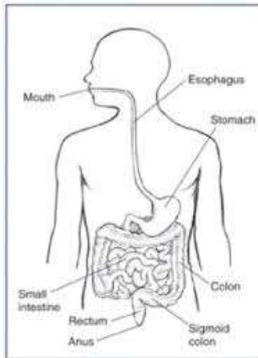


The Shatkarma

The original practices of hatha yoga are known as the shatkarmas – shat means ‘six ’and karma means ‘action’; the Shatkarmas consist of six groups of purification practices. The aim of hatha yoga and, therefore, of the shatkarmas is to create harmony between the two major pranic flows, ida and pingala –to attain physical and mental purification and balance.



Lagoo Shankhprakashalana: cleansing of the small intestine



Kunjal: cleansing of the stomach



Neti: a process of cleansing and purifying the nasal passages.

- Nauli: a method of massaging and strengthening the abdominal organs (optional)
- Kapalbhati: pranayama technique for purifying the frontal region of the brain



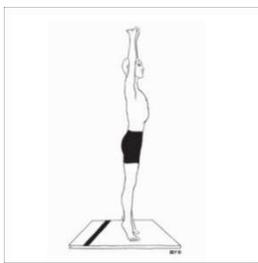
Trataka: the practice of intense gazing at one point or object which develops the power of concentration.



Yoga Nidra: deep relaxation – also considered to be part of the total practice.

Laghoo shankhaprakshalana : a short form – where 6 glasses of warm saline water are drunk – 2 at a time, followed each time by 5 specific asanas which massage the internal organs, activate peristalsis, and open up the sphincters along the gastrointestinal tract.

Performing the following asanas after each 2 glasses of warm saline water



Tadasana



Tiryak tadasana



Kati chakrasana



Tiryak bhujangasana

UDARAKARSHANASANA



Udarakarshanasana

Benefits

Alleviates indigestion, gas, acidity, constipation tones digestive organs
 strengthens the immune system
 eliminates excess mucus
 purifies the blood
 recharges the entire pranic body improves vitality on all levels

Contra indications

People suffering from any medical conditions especially those taking medication should seek guidance from a qualified yoga teacher prior to this practice.

Avoid during pregnancy.

Kunjaj

Regurgitative cleansing

Kunjaj is normally practiced following the intestine cleansing, by quickly drinking a quantity of warm saline water and then vomiting.

Benefits

tones and stimulates abdomen
removes excess mucus
helps with digestive & respiratory disorders
releases pent-up emotions

Contra indications

Not to be performed by people suffering from hernia, high blood pressure, raised intracranial pressure, heart disease, stroke, acute peptic ulcer or by diabetics with eye problems

Nasal cleansing

Jala neti: a practice using saline lukewarm water and a neti pot

Benefits

Removal of mucus and pollutants from the nasal passages and sinuses alleviates many respiratory and ear/nose/throat ailments
cools and soothes the brain
relieves drowsiness and heaviness

balances ida and pingala; and stimulates Ajna chakra

Contra indications

People who suffer from chronic nose bleeding should not do Jala neti without expert advice.

Those who have great difficulty passing water through the nose should seek expert advice.

Kapalbhati

Frontal brain cleansing

Kapalbhati is a 'vitalising' pranayama using forced exhalation and passive inhalation.

Benefits

energises body and mind
cleanses the lungs & tones digestive organs
strengthens the nervous system
purifies Ida and Pingala Nadis – mental and physical flows of energy

removes sensory distractions and prepares the mind for meditation induces a state of thoughtlessness

Contra indications

to be avoided by people who experience frequent nasal bleeding Menstrual sensitivity or discomfort

Trataka

Concentrated gazing

Trataka is a practice of dharana meditation which focuses the mind on a point of concentration (flame or dot, for example).

Benefits

Cleanses the eyes, making them clear and bright
balances the nervous system
improves concentration, memory and willpower
activates Ajna chakra and prepares the mind for meditation

Contra indications

Epileptics should **not** perform Trataka on a candle flame but choose a steady object to gaze on.

In cases of eye ailments such as eyestrain, myopia, astigmatism and early symptoms of cataract, a black dot should be used instead of a candle flame.