

Introduction to Yoga for Non-Yoginis

Major Project Thesis Paper Accompanying Documentary

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I. THESIS

In my documentary, *Introduction to Yoga for Non-Yoginis*, my aim is to offer individuals an introduction to Yoga in a non-commercial way. This is a public service for people who may not ever have the opportunity to take a Yoga class. The practice of Yoga has become so Westernized that it is often only seen as a way to sculpt and mold the perfect body. It is used to advertise everything from food, to cars, to window shades. Though we are told that everyone can do Yoga, only sprightly gymnasts are seen performing pretzel like poses while advertising the latest line of clothing or sports gear. This can make people feel too inadequate to even try.

Through my documentary, I wish to introduce the basic philosophies of Yoga and to emphasize the body's ability to heal itself and function at a higher level. In my paper, I wish to reveal that Yogic practices focus on yoking the mind to the body and its energies. Yoga is taught as a gateway through which suffering is subdued. With practice, suffering is eventually eradicated from the body, mind, and spirit. A clear mind makes better decisions. Yoga and its breathing practices can be utilized by anyone at any time to relieve physical, mental emotional, or spiritual suffering and limitations.

The aspect of Yoga that concentrates on breathing techniques is Pranayama. These concentrated techniques are used to control the energies in the body, mind, and spirit. In American culture, we have learned to wash our hands frequently throughout the day. Bathing once a day is a socially acceptable practice. Everybody knows that grimy feeling they get on their teeth from missing a day of brushing. In other cultures, cleaning the sinuses with a Neti pot, by pouring salt water through one nostril and out the other, clears the sinuses. This allows the body to function better through clearer breathing. In the same way, practicing Pranayama with just ten breaths a day can help both cleanse and nourish the lungs.

The average person can increase their normal lung capacity 200-300% simply by using ten breaths a day to witness the breath and clear the lungs. Over a few weeks' time, the body's resilience against toxins will strengthen, and increased amounts of oxygen to cells will facilitate the healing of injured or damaged cells. With the clearing of toxins, the mind will be able to clear as well, leading to better control of emotions. This leads to a lighter spirit and generally better attitude when facing the challenges in life. The following sections will discuss Pranayama in respect to the functioning of the lungs and breathing, the practice of Pranayama, and my own personal experiences practicing Pranayama.

II. LUNGS AND BREATHING

Though most often done unconsciously, breathing is one of the most important functions for sustaining life. Consciously controlled breathing, such as in the practice of Pranayama, brings with it many benefits. Through the lungs, breathing brings oxygen into the body and carries carbon dioxide out of it. Breathing is normally a passive process powered by the elastic recoil of the chest, like a deflating balloon. In the accompanying documentary, the image of sediments peeling off of a balloon as it is deflated is used as visualization. Unconsciously, the brain controls breathing according to the needs of the body at any given moment. The brain even takes over if a person tries to stop breathing – he or she will lose consciousness, and the body will begin breathing again on its own (Parkes, 2006).

But breathing can be controlled consciously, as an active process, as well. The practice of Pranayama is one example. Other forms of meditation and yoga also utilize conscious attention to breathing (“Breath,” 2007). According to research, Pranayama has many medical benefits: “Several researchers have reported that pranayama is beneficial in treating a range of

stress related disorders, improving autonomic functions, relieving symptoms of asthma, and reducing signs of oxidative stress” (“Pranayama” 2007).

One way to measure breathing and the functioning of the lungs is through pulmonary function testing. Pulmonary function testing assesses the functional status of the lungs as it relates to how much and how fast air volume can be moved in and out of the lungs, as well as measure how stiff or compliant they are and how lungs respond to therapies (Arnall, 2006). The concept of tidal breathing also demonstrates a concept important for evaluating the usefulness of Pranayama. Tidal Breathing refers to the breathing system of humans and other mammals; air enters and leaves the body through the same path. Figure 1 illustrates tidal breathing, the different volumes of air that enter the lungs, and how they are measured.

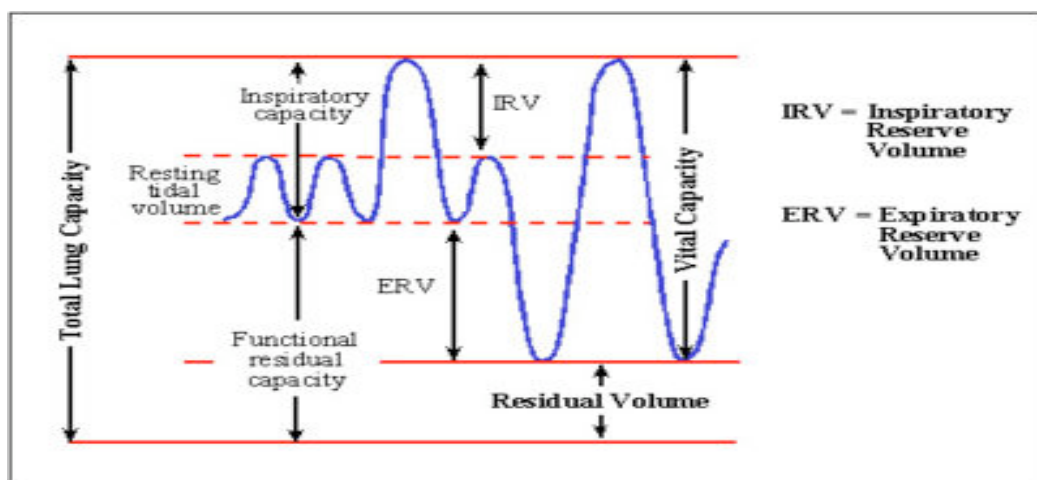


Figure 1

Total Lung Capacity is the total amount a person can breathe in if they inhale as much as possible. The *Resting Tidal Volume* is the amount of air a person inhales and exhales when he or she is breathing normally. The *Inspiratory Capacity* is the amount of air a person can breathe in after a normal exhale, and the *Functional Residual Capacity* is the amount of air that remains in the lungs after a normal exhale. *Expiratory Reserve Volume*, or ERV, is the amount of air a person can exhale if they force as much air as possible out of their lungs after breathing out

normally. A small amount of air will still be left in the lungs and can never be breathed out. This is called the *Residual Volume*. The *Inspiratory Reserve Volume* is the additional amount of air that a person can breathe in after inhaling normally. Together, the IRV and ERV make up *Vital Capacity*, which is the total amount of air a person can force out of the lungs after breathing fully (Palsson et al., 2003). Several factors affect these volumes, including gender, height, altitude, smoking, and exercising (“Lung volumes” 2007). Smoking and exercising are factors that can be controlled. Pranayama techniques can consequently affect lung volume, as conscious effort is used to breathe at the lungs’ *Vital Capacity* instead of the *Resting Tidal Volume*.

III. YOGA AND PRANAYAMA

Yogic practices include Pranayama, breathing techniques that can be practiced at many levels. “The energy in the body is Prana. The process by which the Prana is controlled by regulation of external breath is termed Pranayama” (“Lung Volumes,” 2007). These breathing techniques help to cleanse the body physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. A person will experience a deeper cleansing with the practice of a higher level of technique. Initial levels clear the physical body’s breathing channels and prepare the body and mind for higher levels. The higher levels harness the mind’s ability to cleanse itself using breath as a visualization and manifestation. These practices can be a lifelong study, because as each level is attained, one can see more clearly the higher levels they are capable of attaining. Once a person begins to learn to control the breath, he or she will learn which areas of the mind are uncontrolled. For example, by learning to consciously breathe fully for ten breaths, one will see what kinds of distractions in the mind are taking focus away from the act of breathing. This results in a higher self-awareness, which in turn leads to higher levels of technique. “The breath, directed by thought

under the control of the will, is a vitalizing, regenerating force which you can utilize consciously for self-development” (“Lung Volumes,” 2007).

Many different exercises are available to practice Pranayama. One simple exercise that may make a big difference in one’s health and self-awareness is to concentrate and breathe deeply for ten breaths each day. For some, this may seem like baby steps, for others, an eternity. These ten breaths can increase lung capacity and help a person learn to concentrate and clear his or her mind. With a clear mind, one can come up with more efficient resolutions than a mind that is racing from thought to thought. Another way to use these ten breaths is to visualize oneself exhaling toxic thoughts such as anger, jealousy, and bitterness, and then replace them on the inhale with healthful, compassionate thoughts. Though not everybody is willing or able to name or recognize their toxic thoughts, ten breaths a day can still clear the body of toxins. Pranayama can be practiced by sitting in a chair erect, lying down or in an asana (pose). More detailed descriptions of beneficial practices for beginners can be found in Appendix B.

IV. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Before I began to study Yoga and Pranayama, I had recurring respiratory ailments, especially around the time of my menstrual flow. I knew that at that time every month, my immune system was weaker and didn’t have the resilience to combat everyday toxins. Additionally, I had smoked for over twenty years, but did not plan on quitting. When I began to sincerely practice Pranayama, stretching my diaphragm and lungs as full with air as I could, the breathing exercises actually hurt. There was a tight, burning feeling on the inhales in both my diaphragm and my upper chest as I would fill my lungs to their capacity, and after a few breaths, I would begin to cough. However, the more I continued stretching them, my lungs and belly became more and more flexible.

A few years later, I fell ill with pneumonia, but the doctors were confused that I was still up and walking around with how extreme the pneumonia appeared. I was surprised by this since the last couple of years I hadn't suffered from my lifelong monthly respiratory illnesses, despite the fact that I still smoked. The physician was surprised when I mentioned that I smoked. He said my x-rays showed lungs of a person 10 years younger who had never smoked. I told him about the Pranayama breathing techniques that I had been doing dutifully for the past few years. After that, I realized how much my health had improved after incorporating these breathing techniques into my life. I made a vow to myself to share them, for free, with as many people as I could. This was the main purpose of my Major Senior Project.

At present, on average, I continue to unconsciously inhale approximately 1750 ml. Then, consciously exhaling, or flushing, all breath from the body, my next inspiration will usually at least double to 3500 or even go up to 4000 ml. That is if I am in generally good health but sometimes even with a little morning congestion. Often, the third breath will be slightly less than the second, but it is still significantly higher than the first as long as conscious effort is made to completely push all breath out of the body. If I become distracted on the exhale, I immediately see the results from the next inspiration in hugely lowered numbers, which is usually closer in volume to the first breath. Once conscious effort is applied again, numbers will again raise to approximately the 2:1 ratio of conscious maximal respiration versus non-aware or tidal breathing. My own highest ratio stands at 3:1, reaching 4500 ml with a starting volume of 1500 ml.

Coughing, I have found, is a normal part of the breathing exercise as well. Usually, the highest volume intake is after the first cough, somewhere between the fourth and seventh breaths; the first cough is generally just a slight and gentle clearing of the upper thoracic chest area. Coughing is the body's natural reaction to expelling any substance in the airways. Like the

earlier mentioned balloon, as seen in the documentary, the residue that sheds off like a snake's skin from the maximal deflation of the lungs is naturally expelled through coughing. A good, hard cough will help cleanse the lungs, allowing them to function better.

Once the slight cough happens, the next breath is normally the deepest and can be felt first filling the belly, and then in the lower lungs. If pushed consciously, the upper lungs can be filled, thus creating the highest volume intake. This usually leads to a more vigorous cough, perhaps with a succession of quick, hard coughs. It is tempting to give up the exercise here, but this is the "scrubbing," or the actual cleansing of the lungs. Conversely, if one is very ill or weak where coughing may be detrimental to their current physical state, I have learned that gentle but consciously elongated breaths are extremely useful in accelerating the recovery. If one continues the conscious exhalation, now aided by the body's natural response to expelling an extraneous material from the body, the coughing will lessen with time and practice.

V. CONCLUSION

Practicing ten breaths a day can be extremely beneficial in cleansing our bodies and minds of toxins. Usually, just five breaths will expand the lungs and exercise them well, but not reach the point where the body aids itself in expelling any residue. It would take ten breaths to achieve this objective. Each and every cell in our body is affected by each and every breath in a miraculous exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. This is the body's ability to cleanse and nourish simultaneously. Without this process, we have but minutes left to live. It is the quintessential force of life, from first breath to last.

Though breathing is controlled unconsciously by the body, Pranayama utilizes conscious, controlled breathing to maximize the amount of air a person can breathe in. With normal, tidal

breathing, a person will only breathe in a small amount of their total lung capacity. With Pranayama, one breathes at the lungs' vital capacity. This practice has been shown to benefit the body in many ways, from stress-related illnesses to physical illnesses such as asthma.

The word Prana refers to the energy in the body, and Pranayama is the control of this energy through attention to breathing. Many breathing exercises for Pranayama may be performed at different levels. Ten breaths of concentrated breathing is a good place for many people to start. At beginning levels, one learns to concentrate and can see areas that need improvement. As one progresses to higher levels, the cleansing of the body and mind will become even deeper. Pranayama offers benefits to both the body and mind through self-awareness and cleansing.

My own personal experience with Pranayama has led me to the goal of sharing this technique with as many people as possible. Before I began practicing Yoga and Pranayama, I had recurring respiratory issues. After practicing it for a few years, I no longer had any respiratory problems. The doctors said my lungs looked like those of a person 10 years younger. My lungs' capacity has increased, and I have benefited from the increased oxygen and cleansing of my system.

With this documentary, I hope to reach people who may never have the chance to take a Yoga class or otherwise be exposed to the practices in a non-commercial way. *Introduction to Yoga for Non-Yoginis* explains the basic philosophies behind Yoga and Pranayama, allowing for an easily accessible way to incorporate these practices into people's lives.

VI. APPENDICES

a. Production Script:

You may have heard about Yoga before, but don't really know what it's about... But just what is Yoga and who is it really for?

*Yoga translates into English as UNION, Union of Body, Mind and Spirit and it's for EVERYONE:
From pregnancy... To Birth... Childhood... To Adolescence... Thru Adulthood... And late into life...*

Yoga is a tool available to everyone. Yoga helps to relieve suffering... Whether Physically... Mentally... Emotionally... Or Spiritually...

Physically, Yoga helps our Posture And strengthens our bones, Tones our Muscles... Opens our Joints... Increasing our Range of Motion And flexibility... Yoga can be used to heal injuries... It Detoxifies... Restores... Rejuvenates... Tones... And Builds... Our Bodies...

Mentally, Yoga helps to calm our Minds... When the mental chatter keeps us from staying on task, Or situations cause us anxiety or stress, Yoga can help us reduce the suffering of these ailments

And Yoga helps to open our hearts... Yoga helps us to recognize when we find ourselves in anger, or sadness, Where we hold those feelings in our bodies. We become aware of our bodily habits that are dictated by those emotions and are encoded in our tissues...

Yoga teaches us to connect to our bodies... Use the breath to heal... Release our Limitations... And find our true selves...

How we go into a pose... describes our relationships, tasks, projects, a way to witness the self and how we actually live our lives... All of Yoga is practice... Just as life is all practice... Yoga is bringing the mind into the body and connecting to our spirit

*How often do we need to practice yoga? One needn't attend an hour class three times a week the benefits of Yoga to take effect... Many of us do things everyday where Yoga could be practiced, melding the mind with the body:
Walking the dog... Watering a garden... Praying... Working... Playing... Resting... Driving... Parenting... Eating... Drinking... Cleansing...*

And Breathing!...

Breath is the most important thing in our lives... without it, we would die quicker than without sleep or food or water... Breath is the miraculous exchange that takes place in each and every cell of our bodies with each exhalation and inhalation... Purging the toxins from every cell... Nourishing each and every cell... Body care is a necessity for health and well being...

Our bodies are the only ones we get in this life, so it's important to nourish and cleanse it, Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, And Spiritually... Nourishment and cleansing of all these aspects are necessary for optimal growth and sustenance of the body/mind/spirit...

For many years, the health and fitness industry have campaigned, "No Pain, No Gain" I believe this fallacy is what has kept many Americans from doing normal daily routine exercising, leading to extremes in the scope from very little activity to over working the body, like using a regular car as a race car... When we use that regular vehicle as it should be used, continue to nourish it with fuel, and change the oil filters and tires regularly, having tune-ups in spring and fall, that car will run for years beyond the car that is used for racing or derbies...

Sports and exercise-related injuries has spawned a whole division of healthcare regarding injury rehabilitation, repetitive movement syndromes, Yoga has made its way into popular American culture, and you can see it being used to advertise everything from dog food to trucks, and foods to even pharmaceuticals! Yoga itself has become a multi-million dollar industry in America...

However, Yoga has been around for approximately 6,000 years and it spans much more than just physical fitness. It is a tool for self-awareness, growth and transformations. It is not a religion, but may be incorporated into any religious practices. Yoga is much more than having the perfect body. The body houses the mind, the spirit, and the soul... The body is a temple to house our emotions and feelings Thoughts and behaviors Dreams and fears...

Yoga is an art, like music, And the body is the instrument... We cannot expect to be one of the few who can play Mozart at our first lesson... And we cannot expect to comprehend all of the aspects of Yoga when first exposed to it... Yoga's goal is to discover, through self study, new corners of the body and the mind, and thereby reveal the spirit... Yoga teaches that balance of the states: Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual, and how each effects one another... When one area is out of balance...

For example, if we are filled with mental anxiety about the piles on our desk... We may not be able to sleep at night, from the thoughts crowding our mind... But if we know techniques to help clear the mind, and calm the body, We can overcome the imbalances, and put our mind and body to rest... Or if we notice we are angry, and unable to concentrate or allow our selves to make mistakes... We may be able to catch ourselves, and release the tension through mindfulness and breathing techniques... Allowing us to notice the wonders in the world... And live fuller, richer, lives... With less suffering... Perhaps we are going through a loss, or an illness... Or simply living through the aging process... And we are unable to do what we used to do...

Yoga helps us to find what we are capable of doing... And release our views of our limitations...

Fear is a limitation, It limits our breathing, And fear limits our ability to act... Fear makes us fight or flight, Or be paralyzed from moving at all... Fear causes us to lose our breath or hold it... Keeping oxygen from our brain, and lowering our ability to think clearly and make wise decisions... When a child is crying uncontrollably, they're unable to think clearly... We tell them to calm down, take a few slow, deep breaths. We try to soothe them by remaining calm, rather than escalate their fear or discomfort by becoming uncontrollable our selves.

When we are calm, and able to think clearly in a relaxed state, our breathing patterns is slow and deep. We can create that emotional state by controlling our breath, rather than our emotional state controlling the breath. We must use our minds to do this, and Yoga practice is about training the mind to control the body.

Training the mind is like training a wild horse. It does not happen easily. Forget the images of acrobatic, pretzel-like postures. Yoga meets you as you are here today, at this moment... no more, and no less... Yoga is about balancing the aspects of our life. On the mat practice is really for off the mat practice...

Yoga is a development of awareness, a way for us to witness where we hold tension... In our toes, Our shoulders, Our faces, Our stomachs... But Yoga is also about keeping our spinal column functioning to its best ability... The spine can bend forward, Backward, Sideways, And it can twist.. Keeping the spinal column fluid and flexible promotes optimal functioning of the entire body... When the body is functioning optimally, it is easier for the other states to function at their highest level as well...

So we cleanse the body of waste and toxins that build up each day, Brush off the dead skin with a loofah, or a rag. Simple household baking soda will exfoliate dead skin and leave skin rejuvenated, Or cleanse the mouth and nose... Simply exhaling all the breath from the body, fully and completely, is like rinsing clean a glass of stale water...

If we were to drink the way most of us breath, we would simply take a full glass of water, take a sip, and refill, another sip, and refill... Rather than drinking in the entire glass... But if we never drain the glass entirely, and continue to add water to it...eventually there is stale water being used even though a little fresh water is continually replenishing what little was used... That glass must be emptied, and rinsed, consciously done, to clear the residues that have built up in the stale water... You can use the same glass all the time, but it must eventually be rinsed and cleaned or we will find that the fresh water coming in just mixes with the tainted water...

If we incorporate this into our lungs, we will see that our breath capacity can more than double just by exhaling all the stale breath out of our bodies... When we do this for at least five breaths, we are consciously scrubbing our

lungs and using their full capacity... At first, this might make one cough as they stretch their lungs and collapse them as much as possible...

This is like a painted balloon, where the paint is residue and the balloon is the lungs... As the lungs barely stretch or collapse in our normal shallow breathing... The paint or residue is barely affected and may continue to build and make it more difficult for that balloon to expand... But if we let all the air out of the balloon and it collapses... the paint doesn't shrink, but actually starts to crack... As the balloon or lungs are inflated... That cracked paint begins to flake off and fall away... The more times the balloon is entirely collapsed and then refilled entirely... The more paint that will fall away...

And the same goes with our lungs... The more we stretch and collapse our lungs, the more we clean them... Does this mean you have to breath this way all the time every day? No! But I believe if you try to do this (fully exhaling and fully inhaling,) for five breaths once or twice a day, you will notice a drastic change in not only your breath capacity, but your overall health in general... When we get nourishment to our cells, through oxygen, and clean their waste as we exhale, they are more able to function and support our body's needs to sustain itself.

I believe the biggest healing aspect of Yoga is through self-study, and that our practice is for living in our daily world. Yoga practice allows us to witness where we choose to hurt our selves and examine why. Where do we give up and why? Where do we push through and why? How do we go into, maintain, and come out of poses Mirrors and reflects our relationships with people, Jobs, or ideas... When we use Yoga as a mirror, we may see behaviors or patterns or reflections that may be harmful to our selves or others...

No one wants to suffer... But it is a natural occurrence in life... Simply experiencing change can cause suffering... Unless we use the change to help us grow... Gardening is a great analogy for growing our selves... We each have all the seeds within us for glory and defeat... Hope and despair, Courage and fear, Compassion and anger...

Under the right conditions, Anything will grow... And if we forget to tend the garden, it will sprout weeds that eventually will choke off the fruits that nourish us... But there are weeds that are useful and necessary to support health of the garden and the body... Dandelions detoxify the ground and the body's liver... But uncontrolled, they will take over a field in no time... It is unreasonable to think that we can tend a garden once and no weeds will grow there again... Just as it is unreasonable to think we can overcome anger one time and it will never grow within us again...

Yoga is the union of mind and body and spirit... and it's goal is sustenance and transformation of what was closed and tight to something open and supple, Whether the body, The mind, Or the spirit... Yoga may be incorporated into any stage of life... And may be utilized by anyone... To heal suffering, Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, And Spiritually...

A symbol of Yoga is the Lotus flower... The lotus blooms continuously, ever-evolving throughout its life... The lotus can only grow from the muck of life, But from the muck rises an unblemished flower of perfection, unfolding with each transformation... Shedding outer layers that no longer have life... Continuously blooming... Awareness of the self allows us to continually bloom, throughout the hardships in our life that bring suffering...

Letting our mind feel what's going on in the body when we experience joy or sadness, exhilaration or limitations, pain or relief... Allows us to experience life more fully, and find enjoyment and wonder in life and all it has to offer... I offer gratitudes for the breath, gratitudes for the practice, and gratitude for your presence here and now.

Om Shanti, Namaste

b. BREATHING EXERCISES: PRANAYAMA

(The entire following sections are all parts found word for word in “The Science of Pranayama” which is a free download for anyone to use. Chidananda, Sri Swami (1991). Path to Blessedness, 2nd Ed. The Divine Life Society. <http://www.dlshq.org/download/blessed.pdf>)

Q. Is it dangerous to practice Pranayama without the assistance of a Guru (Teacher)?

A. People are unnecessarily alarmed. You can practice ordinary Pranayama exercises without the help of a Guru. A Guru is necessary if you want to practice Kumbhaka or retention of breath for long time, but you can retain the breath from 1/2 to 2 minutes without any difficulty or danger.

Simple Awareness Breathing

Inhale through both the nostrils slowly and gently. Do not retain the breath. Then exhale slowly. Do 12 times. This will constitute one round. You can do 2 or 3 rounds according to your capacity and strength and time at your disposal.

Deep Breathing Exercise

Each deep breathing consists of a very full inhalation, through the nose and a deep, steady exhalation also, through the nose.

Inhale slowly as much as you can do. Exhale slowly as much as you can do. During inhalation, observe the following rules:

1. Stand up. Place the hands on the hips, the elbows will be out and not forced backward. Stand at ease.
2. Lengthen the chest straight upwards. Press the hip bones with the hands in downward direction. A vacuum will be formed by this act and the air will rush in of its own accord.
3. Keep the nostrils wide open. Do not use the nose as a suction pump. It should serve as a passive passage for both the inhaled and the exhaled air. Do not make any sound when you inhale and exhale. Remember that correct breathing is noiseless.
4. Stretch the whole upper part of the trunk.
5. Do not arch the upper chest into a cramped position. Keep the abdomen naturally relaxed.
6. Do not bend the head far backwards. Do not draw the abdomen inwards. Do not force the shoulders back. Lift the shoulders up.

During the exhalation observe the following rules carefully:

1. Allow the ribs and the whole upper part of the trunk to sink down gradually.
2. Draw the lower ribs and abdomen upwards—slowly.
3. Do not bend the body too much forward. Arching of the chest should be avoided. Keep the head, neck and trunk in a straight line. Contract the chest. Do not breathe the air out through the mouth. Exhale very, very slowly without producing any noise.
4. Expiration simply takes place by relaxing the inspiratory muscles. The chest falls down by its own weight and expels the air out through the nose.

5. In the beginning, do not retain the breath after inhalation. When the process of inhalation is over, begin exhalation at once. When you have sufficiently advanced in your practice, you can slowly retain the breath from five seconds to one minute according to your capacity.

6. When one round of three deep breathings is over, you can take a little rest, 'Respiratory pause'—by taking a few normal breaths. Then start the second round. During the pause, stand still in a comfortable position with hands on hips. The number of rounds can be fixed according to the capacity of the practitioner. Do 3 or 4 rounds and increase one round every week. Deep breathing is only a variety of Pranayama.

This Pranayama removes all diseases, purifies the Nadis, steadies the mind in concentration, improves digestion, increases the digestive fire and appetite, helps to maintain Brahmacharya and awakens the Kundalini that is sleeping at the Muladhara Chakra. Purification of Nadis will set in rapidly. You will have levitation (rising above the ground) also.

Pranayama in Savasana (Resting Corpse Pose)

Lie down on the back, quiet at ease, over a blanket. Keep the hands on the ground by the side and legs straight. The heels should be kept together, but the toes can remain a little apart. Relax all the muscles and the nerves. Those who are very weak, can practise Pranayama in this pose while lying on the ground or on a bedstead. Draw the breath slowly without making any noise, through both nostrils. Retain the breath as long as you can do it with comfort. Then exhale slowly through both nostrils. Repeat the process 12 times in the morning and 12 times in the evening. Chant OM mentally during the practice. If you like you can practise the 'easy comfortable posture' also. This is a combined exercise of Asana, Pranayama, meditation and rest. It gives rest not only to the body but also for the mind. It gives relief, comfort and ease. This is very suitable for aged people.

Rhythmical Breathing

The breathing in men and women is very irregular. In exhalation the Prana goes out 16 digits and in inhalation only 12 digits, thus losing 4 digits. But if you inhale for 16 digits as in exhalation then you will have rhythmical breathing. Then the power Kundalini will be roused. By the practice of rhythmical breathing you will enjoy real good rest. You can control the respiratory centre that is situated in medulla oblongata and other nerves also, because the centre of respiration has a sort of controlling effect on other nerves. He who has calm nerves, has a calm mind also.

If the units of exhalation and inhalation are the same, you will have rhythmical breathing. If you inhale till you count 6 OMs, exhale also till you count 6 OMs. This is breathing in and out in a measured manner. This will harmonise the whole system. This will harmonise the physical body, mind, Indriyas and will soothe the tired nerves. You will experience full repose and calmness. All the bubbling emotions will subside and the surging impulses will calm down.

Ujjayi

Sit in Padmasana or Siddhasana. Close the mouth. Inhale slowly through both the nostrils in a smooth, uniform manner till the breath fills the space from the throat to the heart.

Retain the breath as long as you can do it comfortably and then exhale slowly through the left nostril by closing the right nostril with your right thumb. Expand the chest when you inhale. During inhalation a peculiar sound is produced owing to the partial closing of glottis. The sound produced during inhalation should be of a mild and uniform pitch. It should be continuous also. This Kumbhaka may be practised even when walking or standing. Instead of exhaling through the left nostril, you can exhale slowly through both nostrils.

This removes the heat in the head. The practitioner becomes very beautiful. The gastric fire is increased. It removes all the evils arising in the body and the Dhatus and cures Jalodara (dropsy of the belly or ascites). It removes phlegm in the throat, Asthma, consumption and all sorts of pulmonary diseases are cured. All diseases that arise from deficient inhalation of oxygen, and diseases of the heart are cured. All works are accomplished by Ujjayi Pranayama. The practitioner is never attacked by diseases of phlegm, nerves, dyspepsia, dysentery, enlarged spleen, consumption, cough or fever. Perform Ujjayi to destroy decay and death.

Relaxation

The practice of relaxing the muscles of the body will bring rest to the body and to the mind also. The tension of the muscles will be relieved. People who know the science of relaxation do not waste any energy. They can meditate well. Take a few deep breaths and then lie down flat on your back as in Savasana. Relax all the muscles of the body from head to feet. Roll on to one side and then relax as thoroughly as you can do. Do not strain the muscles. Roll on the other side and relax. This is naturally done by all during sleep. There are various exercises in relaxation, for the particular muscles of a particular part of the body. You can relax the head, the shoulders, the arms, forearms, wrist, etc. Yogins know the science of relaxation thoroughly. When you practise these various relaxation exercises, you must have the mental picture of calmness and strength.

Relaxation of Mind

Mental poise and calmness may be brought about by the eradication of worry and anger. Fear really underlies both worry and anger. Nothing is gained by worry and anger, but on the contrary much energy is wasted by these two kinds of lower emotions. If a man worries much and if he is irritable, he is indeed a very weak man. Be careful and thoughtful. All unnecessary worries can be avoided. Relaxation of the muscles reacts on the mind and brings repose to the mind. Relaxation of the mind brings rest to the body also. Body and mind are intimately connected. Body is a mould prepared by the mind for its enjoyment.

Sit for 15 minutes in a relaxed and easy comfortable position. Close your eyes. Withdraw the mind from outside objects. Still the mind. Silence the bubbling thoughts. Think that the body is like a coconut shell and you are entirely different from the body. Think that the body is an instrument in your hands. Identify yourself with the all-pervading Spirit or Atman. Imagine that the whole world and your body are floating like a piece of straw in this vast ocean of Spirit. Feel that you are in touch with the Supreme Being. Feel that the life of the whole world is pulsating, vibrating and throbbing through you. Feel that the ocean of life is gently rocking you on its vast bosom. Then open your eyes. You will experience immense mental peace, mental vigour and mental strength. Practise and feel this.

Benefit: The benefits of this Pranayama are incalculable. All the muscles are relaxed. All the nerves are toned. Rhythm and harmony are established in the entire being. Mind is calmed. Circulation is promoted. An inexpressible peace and bliss come to reign 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 balance on account of the setting in of lust, anger or other evil Vrittis; 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, very easy and comfortable

Pranayama which has all the advantages of Pranayama, without its 'rules and regulations'. Do it from now without fail.

Pranic Healing

Those who practice Pranayama, can impart their Prana in healing morbid diseases. They can also recharge themselves with Prana in no time by practicing Kumbhaka. Never think that you will be depleted of your Prana by distributing it to others. The more you give, the more it will flow to you from the cosmic source (*Hiranyagarbha*). That is the law of nature. Do not become a niggard. If there is a rheumatic patient, gently shampoo his legs with your hands. When you do shampooing (massage), do Kumbhaka and imagine that the Prana is flowing from your hands towards the leg of your patient. Connect yourself with Hiranyagarbha or the Cosmic Prana and imagine that the cosmic energy is flowing through your hands towards the legs of the patient. The patient will at once feel warmth, relief and strength. You can cure headache, intestinal colic or any other disease by massage and by your magnetic touch. When you massage the liver, spleen, stomach or any other portion or organ of the body, you can speak to the cells and give them orders: "O cells! discharge your functions properly. I command you to do so." They will obey your orders. They too have got subconscious intelligence. Repeat OM when you pass your Prana to others. Try a few cases. You will gain competence. You can cure scorpion-sting also. Gently shampoo the leg and bring the poison down.

You can have extraordinary power of concentration, strong will and a perfectly healthy and strong body by practicing Pranayama regularly. You will have to direct the power of Prana consciously to unhealthy parts of the body. Suppose you have a sluggish liver. Sit on Padmasana. Close your eyes. Inhale gently till you count OM 3 times. Then retain breath till you count OM 6 times. Direct the Prana to the region of the liver. Concentrate your mind there. Fix your attention to that area. Imagine that Prana is interpenetrating all the tissues and the cells of the lobes of the liver and doing its curative, regenerating and constructive work there. Faith, imagination, attention and interest play a very important part in curing disease by taking Prana to the diseased areas. Then slowly exhale. During exhalation imagine that the morbid impurities of the liver are thrown out. Repeat this process 12 times in the morning and 12 times in the evening. Sluggishness of liver will vanish in a few days. This is a drugless treatment. This is nature-cure. You can take the Prana to any part of the body during Pranayama and cure any kind of disease, be it acute or chronic. Try once or twice in healing yourself. Your convictions will grow stronger. Why do you cry like the lady who is crying for ghee when she has butter in her hand, when you have a cheap, potent, easily available remedy or agent Prana at your command at all times! Use it judiciously. When you advance in your concentration and practice, you can cure many diseases by mere touch. In the advanced stages, many diseases are cured by mere will.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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If you would like to order a Volume Flow Indicator to chart and research of your personal Lung Capacity, go to www.imed.com/shop/detail.cfm/sku/K0260 . They sell for \$4.14 and ship within 24 hours. I have nothing to do with this company, but am happy to share the resource.