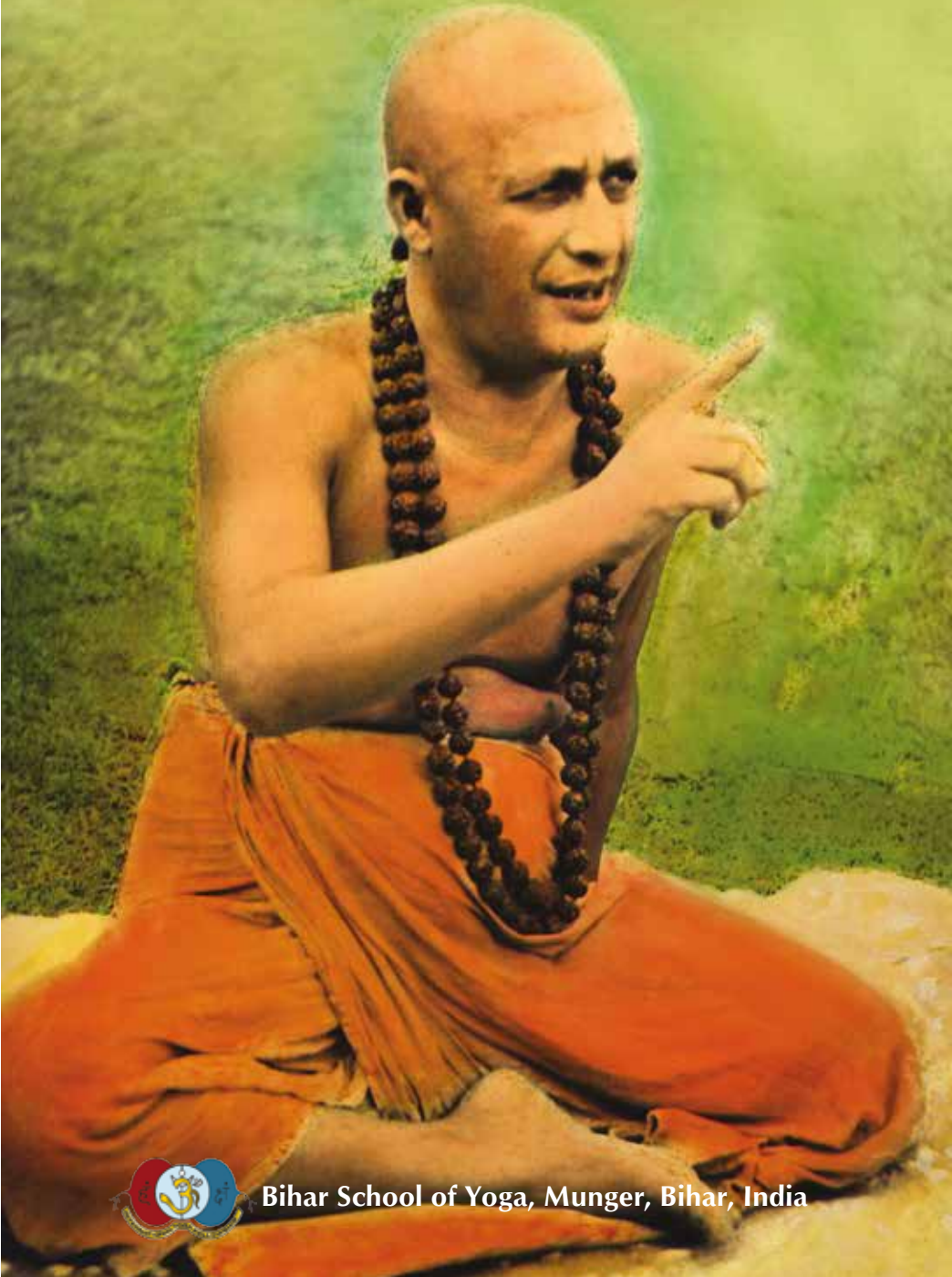


YOGA

Year 9 Issue 10

October 2020

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Bihar School of Yoga, Munger, Bihar, India



Hari Om

YOGA is compiled, composed and published by the sannnyasin disciples of Swami Satyananda Saraswati for the benefit of all people who seek health, happiness and enlightenment. It contains information about the activities of Bihar School of Yoga, Bihar Yoga Bharati, Yoga Publications Trust and Yoga Research Fellowship.

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Bihar, India

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Plates: 1–4: October – Month of Happiness



GUIDELINES FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE

The Earth

What is this earth? Different definitions can be given from different standpoints. The earth is one of the fields for experiencing the fruits of good, bad and mixed actions, and for performing fresh actions. It is a *bhoga bhumi*, the place where you enjoy, as well as a *karma bhumi*, the place where you fulfil your karmas. It is a bundle of atoms, a form of energy, a materialization of thought, an expression of the effects of the karmas of the individuals of whom it is composed and to whom it is related. Scientifically, the earth is only one of the planets which go to make the universe.

—Swami Sivananda Saraswati

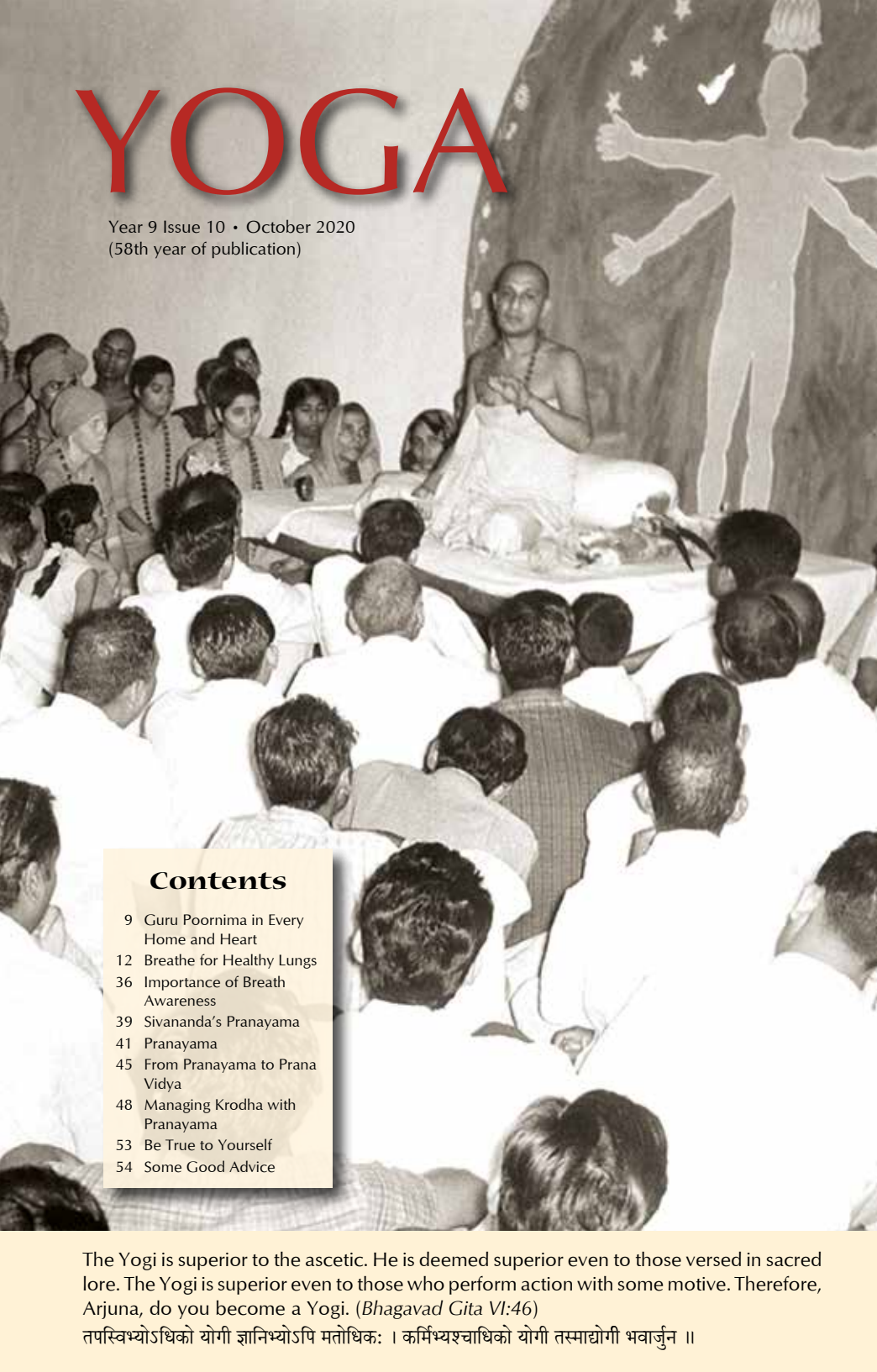
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YOGA

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The Yogi is superior to the ascetic. He is deemed superior even to those versed in sacred lore. The Yogi is superior even to those who perform action with some motive. Therefore, Arjuna, do you become a Yogi. (*Bhagavad Gita VI:46*)

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोधिकः । कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥



Blessed Selves

Hari Om

This year has been like no other. 2020 has brought unprecedented challenges to all, and for many hardship, difficulty and sorrow. It is in such situations that the yogic teachings are even more relevant and important than ever. Through yoga physical health, mental peace and emotional balance are attainable as we strive to adapt, adjust and accommodate, and make the most of the opportunities that come with change.

Many people were looking forward to coming to Ganga Darshan to attend a training, an event, a program, as well as to be in the presence of Swamiji. Yet, since 7th March 2020, the gates of Ganga Darshan have been closed to all visitors, and the guidelines issued by the Government of India and the State Government for the pandemic are being followed sincerely. We hope that people understand the necessity of these measures and precautions for the health and welfare of all.

For so many, Ganga Darshan is their spiritual home and it represents your own aspirations and sankalpa to walk the path you have chosen. The challenge of 2020 is to create a different and stronger connection, that will nurture and sustain all aspirants with the inspiration of the masters and the ashram. This connection is made by living the teachings and creating an ashram in your home or wherever you are. Swamiji's guidance takes many forms and shapes and is given to help you establish, maintain and deepen your connection not only to the ashram but above all to your own faith, commitment and inner strength.

With this in mind, propagating yoga vidya for the upliftment of all aspirants is now the focus of the seva and activities at Ganga Darshan. *Yoga* and *Yogavidya* magazines continue to be produced monthly, yet due to the disruption of the postal services, we are not able to dispatch the magazines. You will find them uploaded and available as free apps for Android and iOS devices and on



On the same website, the *Health for Everyone Series* addresses various aspects of lifestyle and wellbeing with the purpose to help maintain health, immunity, strength and vitality. This series is being continuously updated and enlarged. To date the following presentations, *Breathe for Healthy Lungs*, *Cardiac Care*, *Hypertension* have been completed and are available online. Capsules for the health of eyes,

the management of stress and anxiety are forthcoming and will provide insight and new tools to bring wellbeing into life.

The online Mahamrityunjaya havan presentation connects everyone to the sankalpa of Sri Swami Satyananda. To commemorate the birth centenary of his guru, Sri Swami Sivananda, in 1986, Swami Satyananda initiated this sadhana of the Mahamrityunjaya havan at Ganga Darshan. Since then it has been the tradition to conduct the havan every Saturday, for the welfare and benefit of all. Now everyone can connect to the sankalpa of Sri Swami Satyananda and the healing power of the mantra, wherever they may be. Continue this tradition in your own home by chanting the mantra or conducting the havan where possible. It will improve the home environment and may transport you for a few moments to your spiritual home at Ganga Darshan.



Due to the lockdown and other restrictions, the traditional events and programs could not be celebrated in the manner previously done. Instead, the tradition of these events, such as Guru Bhakti Yoga, has been maintained with simple programs and private functions without guests or visitors. Yet the effort has been to help each and every person connect to these events through live streaming. The Guru Poornima satsang was streamed live from Satyam Vatika, Ganga Darshan, so all could have Swamiji's darshan and listen to the message of his satsang. As and when possible, these events will be brought to you as digital prasad.

At the same time, Satyam Yoga Prasad on www.satyamyoga-prasad.net is continuously being enriched with new publications. Every month you find in this spiritual treasure trove a new source of yoga vidya presented through books, satsangs, chanting and kirtan.

Many people have been writing to enquire about events and trainings for 2021. For the present, rather than making travel plans, make the effort to connect with the yogic lifestyle in your own homes. Live the teachings, connect to your spiritual home, and explore what Swamiji is giving in abundance. Your strongest connection will always be through the effort you make to apply the teachings in your own life. In 2021, we will continue to connect you with the yoga vidya and present new teachings on Satyam Yoga Prasad and the Bihar Yoga website.

Sri Swamiji has told us that 'real life is within'. This real life is your own inner connection. Maintain the light of the guru parampara and the yoga vidya in your hearts, and every day let that light shine brighter.

With prayers for the health and wellbeing of all.

Hari Om Tat Sat





Thank You, Swamiji

Swamis Yogagnana and Vivekamurti, Bulgaria

Thank you and all your helpers for preparing and enriching the Satyam Yoga Prasad site.

Thank you very much for the idea to do such a website and also for all the new releases. With endless gratitude we listen, watch and read these treasures of the tradition.

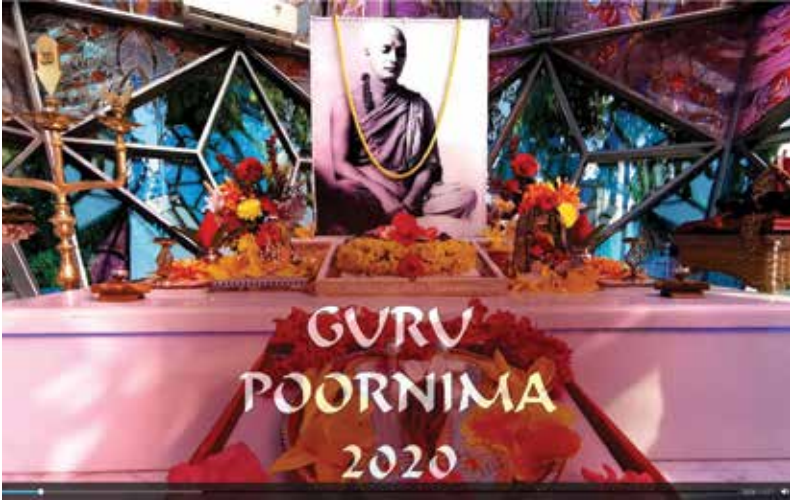
When we listen to the videos and audio recordings, we are transported to the time, when Swami Sivanandaji and Paramahamsaji spoke and sang and delivered the spiritual truths. There are events and lectures which you gave and guided. Now these are history. In some events we were present, in others not. We find so many other interesting and inspiring things, which we had never seen so far. How happy we are when we listen to your voice leading the practices and even reading books for us.

Everything is in very good order – we can easily find whatever we need to watch, read or practise. There is so much that we discover in Satyam Yoga Prasad, for example Paramahamsaji singing bhajans. This moves us and brings tears to our eyes. The website really looks like a big treasure box full with jewels of truth, wisdom and beauty!

Now come the program for *Cardiac Care Through Yoga* for our wellbeing. The presentation of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra Havan transferred us to Ganga Darshan. We are with all of you in a space beyond the mind – a space of the heart and soul. Pranam for all you do for us and humanity.

With love and devotion.

Guru Poornima in Every Home and Heart



Ever since you have instructed to celebrate Guru Purnima at our respective hometowns, we have tried to celebrate it in our own small way at Bera Ashram, Dhanbad. While we did not go to Bera Ashram this year, considering the government guidelines issued for prevention of Covid-19, we distributed 400 lunch boxes to the underprivileged section of society staying in and around Bera Ashram. It was followed by kirtan and chanting at our individual households as given in the SYP app.

– Govinddas, Dhanbad

This year's digital Prasad was the best gift ever! I was totally immersed in the live kirtans and felt I was physically present. Thank you for making this Guru Poornima, so special for all of us.

– Sannyasi Shantikriya, Mumbai



Thank you so much for sending us this priceless digital prasad which will bring so much light into our hearts. All of us in Satyanandashram send you *Hari Om* together with a world of good wishes for health, joy and happiness.

— *Swami Sivamurti, Greece*

I have been crying while watching and I am so thankful to this virus which gave me the opportunity to be again in Ganga Darshan and Chhaya Samadhi and to see you so close.

I would like to thank you for the best prasad we received for Guru Purnima. This prasad gave me the opportunity to walk again around the ashram. I was so much there with my heart, mind and soul. Only the body was here in Bulgaria.

Your prasad was full of love and care and blessings and I think we are the happiest disciples.

— *Sannyasi Tarpanvidya, Bulgaria*

Thank you for the Guru Purnima Prasad. It is really Prasad, not given in my hands but received in my heart.

Thank you!

— *Sannyasi Jyotiprabha, Bulgaria*

Thank you Swamiji for your amazing gifts and Prasad. All sannyasins of Kazakhstan Yoga Academy watched it and were



very happy to have a connection with you. When I saw the program, I felt like I was there sitting behind and participating.

– *Jignasu Gyandarshai, Kazakhstan*

With tears in the eyes and a heart full of love I wish you all a wonderful and happy Guru Poornima. The prasad we received is overwhelming. I miss you all and at the same time feel connected in the love for our Gurus

– *Swami Annapoorna, The Netherlands*

Thank you for your compassion, guidance and inspiration and for your grace. Without you our lives would be without meaning and spent in vain. Guru Poornima was a very touching, memorable and inspirational event for us. Being so far and keeping the social distancing we felt again that your grace is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and that the Guru Tattwa can be experienced everywhere when the faith is pure. All of us were so happy to participate online in this celebration. We received clearly your directions, messages and guidance and faith to continue the journey. I felt that we were moved again to a different dimension and I know it is accessible only through Guru's grace.

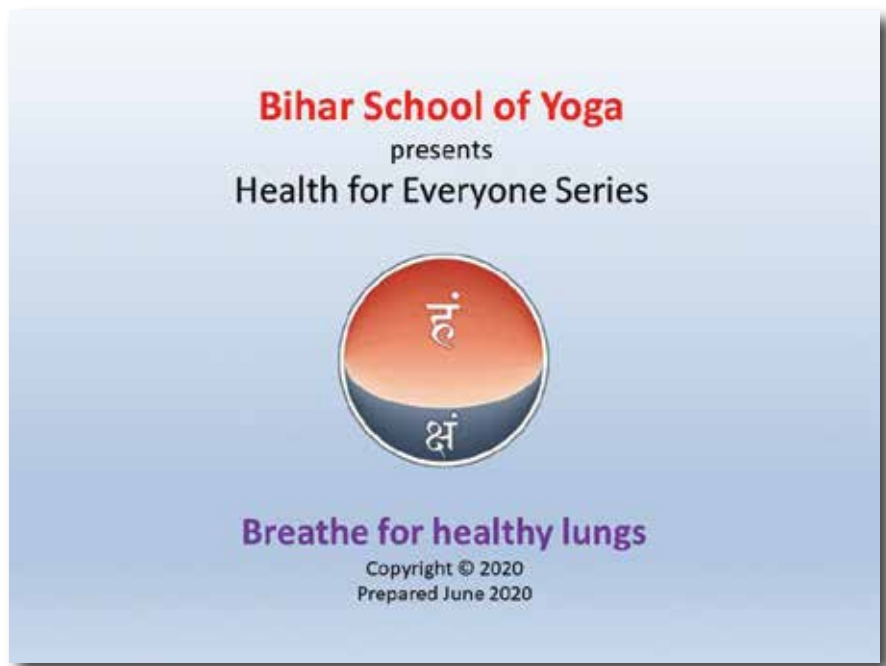
– *Sannyasi Devasiddhi, Bulgaria*

Breathe for Healthy Lungs

This issue of *YOGA* magazine is dedicated to the theme of *Breathe for Healthy Lungs*. The presentation of the same name was launched on 21 July and is available on the Bihar Yoga website, www.biharyoga.net. It is reproduced here so that aspirants may have an ever-ready paper copy to consult.

The collection of articles on prana, breath and pranayama give more information and help to understand why it is important to be aware of the breathing process and develop correct breathing habits.

The more we connect to this vital force, which is our first and last breath, the more we will connect to life itself, and to the quality of our own life and being.



Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Blessed Selves, Hari Om

For all life forms breathing is vital, without which no life would survive. The entire life is lived from the first breath at birth until the last breath at the time of death. Breathing happens all the time, but no one is aware of it.

Similarly the heartbeat is another activity that goes on continuously from the time in the womb until seven, eight, nine decades later, when heart stops, life ends.

A doctor's death certificate states cardio-respiratory failure for the majority of natural deaths, indicating that heart and breath together are responsible for sustaining the journey of life.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati says:

You breathe 21,600 times in 24 hours, but you don't know it. Most people breathe but they don't know they are breathing. This is the relationship of man with his life principle, this is ignorance. If the breath stops for 3 minutes you are gone, finished. Breathing is such an essential process of life and lives so close to you, you can even touch it and still you don't know it. The breath is the most essential item in life.

The heart and lungs are the two most important organs of the body but also the most ignored and uncared for, until some serious setback to health happens.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Yogic tradition has always emphasized care of lungs and heart for a healthy and strong body which can withstand the onslaught of stress and sickness, and increase stamina, vitality, immunity and attain optimum health.

The Yogis realized **breath to be the container and carrier** of prana shakti, the vital life force, which once harnessed, channelled and guided could alter and improve the performance of the cardio-vascular, cerebral, nervous systems and pranic field of life.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Some facts to know about lungs and breath

Breathing is of two types: 1. External Respiration and 2. Internal Respiration.

External respiration is the exchange of gases (oxygen and carbon dioxide) between the body and the external environment.

Internal respiration is the exchange of gases between tissue cells and their fluid environment.

Rhythmic bellows-like movements aid the intake of air to the lungs (inhaling) and expulsion of air from the lungs (exhaling).

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

The total lung capacity can vary in different body types. The average capacity of the lungs is to hold about *five to six litres of air*.

In a normal inhalation you breathe about 500 millilitres of air, out of which about 350 ml reach the alveoli in the lungs and 150 ml remain in the trachea and main bronchi known as the dead space.

The vitality, health and stamina of the body is dependent only on the 500 ml of air that you breathe in and out.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

At rest, a normal male adult breathes in and out about 10 to 15 times per minute. For simplicity, consider the rate of breathing to be 10 breaths per minute. The amount of air that you breathe in per minute is $500 \text{ ml} \times 10 = 5000 \text{ ml}$ or 5 litres. This is the respiratory minute volume.

During hard exercise, the volume may go up to as much as 150 litres or more.

The values are about 25% *lower* in the female body.

In deep breathing, the volume of inhaled air and the quantity which reaches the alveoli increase.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

During normal inhalation of 500 ml, oxygen makes up approximately 20.95%, nitrogen 79.01% and carbon dioxide 0.04% of air that we breathe. Out of 500 ml, 150 ml occupy the conducting passages which remains unchanged in composition.

350 ml (together with 150 ml previously occupying conducting passages) reach the alveoli. This mixture changes its composition as it gives oxygen to the blood and takes carbon dioxide from the blood.

These levels reflect percentages as existing in an optimum healthy environment. But in today's highly polluted environment, the levels of nitrogen and carbon dioxide during inhalation may be much higher leading to greater risk of cardiac and respiratory disease.

One cannot emphasize enough the importance of clean air for our health.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

During normal exhalation of 500 ml of air, oxygen is 16.4%, nitrogen 79.6% and carbon dioxide is 4%. In deep breathing, the composition of air exhaled changes to approximately 13.8% oxygen, 80.7% nitrogen and 5.5% carbon dioxide.

Deep yogic breathing increases the amount of oxygen absorbed into the blood as well as increases the amount of carbon dioxide expelled during exhalation.

Our breath connects us intimately to the natural world around us. The carbon dioxide we exhale is utilized by every plant, tree and forest on earth and in return they supply us with the oxygen we require for life. The process of respiration in humans has evolved along with the forests of the earth and without them there is no life as we know it.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

The depth and rate of respiration may be modified by speech, singing, crying, laughing, drugs, sedatives, alcohol, exercises, sleep, fear, anger, pain, fever, pollution etc.

A better air flow or ventilation of the lungs is achieved with yogic breathing techniques involving a slow breathing rate and a large tidal volume, or a fast breathing rate and small tidal volume.

When this is achieved through controlled practice, it brings about slow and deep rhythmic respiratory patterns and changes the habit of faulty breathing. The elimination of waste gases improves. The heart and the circulatory functions are regulated and arrhythmic heartbeat is rectified. This condition induces a state of relaxation throughout the body-mind complex.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

The **practice of yogic breathing** techniques called Pranayama develop the ability to take deep breaths, to breathe in more than 500 ml, maybe 1000 to 1500 ml and with mastery of breath, maybe even 5000 ml of air per breath.

With Pranayama, it is possible to improve lung capacity.

Under stress and tension, breathing is rapid, short and shallow. During rest, it is slow, deep and long.

Longer and deeper breathing reduces emotional, nervous, cerebral and muscular stress and anxiety.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

It is important to learn the right way to breathe and utilize more of the capacity of the lungs. If you begin to use even half your lung potential, two or three litres, it is a big improvement.

The stamina, strength, vitality, health and physical immunity can increase manifold if you learn to breathe correctly.

In yogic breathing you learn to regulate the breath, increase the lung capacity and master the process of inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Yoga has maintained that proper breathing allows the individual to live a longer and healthier life.

Poor respiration can also become the reason for asthma, anxiety, hypertension, stress, nervous disorders and hyperactivity. It can deplete minerals in the body and lead to skeletal deformities.

When people reach middle age, the lung capacity reduces by at least 10%, and this decline continues due to lack of proper breathing and poor physical health.

'Health is the ultimate wealth' and yogic practices allow you to gain this complete health. Therefore, make yoga a sustainable habit and routine in your life.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

For your information

Medical reports show that the present covid-19 pandemic has left the lungs completely unrecognizable. In those patients who spent more than a month in hospital, massive damage was suffered by the lungs resulting in complete disruption of the lung architecture.

It was also found that people in highly polluted urban areas were more vulnerable to the impact of the virus due to already weakened and compromised respiratory and cardiac systems.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

- In yogic breathing techniques or pranayamas, the practitioner is always advised to breathe through the nose and **not** through the mouth.
- Breathing through the nose is the first line of defence for the body against pollution and particulate matter in the air. It is essential for health of the lungs, gives more energy and brings balance to body and mind.
- As ambient oxygen passes through the sinuses, it diffuses across the nasal epithelium and is used by the nasal cells to produce Nitric Oxide.
- When nitric oxide reaches the lungs it diffuses into the capillaries of the surrounding alveoli, expands blood vessels and increases the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

- The release of nitric oxide helps to control blood flow via diffusion to the underlying muscle cells. The vasodilation effect of nitric oxide leads to increased oxygen intake and arterial oxygenation as well as reduces pulmonary vascular resistance.
- Benefits of enhanced nitric oxide include increased aerobic capacity, reduced hypertension, increased insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance, capillarization and growth of blood vessels.
- Increased nitric oxide, through nasal breathing, regulates autonomic functions like heart rate, respiration, blood pressure, and digestion along with mood, sleep cycle, and fluid balance.
- Another benefit of enhanced nitric oxide is neurogenesis, which is the process by which new neurons form in the brain strengthening synapses for learning and memory.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

In the time of crisis, when breathing becomes difficult and challenging for the untrained lungs, it is always better to practise yogic breathing techniques to overcome the crisis situation. It will improve health, vitality, stamina and internal immunity to enable the body to fight with external viruses and bacterial agents which affect your health and wellbeing.

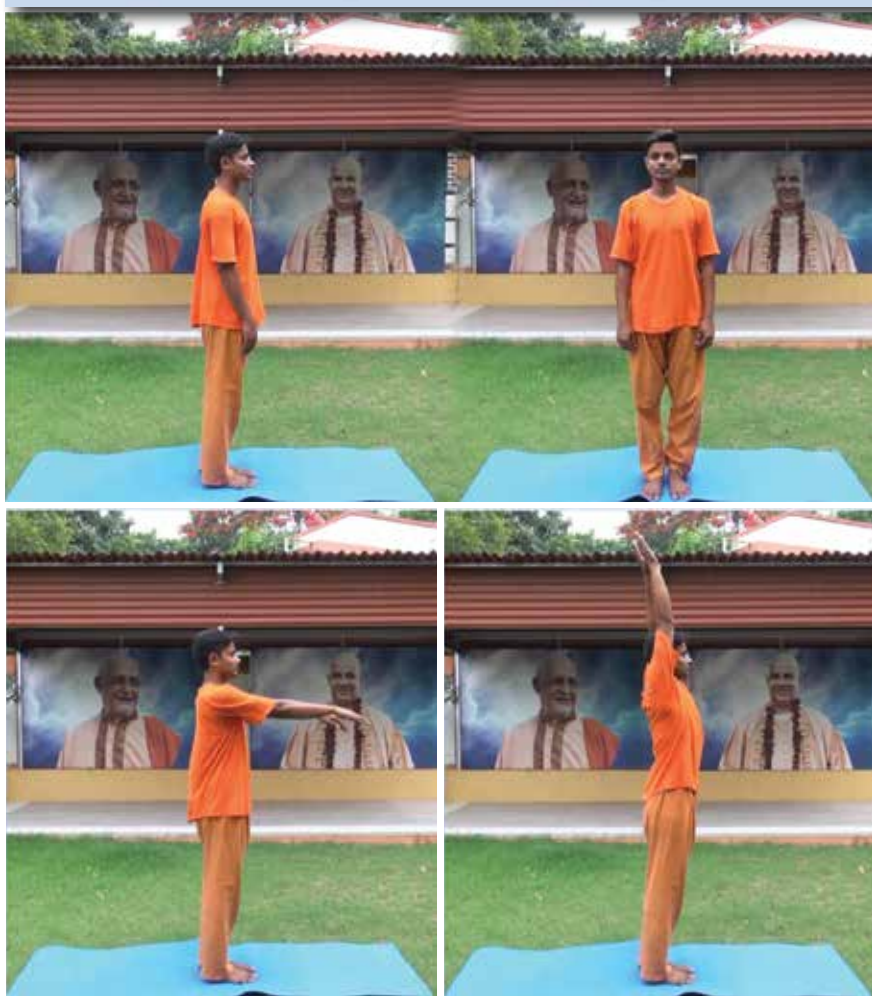
Presented here are eight simple yet effective breathing exercises, taught by our Paramguru, Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati, for you to develop healthy lungs and breathing habits.

1. Preparatory breathing technique – Frontal stretch

Stand upright with arms to your sides.

Inhale long and deep and raise your arms from the front above the head. Hold the breath in for 5 seconds with the arms stretched above. Exhale and lower your arms to the starting position.

Repeat this 10 times as shown:

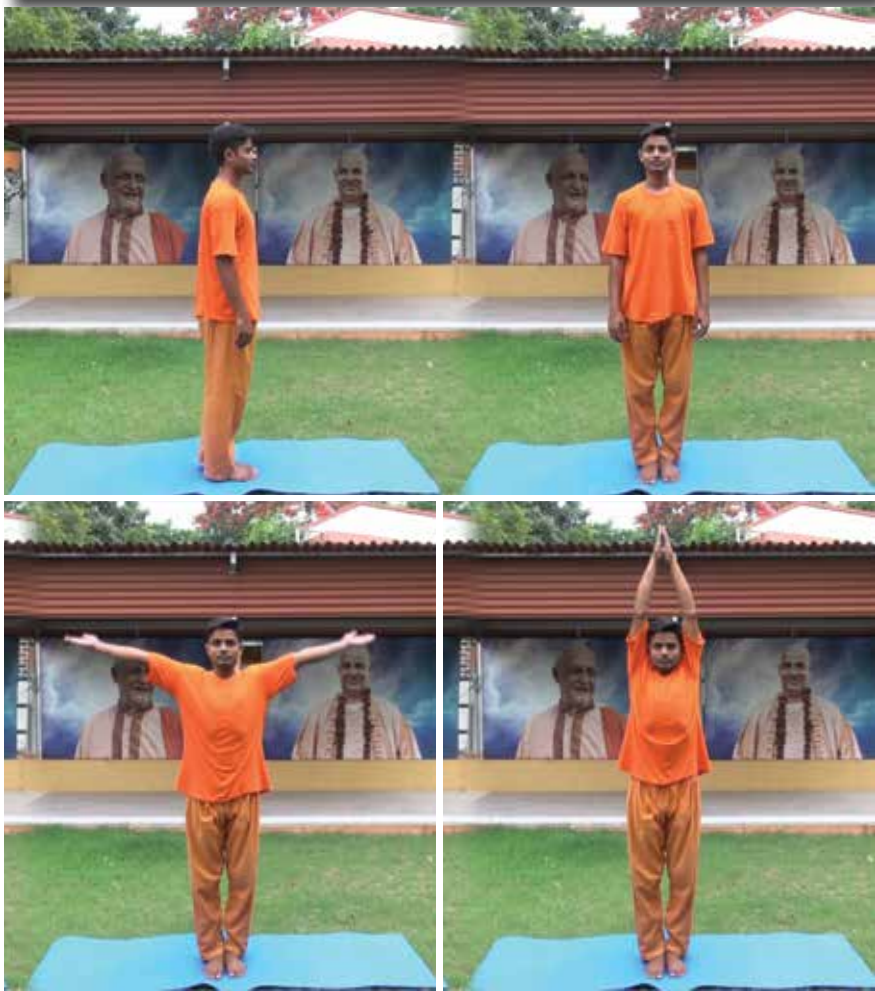


2. Preparatory breathing technique – Side stretch

Stand upright with arms to your sides.

Inhale long and deep and raise your arms sideways and up above the head. Hold the breath in for 5 seconds with the arms stretched above. Exhale and lower your arms sideways to the starting position.

Repeat this 10 times as shown:



3. Preparatory breathing technique – Back stretch

Stand upright with arms stretched in front.

Inhale long and deep and take your arms sideways towards the back. Take the hands behind the back as far as you can comfortably. Hold the breath in for 5 seconds. Exhale and bring your arms to the starting position.

Repeat this 10 times as shown:



4. Preparatory breathing technique – Abdominal breath

Lie flat on the bed and relax the whole body. Place the right hand on your abdomen. Close your eyes.

Inhale slow and deep allowing the abdomen to expand fully and then exhale gently.

Feel the hand move up and down with each respiration.

The breathing should be like the swell of the sea with no jerking or unnecessary strain.

Practise this for 50 gentle breaths fully filling and emptying the abdomen as shown:



5. Preparatory Pranayama technique – Sahaj Purak Shwasan

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position. Keep the spine straight. Place your hands on your thighs as close to the hips as possible. Push your elbows slightly back until you feel your chest open up and expand. Relax in this base position.

Now breathe in and push gently downwards with your hands on your thighs. Don't hunch your shoulders, rather keep them relaxed and loose. Hold the breath in for 5 seconds and then gently breathe out, relaxing the pressure on the thighs.

Breathe silently through your nose and not through the mouth.

Practise this 11 to 21 rounds comfortably as shown:



6. Preparatory Pranayama technique – Utthita Sahaj Purak

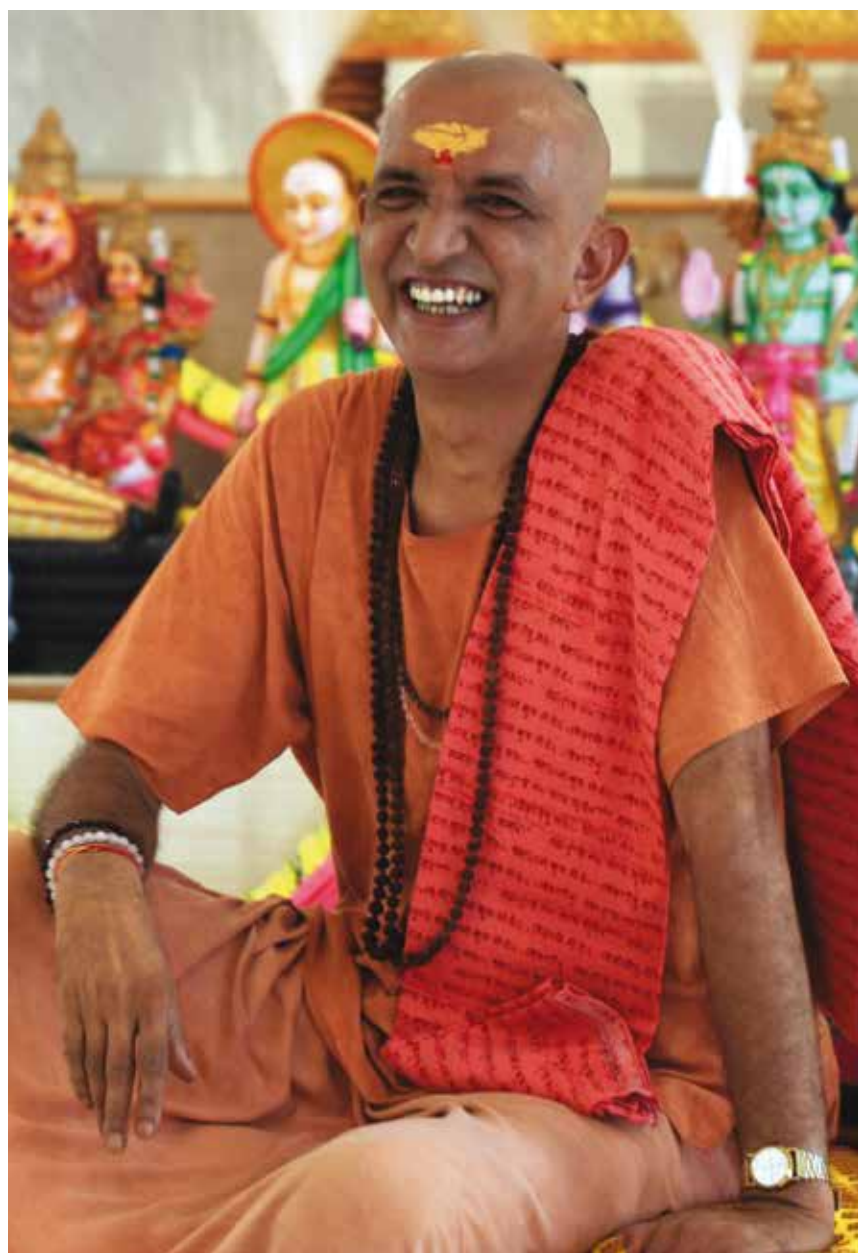
Stand upright and straight. Shoulders relaxed and arms to your sides. Fix your gaze at a point in front of you.

Inhale gently, slowly lift your heels off the floor and stand on your toes. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Exhale and slowly bring the heels back to the floor.

Breathe silently through your nose and not through the mouth.

Practise this 11 to 21 rounds comfortably as shown:











7. Preparatory Pranayama technique – Viloma Pranayama

In viloma pranayama, the breathing is interrupted throughout inhalation and/or exhalation.

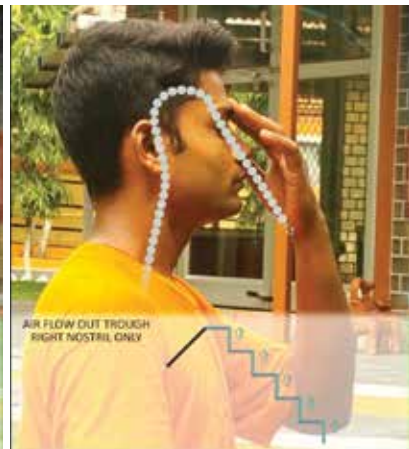
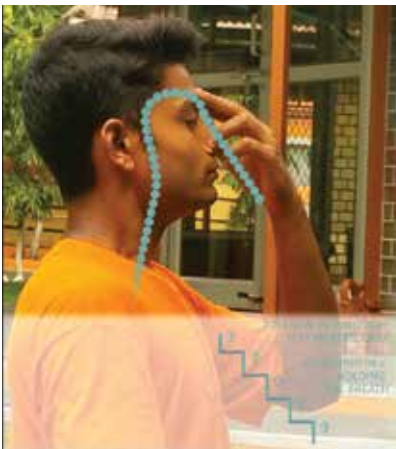
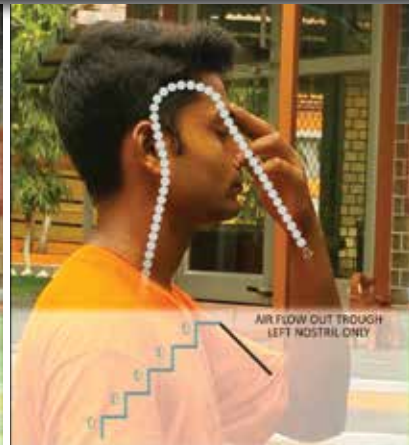
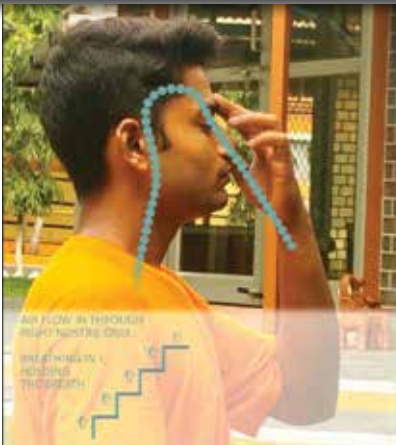
Sit comfortably on your chair or bed. Relax the body and allow the breathing to become regular, steady and stable.

Begin inhalation with a series of short pauses: inhale-pause, inhale-pause, inhale-pause. Continue like this until the lungs are full. The diaphragm and abdomen should remain firm after each pause.

Imagine that you are breathing up a set of stairs. This will make the practice easier.

On completion of the interrupted inhalation, exhale slowly and smoothly until the lungs are empty. Do not strain.

Practise 10 rounds and then relax and breathe normally.



8. Preparatory Pranayama technique – Simple Nadi Shodhana

Sit comfortably on your chair or bed. Relax the body, close your eyes and allow the breathing to become regular and stable.

Place the index and middle fingers of your right hand at the eyebrow centre and with the thumb, close your right nostril. Inhale long and deep through the left nostril mentally counting 7 seconds.

Open the right nostril by removing the thumb and close the left nostril using your ring and little fingers. Breathe out slowly and gently through the right nostril mentally counting 7 seconds. Then again inhale through the right nostril mentally counting 7 seconds.

Close the right nostril with your thumb again and open the left nostril. Breathe out gently through the left nostril, counting 7 seconds.

This is one round of simple nadi shodhana. Practise 10 rounds, then relax and breathe normally.



Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Final word

- Pre-Pranayama or yogic breathing techniques increase the level of physical vitality, thus strengthening the force of internal systems resulting in overall health.
- They strengthen the respiratory muscles and the lungs become more elastic, resulting in a healthier process of respiration.
- During normal respiration, the stomach, pancreas, liver, bowels and kidneys are exercised, but this is accentuated during pranayama by the massage given to them by the conscious, controlled and deeper movement of the diaphragm and the abdominal muscles.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

These breathing techniques also

- Minimize the daily stress of the cardiac system.
- Harmonize, purify, neutralize and balance the secretions of the endocrine gland systems and calm agitated thoughts and behaviour.
- Slowly reduce the dissipations, distractions, agitations and velocity of the mind and the power and clarity of mind increases.
- They sharpen concentration and gradually reduce nervous and cerebral tensions, emotional imbalances and mental stress.

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

- They develop a greater sense of self-reliance by regulating breathing patterns.
- Boost the blood circulation in the brain and body, and
- Clear toxins and impurities of the physical systems giving a boost to the feeling of lightness, energy and vitality.

These simple breathing practices can be done by people of all ages, whether they be yoga practitioners or non-practitioners.

With prayers for health and wellbeing.

HARI OM TAT SAT

Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Yoga publications on this subject can be found on satyam yogaprasad.net

Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha

by Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Prana and Pranayama

by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Asthma & Diabetes

by Dr. Swami Shankardevananda

Common Diseases

By Dr. Swami Karmananda



Bihar Yoga

Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

Live Yoga from Moment to Moment by connecting with the yogic vision, humanitarian mission and spiritual inspiration of the Bihar School of Yoga.

www.biharyoga.net

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Breathe for healthy lungs



Health for Everyone Series

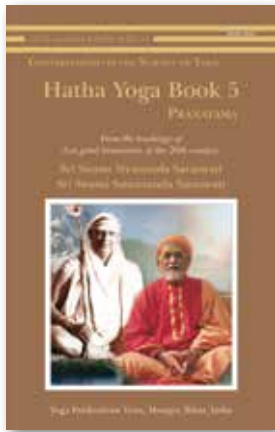
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Prepared June 2020**

Importance of Breath Awareness



Why is it important to know one's breath?

Swami Niranjanananda: Nothing is closer than one's own breath. It is tangible, believable, understandable and controllable. The gentle inhalation and exhalation is sustaining and calming, it affects one's thoughts and is itself affected by one's activities, emotions and thoughts. Everyone experiences this daily, yet the breath is often ignored or forgotten.

In the practices of pranayama, a deep familiarity with the breath develops. Knowledge of the respiratory system aids and enhances the practices, helping to bring a better understanding of their physiological parameters.

Why does hatha yoga give so much attention to the breath?

Swami Niranjanananda: The breath has a close relationship with the body. Whether doing asana, pranayama, dhauti or any hatha yoga practice, it is essential to have control over the breath, as according to yoga the breath is a mirror of the mental and emotional state. If the mind and emotions are restless or scattered, it can be observed in the breath. If a person is lying down and has many thoughts going through the mind and cannot stop those thoughts, the breathing will be rapid, short and unsteady. The breathing process will be mainly in the upper portion of the lungs and unconsciously the person will be longing for a deep calming breath. Alternatively, if the breathing pattern of a person who is

calm, not distressed or restless, is observed, the breath will be found to be calm.

According to yoga there is also a relationship between the breath and the pranic body. Many people believe that if the breath is retained for a longer period, they might even die, but this is an incorrect concept. If the breath is withheld forcibly without practice, the face will turn black, brown, blue, and finally one must breathe, or indeed, death would result. It is quite possible, however, for a siddha yogi to function without the breath for up to half an hour and still be alive. The general public sees this as a *siddhi*, an accomplishment, but in the tradition, restraining the breath is not thought of as a siddhi, but as a capacity of the body. It is also possible to hold air inside the body for up to forty minutes, one hour or longer. There are many things the body can do, but it is essential to understand the body and recognize its capacity.

Prana can exist without breath. The breath has a relationship with *prana shakti*, the life force or energy, but prana is different from the breath. The difference is that prana shakti is present in the physical body in the form of heat, energy and brilliance. The inner heat, or body temperature, is an activity of prana shakti. If one does not breathe in for two minutes, it makes no difference, but if prana does not exist inside the body even for a second, one instantly dies. In its subtle state, prana shakti exists in the form of activity. That is why there is an experience of restlessness, excitement or activity in emotion, in the expression of love, attachment, attraction, anger, desire, lust and craving.

In one sense, prana shakti is even behind the thoughts, but its form is changed and it is called chitta shakti. Prana shakti is physical and extroverted, whereas chitta shakti is internal, mental, emotional and intellectual. Hatha yoga makes an effort to awaken and balance the forces of chitta shakti and prana shakti in the body; that is why the breathing process has been emphasized in hatha yoga. External practices are performed with the body, but in order to vibrate and awaken the inner

shakti it is important to have control over the breath; this is an internal process.

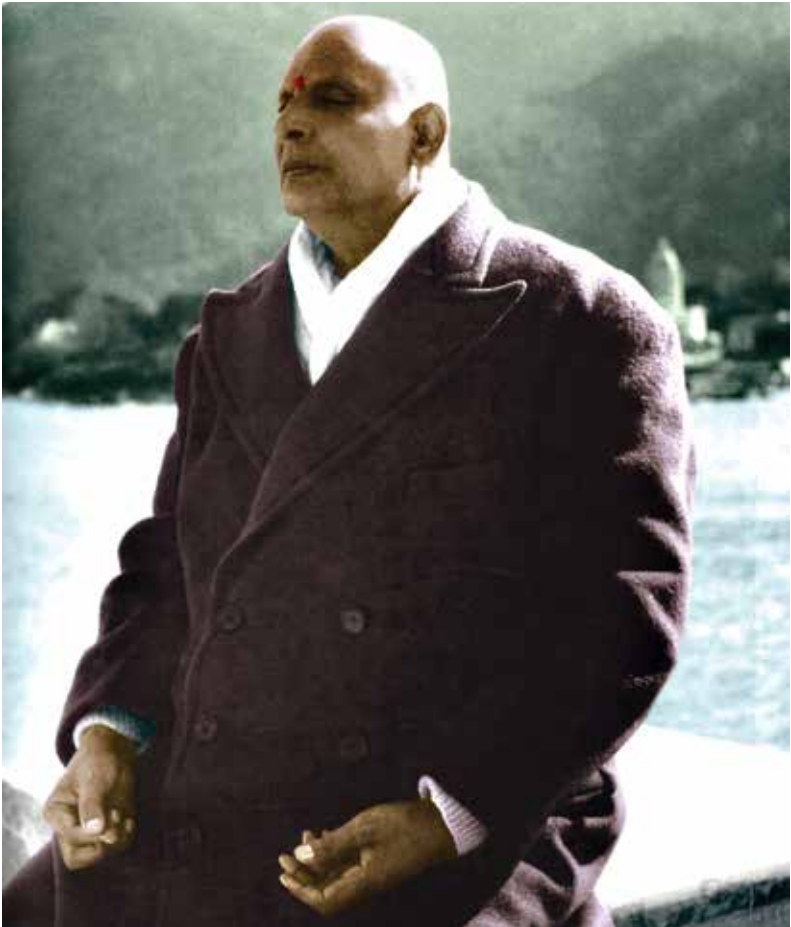
How does one develop awareness of prana?

Swami Niranjanananda: Yoga says to start with breath awareness. The moods and states of the mind are reflected in the way one breathes in and out. If one is agitated, nervous, tense and angry, the breathing pattern will be shallow. The breath will be short and will remain in the upper thoracic region. When one is relaxed, the breath is deep, long and relaxed. Sometimes in deep states of relaxation the breath cannot even be noticed, it is so gentle. Therefore, yogis use the breath to regulate and harmonize the physical systems, like the nervous system. They use the breath to tranquillize the functions of the mind. In this way, through the breath, awareness of prana is developed.

– *From Conversations on the Science of Yoga -
Hatha Yoga Book 5, Pranayama*



Sivananda's Pranayama



Technique: Sit comfortably on a chair, sofa or easy-chair. Draw in the air through both nostrils for as long as comfortable. Retain the breath for as long as comfortable and repeat your ishta mantra or *Aum* while retaining the breath. Then exhale for as long as comfortable. You need not observe any ratio between the inhalation, exhalation and retention, but let the inhalation and exhalation be deep and full.

Benefit: The benefits of this pranayama are incalculable. All the muscles are relaxed and the nerves are toned. Circulation is promoted. A rhythm and harmony is established in the entire being. Mind is calmed and an inexpressible feeling of peace and bliss will arise within you.

You can do it in the morning while lying in bed. Your mind will become alert for commencing japa and dhyana. You can do it when the mind is about to lose its balance on account of the setting in of lust, anger or other evil *vrittis*, whirlpools. The mind will be filled with a great power that will prevent the evil *vrittis* from disturbing it.

You can do it just before commencing your study, the mind will be concentrated easily and what you study will be indelibly impressed in your mind. You can do it during your office work; you will get new strength every time and you will never be tired. When you return home from the office you can practise this pranayama and you will be recharged with fresh energy.

The greatest advantage is that once you start doing it you will do it very often; and your mind can never find an excuse for not practising this *ati-sukha-purvaka pranayama*, this very easy and comfortable pranayama, which has all the advantages of pranayama, without its 'rules and regulations'. Do it from now without fail.

– Printed in YOGA, August 2009



Pranayama

What is the real meaning of pranayama?

Swami Satyananda: Pranayama is a greatly misunderstood term. People translate it as 'breathing exercise'. Of course the practices do improve the introduction of oxygen into the physical body and the removal of carbon dioxide. Of this there is no doubt, and this in itself brings about wonderful physiological benefits. But pranayama is not simply a respiratory exercise, or an exercise of the breath.



Pranayama does not mean controlling the life force. Pranayama does not mean controlling the breath. Then what is pranayama?

Pranayama means conveying the life force to every nook and corner of the body. It is actually a process which awakens the dormant prana, the sleeping vital energy in the physical body. It is part of a total system of reintegration, rebalancing and reharmonizing of body and mind, a system which purifies and strengthens, and thereby eliminates physical and mental tension and weakness. Simultaneously, pranayama awakens the inner awareness. The practice of pranayama recharges the energy in the physical body which is then conducted by ida and pingala nadis in the form of electrical impulses to all parts of the body, including the brain. Scientists have observed that when pranayama is practised both hemispheres of the brain are active and there are great changes in the brain's electrical impulses.

What is the meaning and significance of the word pranayama?

Swami Satyananda: Prana, means far more than breath. 'Prana' plus 'ayama' gives 'prana-ayama'. Ayama is a Sanskrit word which can be defined as follows: stretching, extending, restraining, expansion (of dimensions in time and space). Thus, pranayama means to extend and overcome one's normal limitations. Pranayama uses the breathing process as a means to manipulate all forms of prana within the human framework, whether gross or subtle, but it is chiefly concerned with influencing the subtle forms of prana. Pranayama provides the method whereby one is able to attain higher states of vibratory energy. In other words, one is able to activate and regulate the prana within the human framework and thereby make oneself more sensitive to vibrations in the cosmos and internally.

Pranayama is a method of refining the makeup of one's pranic body, one's physical body and also of one's mind. In this way, it is possible for a practitioner to become aware of new dimensions of existence. By making the mind calm and still, consciousness is allowed to shine through without distortion. In *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad* (v. 89) it is written:

*Chale vaate chalo binduh nishchale bhavet; Yogee sthaanuttva-
maapnoti tato vayum nirundhayet.*

When the prana moves, the bindu also moves. When the prana remains steady, then the bindu is also steady. Thus the yogi becomes steadfast and firm. Therefore, the prana should be controlled.

What are the main purposes of pranayama?

Swami Satyananda: The first purpose of pranayama is to supply energy to the nervous system. The second purpose is to awaken kundalini. The third purpose of pranayama is to awaken the sleeping centres of the brain. It is said that thought influences prana, and prana influences thought. According

to the yogic texts, the purpose of pranayama is to handle the mind. The scriptures on yoga make it clear – mind and prana are interacting. When the mind is restless it affects the prana; when the mind is peaceful, calm and tranquil, there is automatic equipoise in the prana. The reverse is also true. When the pranas are agitated the mind is agitated. When the pranas are controlled, the mind is controlled. In Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (2:53) it is said:

Dharanasu cha yogyata manasah.

And fitness of the mind for concentration (develops through pranayama).

Therefore, if pranayama is correctly followed, one can attain the highest steps in yoga.

What have scientific studies revealed about the effects of conscious breathing on the brain?

Swami Satyananda: The brain consists of the frontal brain and the posterior brain. The posterior brain is the instinctive, or primitive brain. The frontal brain is the seat of total consciousness. When one breathes without awareness, the breath is registered in the posterior brain. This is called involuntary breathing. When one is aware of breathing and consciously witnessing the whole process, it is called voluntary breathing and it is registered by the conscious brain, the frontal brain.

This difference seems to be simple, but its effect is great. Throughout life, most people breathe unconsciously, just like animals and children. A few people who have started practising yoga are the exception. The moment one becomes aware of the breathing and begins to conduct and control the breath in a particular fashion, the frontal brain immediately registers the influence. This fact has been revealed by scientific experiments and has led to the conclusion that conscious breathing has an entirely different effect on the brain from unconscious

breathing. Through unconscious breathing the whole body is supplied with prana, but this supply is insufficient for its evolution and growth.

This means that pranayama is not only a breathing exercise or breath control, it is a system for training the different centres in the brain. An example of voluntary breathing is alternate nostril breathing. Scientific studies have observed that when one breathes in the left nostril, activity increases in the right hemisphere of the brain, and when one breathes in the right nostril, activity increases in the left hemisphere of the brain. When the breath is held, both hemispheres of the brain are equalized.

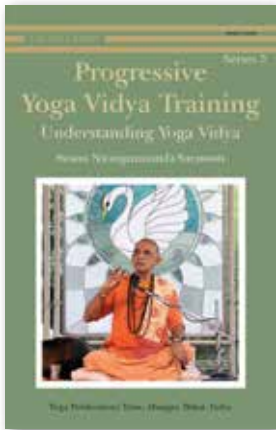
It has also been observed that the breath which goes through the left nostril has a slightly lower temperature than the breath which goes through the right. This concurs with the yogic understanding that the left nostril is related to *ida nadi*, the flow of mental energy, while the right nostril is related to *pingala nadi*, the flow of vital energy. Ida is the lunar force, which is cool, while pingala is the solar force, which is hot.

In scientific experiments related to stress, ECG (electrocardiograph) and EEG (electroencephalograph) are used to record heart rhythm and brainwaves, and GSR (galvanic skin response) to measure electrical activity of the skin. It has been found that the practice of pranayama results in a synchronous flow of alpha, delta or theta waves, which harmonizes the activity of the brain. The tensions recorded during periods of beta activity reduce when alpha, theta or delta waves replace the beta activity. When the alpha waves manifest in the brain, tensions in the body are lowered and the heart becomes free from stress-related pressure.

– *From Conversations on the Science of Yoga –
Hatha Yoga Book 5, Pranayama*

From Pranayama to Prana Vidya

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

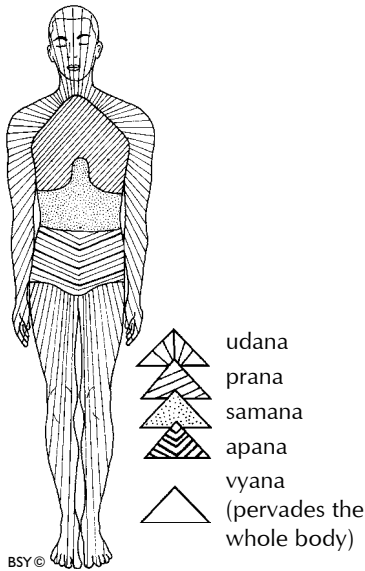


Our objective is not to go into ideas and philosophies of what yogis can do or what is physically possible or not possible, but how you can manage your own lungs. Breathing exercises are known as *prana-yama*. *Prana* meaning energy and *yama* meaning to hold. You are holding the pranic energy, and trying to develop its awareness and understanding. You are also preparing your lung capacity, the physical capacity to breathe, and

through breath access the prana shakti.

The breath becomes like the rope that you catch hold of in order to climb up a branch on a tree. Through the practices of nadi shodhana, surya bheda, chandra bheda, kapalbhathi and bhastrika pranayamas, you are increasing your capacity. That is the first part.

The second part is *prana-ayama*, expansion of prana. What is the meaning of expansion of prana? According to the yogic scriptures there are five manifestations of prana in the body and each performs a different function. The first manifestation is *prana shakti* itself. The area of prana is the chest area governing the lungs and the heart. It is an indrawn breath. When you breathe in, that is prana. The lungs and the heart are controlled by this pranic energy. The next energy is *apana*, active in the area between the navel and the perineum. That is a downward-moving energy, the exhaled breath. It is responsible for expulsion of waste matter, both solid and liquid. If any form



of waste has to be ejected from the body, including sweat, the apana force becomes active.

The third energy between the navel and the ribcage is samana, governing the digestive system. *Samana* means the equalizing force, and it is responsible for digestion, for extracting the nutrients and putting the waste matter on the conveyor belts. *Udana* is in the extremities, responsible for locomotion of the body. It is present in the legs, arms, head and neck, and it also governs the sense organs in the

head: the eyes, nose, mouth and ears. *Vyana*, the fifth energy, is the second breath. It is like the emergency supply. When one supply runs out, instantly the emergency supply goes there.

These five pranas have been defined. Out of the five, two are considered the most important: prana and apana. As prana and apana merge they become larger. It is the merger of prana and apana in samana which is known as pranayama. It is not the breath; it is the merger.

Different techniques are used in pranayama to aid this process of merger, such as mudras and bandhas. The breath becomes secondary here. In prana-yama the breath was primary. In prana-ayama the breath becomes secondary, and the experience of the movement of the pranas becomes primary.

The purpose of prana-ayama is to merge prana and apana. Only these two pranas. The scriptures and yogis don't deal much with udana, vyana or any other form of prana; they speak of prana and apana merging in the samana region. This means the three pranas become one. That is the expansion of prana which we seek in prana-ayama.

Pranotthana

With expansion of prana comes the next stage. The psychic centres, the chakras, become activated, and the energy contained in them is released. That stage is known as *pranotthana*, awakening of the pranas. After awakening of the pranas, you work with the chakras. In the second level, prana-ayama, you deal with the merger of prana and apana. In the third level, you are managing the release of energy from the chakras.

You are not trying to release them; you are trying to manage them. Please remember that. This is a major point. People think, 'I can awaken my chakra.' No. If it awakens, you have to manage it. It is the management which is more important than the awakening. You can wake up the sleeping giant and then what? Therefore, don't think of awakening, think of managing.

Pranotthana takes place naturally when the pranas merge and become one. Their identity is gone and the chakras discharge the prana contained in them. That is *chakrotthana* and *pranotthana*, and it is their result that you have to manage. This management is done through prana pratyahara. Prana pratyahara has been vastly defined in the classical raja yoga, and one of the practices of prana pratyahara is prana nidra.

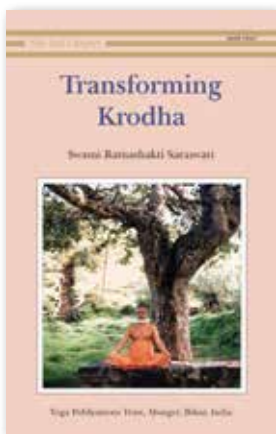
After prana pratyahara, when you are able to master the pranic energy, the fifth component is prana vidya. Now you can do anything with prana shakti. You can heal yourself. You can transmit prana shakti to heal other people. It is not like a Reiki experience. *Prana vidya* is the classical, traditional and original way of exploring and utilizing this cosmic energy for the betterment of society. The outcome of pranayama is *laghavam*, lightness, of body, mind, emotions and prana shakti.

This is the progression: prana-yama, prana-ayama, pranotthana, prana pratyahara and prana vidya. Prana is the next level of the physical yoga and it is aided with other components such as mudras and bandhas.

– From Progressive Yoga Vidya Training Series 5,
Understanding Yoga Vidya

Managing Krodha with Pranayama

Swami Ratnashakti Saraswati



Prana entwines the mind like a creeper. Pranayama leads to the control of mind. Pranayama will put a break on the impulse of speech. It gives one an abundance of energy to check anger.

– *Swami Sivananda Saraswati*

Krodha is fuelled by prana. Anger is a hot and fiery reaction that is felt in both body and mind. The heat of krodha comes from prana. The more agitated and extreme the reaction, the more prana is directed into the vritti as fuel. Explosive outbursts deplete prana and have a detrimental effect upon the overall vitality of body and resilience of mind. If sustained this depletion of prana causes a fundamental imbalance in the pancha pranas and also impairs the ability of the mind to experience higher states of consciousness.

Pranayama techniques are used to cool the physical and mental systems, restrain the effects of krodha and divert awareness from stressors to relaxation. Cooling pranayamas like sheetalī and sheetkārī can be used, while heating pranayamas should be avoided. One simple method to restrain the instinctive physiological reaction of krodha and regain control of yourself is simple breath awareness. This can be practised anywhere at any time. Become aware of your breath. When you feel irritated, use abdominal breathing. Do not allow the breathing process to move upwards into the chest and

thoracic regions, as this exacerbates the krodha response. If that does not help, focus on extending your exhalation. Exhale slowly for at least twice the duration of your inhalation. Before venting your frustration upon others, take ten long, slow, deep breaths and allow the physiological and pranic systems time to settle and realign. Then decide what is the appropriate course of action.

The sadhana to manage anger is pranayama. From the yogic perspective, anger is a nervous disorder and not a mental disorder. It is a disorder of the nerves, and nerves or nadis are the conductors and carriers of prana shakti. When you practise pranayama, especially nadi shodhana, the pranic flow is harmonized, and its effect impacts your mental behaviour. With the balancing of the nadis and the regulation of the prana flowing in them, the agitated mental behaviour can be brought under control. Those people who do get angry will notice a peculiar condition of breath in the moment of anger; the breath becomes shallow and fast. At that time, if you take deep breaths in and out and regulate your breathing pattern, you can manage your anger very efficiently and effectively.

– Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati

Bhramari pranayama (humming bee breath)

During the practice of bhramari pranayama a humming sound, like that of the bee, is produced with the exhaling breath. The whole pharynx, nasal cavities and sinuses become a resonating column. This sound produced in the vocal cords travels through the middle ear and into the internal ear. This humming sound causes the entire cerebral cortex to vibrate. The vibration has a soothing effect on the mind and nervous system. The environment of the whole body is controlled by the combined-neuroendocrinal systems. When the cerebral cortex is vibrating the harmonizing impulses are sent to the hypothalamus which has the capacity to control the pituitary



gland. In this way, the endocrinal system is controlled and regulated. These impulses from the hypothalamus also affect the sympathetic nervous system which in turn affects all the internal systems of the body. The pineal gland which produces the hormone melatonin is also activated. Bhramari activates the frontal cortex of the brain, and relieves stress and cerebral tension. In doing so it helps alleviate negative mental reactions, harmonize the mind and direct awareness inward.

Duration: Ten rounds or 2 to 5 minutes daily is sufficient.

Technique: Those who are comfortable with bhramari pranayama should practise with shanmukhi mudra.

Ujjayi (psychic breath)

Ujjayi is a tranquillizing pranayama which soothes the nervous system and calms the mind. It has a profoundly relaxing effect and induces a state of sensory withdrawal.

Duration: Begin with 20 breaths or one minute and slowly increase the practice up to 10 minutes.

If people observe the breath and develop sound awareness for five minutes that will reduce cerebral and nervous tension. If there is too much pressure from work, then bhramari pranayama will stimulate melatonin which will reduce tension. People will feel more relaxed and peaceful, thanks to the release of melatonin.

– Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



Nadi shodhana (alternate nostril breathing)

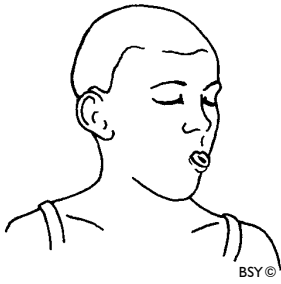
The practice of nadi shodhana balances the two flows of prana, ida and pingala, which simultaneously regulates and harmonizes the activity of the nervous system and the brain hemispheres. It has a profoundly calming effect and relieves anxiety, improves concentration and stimulates the prefrontal cortex. This ratio establishes a calming rhythm for the brain and heart and is of maximum assistance in the management of krodha and other stress-related conditions.

Ratio: 1:2

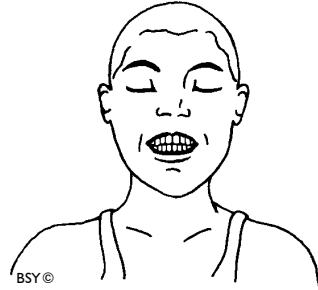
Duration: 10 rounds or 10 to 15 minutes.

With the practice of pranayama, more oxygen may be inhaled but that is not the important point. If oxygen alone is the purpose, then deep breathing would be sufficient. In pranayama inhalation and exhalation must be practised in the ratio of 1:2, because this ratio is most beneficial for the heart. From the pulse you can observe that with inspiration the heart rate speeds up, whereas with expiration it slows down. Therefore, when the ratio of 1:2 is used, the overall effect is that of relaxation of the coronary muscles, but without a reduction of the supply of oxygen to the brain and body tissues.

– Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Sheetali



Sheetkari

Sheetali (cooling breath) and Sheetkari (hissing breath)

Aggression can be combated by the practice of sheetalī and sheetkārī prāṇāyama, but I think you should firstly make a thorough study of your personality.

– Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Sheetali prāṇāyama uses a powerful evaporative cooling mechanism during inhalation, delivering a gently cooling effect from the tongue and roof of the mouth, to the internal organs and deep tissues of the body. Sheetali affects the brain centres associated with instinctive responses and temperature regulation. It cools and reduces the mental agitation and emotional excitement associated with krodha. Excess heat in the physiological system is reduced and the functioning of internal organs is improved. Additionally the practice aids in the regulation of hunger and thirst, both of which are contributing factors in the reaction of krodha.

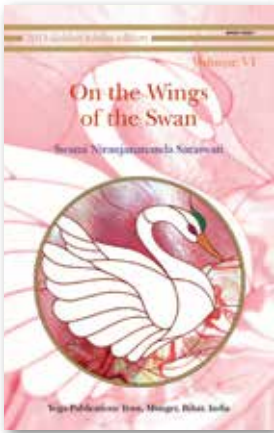
Duration: Begin with 10 rounds and gradually increase up to 5 minutes of practice.

Technique: Experienced practitioners can include antar kumbhaka.

– From Transforming Krodha

Be True to Yourself

Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati



If you want to live yoga, you have to sacrifice whatever is a barrier to spiritual life. If you want to live in a room that has been closed for years, you have to open the doors and windows, clean out all the grime and dust which has accumulated, light some incense and make it a pleasant room to live in. You have to allow the fresh air in. If you don't like it then change your apartment, change your city, change your association, yet be true to yourself.

This message is applicable to everyone: to the sannyasins, to the new students and the old students, as only when you experience this principle of yoga will you know what yoga truly stands for. You have to make the effort to become the self-observer, to become somebody who experiences yoga. The possibilities are endless and the mind has to be open.

This is the journey of yoga that has received the blessings of Swami Sivananda and Swami Satyananda, two great sages of our time. Yoga will become the world culture one day, and the acceptance of yoga throughout the world is proving it. As you begin to experiment with the wholeness of yoga and look upon it as something that can bring out the potential inside, rather than as something you do externally to feel good and relieve your stress, it will provide you with something deeper than you bargained for.

– 29 July 2003, from *On the Wings of the Swan*, Volume VI



Some Good Advice

Swami Sivananda Saraswati



It is through pranayama that you can control your circumstances and character, and consciously harmonize your individual life with the cosmic life.

Start the practice of pranayama –
this very second in right earnest.

Control the breath and calm the mind.

Steady the breath and enter samadhi.

Restrain the breath and lengthen the life.

Subdue the breath and become a yogi –
a dynamo of power, peace, bliss and happiness.

Whenever you feel uneasy, depressed or dejected, practise pranayama. You will be at once filled with new vigour, energy and strength. The pranayama will elevate you and fill you with joy.



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Yoga and Pregnancy

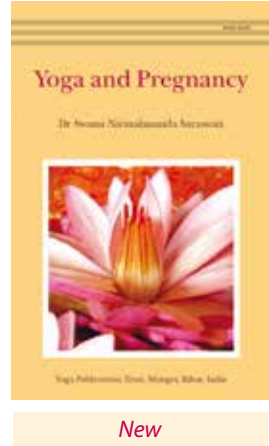
Dr Swami Nirmalananda Saraswati

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Living Yoga Lifestyle Sadhana

This program is released aiming to improve and enhance health and total wellbeing. Available from biharyoga.net and Satyam Yoga Prasad.

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Blessed Self
Hari Om

We are happy to bring the joyous news that from January 2021, the monthly YOGA English and YOGAVIDYA Hindi magazines are available FREE of COST to all subscribers, supporters, yoga aspirants, devotees and spiritual seekers at –
www.satyamyogaprasad.net
www.biharyoga.net

Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and uncertainties associated with it, the printed copies of YOGA and YOGAVIDYA magazines will not be available in 2021 for circulation to subscribers. Therefore, NO new or renewal of previous subscription is being accepted for these magazines for 2021, so please do NOT send any membership for the magazines.

You will be notified from time to time regarding the magazines and any new developments.

In the meantime, continue to enjoy the message of yoga and to live the teachings of Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati to improve and better the quality of your life.

With prayers and blessings of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati for your health, wellbeing and peace.

Om Tat Sat
The Editor