

INDU ARORA

YOGA

Ancient Heritage, Tomorrow's Vision



|| श्री ||

Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya

Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya

Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

-Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad—1.3.28

Lead me from untruth toward truth

from darkness toward light

from death toward the nectar of immortality

Om Peace Peace Peace

In thy name, In thy lotus feet

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CHAPTER 3

SHAT KRIYAS

CLEANSING ACTS



Meaning of Shat Kriyas

Shat means six. *Kriya* means action. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita* state the six purification practices (*shat kriyas*) for the cleansing of the *dhatus* (tissues) and *srotas* (channels), which should be practiced by a *sadhaka* before attempting *asanas* and other subtle/advanced yoga practices.

Textual References of Shat Kriyas

Gheranda-Samhita 1.12

dhautir vastis tathā netir laulikī trāṭakam tathā

kapālabhātīs caitāni ṣaṭ-karmāṇi samācaret.

Dhauti, *Vasti* [*basti*], *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli* and *Kapalbhāti* are six cleansing practices for the body. One must practice these.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 2.22

dhautir bastis tathā netis trāṭakam naulikam tathā

kapāla-bhātīs ca-itāni ṣaṭ-karmāṇi pracakṣate

The six purificatory practices are *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli* and *Kapalabhāti*.

These six purification practices cleanse and strengthen the entire gastrointestinal (GI) tract from mouth to anal opening in order for the organs, organ systems, and the body to maintain a state of health.

Duration: 2–3 minutes

Dharana: External: Big toe of the extended leg

Internal: *Manipura chakra*

Action: *Spandana*

Purpose: *Vyayama/Chikitsa*

Position: Seated

Movement: Stretch

Effect on Dasha: V+ P+ K-

With the state of Yoga as the goal, bow as the body, senses as the string, mind as the arrow, and the act of releasing as the breath, this asana is a reminder of why we practice.

Procedure:

Avahana

- Mentally prepare for the *asana* by visualizing it and feeling it in your body.
- Sit in *danda asana* and establish diaphragmatic breath.



Udgati

- Inhale, stretch your arms, and catch hold of both the big toes with the first two fingers of the respective hands from inside, making a grip around the big toe; exhale. (See photo below, left.)
- Inhale and bring the big toe of the right leg near the respective ear by folding the right knee and the right elbow outward without lifting the other foot, exhale. (See photo below, right.)
- As if drawing back a bow, bring the toe of the right foot as close to the ear as possible.



Madhyasta

- Practice internal or external *Dharana*.

Adhogati

- Slowly release the *asana* step by step with breath coordination.

Kati Skanda Asana: Torso Strengthening Pose

Kati means “waist” and *skanda* means “torso.” The *asana* aims at giving strength to the waistline and all abdominal organs.

Duration: 1–2 minutes/Per your capacity

Dharana: External: Fingertips/Knee

Internal: *Manipura chakra*

Action: *Spandana*

Purpose: *Vyayama/Chikitsa*

Position: Lying down/Supine

Movement: Contraction

Effect on *Dosha*: V- P+ K-

Procedure:

Avahana

- Mentally prepare for the *asana* by visualizing it and feeling it in your body.
- Lie down in *shavasana* and establish diaphragmatic breath.



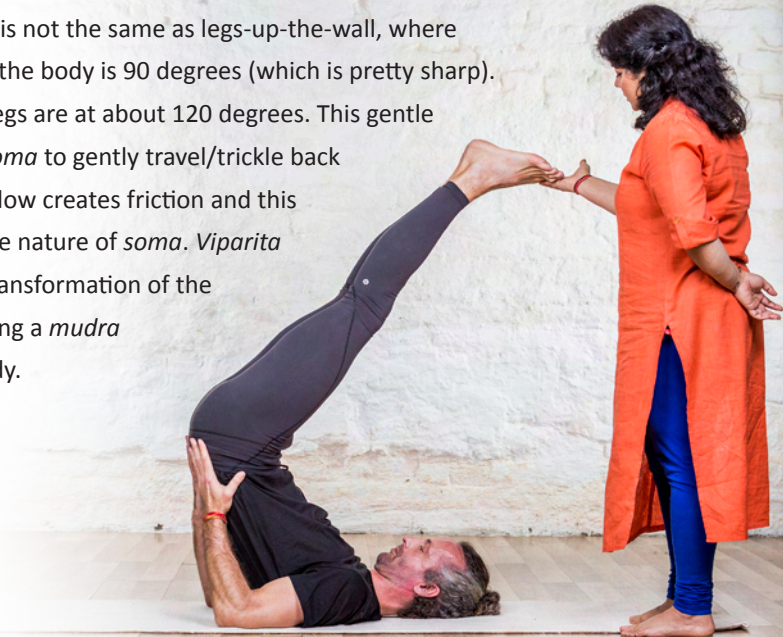
Benefits

- Removes stiffness of the cervical and thoracic region by increasing the flow of *prana*.
- Increases the lung capacity and releases bronchial spasms.
- Energizes the parathyroid, pituitary, and pineal glands.
- Balances the *udana vayu* and *prana vayu*.

Viparita Karani Mudra: Attitude of Reversing

Viparita means “reverse.” *Karani* means “one that leads to the action of.” It does not mean inversion, but reversion. The mirror translation of Sanskrit into simple English at times creates more distance from the meaning of the word instead of proximity.

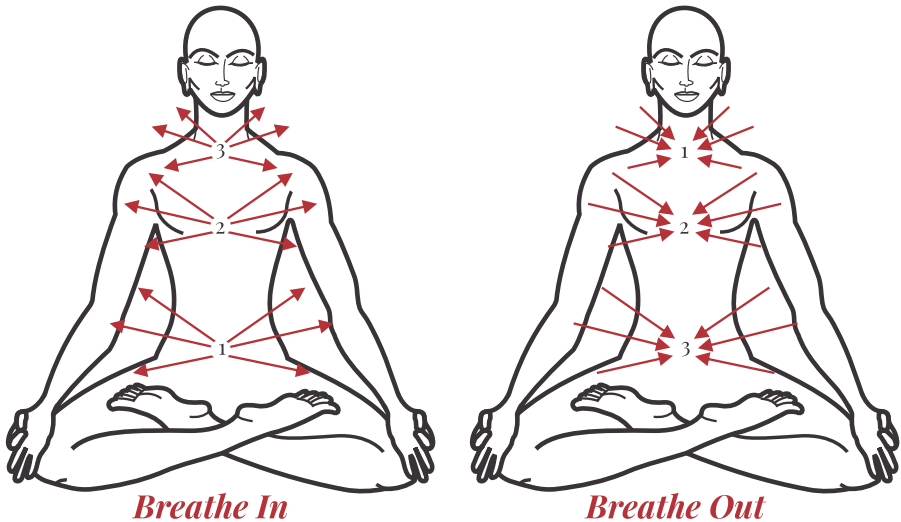
Viparita karani is a *mudra* that creates a loop of re-vitality, rebirth, rejuvenation, and reversal. This message revolves over and over in the body, until it starts a conspiracy of pulling the nectar/*amrita/soma* back to its origin—the *bindu chakra/soma chakra*. It is not the same as legs-up-the-wall, where the angle of the legs to the body is 90 degrees (which is pretty sharp). In *Viparita karani*, the legs are at about 120 degrees. This gentle inclination allows the *soma* to gently travel/trickle back to its home; any steep flow creates friction and this changes the calm, gentle nature of *soma*. *Viparita Karani* is the revision/transformation of the *apana* into *prana* creating a *mudra* of *pranic* seal in the body.



Purna Yogi Shwasa: Full Yogic Breathing

Full yogic breath is also called *vi-bhaga Pranayama* or *purna yogi shwasa*. It refers to the expansion and contraction of the lungs utilizing all three compartments (*bhaga*): the upper, the middle, and the lower lobe of the lungs. It is a combination of the *adham*, *madhyam*, and *adhyama shwasa*.

1. Adopt *dhyana asana* with *dhyana mudra* and *diaphragmatic breath*. Focus on the solar plexus or the *manipura chakra*.
2. With inhalation, start filling up the lungs from the bottom to the top with the expansion around the navel region, chest cavity, and shoulder region. Experience the expansion in the whole body.
3. Upon exhalation, feel the relaxation first in the collarbone and shoulders, then in the chest cavity falling, followed by the contraction of the abdomen.
4. Make sure there is no friction or breaks or unevenness in your breath. Let it move smoothly and quietly. This is one round.



Shitkari Pranayama: Cooling Pranayama

Sita means “cold.” *Kari* means “the action of.” *Shitakari* means “that which brings a cooling effect.” *Shitkari pranayama* helps in cooling down the overheated body and mind.

Reference Verses: 2.54–2.56 of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

Duration: 5–10 minutes

Dharana: Tip of the tongue/body of the tongue

Type/Purpose: Cooling

Position of Hands: *Vishnu mudra* and *Jnana mudra*

Number of Rounds: 10–40 rounds

Time of Day: Morning, midday before meals

Effect on *Dosha*: V- P- K+



Affirmation:

Every inhalation brings in the cooling wave of prana and hydrates my body. In suspension, I soak the irritation, inflammation, heat, and friction of the body into the cooling nectar of the prana. Every exhalation draws out the heat of friction, leaving my body hydrated and relaxed.

Meaning of Dhyana

Dhyai means “to meditate.” *Dhi* means “higher intellect, innate intelligence.” *Yana* means “to move toward, to discipline.” The conscious act of internalizing the sum total of physical, emotional, intellectual, and subtle energies for the sake of self-realization and the realization of the state of Yoga as such is meditation.

Three Main Components of Meditation

- *Observer/practitioner known as sakshin*
- *Observation process/witnessing known as sakshi bhava*
- *Object to be observed known as pada-artha*

Meditation, Concentration, and Mindfulness

When the observer starts observing Self (as the object) and becomes Self in the process (dissolving the process itself), all three components become one. This is meditation in true sense.

Often the meditation process involves three levels of engagements with the object of focus:

- *Nama*: Awareness of the name of the object
- *Rupa*: Awareness of the form/visual of the object
- *Pada-artha bhavana*: The realization/experience of the true meaning/nature of the object as none other than the nature of *Brahman*/consciousness itself.

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Asana means “to become that which you are going to practice.” It is not make believe, mimicking, performance, rigidity, or adamancy. It is simply any body position in which the mind takes a seat, expands, and then is redirected toward a specific point, which then triggers the extraction of the samskaras, vikrutis, vikalpas, negative thoughts, and emotions held there. This helps in peeling the layer of blockages and the practitioner enters into the anandamaya kosha.

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Krikkara prana: A type of apana prana which opens the bronchioles and sinuses through sneezing and coughing to release blockages from the respiratory system.

Kshetra: Region.

kundalikaran-akundalikaran: The coiling and uncoiling.

Kundalini: The serpent energy, the sum total of energy as sleeping potential.

kurma prana: A type of apana prana that governs the blink reflex.

kurpara avakunchan-vistara: Kriya with elbow flexion and extension.

madhayama nauli: Nauli focusing on the center of the abdominal muscles.

madhyama Pranayama: A form of breathing technique that guides the prana in the middle lobe of the lungs.

madhyama shwasa: Guided breath into the middle lobe of the lung.

madhyasta: Centered, moderated, balanced, established in the middle path; here to refers to a path of moderation or central channel.

mahad: Grand collective universal intelligence; at individuated level it is called buddhi (awakened intellect).

maitri: Friendliness towards goodness.

majja: Nerve tissue.

mamsa: Muscle tissue.

manana: Contemplation, self-inquiry.

manas: The mind, which carries the seed of sattva within it, the potentiality of expression and multiplication, as well as union and dissolution.

manda agni: The dull, heavy, and hypo-digestive fire.

manibandha bhramana: Kriya with wrist rotation.

manobhava: The awareness of emotional waves, emotional body.

manomaya kosha: The sheath of thoughts, feeling, emotions, wishes, desire.

Mano-Vijnana: The art and science of reading/understanding mind (own or others), at times referred to as psychology.

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Other works by Indu Arora

Mudra: The Sacred Secret (translated in French and German languages), published 2015

Yoga: Ancient Heritage, Tomorrow's Vision (*known as "The little Red Book on Yoga"*), First Edition published 2005

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