



## Breath.

We are beginning to study one of the most important processes for maintaining life on planet Earth.

A lot has been said about breathing: from a scientific point of view, and from the yogic-scientific, and from the philistine side.

We will approach this process from the therapeutic side.

But for starters:

Dry, scientific definition:

Breathing is the process of moving air into and out of the lungs to facilitate gas exchange with the internal environment, mainly due to the supply of oxygen and leaching of carbon dioxide.

In yoga, breathing is performed only after the first three steps: yama, niyama and asana.

That is, without having studied the first three steps, do not even think about embarking on the fourth pranayama.



In Tantric techniques, on the contrary, Breathing is used as preparation of the body for deeper work with the body. As the body becomes more soft and calm.

Let's see what classical Yoga says about breathing (pranayama)?

Pranayama is usually defined as breath control. But this definition does not fully convey the full meaning of this term.

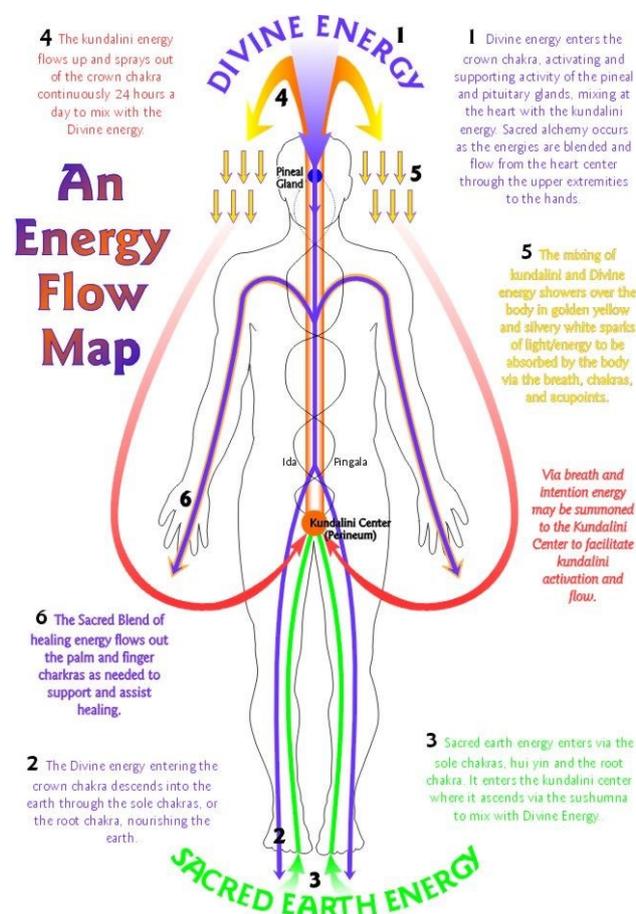
The word pranayama itself consists of two roots: prana and ayama.

Translated from Sanskrit, "prana" means life energy or life force. It is a force that is present everywhere and in everything: it can apply to both animate and inanimate objects and beings. Also, the inhaled air itself is thinner than independently existing air or oxygen.

Therefore, pranayama cannot be regarded as simply breathing exercises aimed at introducing supplemental oxygen into the lungs. Pranayama uses the process of breathing to affect the flow of prana in the nadi (energy channels) of Pranayama Cauchy (Energy body).

A common mistake in translating the meaning of the word pranayama is to use the second part of the word pranayama, "pit", which is translated from Sanskrit as "control". But Yama is the first step in the study of Yoga and is used to designate various rules or codes of conduct.

However, it is not a word that connects with prana to form pranayama! In fact, the second part of the word pranayama is "ayama," which has a much deeper meaning. "Ayama" in Sanskrit means extension of the energy dimension.



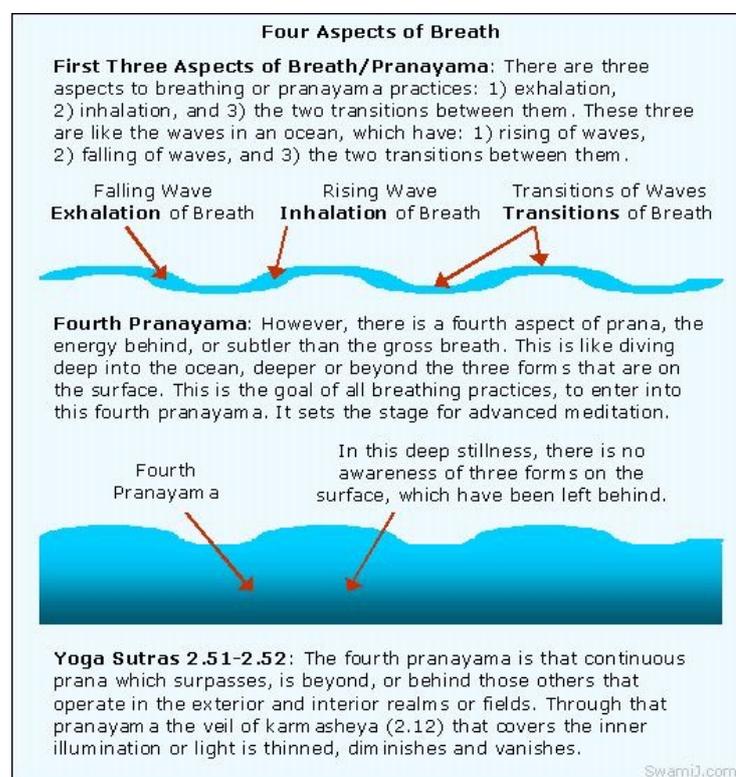
There are numerous breathing techniques.

Different traditions use their techniques: Yoga, tantra, kriya, holotrop, etc ....

All of them are aimed at activating vitality. Breathing can be used as a therapeutic method to cure diseases. And it is possible with the aim of achieving higher states and going beyond the limits of the usual framework of accepted reality, in order to achieve higher states of vibration, as well as energy and awareness.

In tantric techniques, breathing is simple and natural, and at the same time very powerful in its effects, which can take you half an hour into a state of deep meditation, to the level of peace and quiet, observation and awakening.

### Four aspects of pranayama:



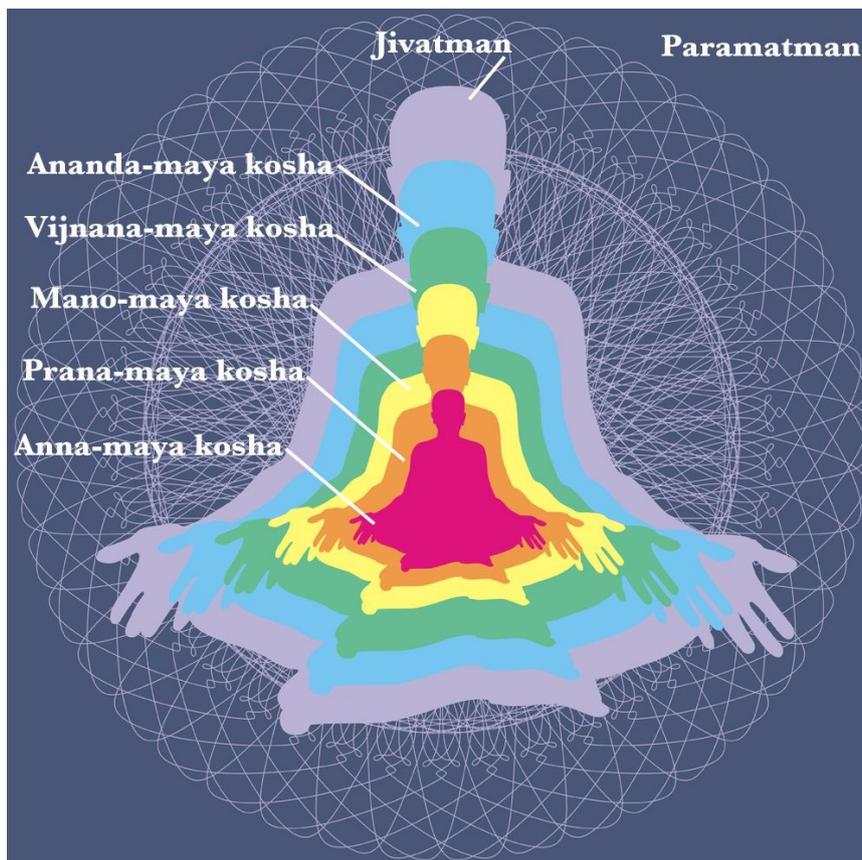
1. Puraka or inhale.
2. Rechaka or exhale.
3. Antar Kumbhaka or hold on the breath.
4. Bahir Kumbhaka or hold on the exhale.

These aspects are systematically used in various pranayama techniques.

There is another kind of pranayama, called Kevala Kumbhaka, which uses spontaneous holding of breath. Different practices of pranayama include various technologies. Kumbhaka is a more advanced stage of pranayama that occurs during high states of meditation. During this state, the vibrations of prana cease, which opens the veil that prevents to see the subtle aspect of existence, and a higher vision of reality is achieved. The most important part of pranayama is kumbhaka or holding your breath. However, the successful development of kumbhak requires the gradual development of control over respiratory function.

Therefore, in the practice of pranayama in the initial stages, more attention is paid to inhalation and exhalation in order to strengthen the lungs and balance the nervous and pranic systems in preparation for the practice of kumbhaka. These initial practices affect the flow of prana in the nadi (energy channels) and purify, regulate and activate them, causing physical and mental stability.

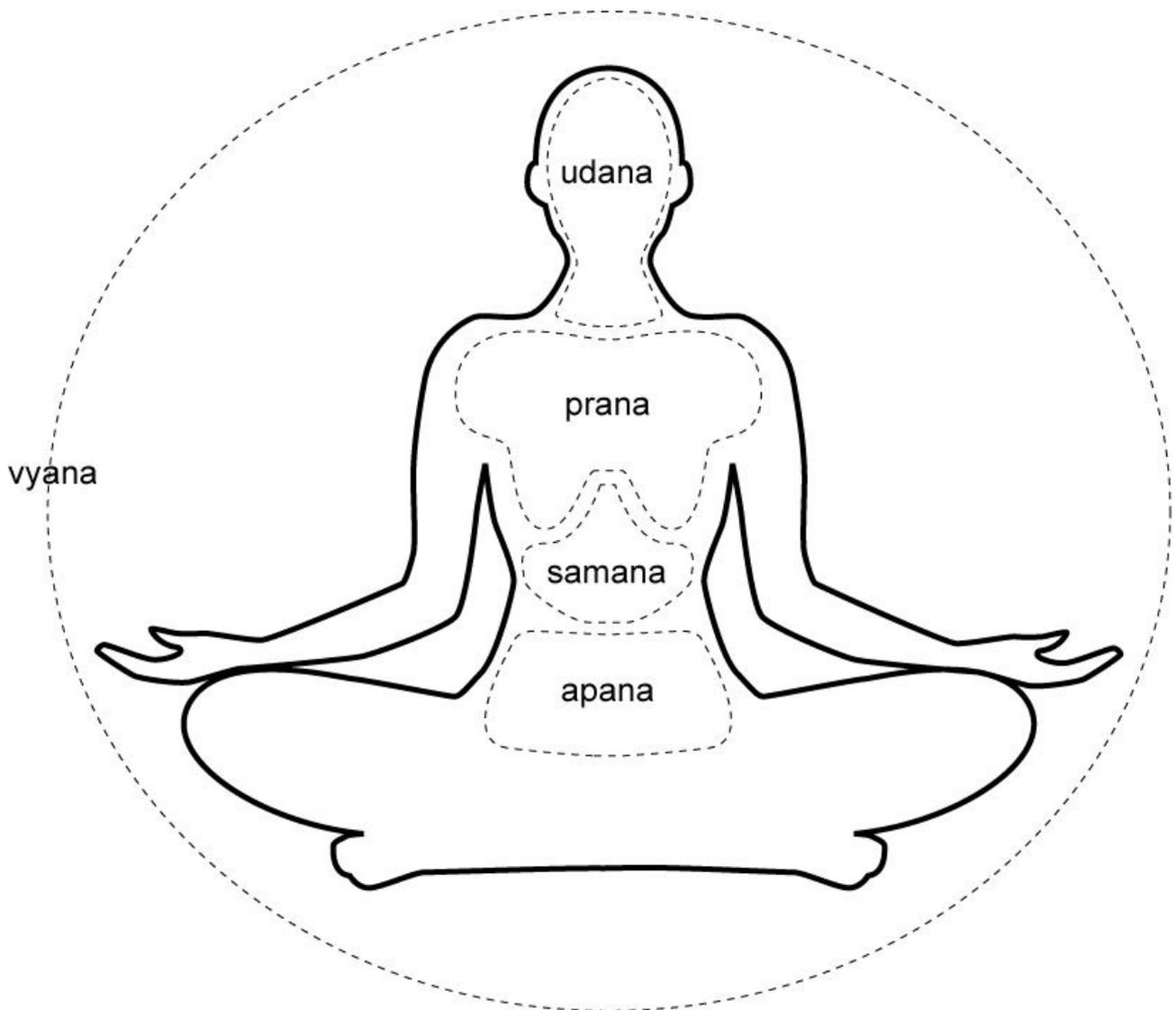
### **Pranic bodies (Kosha).**



In accordance with the yoga physiology, the human body consists of five bodies or shells, which differ in size and are determined by various aspects of human existence:

1. Annamaya kosha, physical or material body.
2. Manomaya kosha, mental body.
3. Pranamaya Kosha, bioplasmic or vital energy body.
4. Vijnanama kosha, mental or higher mental body.
5. Anandamaya Kosha, transcendental or blissful body.

Despite the fact that these five shells function together, forming a holistic, the practice of pranayama mainly works with pranamaya kosha.



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Pranamaya Kosha consists of five main Pranas - Pancha: Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana.

1. Prana in this context does not refer to cosmic prana, but is one of the main pranas of the body (one of the energy flows) that regulates the chest region between the larynx and the upper part of the diaphragm. Prana covers the region of the heart, the respiratory organs along with the muscles and nerves that activate them. This is the force that draws in Breath.
2. Apana manages the abdominal area, as well as below the navel, and supplies energy to the large intestine, kidneys, anus, and genitals. Job of apana is getting rid of body waste. It is a force that displaces breathing.
3. Samana is between the heart and the navel. It activates and controls the digestive system: liver, intestines, pancreas, stomach and their release. Samana is responsible for the transformation. At the physical level, this refers to the

assimilation and distribution of nutrients. At the evolutionary level, this refers to the kundalini and the expansion of consciousness.

4. Udana - controls the neck and head, activating sensory receptors such as eyes, tongue, nose and ears. Udana also harmonizes and activates the limbs and all associated muscles, ligaments, nerves and joints. She is responsible for the sublime posture of the body, sensory awareness and the ability to respond to the outside world.

5. Vyana - permeates the whole body, regulating and controlling all movements and coordinating other pranas. It works as a backup force for other pranas.

More deeply, in these five basic pranas there are five smaller pranas, known as upa-prana: naga, kurma, krikara, devadatta and dhananjaya.

Naga is responsible for burping and hiccups.

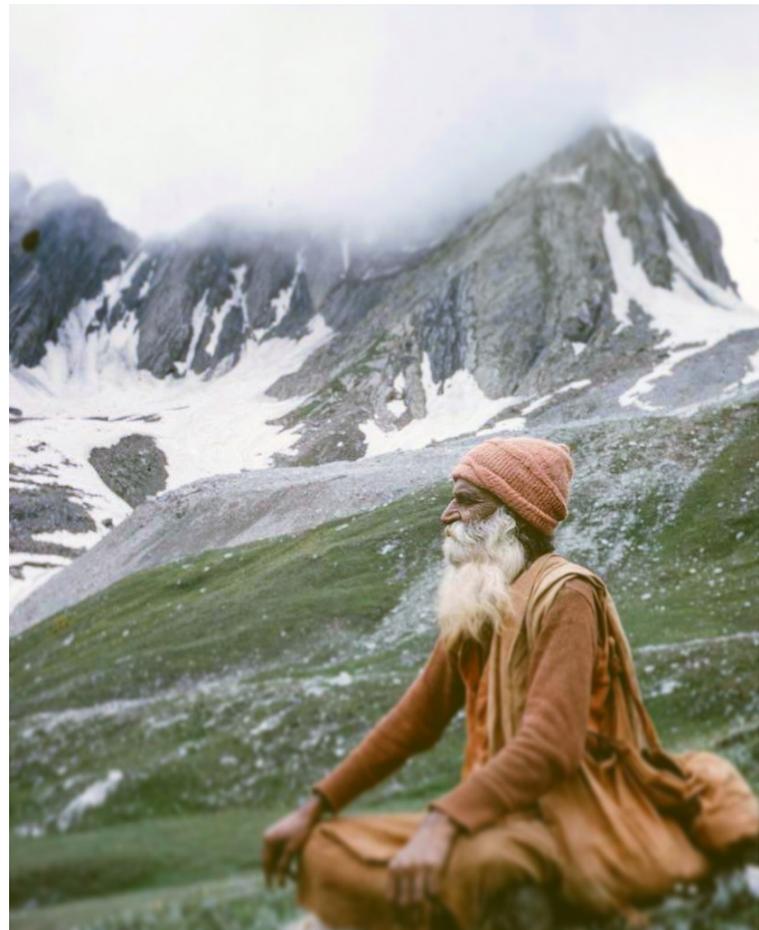
Kurma is responsible for opening eyes and blinking.

Krikara creates hunger, thirst, sneezing and coughing.

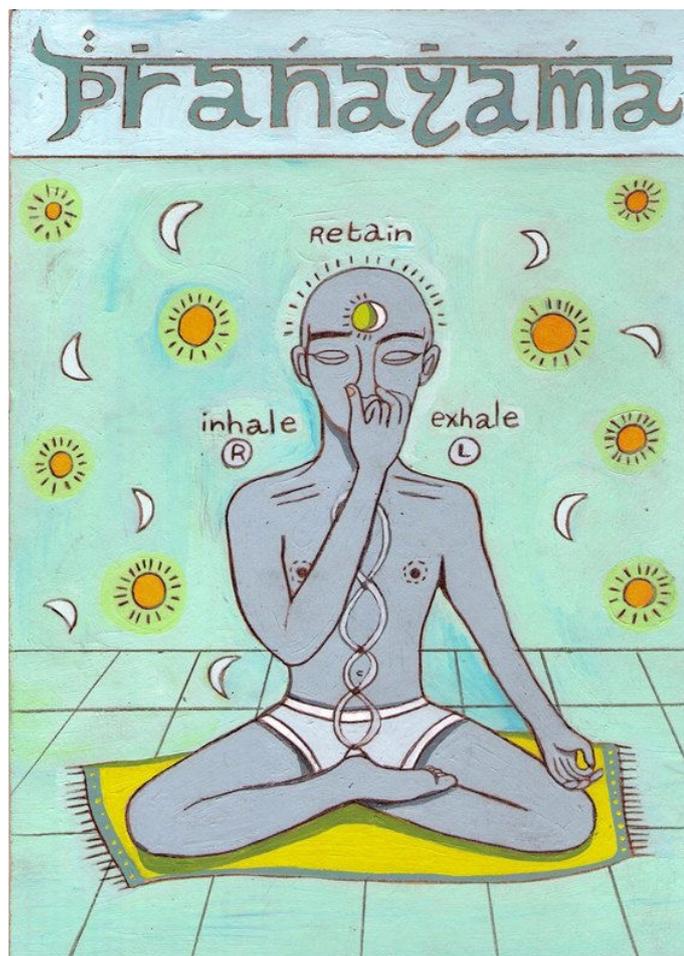
Devadatta causes sleep and yawning.

Dhananjaya remains after death until the decomposition of the body.

### **Prana and lifestyle.**



Lifestyle has a profound effect on pranamaya kosha and its energy. Exercise, work, food and time of consumption, sleep and sexual relations, affect the distribution and flow of prana in the body. The mind has more influence on the pranic body, namely, its abilities, such as: emotions, thoughts and imagination. Stress, unbalanced nutrition, insomnia, fatigue at work, dissatisfaction in sexual relationships, all this drains and impedes the pranic flow. As a result, this leads to the fact that people are experiencing a "depletion of energy." The depletion of energy in a certain prana leads to the loss of the vital energy of the organs or limbs that it controls, and ultimately to disease or metabolic dysfunction. Respiratory techniques redirect energy and reverse body destruction by activating and balancing various pranas within the pranayama.



### **Breath, health and pranayama.**

Breathing is the most important life process. It affects the activity of each cell of the human body, and most importantly, respiration is directly related to brain functions. An ordinary person performs about 15 respiratory cycles per minute: 21,600 cycles per day, respectively. The respiratory process burns oxygen and glucose, producing fuel and energy. This energy fills with force every muscle

contraction, secretion of glands and mental processes. Breathing is directly related to all aspects of human existence.

Many people breathe incorrectly, completely unaware of it. During breathing, people usually use only a small part of the lung volume and do not fully engage the diaphragm. As a rule, people's breathing is shallow, which deprives the body of sufficient oxygen supply and prana (energy) necessary for health. Therefore, starting to practice breathing techniques, we will first focus on methods of learning proper breathing. In addition, these techniques will help focus attention on the very process of breathing, which is ignored in everyday life. As you practice, you will also develop sensitivity to the respiratory process, prepare the muscles of the diaphragm and pulmonary cavity, and increase their vital ability. Rhythmic, deep and slow breathing will bring peace of mind. Irregular breathing, on the contrary, violates the rhythms of the brain and leads to physical, emotional and mental blocks. This, in turn, leads to internal conflict, imbalance, irregular lifestyle and illness.

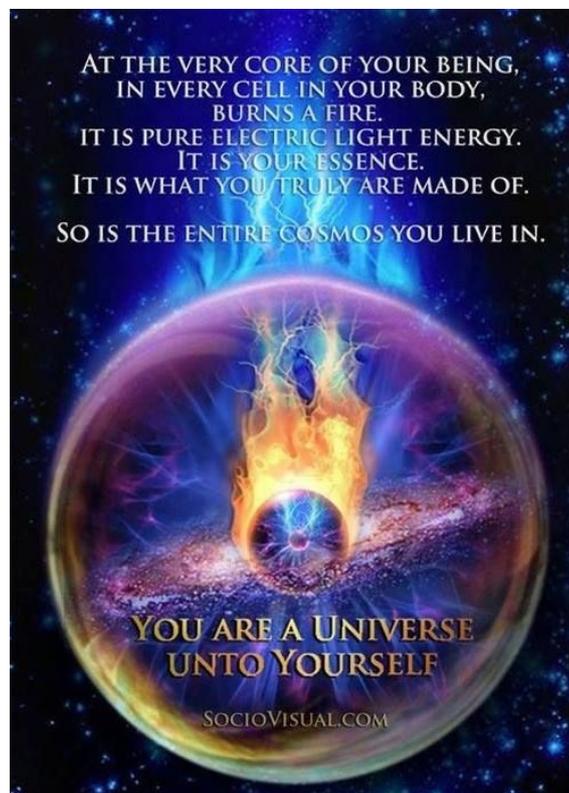
Pranayama will help establish proper breathing, eliminate negative cyclical processes and transform debilitating processes in reverse. By practicing, we will gain control of the breath and restore the natural, relaxed rhythms of the body and mind. Although breathing is basically an unconscious process, conscious control over it can be injected at any time. Therefore, pranayama is a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. Through the practice of pranayama, a blocked neurotic, unconscious energy can be released and used in a positive and joyful way of life and work.

### **Breath and longevity.**



The quality of life is influenced by the length of inhalation and exhalation, the number of respiratory cycles and the rhythm of breathing. The ancient yogis and rishis studying nature noticed that animals with slow breathing, such as pythons, elephants and turtles, have a longer life than animals with fast breathing rates, such as birds, dogs and rabbits, who live only a few years. From these observations, it was concluded that the rhythm of breathing is important, the slower the breathing, the longer the life expectancy. Those who breathe quickly, who have cycles of inhalation and exhalation are short, they have, respectively, a shorter lifespan than those who breathe deeply and evenly. On the physical level, this is due to the fact that Breath is directly connected to the heart. Slow breathing speed improves heart health and makes it stronger, which increases longevity. Deep breathing also increases the absorption of energy by pranayama kosh (the energy body), enhancing the dynamics of vital energy and general well-being.

### **Pranayama and practitioners.**



The practice of Pranayama heals the body by removing the blocks in the pranayama kosh (energy body), which increases the absorption and preservation of prana. The student is required to learn to keep his mind calm, which is also the first step towards deeper practices. To this end, many methods of pranayama use kumbhaka, breath-holding, to establish control over the flow of prana, calm the mind and control the thinking process. When the mind calmed down, and prana flows freely in the nadis (meridians of the body) and chakras, then the door opens to the evolution of consciousness, into higher dimensions of spiritual experience. Swami Sivananda writes to the rationale of Pranayama: “There is a direct connection between breathing, nerve impulses and internal pranas or vital forces.

Prana becomes visible on the physical plane, as a movement or action, and also on the mental plane, as a thought. Pranayama is the means by which yoga realizes in its individual body the entire cosmic nature, the microcosm and the macrocosm unites. In this way, the practitioner achieves the perfection of all the forces of our Universe. ”

### **Basic tips for practitioners.**



In classical and traditional scriptures there are many rules concerning the practice. The main points are to learn to accept yourself as you are, balance, harmony and common sense in relation to internal and external thinking and life. It is important to note that those who want to practice, the presence, direction and knowledge of the teacher (guru) are necessary! Believe my experience !!!!!

#### **Contraindications in practice:**

Sophisticated Pranayamas should not be practiced during illness! Simple and soft techniques, such as abdominal breathing (lower breathing) in shavasana, on the contrary, can be practiced after studying and practicing with a teacher. Simple techniques have a healing effect even during high fever and sharp pains! It is important to follow the contraindications given in accordance with individual practices.

#### **Time to practice:**

The best time to practice pranayama is dawn, when prana is fresh, the body is rested, and the mind is not yet active. So immediately after sunrise, it is considered

a suitable time for practice. Soothing techniques are generally recommended before bedtime.

It is important to comply with the law: your basic and simple practice should be performed at the same time every day (min. 10-15 min.). The regularity and time of the practitioner increases strength, and also prepares the body and mind to accept pranic power. During the practice, do not rush, change, slow and steady progress is necessary.

### **Bathing:**



Take a shower before practicing, or at least wash your hands, face and feet. Do not take a bath for at least the next half hour after practice, to normalize body temperature.

### **Clothing:**



It should be practiced in loose and comfortable clothing made from natural fibers. It is also good to use a shawl or blanket when it is cold, and to protect the practice space from insects.

#### **Diet:**

**It is recommended to practice on an empty stomach — in the morning before eating or after three to four hours after eating, as the food in the stomach puts pressure on the diaphragm and lungs, making it difficult to breathe fully.**



A balanced diet with vitamins and minerals is suitable for most pranayama practices. It is recommended to consume cereals, legumes, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products. Sometimes, beginners practice constipation or diarrhea, and a change in the amount of urine. In cases of constipation, it is recommended to drink more water (min 2 l per day), to suspend or reduce the consumption of salt and spices. In cases of diarrhea, it is recommended to draw a diet and natural yogurt.

**The practice of advanced techniques of pranayama is recommended to be done only under the supervision of a teacher (guru)!**

### Place for practice:



Practice in a quiet, clean room that is well ventilated and protected from direct sunlight as the body can overheat. Except at the time of dawn, when the sun is mild and healthy. Practicing in the draft, directly under the air conditioner or fan is not recommended, as you can catch a cold.

### Breath:

Always breathe through the nose, except for special techniques. The nose should be clean, breathing should flow freely. In case of nasal congestion, the mucus must be removed with the help of Shatkarma-Neti technique and the practice of Kapalabhati. If one of the nostrils is clogged, that is, the Breath flows unevenly through both nostrils, you must first balance the sides of the breath with the Padahirasana technique.

### Sequence:



Pranayama should be performed after Shatkarma (cleansing) and asanas and prior to the practice of meditation.  
After practicing pranayama, shavasana is recommended for a few minutes.

**Pose for practice:**



The most important posture during practice should be comfortable and stable. It is necessary to keep a straight, and at the same time relaxed back and neck, to ensure effective breathing and body stability during practice.

Siddha yoni asana, sukhasana or padmasana are considered the best poses to practice. However, not all beginners can do it, so elementary body preparation is necessary! In the difficulty of sitting postures on the floor, at the beginning of the practice, you can safely use special pillows or chairs for meditation. Also, you can sit at the wall with legs extended. The body must be relaxed !!!! It is important to use auxiliary materials made from natural materials to ensure maximum conductivity of energy during practice.

**Avoid stress during practice !!!!**



The most important thing to understand is that during All Practices to remember that overstrain in the body is a gross mistake!

Do not try to immediately sit for a whole hour, this EGO will dictate, but in spiritual practices, EGO only interferes!

Progress in practice should be mild and slow, the main thing is to listen to your body and your teacher.

The lungs, diaphragm, throat, nose and all organs involved in the breathing process are very delicate and can be easily damaged! It is important to note that improper use of a technician can also lead to injury not only of the physical body, but also of emotional aspects. It is necessary to be conscious of the process of the practitioner as well as of the process of cleansing, even in healthy people various symptoms can occur, which is caused by the process of release from toxins. You may experience sensations like itching, tingling, warmth or cold, as well as feelings of lightness or heaviness. This experience is usually temporary, but if it does not stop, contact a competent teacher. Energy levels may increase or fluctuate; interests may change. If such changes cause lifestyle difficulties, reduce or discontinue the practice until the competent teacher or guru gives instructions.

