

Balancing *Dosha Gati* through Pranayama (Breath Control)

Anand Garima¹, Parashar Deepti²

¹P. G. Scholar, P. G. Department of Roga Nidana Avum Vikriti Vigyana, Shri Krishna Ayush University, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India

²HOD & Professor, P. G. Department of Roga Nidana Avum Vikriti Vigyana, Shri Krishna Ayush University, Kurukshetra, Haryana, India

Abstract: *Pranayama, an ancient yogic practice originating from India, holds profound therapeutic potential in Ayurveda, the traditional system of medicine. In this review, we delve into the intricate relationship between Pranayama and Ayurveda, exploring their synergistic effects on promoting holistic well-being. The term "Swasthya" in Ayurveda signifies the ideal state of health, wherein Doshas, Agni, Dhatus, Mala, senses, and mind are in perfect equilibrium. Central to this equilibrium is the concept of "Sama Avastha," denoting balance and harmony in Doshas, Dhatus, and Malas, facilitated by the optimal functioning of Vayu. Disruptions in this equilibrium lead to Dosha Prokopa, characterized by the movement and spread of Doshas throughout the body, contributing to various diseases. Pranayama emerges as a potent tool to restore balance and alleviate Dosha imbalances by directing Doshas from compact tissues to hollow organs. Through specific breathing techniques, Pranayama unblocks energy channels (Nadis), promotes the smooth flow of Prana, and liquefies accumulated Doshas, thus facilitating their elimination and purification. By integrating insights from Ayurvedic texts and contemporary research findings, this review underscores the therapeutic potential of Pranayama in promoting overall vitality and well-being.*

Keywords: *Dosha Gati, Pranayama, Balancing Dosha, Koshata to Shakha Dosha Gati.*

1. Introduction

In *Ayurveda*, the term "Swasthya" encapsulates the ideal state of well-being, wherein harmony pervades every aspect of the individual's being. It signifies a state where all the *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) are in perfect balance, the *Agni* (digestive fire) functions optimally, and the *Dhatus* (tissues) and *Mala* (waste products) are produced and eliminated efficiently. Additionally, the senses (*Indriyas*) and the mind (*Mana*) are in a serene and contented state. ^[1]

This state of equilibrium is denoted by the term "Sama Avastha." Here, "Sama" signifies balance and harmony. Sometimes, "Sama" is also used to describe the proper movement or functioning (*Gati*) of *Doshas*, *Dhatus*, and *Mala*. This movement or *Gati* is facilitated by *Vayu* (air), as it governs the mobility of *Pitta*, *Kapha*, and *Mala*. ^[2] When *Vayu* is in balance and functions optimally, it ensures the smooth flow and distribution of these elements throughout the body, maintaining health and vitality.

When these factors disrupt the natural balance of doshas within the body, it leads to a state known as *Dosha Prokopa*, which is primarily elucidated under the concept of *Doshagati*. ^[3]

The concept of *Doshagati* describes the movement and spread of *Doshas* throughout the body, causing disturbances at different levels of the physiology.

The three types of *Gati* of *Doshas* in *Ayurveda* are as follows: ^[4]

- 1) *Ksaya*, *Sthana* and *Vrddhi*.
- 2) *Urdhwa*, *Adhah* and *Tiryak*.
- 3) *Sakha*, *Kostha* and *Marmasthi Sandhi*.

Relation of *Doshas* with *Koshtha* and *Shakha* ^[5]

During the progression of a disease, the *Doshas* spread from different hollow organs and channels (*Kostha*) towards the

compact tissues or extremities (*Shakha*). The severity and intensity of this process contribute to the seriousness of the diseases.

When doshas accumulate in the solid tissues or *Shakha*, causing imbalance and disease, the treatment aims to restore equilibrium by directing the *Doshas* back to their primary sites in the hollow organs or *Koshtha*. This can be achieved through *Pranayama* is an ancient *Yogic* practice originating from India that focuses on breath control and regulation.

Aim

To Restore balance and alleviate imbalances in the *Doshas Gati*, which is crucial for maintaining optimal health.

Objectives

- Balancing *Dosha Gati*
- Enhancing Energy Flow
- Purifying the *Nadis*
- Calming the Mind and Emotions
- Cultivating Mindfulness and Awareness

2. Material

This study is based on the literature review. Material has been collected from Ayurvedic texts e. g Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Pantajali yog darshan and Research articles from Pubmed, Google scholar etc.

3. Method

Pranayam involves specific breathing techniques, such as deep inhalation, exhalation, breath retention, and alternate nostril breathing, to manipulate the flow of *Prana* (life force) in the body. ^[6]

These are various types of *Pranayama*, or *Yogic* breathing exercises, each offering unique benefits for physical, mental, and emotional well - being^[7]

S. No	Type of <i>Pranayam</i>	Technique
1.	<i>Dirga Pranayama</i> (Three - Part Breath)	This breath involves consciously breathing into three parts of the torso—lower belly, ribcage, and upper chest. It promotes deep relaxation, enhances oxygenation, and helps in releasing tension and stress.
2.	<i>Ujjayi Pranayama</i> (Victorious Breath)	<i>Ujjayi</i> breath involves inhaling and exhaling through the nose while slightly constricting the throat, creating a gentle oceanic sound. It calms the mind, improves concentration, and regulates energy flow in the body.
3.	<i>Nadi Shodhana Pranayama</i> (Alternate Nostril Breathing)	This technique involves breathing through alternate nostrils, balancing the flow of energy in the body and calming the nervous system. It promotes mental clarity, balances the hemispheres of the brain, and enhances respiratory health.
4.	<i>Kapalabhati Pranayama</i> (Skull Shining Breath)	<i>Kapalabhati</i> involves rapid and forceful exhalations followed by passive inhalations. It cleanses the respiratory system, energizes the body, and clears the mind. It's also known for its detoxifying effects.
5.	<i>Bhastrika Pranayama</i> (Bellows Breath)	<i>Bhastrika</i> involves forceful inhalations and exhalations through the nose, creating a bellows - like movement of the abdomen. It increases vitality, enhances lung capacity, and generates heat in the body.
6.	<i>Sheetali Pranayama</i> (Cooling Breath)	<i>Sheetali</i> involves inhaling through a rolled tongue or pursed lips, creating a cooling sensation in the body. It reduces stress, calms the mind, and regulates body temperature.
7.	<i>Sheetkari Pranayama</i> (Hissing Breath)	Similar to <i>Sheetali</i> , <i>Sheetkari</i> involves inhaling through the teeth while keeping the lips closed. It has similar cooling and calming effects, reducing anger, anxiety, and fatigue.
8.	<i>Surya Bhedana Pranayama</i> (Sun Piercing Breath)	<i>Surya Bhedana</i> involves inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril. It increases energy, stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, and activates the solar energy in the body.
9.	<i>Chandra Bhedana Pranayama</i> (Moon Piercing Breath)	<i>Chandra Bhedana</i> involves inhaling through the left nostril and exhaling through the right nostril. It induces relaxation, activates the parasympathetic nervous system, and promotes a sense of calmness and tranquility.

4. Discussion

Pranayama extends beyond mere lung exercises; its effects permeate throughout the entire body, including the hollow organs. Regular practice of *Pranayama* holds numerous benefits for promoting the healthy movement of *Doshas* from compact tissues to hollow organs and facilitating overall well - being:

- **Removing Blockages in Channels:** *Pranayama* practices help to clear blockages in the subtle energy channels (*Nadis*) throughout the body. By promoting smooth energy flow, *Pranayama* supports the movement of *Doshas* from compact tissues to hollow organs, aiding in the restoration of balance and vitality.
- **Liquification of Doshas:** *Pranayama* techniques promote increased circulation of *Prana* (vital energy) and oxygen throughout the body. This enhanced circulation helps to liquefy and mobilize accumulated doshas, facilitating their movement towards the hollow organs for elimination and purification.
- **Decreasing Activity of Vata:** *Vata dosha*, when aggravated, can lead to imbalances in the body and mind. *Pranayama* practices, with their calming and grounding effects, help to pacify excess *Vata*, reducing symptoms of anxiety, nervousness, and restlessness. By calming *Vata*, *Pranayama* supports the healthy movement of *Doshas* and promotes overall balance and harmony within the body.

5. Conclusion

Practice of *Pranayama*, it is believed that one can manipulate and balance this energy, promoting overall vitality and well - being. *Pranayama* techniques can help unblock energy channels (*Nadis*) and promote the smooth flow of *Prana*

throughout the body enhanced energy flow, *Dosha* balance, and overall well - being.

References

- [1] Sushruta Samhita, with Nibandha Sangraha commentary by Dalhana, foreword by Acharya Yadav ji Trikam ji. 8th edition. Varanasi; Choukhamba Sanskrit Sanasthan Sutrasthana 15/41. P. No 75.
- [2] Dr. Bramhanand Tripathi, Sharandhar Samhita, Chaukhamba Surbharti Prakashan, Varanasi, Edition 2016, Pratham Khand, Page No.50.
- [3] Prof. R. H. Singh, Charaka samhita with Ayurvedipika commentary, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, Varanasi, Sutrasthana, Adhyaya 17/112, pg, no, 222
- [4] Shastri KN, Chaturvedi GN, charaka samhita 21st Ed, Varanasi; chaukambha Bharati Academy., 1995; 1: 235
- [5] Vd. Arun R. Vaidya, CLINICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF DOSHA - GATI: wjpmr, 2018, 4 (5), 258 - 259.
- [6] Jayawardena R, Ranasinghe P, Ranawaka H, Gamage N, Dissanayake D, Misra A. Exploring the Therapeutic Benefits of Pranayama (Yogic Breathing): A Systematic Review. Int J Yoga.2020 May - Aug; 13 (2): 99 - 110. doi: 10.4103/ijoy. IJOY_37_19. Epub 2020 May 1. PMID: 32669763; PMCID: PMC7336946.
- [7] Sengupta P. Health Impacts of Yoga and Pranayama: A State - of - the - Art Review. Int J Prev Med.2012 Jul; 3 (7): 444 - 58. PMID: 22891145; PMCID: PMC3415184.