



## OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTING NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA IN ROUTINE PER DIEM

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### ABSTRACT

Ashtang Yoga is Patanjali's classification of classical yoga, as in his yoga sutras. It comprises of eight limbs, one of them being pranayama. Pranayama is the term for all yogic breathing exercises. It is also stated as the art of breath control. Nadi Shodhana Pranayama or Alternate nostril breathing is one type of pranayama. It is the focused practice of breathing through alternate nostrils, one side at a time. Nadi means channels and Shodhana means cleansing, therefore the term stating to as practice which cleanses the channels of body. It is advised to be practiced before initiating other types of pranayama as when the channels are full of impurities, the vital air does not pass through them. As an outcome of this practice, the nadis are purified, and the individual can control and retain his breath. Daily practice of this pranayama has multiple benefits on overall health, especially on the cardiovascular apparatus. Therefore, it should be inculcated in daily routine for maximal benefits.

**KEYWORDS :** Yoga, Ashtang Yoga, Pranayama, Nadi Shodhana Pranayama

### INTRODUCTION

The restraint or regulation of prana or vital force is defined as pranayama. It is the separation of inhalation and exhalation. The retention of vayu (air or prana) in the body is called life, whereas death occurs when it leaves the body. Therefore, one must control vayu. Vayu refers to air, but it also indicates pranic air and not just the gross air and its chemical properties.<sup>1</sup> Nadi Shodhana Pranayama is the focused practice of breathing through alternate nostrils, one side at a time. The vital energy or prana circulates through the whole body, following channels called Nadis, that are responsible for maintaining all individual cellular activity. Therefore, it means the practice which purifies the body.<sup>2</sup>

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

The data was derived from various Ayurvedic classical texts, relevant modern medical science books, Ayurvedic and allied pharmacological dissertation works, websites and research & review articles published so far using PubMed, Medline, Google Scholar and manual search.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Ancient references of Yoga

According to Vishnupurana, the integration of self with the supreme soul is yoga. According to Bhagvada Gita, having a sense of equality in all beings and the skill of performing any act with selflessness is defined as yoga. As per Sankhya Darshana philosophy, distinguishing purusha from prakriti and establishing purusha in its form is yoga. As per Buddha philosophy, concentration of skilled mind is yoga. Patanjali Yoga Sutra states that, restraining of the instincts of mind is yoga.

#### Ashtanga Yoga

The eight components of Yoga are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. The first five are Bahiranga Yoga and remaining three are Antaranga Yoga or Sanyama Traja.

#### Pranayama

The word Pranayama is comprised of two parts- Prana and Ayama. Prana refers to the life force or vital energy, which exists in all animate and inanimate matter. Ayama is defined as extension, expansion, development and control. Hence, pranayama means expansion of the dimension of prana or development and control of life force.<sup>3</sup>

Pranayama occupies second place in Hathayoga and fourth place in Patanjali's Ashtangyoga. Patanjali yoga sutra states that, "The pause brought in the movement of inhalation and exhalation is nothing but pranayama." Hathayoga Pradipika states that by practicing pranayama, one acquires complete control over one's body. Also the people who have mastered the technique of pranayama have slim body, lustrous face, clear voice, bright eyes, good appetite and freedom from

diseases. Previous studies on the effect of pranayama have shown a significant improvement in respiratory function with lowered rate of respiration, increased expansion of chest, increased vital capacity and breath holding time.<sup>4</sup>

Hathayoga Pradipika states that, in pranayama it is the duration of breath retention that has to be increased. Pranayama is generally considered to be the practice of controlled inhalation and exhalation, along with retention. Out of these, retention is the most significant part because it provides a longer duration for assimilation of prana, just like it allows adequate time for exchange of gases in the cells i.e. oxygen and carbon dioxide. Retention of breath after expiration removes the obstacles to yoga, therefore it must be developed in order to stop the fluctuations of the mind.<sup>5</sup>

The word Nadi means channels and Shodhana means purification. Nadi Shodhana therefore means the practice which purifies the body.<sup>2</sup> According to Hathayoga, "one should perform Nadi Shodhana Pranayama before starting the eight main types of pranayama as it will cleanse the nadis (channels)." Nadis are the channels in human body along which the vital force or prana flows. Hence, the objective of Nadi Shodhana pranayama is purification of the networks in body.

When the nadis or channels are full of impurities, the vital air does not pass through them. The Siva Samhita mentions that there are 350000 nadis in the body, the Prapanchasara Tantra states 300000 and the Goraksha Satarka states 72000. These nadis distribute consciousness and prana to every cell of body. However, as stated in Gheranda Samhita; when the nadis are full of impurities, vayu does not enter them.<sup>6</sup>

When all the nadis and chakras full of impurities are then purified through this practice, the yogi becomes able to retain prana. Therefore, pranayama should be practiced daily with a pure or sattvic state of mind, so that the impurities are cleared out from the nadis and purification occurs.<sup>7</sup>

The Nadi Shodhana Pranayama technique is explained in Hathayoga Pradipika, Siva Samhita, Vasistha Samhita and Gheranda Samhita.<sup>8</sup>

#### Standard Operative Procedure

##### Stage 1-

- 1- Sit in padmasana / baddha padmasana / siddhasana position.
- 2- With the right-hand thumb, close the right nostril. Breathe in slowly & fully through the left nostril and then breathe out through the left nostril.
- 3- Repeat this 10 times and then repeat the same process with the right nostril by closing the left nostril with the third finger of right hand.
- 4- Develop breath control so that the inhalation and exhalation continue for exactly the same length of time.
- 5- Count up to six while inhaling and then exhale for the same count.

This is a ratio of 1:1.

Stage 2-

1- Inhale through the left nostril and then exhale through the right nostril 10 times.

2- Inhale through the right nostril and then exhale through the left nostril ten times.

3- Inhalation and exhalation are to be maintained in the ratio of 1:1.

Stage 3-

1- Inhale through the left nostril & exhale through the right, then inhale through the right nostril & exhale through the left. This is considered as one round.

2- Repeat these 5-10 times. Maintain the inhalation and exhalation in the ratio of 1:2, i.e. if inhaled for the count of six then exhale for the count of twelve.

Stage 4-

1- Practice the same technique as stage 3, but add breath retention after inhalation.

2- The order of inhalation, retention and exhalation should be started with the ratio of 1:2:2.

3- When this is perfected, it should be changed to the ratio of 1:4:2.

### Effects of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama<sup>9</sup>

- Regular practice in daily routine strengthens the respiratory musculature and makes efficient use of abdominal & diaphragmatic muscles to the fullest possible extent.
- It helps the lungs to expand to their full capacity. The oxygen reaches to the deepest parts of the lungs helping to open the otherwise residual alveoli and generally helping the lungs to work more efficiently.
- It boosts the oxygen intake therefore increasing the oxygen saturation level in blood and aids in adequate distribution of oxygen throughout the body.
- Practicing pranayama has a positive effect on respiratory endurance which improves an individual's athletic performance.
- It can help in developing good breath control.
- It increases breath & body awareness and slows down the respiratory rate.

### CONCLUSION

In the present scenario, it has been established that due to a variety of etiological factors like the pollution in the surroundings, infections by micro-organisms, addiction like use of masticatories and fumigatories, sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy dietary habits, there is an impact on the health of the being and especially the cardio-pulmonary apparatus. Therefore, the health of cardio-pulmonary system is very important to prevent fatality. As pranayama improves the overall respiratory health, it can be used to the rescue. Pranayama can be indicated as a pre-habilitative procedure for the vulnerable as well as healthy population to avert the infection and as a part of management regime for the patients so as to provide a broad spectrum immune buildup in the body so that the virulence can be reduced.

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