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A RESEARCH ON THE EFFECT & IMPORTANCE OF YOGA & PRANAYAM ON HEALTH IN THE MODERN TIMES



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ABSTRACT:

Yoga is one of the ancient sciences prevalent in our country. Rishi Patanjali outlined the Ashtanga Yoga i.e "eight limbed yoga" so that man could enjoy all the comforts of life in a better way. It consists of the following 8 spiritual practices Yama (Moral codes),Niyama (self purification & study), Asana (Posture), Pranayam (Breath Control), Dharna (concentration), Dhyana (Meditation, Samadhi (Absorption into the universe). Out of these eight the most important is Pranayam. Pranayam is made of two words Pran and aayam which means "inner conciousness". In this Anulom and Vilom techniques & Nadi Shodhana (Alternate nostril breathing) are mentioned so that a common man can easily practice it.It also gives information on when & how Anulom and Vilom & Nadi Shodhana should be done, at what time, how many times and at what age it should be done. It also tells us about the diseases against which we get protection by doing Pranayam. It tells the importance of Pranayam in keeping a man healthy and disease free.

KEYWORDS: Importance of yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Pranayam, Anulom, Vilom techniques

INTRODUCTION:

In India from ancient times Rishi Munis have been telling us the importance of Yoga in our daily lives to lead a healthy life. Yoga helps in the development of the mind, body and the soul. Our body becomes disease free and helps in the development of an individual. Health is not only related to body but one should have a peaceful soul, mind and perfect toned body for leading a good healthy life. In the modern age of technology, man aspires to earn more in a short span of time. He finds new avenues to make more and more money. In this run for money he paves the way for tensions, stress, fears, jealousy, and corruption. He finds alternative means to make life happy. But due to the money earned this wrong way he suffers and becomes a victim of different problems like hypertension, stress, diabetes etc... We forget that if we live a healthy life then only we can work hard and enjoy the comforts, money, rights, and power. It is rightly said 'HEALTH IS WEALTH'. To lead a healthy life one has to find time to go to a gym, swimming, morning walk, doing yoga etc. Man needs air to breathe and stay alive. Patanjali, Ramdev Baba, Asaram Bapu, Janardan Swami and many more Yoga preachers have emphasized the importance of yoga. By breathing fresh air and large quantity of air we can increase our brain power, memory, mental balance. Pranayam controls and helps to fight many diseases and helps us to live a long life and enjoy the benefits of life.

Out of the Ashtanga Yoga given by Patanjali, Pranayam has been placed on the 4th position. Pranayam is made of two words Pran and Aayam. 'Pran' refers to the universal life force and 'aayam' means to regulate, thus Pranayam is the control of prana through breath. It means taking air from the nostrils and spreading it in the lungs and then spreading it through the blood in the different parts of the body. Air possesses many unique qualities. It contains life giving force. It has absorbing, activating and massaging capacity. Due to these properties of air it is regarded as a great purifier as well as a giver of life to inner organs. The body is benefitted by these qualities of air.

The objective of this research is that a common man should be easily able to do Pranayam so that everyone is benefitted by it.

DEFINITION OF PRANAYAM

Tasmin sati svasaprasvasayor gativicchedah pranayamah

It means " Regulation of breath or the control of Prana is the stoppage of inhalation and exhalation which follows after securing the steadiness of posture or seat." This is the definition of Pranayam in the Yoga sutras given by Patanjali.

i) One must make up his/ her mind:

This is a prerequisite of Pranayam. Due to the purification of the pulse, all the paths and ways in the body are cleared and opened. All the obstacles in the veins are removed and cleaned and the person is now ready for Pranayam.

i) Willingness:

One should do Pranayam only if he/ she wishes. It should not be forcefully done or done by someone's telling.

ii) Do not see bad visuals and keep your eyes closed.

iii) State before Pranayam: Padmasan, Vajrasan, Straight neck and back

iv) Pre-Preparation: Practice Anulom Vilom

METHOD

Close the right nostril with the right thumb. Simply press the thumb against your nostril to block it. Inhale slowly through the nostril. Fill your lungs with air. Feel your chest expand. Remove your thumb from the right nostril. Use your ring and middle finger to close your left nostril. Exhale slowly and completely with the right nostril. Inhale through the right nostril. Close the right nostril and open the left, breathe out slowly through the left nostril.

TIME

According to the capacity fix the time period. One must always try to follow these things. Purak, Rechaka and Kumbhaka complete the Pranayam.

Purak : Inhalation of breath

Rechaka: Exhalation of breath

Kumbhaka: Retention of breath

Purak

Purak means inhalation of breath. Keep your Spinal cord straight. Breathe slowly. Fill the lungs with air.

Kumbhaka

Kumbhaka means breath retention. Kumbhak literally means an earthen pot. A man's body is compared to an earthen pot, which is to be filled with air and stored and then slowly emptied. The breath is ceased when the inhalation is complete and the lungs are filled with air. In this inhalation is slightly forceful. The air is held as per one's ability.

RECHAKA

In this the used inhaled air i.e Co₂ is removed from the body through the nostrils. This is known as Rechak. In this the Apan Vaayu rises upwards which pushes the pran vayu up and finally out. The released air is hot. While giving out the air, the chest is kept high and the air is given out. While doing this the stomach automatically gets contracted.

One must exercise according to one's energy level. The time span for Rechak should be double the span devoted to Purak. Kumbhak should be done according to one's energy. Respiration includes inhalation and exhalation. There is a gap of 1 min in between the two, which usually goes unnoticed. Purak and Kumbhak increase the concentration of the mind. The duration of retaining the breath has to be increased gradually. This strengthens the lungs and the respiratory muscles. When a person gains proper control on it and masters the art, there is an immense influence on the flow of prana in the body which helps to balance both physical as well as mental energy.

PROCESS OF PRANAYAM

Pranayam means control of breath. Due to pranayam one can control breath and strike a dialogue with the inner consciousness in your body. After the basic preparation of pranayam, one must search a quiet place under a banyan, peepal or neem tree where one can get fresh air. One must choose such a place and sit in a padmasana, pupils of the eyes downwards, with joy and happiness in the heart take a long deep breath. Keep both the nostrils open and inhale and exhale with both the nasal cavities.

One must inhale and exhale with speed as much as possible. Then close the right nostril with the help of left thumb of right hand and inhale with left nostril and also exhale through the same. Then the left nostril is closed and breathing is done with the right nostril. In the beginning one should start with 11 cycles of breathing. It can be further increased to 100 or 120. One can practice Kumbhak for 7 sec and Rechak for 8 sec. This completes one round of pranayam.

There are 7 different types of pranayam.

- 1) Bhastrika pranayam
- 2) Kapalbhata pranayam
- 3) Bahya pranayam
- 4) Anulom - Vilom pranayam
- 5) Bhramari pranayam
- 6) Aumkara pranayam
- 7) Nadi Shodhana pranayam

All types of pranayam have their own importance.

1) Bhastrika pranayam

Sit in meditation posture and breathe in deeply with both the nostrils and breathe out forcefully.

Benefits

- 1) It helps to overcome allergy, respiratory diseases.
- 2) It strengthens the lungs, heart, brain.
- 3) It gives pure oxygen.
- 4) It helps in curing thyroid related problems, tonsils.
- 5) It stabilizes mind and prana.

2) Kapalbhata pranayam

'Kapa'l' means forehead and 'bhata' means to shine. The pranayam gives a natural glow and shine to the face. It should be done for 3 -5 min. It is done in sitting posture. Keep the back straight. Keep your right palm on your right knee and left palm on the left knee. Take a deep breath and exhale with all your force. Inhale effortlessly. Repeat this for 5 min. One can increase the time for 15 – 30 min. Speed should be medium.

Benefits

- 1) It increases glow and shine on the face.
- 2) It cures cough, asthma, constipation, acidity.
- 3) It reduces weight.
- 4) It is good for stomach, liver, pancreas and kidney.
- 5) It improves the functions of lungs.
- 6) It is effective in weight loss.

3) Bahya pranayam

Sit in padmasana and breathe out completely. Breathe slowly. Inhale and without stopping breathe out and repeat the process.

Benefits

- 1) It overcomes playfulness of the mind.
- 2) It increases digestion.

- 3) It makes the mind sharp.
- 4) It purifies the body.
- 5) It is good for stomach ailments

4) Anulom -

Vilom pranayam (Alternate nostril breathing) It should be done on empty stomach. Close the right nostril with the thumb and the left nostril with the little and ring finger. Draw air from the left nostril and release the air through the right nostril. Next take in air from the right nostril and exhale through left nostril. It involves purak, kumbhak and rechaka. This is one round of Anulom - Vilom pranayam. Start with 5 rounds and increase upto 20.

Benefits

- 1) It cures joint pains, arthritis, urinary problems.
- 2) It helps in regulating cholesterol, triglycerids, LDL/HDL.
- 3) It replaces negative thoughts in the mind.

5) Bhramari pranayam

Inhale completely. Press the nostrils with the little fingers. Close the ears with thumbs. Keep index fingers on forehead and close the eyes. Place the middle fingers on the closed eyes. Chant Aum with mouth closed and exhale. The sound produced resembles that of a honey bee hence the name.

Benefits

- 1) It helps release mental stress.
- 2) It controls high B.P, diabetes, heart diseases etc.

6) Aumkara pranayam

Sit in a steady and comfortable position. Keep your back straight. Close your eyes. Relax yourself. Inhale slowly through the nose. Open your mouth and chant 'O'. Close your lips and produce the sound of 'M'. When put together we get the sound of Aum.

Benefits

- 1) It helps overcome bad dreams and helps a person to get sound sleep.
- 2) It helps to overcome fear.
- 3) It improves memory.

7) Nadi Shodhana pranayam

Close the right nostril and inhale from left nostril. Stop the breath and exhale very slowly from the right nostril. Then inhale from the right nostril and do Kumbhak. Stop the breath and exhale slowly from left nostril.

Benefits

- 1) It helps increase concentration of mind and gives stability to the mind.
- 2) It purifies the veins
- 3) It combats vaat, pitta and kapha
- 4) It makes the heart strong as the heart gets ample supply of blood.

BEST TIME TO DO PRANAYAM

For doing any Pranayam the best time to do it before 6 am in the morning, i.e on 'Bramhamuhurta'

BENEFITS OF YOGA

Yoga, is a way of living with an aim ' A healthy mind dwells in a healthy body'.Yoga helps an individual to strike a balance with his physical, mental and spiritual being. Yoga not only exercises the body but also recharges it. It reduces stress and makes life peaceful. It helps to increase concentration. It rejuvenates an individual. It gives the individual the power to control the body and the mind. It increases flexibility and strengthens the muscles and bones of the body. Yoga improves respiration and provides energy to the body and also makes the body flexible. It keeps a person physically as well as mentally fit as it reduces stress and helps to find inner peace. It increases the immunity of the body as it prevents diseases and maintains a healthy body. It improves blood circulation and combats headaches, stress, anxiety, blood pressure, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes. It boosts the confidence in a person.

In today's world where life is very fast, one hardly finds time to exercise; man is leading a sedentary lifestyle and thus paving a way to chronic diseases. The number of health clubs is increasing. It is becoming a fashion to go to these clubs for doing exercises. They charge an exorbitant fees that only a few can afford. Instead of going to these gyms one should divert to yoga and find its benefits and enjoy a long healthy life.

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