

The common inverted asanas are:

- Grivasana or the neck posture
- Karnapidasana or the ear pressure pose

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- Sirshasana or the headstand posture
- Urdhva Padmasana or the upward lotus posture
- Supta Konasana or the reclining angle pose
- Salamba Sirshasana or the tripod headstand pose
- Halasana or the plow posture
- Naman Pranamasana or the prostration pose

10.3.9 Balancing Asanas

As the name suggests, balancing asanas are those that help in improving the balance of the body and the muscles. Boosting the balancing power, these asanas help in building a strong foundation for the practice of various asanas. Balancing asanas can be practiced anytime during a yoga session of asana. These asanas focus on giving more stability, increasing the physical strength while boosting the coordination.

The common balancing asanas are:

- Garudasana or the eagle posture
- Ardha Chandrasana or the half-moon posture
- Adho Mukha Vrksasana or the handstand pose
- Utthita Hasta Padangustasana or the extended hand to big toe posture
- Dandayamana Janu Sirsasana or the standing head to knee posture
- Natarajasana or the dancer posture
- Bakasana or the crane posture
- Vrikshasana or the tree posture
- Vasisthasana or the side plank posture
- Virabhadrasana or the warrior posture

To hold the position of balancing asanas for a longer period of time an individual requires practicing the asanas regularly and with dedication. Initially, one may find practicing the balancing asanas without any movement a difficult task.

Check Your Progress

1. What are the levels of asanas?
2. Name some meditative asanas.
3. What are dynamic asanas?
4. Which category of asanas are done as a restorative break?
5. Mention some examples of relaxative cultural asanas.

10.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Depending on the purpose or effect, asanas can be divided into two main levels, i.e. cultural and meditative.
2. Some examples of meditative asanas are Siddhasana, Samasana, Padmasana, Svastikasana etc.
3. Dynamic asanas refer to those asanas that involve the articulation of the spine.
4. During yoga practices, prone asanas are done as a restorative break.
5. The common examples of relaxative cultural asanas are:
 - Shavasana or the corpse pose
 - Supine asanas
 - Makarasana or the crocodile pose

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10.5 SUMMARY

- The term 'asana' is a Sanskrit term that refers to 'pose' or 'physical postures'. In general, Asanas refer to comfortable and steady postures or seat that can justly cater to the purpose of meditation.
- Asanas are certain physical positions that cannot only be performed in a comfortable manner but also can be held for a long period in a relaxed manner.
- Asanas are not practiced because they are comfortable and the majority of them comes with easy to do postures. Asanas are practiced because they have a number of benefits to offer to both the human body and mind.
- Asanas can be classified in various ways. Usually, the classification of Asanas depends upon their purpose or their application. Depending on the purpose or effect, Asanas can be divided into two main levels, i.e. cultural and meditative. The cultural levels can be divided into two other categories, physical Asanas, and relaxative Asanas.
- When it comes to the starting point of the asanas or the positions that are involved with the performance of the asanas, asanas can be classified into four categories, which are: Standing asanas, Sitting asanas, Prone asanas and Supine asanas.
- Meditation asanas, also known as the meditative asanas, refer to yoga postures that help in improving the concentration and meditative power. Usually, meditation asanas are practiced while in a standing or sitting position

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and in complete comfort to prevent muscle proprioceptors from causing any interference.

- Relaxation asanas refer to a group of asanas that focuses on releasing tension from all the muscles in the body while offering a deep repose. After a few hours of practicing relaxation asanas, they are considered to make one feel more energetic and achieve greater mental piece.
- Often termed as the ‘daily physical exercise’ postures, cultural asanas focus on correcting or rectifying postural defects. The name ‘cultural asanas’ comes from the objective or the role that these asanas play in forming the physical culture of well-being through practicing yoga exercises. Cultural asanas also help in obtaining mastery of the mind and body and its organ system.
- Backward bending asanas are those that involve the yoga practitioner to bend the body in the backward direction. Backward bending or back bending asanas are considered to have therapeutic effects.
- Forward bending asanas are those that involve the body bending towards the front. Creating space and length in the spine, forward bending asanas promote spinal health. These asanas also work towards making the tight and stiff muscles flexible.
- Inverted asanas refer to those asanas that reverse the gravity’s action on the body. In simpler words, defying the action of gravity on the body, in inverted asanas, the orientation of the body is shifted towards the head instead of being drawn towards the feet.
- The spine is one of the body parts that have crucial importance. Moreover, the spinal twisting asanas are meant to take care of it. The spinal twisting asanas also focus on restoring the natural motion range of the spine while stimulating the blood circulation and cleansing the organs of toxins.
- Balancing asanas are those that help in improving the balance of the body and the muscles. Boosting the balancing power, these asanas help in building a strong foundation for the practice of various asanas. Balancing asanas can be practiced anytime during a yoga session of asana.

10.6 KEY WORDS

- **Asanas:** It refers to comfortable and steady postures or seat that can justly cater to the purpose of meditation.
- **Static Asanas:** It refers to those asanas that focus on opening up the higher levels of consciousness and developing inner awareness.
- **Dynamic Asanas:** It refers to those asanas that involve the articulation of the spine.
- **Prone Asanas:** It refers to yoga postures where the belly is positioned downward or lying on the stomach is involved.

- **Supine Asanas:** It refers to certain yoga postures that are performed on the back while the belly is positioned facing the upwards.

Asanas

10.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short Answer Questions

1. What are common relaxation Asanas?
2. Name some of the standing Asanas.
3. What are Prone Asanas?
4. What are Supine Asanas?
5. What are the two categories of Asanas?

Long Answer Questions

1. What are the primary objectives of Asanas?
2. What are Meditation Asanas?
3. Describe classification of asanas based on the starting position.
4. Explain Balancing Asanas in detail
5. Explain Spinal Twisting Asanas in detail.

10.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 11 PRANAYAMA

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 - 11.2.3 Breathing and Life Span
 - 11.2.4 Pranayama and the Spiritual Aspirant
- 11.3 Types of Pranayama
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- 11.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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- 11.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 11.8 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's world when the human is suffering from diseases, stress, depression, hypertension, anger and arrogance, everyone seems to be running from one place to another in search of peace of mind. Some think that more money will give them that peace, some think that medication is their one stop solution and others keep on looking for the life that they were born with, and after one point, they too give up and get caught up in the same cycle of suffering. However, what they are actually suffering from is the lack of life or Prana. Prana means the vital energy that keeps us alive, that binds the physical self with the metaphysical self, that imparts consciousness and by the control and exercise of the prana, we can have more control over the life, and can be free from the lack of life and all the things that make us feel less lively.

By understanding the prana, and by controlling it, one can realize their body as a part of the whole cosmos, in the cosmic sense. In this unit, you will learn about the concept of pranayama and its types.

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the great changes that Pranayama can bring about in your life
- Explain the health benefits of pranayama

- Describe how pranayama increases lifespan
- Examine the different types of pranayama

11.2 THE CONCEPT OF PRANAYAMA

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Respiration is the process of breakdown of food (glucose) leading to the formation of energy and this process happens in each and every human cell but for this biochemical process to take place, those cells need oxygen (as only in some circumstances the respiration is anaerobic). Therefore, for this aerobic respiration, the oxygen is supplied via blood and this oxygen comes from the physical process of breathing (inhalation and exhalation). So, breathing is the life energy for every single cell of the body and hence the whole body. By doing breathing exercises, and clearing physical and emotional obstacles in our body, we can free the breath and so the flow of prana (life energy). These exercises are called Pranayama. By controlling the breath, we can control all the vital functions of the body and then through that we can take control of the soul and can achieve anything with the exercise of pranayama.

11.2.1 Prana and Lifestyle

We are living a sedentary lifestyle today; we are seated most of the times and are mostly looking for some or the other ways to not move out of our comfort zone. Most of us get up in the morning, freshen up, and eat anything that we can easily find or make without much thought and leave for work. We spend all our day mostly sitting down, working in a room in front of a computer, moving out for a lunch and again not paying much attention to what we are eating, get back home, do the work left and eat dinner, and fall asleep sinking into the digital screens playing in front of us.

In addition, we repeat the same process the next day as well. Moreover, in all of this, there is no time for any sort of physical activity that is making our body do any work. Over time, our body loses its capacity to do anything beyond what it has been doing. In addition, the body being not worked up physically is never able to expel the toxins that build up in our body due to the food we eat the air we breathe and gets stored in the body. On a long term, the body has become used to not doing any work and the toxins have accumulated, these factors start presenting us with problems that hamper the day-to-day functioning of the body such as stress, hypertension, headache and may lead to chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes. All of these can be minimized and finally be eradicated from the body by practicing pranayama that is the exercise of breathing. When we start breathing properly, our body parts and hence each cell starts receiving ample of oxygen and through natural functioning of the body parts itself, the toxins are removed. Thus, pranayama helps us counter the sedentary life that we are leading today.

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11.2.2 Breathe, Health and Pranayama

The breath is the first thing that enters the body and is the entity that is being constantly and involuntarily being consumed by the body at all the times from life to death. Thus, it connects the body to the nature and it is the main thing that interacts with the body.

There have been many researches that have shown direct relationship between health and pranayama. There are many evidences in research works to support that the practice of breathing, i.e. Pranayama, over a period of time strengthens the overall health of the body. It makes the body look much younger and youthful. The body becomes more balanced, strong and agile; the proper supply of oxygen relieves stress, keeps the body in control of the mind and opens up the nadis (nasal passages) as they become cleaner with better supply of oxygen making the body toxic free.

11.2.3 Breathing and Life Span

Much of the science is thinking of the ways to increase the life that we humans live, and a big breakthrough is yet to come. One of the longest living vertebrates is tortoise; they have been recorded to live for around 200 and the reason behind it has been found to be the low respiration rate. Other animals having longer lifespan also have low respiration rate and controlled longer breath. This is exactly the same thing that pranayama teaches, the exercise of breath, the life force. Through pranayama, we learn how to control breathing. Alternate breathing (*Nadi shodhana*) also called anuloma viloma, which comes under pranayama, have been proven to increase life span. One of the key indicators of life span is the resting heart rate, and anuloma viloma has been proven to slow the resting heart rate and give the rest to entire body making it more energetic, fit and balanced. Thus, pranayama and mortality rate or lifespan are directly related to each other.

11.2.4 Pranayama and the Spiritual Aspirant

The role of pranayama for a spiritual aspirant is inter-related. For a spiritual aspirant who aspires to follow the yoga of inner peace, yoga of inner wisdom, who wishes to be one with the divine God, and who aspires to connect his consciousness to the cosmos, has to breathe in purity, and he has to have most of the pure nature by breathing so that they can invoke the divine. While breathing in, if the aspirant believes that he is breathing in purity, the creation of the God himself, then only he will be pure enough to be free from all the worldly toxicants and will feel enlightened from the inside. When the aspirant starts breathing more purely, he is more enlightened, and he is more powerful and energetic from the within. When the aspirant breathes more deeply and slowly, he feels more connected to the nature and himself, and then he lights up the fire inside of him. When the aspirant breaths more then only they can give service to the humanity and hence the God himself.

11.3 TYPES OF PRANAYAMA

As we have learnt before, pranayama is the control of breathing which is the life energy in the body. 'Prana' means the pranic energy responsible for life or life force, and 'ayama' means control. Therefore, Pranayama is 'control of breathing'. One can control this energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind.

There are three types of pranayama such as:

- (a) Tranquilizing pranayama
- (b) Sensitizing Pranayama
- (c) Vitalizing Pranayama

Let's discuss each of these types.

11.3.1 Tranquilizing Pranayama

Pancha Kosha are considered to be five layers around the human soul. It consists of:

- Annamaya kosha — the food sheath
- Pranamaya kosha — the breath sheath
- Manomaya kosha — the mind sheath
- Vijnayanamaya kosha — the intellect sheath
- Anandamaya kosha — the bliss sheath

The tranquilizing pranayama is the type of Pranayama which tranquilizes the *Pranayama Kosha*, which is the second of the five layers of the body; these five layers are referred to as *pancha kosha* collectively. This pranayama gives a soothing effect and a feeling of pleasure for the mind and body; it relaxes the body and takes away all the stress. The examples are:

1. Ujjayi Pranayama
2. Brahmari Pranayama
3. Sheetal Pranayama
4. Sheetkari Pranayama

The first two types namely *Ujjayi* and *Brahmari* Pranayama are very effective in awakening the awareness in the inner psychic and the vibrations of sound produced inside the body are very pleasing and play a soothing effect on both the mind and the body.

The last two types namely *Sheetali* and *Sheetkari* Pranayama are very different and unique as in other pranayama the breathing is done through the nose but in this, the breathing is carried out through the mouth. The tongue is rolled back and the breathing is done through the mouth and the exhalation is done through the nose. Since the breathing through nose heats up the air before it enters

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the lungs, the breathing through mouth causes a cooling effect thus cooling down the body.

11.3.2 Sensitizing Pranayama

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Pranayama done for a specific part of the body or done for the awareness and awakening of one specific part of the body comes under the sensitizing pranayama. This pranayama sensitizes that specific part of the body of it brings more sensitiveness to that part of the body keeping which in mind the pranayama was done.

The Mudra pranayamas are example of sensitizing pranayama. The practitioner uses different kinds of mudras to bring sensitiveness to different parts of the body and channelize the energy properly. The examples are following:

1. Chinmudra (also known as Gyan Mudra, can be described as a yogic gesture that represents the unified nature of human consciousness)
2. Chinmaya mudra (also referred to as “the gesture of awareness,” is one of the powerful mudras that promote physical and mental health)
3. Brahma mudra (is a hand gesture used in both yoga asana, meditation and pranayama practice that is valued for both its symbolic and healing qualities)

11.3.3 Vitalizing Pranayama

This type of pranayama revitalizes the body, i.e. it gives strength and energy to the mind and body, and it endows the mind and body with vitality. The examples of this type of pranayama are the following:

1. Kapalbhaati Pranayama
2. Bhastrika Pranayama
3. Surya Bhedan Pranayama

As we have learnt before *Kapalbhaati* is a sanskrit word that means forehead shining since ‘kapal’ means forehead ‘bhaati’ means shining. As the name itself describes, *Kapalbhaati* pranayama gives the practitioner a shining intellect. It is one of the simplest pranayama. It is a ‘shat’ Kriya process in which toxic air is flushed out from the body, and the body is cleaned during this process. Cleaning has various mental and physical benefits. In this pranayama, one has to sit in a yogic posture and breathe. It is more of a breathing exercise rather than assuming a pose with the help of your limbs. Practicing this keeps the mind healthy and keeps the spirit high.

In *Bhastrika Pranayama*, we have to operate lungs like the bellow, fast inhalation and fast exhalation happens, and that is followed by inhalation through right nostril and performing kumbhaka (a type of yogic breathing exercise in which the breath is retained or stopped) with bandhas (*is a yogic practice which involves concentrated muscular contractions*) and exhalation through left nostril is done.

The circulation of cerebral fluid happens due to the rhythmic inhalation and exhalation, which creates compression and decompression in the brain. The Rhythmic diaphragm movements of heart and lung muscles improve the circulation of the blood throughout the body. This circulation improvement will clean the toxins on the cellular level.

Surya means the sun. In *Surya Bhedan Pranayama*, the inhalation is done from the right nostril and the exhalation is done from the left nostril. In addition, in between, Kumbhaka with Bandhas is done in which chin lock, anus lock and the abdominal lock are performed. This pranayama stimulates the left part of the brain and it stimulates the sympathetic nervous system. It deals with balancing of the mucus in the body and one can do away with gas related problems by performing this pranayama.

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Check Your Progress

1. State one of the key indicators of life span.
2. What is tranquilized in tranquilizing pranayama?
3. Name the types of pranayama in which breathing is carried out through the mouth.
4. Which mudra is referred to as 'gesture of awareness'?
5. Mention the pranayama which stimulates the left part of the brain and it stimulates the sympathetic nervous system.

11.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. One of the key indicators of life span is the resting heart rate.
2. The tranquilizing pranayama is the type of Pranayama which tranquilizes the *Pranayama Kosha*.
3. The *Sheetali* and *Sheetkari* Pranayama are the types of pranayama in which the breathing is carried out through the mouth.
4. Chinmaya mudra is referred to as 'gesture of awareness'.
5. The *Surya Bhedan Pranayama* stimulates the left part of the brain and it stimulates the sympathetic nervous system.

11.5 SUMMARY

- By doing breathing exercises, and clearing physical and emotional obstacles in our body, we can free the breath and so the flow of prana (life energy). These exercises are called Pranayama.

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- By controlling the breath, we can control all the vital functions of the body and then through that we can take control of the soul and can achieve anything with the exercise of pranayama.
- When we start breathing properly, our body parts and hence each cell starts receiving ample of oxygen and through natural functioning of the body parts itself, the toxins are removed. Thus, pranayama helps us counter the sedentary life that we are leading today. The breath is the first thing that enters the body and is the entity that is being constantly, involuntarily being consumed by the body at all the times from life to death.
- The role of pranayama for a spiritual aspirant is inter-related. For a spiritual aspirant who aspires to follow the yoga of inner peace, yoga of inner wisdom, who wishes to be one with the divine God, and who aspires to connect his consciousness to the cosmos, has to breathe in purity, and he has to have most of the pure nature by breathing so that they can invoke the divine.
- Pranayama is the control of breathing which is the life energy in the body.” Prana” means the pranic energy responsible for life or life force, and “ayama” means control. Therefore, Pranayama is “Control of Breathing”. One can control this energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind. There are three types of pranayama such as, Tranquilizing pranayama, Sensitizing Pranayama and Vitalizing Pranayama.
- The tranquilizing pranayama is the type of Pranayama which tranquilizes the *Pranayama Kosha*, which is the second of the five layers of the body; these five layers are referred to as *pancha kosha* collectively. This pranayama gives a soothing effect and a feeling of pleasure for the mind and body; it relaxes the body and takes away all the stress.
- Pranayama done for a specific part of the body of done for the awareness and awakening of one specific part of the body comes under the sensitizing pranayama. This pranayama sensitizes that specific part of the body of it brings more sensitiveness to that part of the body keeping which in mind the pranayama was done.
- Vitalizing Pranayama is the type of pranayama which revitalizes the body, i.e. it gives strength and energy to the mind and body, and it endows the mind and body with vitality.

11.6 KEY WORDS

- **Prana:** It means the vital energy that keeps us alive, that binds the physical self with the metaphysical self, that imparts consciousness.
- **Pancha Kosha:** These are considered to be five layers around the human soul.

- **Shat Kriya:** It refers to the six yogic cleansing processes used by yoga practitioners to help purify the physical body.
- **Kumbhaka pranayama:** It is a type of yogic breathing exercise in which the breath is retained or stopped.
- **Bandha:** It is a yogic practice which involves concentrated muscular contractions. Performing these locks can aid the practitioner in improving their focus and supporting physical health.

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11.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are the types of Pranayama?
2. What are the examples of Sensitizing Pranayama?

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain how Pranayama is related to life span.
2. Describe Vitalizing Pranayama and its types.
3. Discuss the different types of Tranquilizing Pranayama.
4. Explain the relation between Pranayama and the spiritual aspirant.

11.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK - IV
METHODS OF MEDITATION

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UNIT 12 BALANCING PRANAYAMA

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 - 12.2.5 Kaya (Postural) Mudra
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12.0 INTRODUCTION

Among the most important Wings of Yoga, is Pranayama. As we have learnt before, it has roots in the Sanskrit word ‘prana’ meaning life force and ‘ayama’ meaning control. In Indian mythology and even in Ayurveda – life is not counted in the number of years, but in the number of breaths, so pranayama focusses on the science of breathing and controlling one’s ability to inhale and exhale in a disciplined fashion which, paves the way for a longer healthier life. Patanjali yoga sutra also describes it as the ability to monitor and control one’s breathing, both the inhalation and exhalation processes, separately and together as one. In simple words Pranayama increases the duration of breathing (*Dirgha-deep*) and makes it gentler (*Sukshma*). It increases the oxygen carrying capacity of blood, and increases the lapse between two sets of breaths.

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of mudras and prana

- Describe the scientific benefits of Mudras
- Explain the different type of Mudras
- Examine the concept of Bandhas
- Discuss the different types of Bandhas

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12.2 MUDRA

Mudra is a Sanskrit word and depicts ‘gestures’. A mudra can be a simple hand gesture or a combination of yogic pranayama and body gestures. Mudras guide energy flow through our body and are done mainly in conjunction with meditation and various pranayama techniques. The five fingers represent the five elements of our body that are fire, air, aether, earth and water. Different Mudras practiced with different sound vibrations, stimulate specific chakras or energy centres in our body. Scientifically speaking they trigger our specific acupressure points and develop specific neurological pathways with energy flow. Thus, Mudras may look simple, but are an extremely important detail in yogic and pranic practices.

12.2.1 Mudra and Prana

Our body comprises of seven energy centres called Chakras or the wheel of energy. In yogic science, it is believed that energy flows in our body through paths called nadis and through the chakras. The highest chakra is our crown chakra, which resonates with awakening of the subconscious and mudra associated with this is Gyaan Mudra (thumb touching index finger) used in constant chanting of the sound ‘Aum’. The Gyaan Mudra is the most powerful of all mudras and it has been scientifically proven to improve the neurological pathways, resulting in better memory and higher consciousness. Pranayama is the science behind controlled breathing and mudras channelize energy flow in the body. Thus, whatever prana or life was initially being wasted by our system is absorbed back and redirected inside the body itself. The control of Prana through mudras requires patience and practice and paves the way for higher yogic practices that need a lot of concentration.

12.2.2 Scientific Benefits of Mudras

Mudras, as discussed, influence our brain to form new neurons and develop new brain passages. Every mudra is in itself a different set of body equation, leading to varied effects on the body.

Gyaan Mudra’s most visible effect is enhancing brainpower, and tapping into resources hidden in our mind. Some mudras eliminate the body of psychological disorders like anger, depression, stress etc. It also helps in hormonal balance further leading to rectifying many disorders the body.

The Vayu Mudra controls the air element in the body, thus reducing bloated stomach, gastric issues etc. It also controls Vata dosha, helping reduce arthritis and sciatica. The Prana Mudra for instance is used in Nadi shodhan Pranayam,

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and results in energy flow during pranayama through the body. Various mudras help in relieving stress from different parts of our body. They are so powerful that they even help in strengthening bones, reducing impact of diseases, control weight and obesity and remove skin problems etc.

12.2.3 Hasta Mudra

Hasta/ hand mudras are the ones in which gestures are formed using fingers and palms. The flow of energy is from palms to specific body parts and back. Hand mudras are specifically to target the brain, so most energy loops are from the brain and back to the palms. Jnana, Chin, Yoni, Bhiravi and Hridaya Mudras are the techniques to do hand Mudras. Among the various hand mudras Gyana, Prithvi, Vayu, Varuna, Surya, Shunya and ling mudras are the most commonly used mudras. One of the basics for doing a Hasta mudra is sitting position. Since Mudra facilitates blocking dissipation and facilitation of internal energy flow, the body needs to be in a position to ease the process. Energy flow in body is best done, when we sit without support, back perpendicular to the ground, preferably in Padmasana, which enables all our chakras to be in the same line. Scientifically speaking our cerebral cortex should be in line with our last vertebra for an efficient energy cycle.

12.2.4 Mana Mudra

Mana – head mudras – uses sense organs, to indulge in mudras that require concentration and staying in mudra for a longer duration for results. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue and lips are used to practice Mana Mudras. These mudras break old habits and cycles and the practitioner develops better consciousness. They are integral to kundalini yoga, as it requires high concentration levels.

Different types of Mana Mudras are

- Shambhavi – reduces temple stress and strengthens eye muscles
- Nasika drishti – calms anger and disbalanced emotions
- Kechari - reduce hunger and thirst
- Kaki – induces cooling effect in body
- Bhoochari – increases memory and concentration
- Akashi- relieves thyroid
- Shanmukhi- calms nervous system
- Unmani – reduce stress

12.2.5 Kaya (Postural) Mudra

Kaya means body. Kaya mudras are simply mudras done using body postures; they induce stress relief and relaxation of nervous systems in general.

The types of kaya mudras include:

- Vipreet karani (Inverted Psychic mudra) – balances thyroid
- Pashinee mudra – Soothes nervous system, stretches spine and back muscles
- Tadagi Mudra – raises prana level, induces lower chakra balancing, abdominal toning, relieve body stress
- Prana Mudra – increase inhalation time and helps retain breath. Increase strength, develops energy channels in nadis and chakras and develops higher consciousness
- Yoga mudra – Spinal stretch and general health
- Manduki mudra – (manduka means frog) – meditative posture

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12.2.6 Adhara – Perineal Mudras

These include mudras to redirect energy from lower sacral and lumbar chakras to cerebral chakras, to channelize sexual energy dissipating through lower chakras to the brain. The acquisition of this mudra is not easy and it leads to a huge inflow of energy to the brain when mastered, inducing high concentrations and lower sexual energy, promoting high focus and consciousness. Ashwini Mudra and Vajroli Mudra are practiced in this category. Ashwini mudra is contraction of anal muscles; the Vajroli Mudra is contraction of Urethra muscles, both of them prevent losing energy through sacral channels and redirecting it to the brain.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the pranayama in which the prana mudra is used.
2. List the commonly used hand mudras.

12.3 BANDHA: LOCK MUDRAS

Bandha simply means lock, to shut out or close. The physical act of doing a bandha involves tightening muscles or locking the area with postures to prevent energy dissipation from that area. In bandha mudra both prana and mudras are used to block energy flow to certain parts of body. It is like holding the mouth of a pipe of water, when the lock is released, the energy flows more strongly. The purpose is to flush out stored negative energy and toxins with a force, to clean, detox and strengthen the organs. Bandhas clean the blockages in nadis and chakras and enable cleaner seamless energy flows.

There are four types of bandhas associated with Granthis (imagine as valves), which impede free flow of energy in the body. This means that these blocks or valves need clearing to accelerate the process of detoxification through Bandha Abhayasa (practice).

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- Moola Bandha or Anal Lock is situated at *Bhrami Granthi*. Since it is located in Sacral and Root chakra area, it guides sexual and survival instinct. The manipulation of this Granthi directs energy to the brain. Reducing concentration on sexual desires and increasing in the sub conscious.
- Uddiyani Bandh is situated at the *Vishnu Granthi*. It is located at the Solar plexus and Heart Chakra, which are a seat of physical desires (eating, sleeping, metabolism, mental body etc.). Controlling Uddiyani reduces the impact of outward physical and mental desires and emotional attachment.
- Jalandhara Bandh is situated at *Rudra Granthi* that is the seat of Throat Chakra and moves up to crown and third Eye chakra both of which are the seat of the subconscious mind. Needless to mention that Jalandar Bandha exposes one to the seat of super human sub consciousness.
- Maha Bandh is practicing all the three Bandhs at the same time.

12.3.1 Concept of Lock

The bandha mudra or locks can be seen as blocking the mouth of a running tap or pipe; as soon as it is blocked, the pressure inside starts rising, until it forces the blockage out, releasing the water with force. Similarly, Bandha is practiced to shut down *Granthis* or valves that impede the energy flow in body. Once the bandha is maintained the pressure inside surmounts and on release of bandha mudra, the energy pushes itself out. This enables release of dead cells, toxins, unwanted energies in the body and circulates energy through the Granthis to other parts.

12.3.2 Mechanics of Bandhas

All the three Bandhas, Mool, Uddhiyan and Jalandar Bandh have different mechanics to carry out the Bandhas.

- **Moola Bandha:** It is initiated by contracting the muscles in the perineal/ vaginal region. One is supposed to focus on the muscles of the region and subject them to periodic contraction holding and relaxation, in repetitive cycles.
- **Uddiyani Bandha:** It is not done by contracting abdominal muscles rather by sucking them inwards and pushing upwards towards the chest.
- **Jalandar Bandha:** Commonly called as the chin lock, it is practiced in various asanas and in Kriyas. The bandh is done by pressing the chin directly in the chest and hunching shoulders upwards for more pressure.

Let us understand these Bandha's in detail.

Mool Bandha

The Mool bandha is locking of the *Bhrahmi Granthi* in the Perineal/ vaginal regions that is the seat of our Sacral and Root chakras. The Sacral Chakra Guides our sexual abilities, desires and procreation and Root Chakra guides our survival

instinct. Mool Bandha transcends the Bhrahmi Granthi and directs the energy that was wasted through sacral regions. By inducing bandha, the energy is locked and transmitted to higher chakras. With this, a flow of energy is created to balance the energies in the body. It reduces the overload of sexual desires and lack of concentration as a result of it, transmitting energies to Crown and third eye Chakra that awaken our subconscious.

Uddiyani Bandha

The Uddiyani is the locking of the diaphragm or mid body lock, also called the *Vishnu Granthi*, or the seat of Solar plexus and Heart chakras, both of which are responsible for Physical and mental desires – like eating, sleeping, digestion, metabolism, emotional responses, etc. Manipulation of Vishnu Granthi enables a person utmost control of his/her physical and mental desires. It makes the person immune to emotional upheavals and stresses, making them free from all kinds of tangible and intangible desires. The Uddiyani is practiced through sucking the abdomen in and up to the chest, along with a Jalandhar bandh or chin lock.

Jalandhar Bandha

The Jalandhar bandha locks the *Rudra Granthi*, or the chin lock. From the head to chin, three chakras align above our throat – The Throat Chakra, The Third Eye Chakra and The Crown Chakra. The throat chakra is responsible for thyroid, speech, healing (lymphatic ducts), self-expression etc. The Third Eye Chakra is responsible for decision-making and convergence of mind and body, while the Crown Chakra is the seat of the subconscious mind, which separates human mind from ego and creates detachment from all worldly pleasure. Inducing this bandha creates mental relaxation, relieving stress, anxiety and anger. It develops meditative environment and improves focus. The stimulus on the throat helps to balance thyroid function, regulate metabolic activities, and boost immunity.

12.3.3 Physical Effect of Bandhas

All the bandhas mastered together create a full flow of energy, detaching one from sexual, physical, mental desires, emotional stress, trauma etc. and induces relation and meditative introversion. With guided practice, a person gradually balances and loses ego and self-obsession and gains higher concentration and subconscious penetration.

Some physical visible benefits of bandhas are:

- Increase in blood circulation
- Increased immunity
- Hormonal balance
- Mental relaxation and stress relieving
- Decrease heart rate, increase breath retention

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- Toning of pelvic muscles (useful for loose muscles and related medical problems)
- Strengthening internal organs like liver, pancreas etc.
- Improve digestion
- Low skin related issues

Check Your Progress

3. What is another name for Uddiyani Bandha?
4. Name the chakras which align above our throat.

12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Prana Mudra is used in Nadi shodhan Pranayam, and results in energy flow during pranayama through the body.
2. Among the various hand mudras Gyana, Prithvi, Vayu, Varuna, Surya, Shunya and ling mudras are the most commonly used mudras.
3. The Uddiyani Bandha is also called the *Vishnu Granthi*.
4. From the head to chin, three chakras align above our throat – The Throat Chakra, The Third Eye Chakra and The Crown Chakra.

12.5 SUMMARY

- Pranayam is the science of breathing and controlling one's ability to inhale and exhale in a disciplined fashion, which paves the way for a longer healthier life. It is the ability to monitor and control ones breathing, both the inhalation and exhalation processes, separately and together as one.
- In simple words Pranayam increases the duration of breathing (*Dirgha-deep*) and makes it gentler (*Sukshma*), increases the oxygen carrying capacity of blood, and increases the lapse between two sets of breaths.
- Mudras means gestures. Mudras guide energy flow through our body and are done mainly in conjunction with meditation and various pranayama techniques. The five fingers represent the five elements of our body that are fire, air, aether, earth and water.
- Different Mudras practiced with different sound vibrations, stimulate specific chakras or energy centres in our body.
- Bandha simply means lock, to shut out or close. In bandha mudra both Prana and Mudras are used to block energy flow to certain parts of body.

The purpose is to flush out stored negative energy and toxins with a force, to clean, detox and strengthen the organs.

- Bandhas clean the blockages in nadis and chakras and enable cleaner seamless energy flows.
- There are four types of bandhas:
 - o Mula Bandha – Anal Lock
 - o Uddiyani Bandha – Lifting Diaphragm
 - o Jalandhara Bandha – chin lock
 - o Maha Bandha is practicing the three Bandhs at the same time
- All the bandhas mastered together create a full flow of energy, detaching one from sexual, physical, mental desires, emotional stress, trauma etc. and induces relation and meditative introversion. With guided practice, a person gradually balances and loses ego and self-obsession and gains higher concentration and subconscious penetration.

NOTES

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Mudra:** It refers to a simple hand gesture or a combination of yogic pranayama and body gestures. Mudras guide energy flow through our body and are done mainly in conjunction with meditation and various pranayama techniques.
- **Chakras:** It refers to the seven energy centres or the wheel of energy in our body.
- **Granthis:** It refers to the valves that impede the energy flow in body.
- **Bandha:** In yoga, it refers to the physical act of tightening muscles or locking the area with postures to prevent energy dissipation from that area.

12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What are five elements of body?
2. What is the relation between Mudras and Pranayam?
3. Briefly explain the scientific benefits of Mudras.
4. What is Maha Bandha?
5. What are the uses of the Throat, Third Eye and Crown Chakras?
6. List the benefits of Bandhas.

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain all four Mudras in detail.
2. Describe Moola Bandha, Uddiyani Bandha, and Jalandhara Bandha.

NOTES

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

Chandrasekaran, K. 1999. *Sound Health Through Yoga*. Madurai: Prem Kalyan Publications.

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Satyananda, Saraswati Swami. 2007. *Meditations from the Tantras*. Munger: Yoga Publications Trust.

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UNIT 13 KRIYAS

Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Kriyas
 - 13.2.1 Kapalabhati
 - 13.2.2 Trataka Kriya
 - 13.2.3 Neti Kriyas
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- 13.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
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NOTES

13.0 INTRODUCTION

According to the Indian medicine theory also known as tridosha theory, human body is composed of three components or doshas called tridoshas.

1. Vata which is a mechanical essential of the body
2. Pitta is a chemical functional essential of the body
3. Kapha is a material functional essential of the body

These three doshas should be balanced. Imbalance of any of these doshas leads to the invitation of disease. To keep these in balance, the cleaning of body and mind is very important. Not only externally, one should clean every day, but internally also. For the internal cleaning, Yoga has introduced Kriyas.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the concept of Kriyas
- Describe the types of Kriyas

13.2 KRIYAS

Kriyas are the techniques for cleaning the body internally. It is an ultimate purification of the body and mind. There are six cleaning process of Kriyas called as Shat-

Karma Kriyas. The six purification techniques are Kapalabhati, Trataka, Neti Kriyas, Dhouti, Nauli Kriyas and Vasti Kriyas.

13.2.1 Kapalabhati

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As we have learnt before, Kapalabhati means polishing of head. It is an impulsive breathing process that detoxify the respiratory system of the body and helps in cleaning the brain cell. This technique is done in the seating asanas like Sukhasana or Vajrasana. In this process, deep breath should be inhaled naturally and then exhale the breath with maximum force for three to four times. Exhalation should be done only by nose. During the exhalation, hissing sound will be created.

This Kriya helps in improving memory, developing the thinking ability and cleaning of the entire respiratory system. Best time to practice this Kriya is during morning when there is fresh air or during evening, and it should never be performed after meals.

13.2.2 Trataka Kriya

Trataka means continuous gazing. Trataka Kriya is an eye exercise that helps in improving eyesight and helps in developing focus. Trataka is a process in which eyes are focused to an object generally to a candle's flame, without blinking. During this, continuous gazing eyes will become wet and will be cleaned. This should be practiced in the dark room where the focus will be on the flame only. One can also focus on the thumb of the hand by stretching the hand straight and raising the thumb, then keep the focus only on thumb as long as possible. This can also be done by continuous gazing to the tip of the nose or by keeping focus on third eye. After the performance of continuous gazing, relax the eyes by keeping the palm lightly on the eyes.

Trataka Kriya also helps in preparing the meditation and helps in strengthening the eyes.

13.2.3 Neti Kriyas

Neti Kriya is the process for cleansing of nose. It helps in the purification of the nostrils and the nasal passages. It also helps in releasing depression and anxiety. It helps in balancing the nervous system. Neti Kriya process is done by using two kinds of tools that are Jal (water) and Sutra (thread). These two tool helps in purification process.

In Jal Neti Kriya, water is poured with the help of pot in one nostril and out by other. Head should be tilted while performing this Kriya. During this process breathing should be normal and by mouth. After the Kriya is done, no water should be left in the nostril. Water used in this process should be saline and lukewarm. This Kriya should be performed everyday if the person is living in polluted city.

In Sutra Neti Kriya, cotton waxed strings of thread are used. In this technique, one end of the string is inserted into the nostril and taken out through the mouth. Both the ends of the thread are moved forward and backward for 5-10 times for each nostril. After that, the thread is removed out of the mouth.

13.2.4 Dhouti Kriya

Dhouti Kriya is the process for cleaning of stomach. It is specifically related to the removal of toxins and impurities in the intestine. The three types of Dhouti Kriyas are Jal Vaman (water) Dhouti, Vastra (cloth) Dhouti and Danda (stick) Dhouti.

In Jal Vaman, 8-10 glasses of saline water is consumed while sitting, then with the help of fingers vomiting is induced so that the water is spit out that is accumulated with toxic, gases, acids and other wastes.

In Vastra Dhouti, a clean muslin type of cloth is swallowed from one end, soaking the fluids present in the digestive system and then pulled out.

Very few trained yogis perform Danda Dhouti. In this Kriya, a special stick of a wood is swallowed in the stomach for the cleansing of digestive system.

All the three Dhouti Kriyas help in the treatment of gastric problems, bile disorders and constipation. It helps in detoxifying the impurities in digestive system.

13.2.5 Nauli Kriyas

Nauli Kriya is the process of toning abdomen and cleaning of the internal organ. It is also known as abdomen churning. This involves naval movements. It helps in curing stomach and liver related problem.

Nauli Kriya is followed by Uddiyana Kriya. In Uddiyana Kriya, lungs are emptied, breath is hold and abdomen is pulled upwards. It is the process of lifting energy to the chest, throat and to the brain. The stomach is sucked in to the maximum point. The vacuum created is Uddiyana.

13.2.6 Vasti Kriyas

Vasti Kriya is the process for cleaning of large intestine. It is done for the purification of the lower abdomen. It is also known as 'Yogic enema', as it involves the purification through the colon. It helps in curing digestive related problem, irregular bowels, and urinary disorders.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the position in which the Kapalabhati Kriya is done.
2. What are the tools used in the Neti Kriya process?
3. Mention the Kriya which is used for cleaning of large intestine.

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13.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

NOTES

1. Kapalabhati technique is done in the seating asanas like Sukhasana or Vajrasana.
2. Neti Kriya process is done by using two kinds of tools that are Jal (water) and Sutra (thread).
3. Vasti Kriya is the process for cleaning of large intestine.

13.4 SUMMARY

- Purification and cleansing of the body is very important to keep the doshas in balance.
- There are Kriyas that helps in purification of the internal parts of body.
- There are six cleaning process of Kriyas called as Shat-Karma Kriyas. The six purification methods are Kapalabhati, Trataka, Neti Kriyas, Dhouti, Nauli Kriyas and Vasti Kriyas.
- All these Kriyas help in maintaining the balance of body and mind. These purification methods help in curing various health related problem.
- Kapalabhati means polishing of head. It is an impulsive breathing process that detoxify the respiratory system of the body and helps in cleaning the brain cell.
- Trataka Kriya is an eye exercise that helps in improving eyesight and helps in developing focus. Trataka is a process in which eyes are focused to an object generally to a candle's flame, without blinking.
- Neti Kriya is the process for cleansing of nose. It helps in the purification of the nostrils and the nasal passages. It also helps in releasing depression and anxiety.
- Dhouti Kriya is the process for cleaning of stomach. It is specifically related to the removal of toxins and impurities in the intestine. The three types of Dhouti Kriyas are Jal Vaman (water) Dhouti, Vastra (cloth) Dhouti and Danda (stick) Dhouti.
- Nauli Kriya is the process of toning abdomen and cleaning of the internal organ. It is also known as abdomen churning.
- Vasti Kriya is the process for cleaning of large intestine. It is done for the purification of the lower abdomen. It is also known as 'Yogic enema', as it involves the purification through the colon.

13.5 KEY WORDS

- **Tridosha Theory:** According to the Indian medicine theory, there are the components of the human body including Vata, Pitta and Kapha and imbalance of any of these doshas leads to the invitation of disease.
- **Vajrasana:** Also known as the thunderbolt pose, it is a sitting asana in yoga. It is a kneeling position sitting on the heels.

NOTES

13.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. How is the Kapalabhatti kriya performed? List its benefits.
2. Write a short note on Neti Kriya.
3. State the concept of Nauli Kriya.

Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the process of Trataka in detail.
2. Describe the Dhouti Kriya and its types.

13.7 FURTHER READINGS

- Chandrasekaran, K. 1999. *Sound Health Through Yoga*. Madurai: Prem Kalyan Publications.
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UNIT 14 MEDITATION

NOTES

Structure

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 - 14.2.1 Methods of Meditation
 - 14.2.2 Concept of Meditation
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 - 14.3.1 Muscle Relaxation
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 - 14.5.1 Sri Aurobindo Meditation
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14.0 INTRODUCTION

Meditation is an art or skill of developing a focus on a particular object or on an activity while achieving an emotionally calm state. It gives a deep rest along with good concentration, inner strength and relaxation through the mind. Meditation is a way of training the mind, similarly training the body for healthy fitness. Meditation has the power to create peace of mind and unconditional happiness. In this unit, you will learn about the concept of meditation, the different techniques involved, benefits of mediation and varied types of meditation.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of meditation
- Describe specific techniques of mediation
- Explain the benefits of meditation
- Discuss the different types of meditation

14.2 INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION

The result of the growing social and cultural rush-taking place around us is that we are getting our mind stressed. We rely upon a good state of mind to be happy, content, and emotionally stable as individuals and at the same time to be kind, thoughtful, and considerate in our relationship with others. Soundness of mind contributes towards us being focused, creative, and spontaneous and to perform at our very best in everything that we do. However, what happens actually is that we use our mind to process many difficult thoughts and confusing emotions and we really do not know how to deal with that. This makes us miss the other things that could have been more important to us.

Different people deal with stress in different ways. Some of them busy themselves with heavy work, grateful for the distraction and others turn to their friends and family for support. However, we often seem to undermine the idea of dealing with stress by living in the present moment, to which meditation paves the right path and is technically proven. While meditating, it is important that our good intentions extend beyond the simple act of closing our eyes. Training the mind is much more difficult than it seems. It is not just limited to stopping thoughts or eliminating feelings. Meditation gifts a person with a greater appreciation and understanding for the present moment. It does not mean not getting lost in thoughts, not being distracted, not with overwhelmed with different emotions, but instead learning how to be in the here and now and to be mindful with healthy thought process. Meditation simply familiarizes ourselves with the present moment.

14.2.1 Methods of Meditation

Meditation offers time for heightened and relaxation awareness in a stressful world where our senses are dulled. Research tells that meditation has the potential for more than just temporary stress relief.

Concentration meditation involves focusing on a single point. This could entail following the repeating a single word or mantra, breath, listening to a repetitive gong, staring at a candle flame, or counting beads on a mala. The challenging part in meditation is to stay focus. A beginner can meditate for only a few minutes and then can practice for longer durations. Meditation inspires the practitioner to observe wandering thoughts and to keep the focus on them.

14.2.2 Concept of Meditation

Meditation is the practice of balancing and achieving, the physical, mental and emotional aspects. Meditation is used to decrease the symptoms associated with stress, depression, and anxiety. The ‘deep rest’ that is succeeded through the practice of meditation can eliminate stress and uncertainty. This allows the individual to make better decisions through clearer and more focused thinking.

NOTES

The concepts of meditation are similar to Yoga as both have same objective. In both these disciplines, self-healing depends on the practitioner to focus on maintaining a balance between physical and mental state.

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Meditation, as explained, is the collective name of a process, which helps us to be more and more aware of our actions, thoughts, feelings and emotions. It has no rigid rules. You are not required to sit cross-legged in a particular pose for mediation. You can meditate in the most mundane circumstances. In fact, the best meditation is possible when your body is in the most comfortable state. The requirement of yoga in meditation is only for the purpose of instilling a habit of regularity in you.

14.3 SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

Meditation is a process of training your mind for peace and calm state by increasing concentration and focus and relaxing the thoughts and body through various techniques. There are few widely used techniques discussed below.

There are many ways to approach relaxation techniques. Our body releases few chemicals for 'flight or fight', during stress. These stressful situations in day-to-day life are lifesaving in an emergency. However, if this stress constantly increases it takes over the emotional and physical health.

14.3.1 Muscle Relaxation

Dr. Edmund Jacobson invented the 'Jacobson's relaxation technique' in the 1920s to help people suffering from anxiety. According to Jacobson's relaxation technique, relaxing the muscles is directly proportional to relaxing the mind. This method involves tightening one of the muscle groups, while taking a deep breath and relaxing the remaining muscles of the body, which results in a release of tension. This is a therapy, which includes tightening the group of muscles while relaxing the other in an order of sequence. Dr. Jacobson says that, by focusing on a specific group of muscles, that is by tensing and relaxing them, we can be aware of our own body and physical sensations. This method is also known as progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) therapy.

This PMR is flowed by simple ten steps:

1. In a quiet place which is free from distractions. Recline in a chair or lie on the floor. Rest your hands.
2. Start taking few slow breaths.
3. Forehead – Squeeze the forehead muscles. Be sure to tense only the forehead muscles and the remaining body have to be relaxed. Slowly release the tension in your forehead. Continue to breathe slowly and evenly.
4. Jaw – Tense the jaw muscles and release them slowly. Feel the relaxation without forgetting to breathe evenly and slowly.

5. Neck and Shoulders – Increase tension in the muscles of neck and shoulders while raising the shoulders towards ears followed by releasing the tension created in the neck and shoulders.
6. Arms and Hands – While drawing both hands into fists, pull the fists closer to the chest. Squeeze them as tight as possible. Slowly start releasing the muscles tensed previously while noticing the relaxation in the created in the arms and hands region.
7. Buttocks – Slowly increase the tension in the muscles of buttocks followed by releasing the tension. Continue to breathe evenly and slowly.
8. Legs – Increase the tension in the quadriceps and calves. Melt the tension and start feeling relaxed.
9. Feet – Slowly, create tension in feet and toes and slowly release the tension.
10. Continue to breathe evenly and slowly throughout the process while creating or increasing the tense and relaxing the muscles.

NOTES

This technique is widely used in insomnia patients. Researches studies provide evidence that Jacobson's relaxation technique helps in patients to reduce epilepsy and the frequency of their seizures.

Deep muscle relaxation is a technique for beginners to tense your muscle and then consciously relax them. When the muscles are tensed, there is decreased blood flow, nerve communication and even nutrient assimilation. This is will help the body to open the pores and allow the fresh blood flow through the muscle and nourishing it. This allows the energy to heal every part of the body.

14.3.2 Logic Relaxation

Meditation involves, a state known as 'logic relaxation'. Many consider there is an increase of the activation of the prefrontal lobe. This region is associated with logic and is not supposed to be activated during the 'logic relaxation'. It was termed by Craven in 1989.

According to Cardoso et al. 2004 and Cardoso et al., 2007, logic relaxation is one of the most difficult concepts to understand. To obtain logic relaxation there are three major things to follow:

1. Not "to intend" to analyse the possible psychophysical effects
2. Not "to intend" to judge the possible effects
3. Not "to intend" to create any type of expectation regarding the process

Through these three strategies, it helps the individual to become involved in the thoughts which appear during meditation.

Logic relaxation is unclear and paradox in the beginning. In simple terms meditation is an alternative process of 'anchor' (self-focusing skill) and logic relaxation. Meditation gradually increases the 'focused in the anchor'. Despite

the person's attention to maintain 'logic relaxation', will involve in the stream of thoughts and return to the anchor.

NOTES

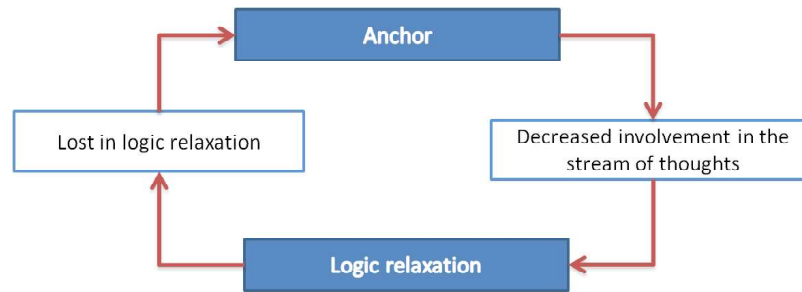


Fig. 14.1 Method of Logic Relaxation

In this schematical representation, the higher activity in prefrontal lobe, caused by the use of the 'self-focus skill', which is an exercise to increase the focus of the attention, important in the initial stage of meditating process. The model has explained better in seven steps:

1. Definition of the specific technique
2. Application of the 'anchor exercise'
3. 'Logic relaxation'
4. Loss of 'logic relaxation'
5. Higher effort in the 'anchor exercise'
6. Repeated cycles, every time in more distant
7. Psychophysical relaxation

14.3.3 Self-Induced State

Instead of getting more in touch with reality we humans tend to take a step away from reality. Meditation causes us to take a step away from the model of reality that we have built in our minds, by adding thought after thought through the years, until the only world we can see is the one we built (or others built in you, often enough). On the contrary, the state of meditation results in heightened awareness of reality rather than diminishing it. Many of the techniques of meditation use a mechanism that narrows down and blocks out extraneous stimulus of the senses, but that is not the state of meditation itself, but is only the technique used to arrive at a state of meditation.

14.4 BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Meditation can improve mental and emotional health. It can be done anywhere, without special equipment. Meditation support groups and courses are widely available. There are many styles, each with different benefits and strengths.

Few benefits of meditation are as follows:

1. Stress reduction is one of the most common benefits people say about meditation.
2. Fewer stress results in less anxiety or even anxiety-related mental health issues like phobias, social anxiety and obsessive-compulsive behaviors.
3. Some forms of meditation improve depression and create a more positive outlook on life.
4. Self-inquiry and related styles of meditation can help to “know ourselves.”
5. Improvements in attention and clarity of thinking may help keep your mind young.
6. Meditation develops willpower and mental discipline and can help you avoid triggers for unwanted impulses.
7. Meditation helps in improving sleep and reduces insomnia.
8. Meditation can diminish the perception of pain in the brain and helps in treating chronic pain when used as a supplement to medical care or physical therapy.
9. Meditation can also improve physical health by reducing strain on the heart and decreases blood pressure. It also decreases cardiovascular diseases related to hypertension.
10. Due to peace of mind, people feels happier and confident.

There are more than 100 physiological, psychological and spiritual benefits.

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Check Your Progress

1. How are Yoga and Meditation similar?
2. Define concentration meditation.

14.5 TYPES OF MEDITATION

In this section, we will discuss some of the varied types of mediation.

14.5.1 Sri Aurobindo Meditation

Sri Aurobindo completed his education in England from Cambridge University and started practicing yoga from 1905. In 1926 he started Sri Aurobindo Ashram and given all responsibilities to his mother. He has spent twenty-four years in seclusion. According to Aurobindo, English translation of the word ‘Dhyana’

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has two meanings ‘meditation’ and ‘contemplation’. Meditation means concentrating on a stream of ideas on a single subject. Whereas contemplation means mentally gaining knowledge on a single object, idea, image by forcing the mind concentration.

Sri Aurobindo has said:

The capital period of my intellectual development was when I could see clearly that what the intellect said may be correct and not correct, that what the intellect justifies is true and its opposite also is true. I never admitted a truth in the mind without simultaneously keeping it open to the contrary of it. And the first result was that the prestige of the intellect was gone.

14.5.2 Vethathiri Maharishi Meditation

Yogiraj Shri Vethathiri Maharishi was a spiritual leader, scientist, world peace activist, Ayurvedic, Homeopathic practitioner, Philosopher, Siddha, and founder of the World Community Service Center in Chennai. According to Vethathiri Maharishi, to create the complete science of living goodness of humanity is done through Simplified Kundalini Yoga meditation, Kaya Kalpa Yoga, Physical Exercises, and Introspections. His lifetime works are known as Vethathiriyam, which means a pathway to knowledge. He claimed that an understanding of nature is important for living in peace with the law of nature, along with spiritual progress.

Vethathiriyam has two inherent attributes that are latent:

- **Force or Gravity:** The source of all forces is an inexhaustible self-compressive force, which acts everywhere.
- **Consciousness:** The omniscient order of function is in everything. According to Swamiji, because of the self-compressive nature of the absolute space, an infinitesimal volume of space begins to spin in a whirling motion, called a fundamental energy particle.

14.5.3 Vallalar Meditation

Swami Ramalingam Vallalar is one the ancient saints from Tamil Nadu. Vallalar has no regard to Vedas, Puranas and Agamas. For him god is a light ‘jyothi’. The spiritual approach of Vallalar is based on love and compassion. He always tried to satisfy the hunger of fellow human beings. According to Swami Vallalar, the basic principle of approach to god is through removal of hunger, which is equal to renovation of temple. According to Swami, the way of practicing yoga discipline or meditation is to receive the power of Siddhis or to gain inner light. To do the Sadhana, we need to practice to see our fellow human beings as being equal to us.

Swami Ramalingam Vallalar has said:

When we express Love, Compassion, and Bliss we are all connected. We are one because those qualities are the qualities of all souls and also the qualities of the Absolute Eternal Grace Light. There is only

one God, which is the Absolute Eternal Light; no other form should be worshipped. There are no castes, no differences of sex...we are all equal.

Meditation

14.5.4 Vipasana Meditation

Vipasana is one of the ancient techniques of meditation, which means to see the things as it is. It was started in India about 2500 years back and now known as art of living. Vipasana is a way through self-observation to achieve self-transformation. It focuses on the interconnection between body and mind, which can be felt by attention to the physical sensations, and continuously interconnect the life of the mind. It is this observation-based, self-exploratory journey through mind and body that melts mental impurity, achieving a balanced mind full of compassion and love.

Vipasana is:

- Not a rite or ritual depending on blind faith
- Not a philosophical or an intellectual entertainment
- Not a rest cure, an opportunity for socializing or a holiday
- Not an escape from the tribulations and trials of everyday life
- A technique that will remove suffering
- A method of purification of soul, which allows facing tensions and problems in a balanced and calm way
- An art of living, which can be used to make positive contributions to society

14.5.5 Tamil Siddha Meditation

Tamil siddha is an unorthodox religion in India that is associated with mysticism. The word 'siddha' is derived from the sanskrit word 'sidh' which means 'being accomplished or fulfilled'. Tamil siddha, based from southern part of India, is part of siddha movement in entire South Asia and Tantric yoga. The Siddha movement crosses religious lines with Buddhist and Jain, Hindu siddhas, sharing similar beliefs and practices about the universe.

Tamil siddhas originated in the 8th century. In Tamil, siddhas are known as saints or yogis who dwell in meditation.

There are 18 majorly known Siddhas:

1. Agathiyar - father of Tamil literature
2. Thirumoolar - the Prince of Mystics
3. Bogar - the propagator of spirituality
4. Konganar - the son of Bogar
5. Therayar - master of astrology
6. Korakkar
7. Karuvurar

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8. Edaikkadar
9. Chattamuni
10. Sundaranar
11. Ramadevar
12. Pambatti
13. Machamuni
14. Kudambai
15. Azhuganni Siddhar
16. Agapai siddhar
17. Nandhidevar
18. Kakapusundar

14.5.6 Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental meditation is an easy, natural technique. It allows body to settle into a state of profound relaxation and rest. It helps mind to reach a state of inner peace, without the use of concentration or effort. It is not a philosophy or religion. Unlike other forms of meditation, transcendental meditation does not focus on chanting or breathing. An Indian guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, developed the Transcendental Meditation technique in the mid-1950s. Some studies found that regular Transcendental meditation could reduce anxiety, chronic pain, cholesterol, high blood pressure and the use of health care services.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi said:

Mantra is a specific thought which suits us, a suitable sound for us which we receive from a trained teacher of Transcendental Meditation. By using this mantra, the practitioner experiences the thought of that sound and starts minimizing that thought to experience the finer states of that thought – until the source of thought is fathomed and the conscious mind reaches the transcendental area of being.

Check Your Progress

3. What is needed to be done to create the complete science of living goodness of humanity according to Vethathiri Maharishi?
4. Which form of meditation does not focus on breathing?

14.6 CENTERS OF MEDITATION/CONCENTRATION

Meditation is a process of calming the mind and developing/strengthening the connection of individuals with their spirituality. It is practiced by attempting to direct all of the mind's focus on a particular sound, image or even emotion. The two major components of meditation are: concentration and relaxation. It does

not only help improve the mental health but also has a positive effect on the bodies, as it leads to a slower respiration rate, slower heart rate and lower BP.

Even though the origin is unclear, it is widely believed that Lord Buddha played a significant part in creating awareness for the ancient practice. Meditation has also been mentioned in the Hindu religious texts, the Vedas.

In today's world where the stress levels are going through the roofs, practices like meditation are very important in the lives of the people. Therefore, in India, many gurus and practitioners have set up meditation centers across the country. These centers are major attractions for people looking for a spiritual retreat, away from their regular lives.

Here are some of the best centers for meditation in India:

1. Ananda in the Himalayas

Located at the foothills of the Himalayas, Ananda is a resort and spa that is known for being India's most luxurious and authentic wellness destination. One of the many wellness programs that this place offers is called Dhyana Meditation. This is a minimum 7-day package that includes activities like spas, yoga, detox, and meditation. Being surrounded by the Sal forest and the close proximity to the holy river Ganga, provides this retreat a natural and authentic ambiance.

The Dhyana Meditation program focuses on promoting the idea of self-awareness and using that to create a connection between the mind and a higher consciousness. This practice helps in creating an order in the otherwise chaotic minds.

Over the years, Ananda has been a host of several Indian and international celebrities such as; Oprah, Bill Gates, Deepak Chopra, etc.

2. Vipassana International Academy

Vipassana means 'to see things as they are'. While meditation is often seen as the act of focusing the mind, Vipassana sees meditation as the act of not reacting to the things happening in the surroundings or even to the thoughts that occur in the mind. This allows the individuals to attain peace and true freedom as it helps untie the knots to the unnecessary bonds that cause suffering.

There are several centers of the Vipassana International Academy across the nation and its headquarter is situated at Dhamma Giri in Igatpuri. All these centers offer a 10-day course to the public, free of cost. In these 10 days, the people are taught the basics of the practice and its techniques. As the VIA does not charge any amount from the visitors, it runs on the voluntary donations given to them by the beneficiaries.

3. Art of Living

Founded in 1981 by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar ji, Art of Living is a non-profit organization that focuses on uplifting the human values at the ground level. The

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organization provides many courses like the Happiness course, Yes Plus Course, Sri Sri Yoga Program, etc. In these courses the people are taught different types of breathing techniques, yoga poses, and psychological activities that are centered on the meditative technique known as the Sudarshan Kriya.

The Sudarshan Kriya is a set of breathing techniques that stresses on watching ones breathing patterns. It helps in bringing out the suppressed emotions of an individual. This leads to a calmer and more relaxed mind.

These courses are offered across different centers in over 150 countries around the world. The main ashram is situated in Bangalore. Built in an area of 65 acres, this place is as peaceful as it gets. There are several facilities built in the ashram that include an Ayurvedic hospital, beautiful gardens, and Goshala where one can take care of the cows.

4. Osho Meditation Resort

The Osho Meditation Resort in Pune can be reached quite easily, through flights, trains or even by road. The place is spread across 28 acres of land and is a beautiful retreat for anyone who is looking for inner peace or trying to find a new perspective towards life.

Osho saw meditation as a state of complete awareness. This would help the people free themselves from the traditional confides of the society and find their own voice. A variety of meditation techniques are used at the meditation resort that range from just focusing mind on individual points to engaging in physical activities in a pattern that leads to quiet.

Osho is greatly influenced by the teaching of Lord Buddha, and Zobra the Greek. These influences can be seen throughout the resort. The resort can be seen as a unique amalgamation of the traditional and modern stream of thoughts.

5. Tushita Meditation Centre

Established in 1972 by a highly qualifies teacher of Buddhist traditions, Lama Thubten Yeshe. This is one of the more beautiful meditation retreats located at an elevation of 1888 meters in McLeod Gunj. The meditation center is greatly influenced by the Tibetan culture. The center promotes silence and uses it to create a calming effect on the visitors.

This place teaches the Buddhist philosophies in order to help the visitors discover themselves in a spiritual light. The silence also helps in pushing away all the distractions thus helping the individuals purify their souls through thorough introspection. The visitors are not allowed to use their phones, watch TV or engage in any of the worldly activities as a part of the discipline taught the resort. It is this discipline that further helps the visitors become more relaxed and experience true happiness.

Tushita aims to provide a friendly and a nondiscriminatory environment to people of all nationalities. It offers different courses of different intensities and durations that teach the Buddhist philosophies and meditation.

These Meditation Retreats are an extremely important in today's society where the societal norms are dictating the behavior of the people. This causes stress that leads to them being dissatisfied and ultimately unhappy. These meditation centers and organizations help these people attain inner peace and show them the true path to happiness.

Check Your Progress

5. State the two major components of meditation.
6. What is Sudarshan Kriya?

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14.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The concepts of meditation are similar to Yoga as both have same objective. In both disciplines, self-healing depends on the practitioner to focus on maintaining a balance between physical and mental state.
2. Concentration meditation involves focusing on a single point. This could entail following the repeating a single word or mantra, breath, listening to a repetitive gong, staring at a candle flame, or counting beads on a mala.
3. According to Vethathiri Maharishi, to create the complete science of living goodness of humanity is done through Simplified Kundalini Yoga meditation, Kaya Kalpa Yoga, Physical Exercises, and Introspections.
4. Transcendental meditation is the type of meditation which does not focus on chanting or breathing.
5. The two major components of meditation are: concentration and relaxation.
6. The Sudarshan Kriya is a set of breathing techniques that stresses on watching ones breathing patterns. It helps in bringing out the suppressed emotions of an individual. This leads to a calmer and more relaxed mind.

14.8 SUMMARY

- Meditation is an art or skill of developing a focus on a particular object or on an activity while achieving an emotionally calm state.
- Meditation is a way of training the mind, similarly training the body for healthy fitness. Meditation has the power to create peace of mind and unconditional happiness.

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- Meditation offers time for heightened and relaxation awareness in a stressful world where our senses are dulled.
- Concentration meditation involves focusing on a single point. This could entail following the repeating a single word or mantra, breath, listening to a repetitive gong, staring at a candle flame, or counting beads on a mala.
- The challenging part in meditation is to stay focus. The concepts of meditation are similar to Yoga as both have same objective. In both disciplines, self-healing depend on the practitioner to focus on maintaining a balance between physical and mental state.
- Meditation is a process of training your mind for peace and calm state by increasing concentration and focus and relaxing the thoughts and body through various techniques.
- According to Jacobson’s relaxation technique, relaxing the muscles is directly proportional to relaxing the mind. This method involves tightening one of the muscle groups, while taking a deep breath and relaxing the remaining muscles of the body, results in a release of tension.
- Deep muscle relation is a technique for beginners to tense your muscle and then consciously relax them.
- Meditation involves, a state known as “logic relaxation”. Many consider there is an increase of the activation of the prefrontal lobe. This region is associated with logic and is not supposed to be activated during the “logic relaxation”.
- Meditation can improve mental and emotional health. It can be done anywhere, without special equipment. Meditation support groups and courses are widely available. There are many styles, each with different benefits and strengths.
- There are different types of meditation namely, Sri Aurobindo Meditation, Vethathri Maharishi meditation, Vallalar meditation, Vipasana meditation, Tamil siddha meditation and Transcendental meditation.
- In today’s world were the stress levels are going through the roofs, practices like meditation are very important in the lives of the people. Therefore, in India, many gurus and practitioners have set up meditation centers across the country.

14.9 KEY WORDS

- **Meditation:** It is an art or skill of developing a focus on a particular object or on an activity while achieving an emotionally calm state.
- **Deep muscle relaxation:** It is a technique for beginners to tense your muscle and then consciously relax them.

- **Self-focus skill:** It refers to an exercise to increase the focus of the attention, important in the initial stage of meditating process.
- **Siddha:** It is derived from the sanskrit word 'sidh' which means 'being accomplished or fulfilled'.

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14.10 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What is Vallar meditation?
2. State the steps involved in the progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) therapy.
3. What is self-focus skill?
4. Write a short-note on the benefits of meditation.
5. Differentiate between vipasana and transcendental meditation.

Long Answer Questions

1. Describe the specific techniques of meditation.
2. Discuss some of the centers of meditation in India.
3. Write a short note on: (i) Vethathiri Maharishi Meditation and (ii) Tamil Siddha Meditation.

14.11 FURTHER READINGS

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