

Sanjivani Kriya

**The Esoteric Science
of Pranayama**

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Price : Breathe Completely

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SANJIVANI = LIFE GIVING

WHAT IS SANJIVANI KRIYA?

A practice through which anyone, an old or a young, a healthy or a diseased, a female or a male can regain the ability to draw and digest complete breath, is called Sanjivani Kriya.

A practice through which body muscles can be made stronger, body joints can be made more flexible and body organs can be made more dynamic, is called Sanjivani Kriya.

A practice through which declining health can be restored, drooping back can be corrected, invasion of diseases/old age can be curbed, is called Sanjivani Kriya.

A practice through which pranic flow can be turned inwards from all the sensory organs and be intensified to awaken the latent force (kundalini), is called Sanjivani Kriya.

A practice through which life force is strengthened and united with its source within the body as well as in the universe, is called Sanjivani Kriya.

A practice through which a healthy, happy, harmonious and energetic life is availed, is called Sanjivani Kriya.

SANJIVANI BREATH

(Being aware of unawareness)

***“Pranasyedam vashe sarvam, tridive yatpratishthitam,
Matev putran rakshasw, shrishcha pragnyam cha vidhehi na iti.”***
Prashn-Upanishad (2:13)

Meaning: *Prana*, the life force, pervades all the three worlds –the earth, below and above, and governs all the activities, physical or subtle. We beseech *prana* to protect us as a loving mother protects her children. We also request *prana* to instill divine power and knowledge in us.

An Important Truth



The first full-throated cry of a newborn baby that announces its arrival in the world is an all-important event, vital to life. It is the process of drawing in the first fresh gust of air independently as the umbilical cord is disconnected. Even though breath is drawn through the nose into the lungs, still the pull is applied right from the base of the navel. With this, starts the fascinating process of evolution of the mind, intellect, and body. On the other hand, a last frail puff of air exhaled, disconnected from navel-base marks the end of the

journey of life. Within these two breaths is written the entire story of existence of Man, its ups and downs, pain and pleasure.

The initial breath of a newborn is powerful and vigorous, rich and strong, drawn from the base of the navel and vibrating the cells and the tissues as it rises up, to the subtle centers in brain. This is the breath of life: *sanjivani shvaas*, as it connects with the subtle energy centers in the body – *muladhara*, in the base of the navel region and *brahmarandra*, inside the brain, responsible for life. A child's body develops rapidly owing to the continuity of this *sanjivani* breath. However, the inherent capacity to draw *sanjivani* breath gradually decreases, as one matures, making breath shallow and hasty. Most modern adults breathe 15-20 breaths per minute as compared to normal breathing rate of 12, suggested by medical books. The main cause is great increase in extroversion. It is further interesting to note that in old medical textbooks, normal rate was still lower, just eight breaths per minute. This paradigm shift has occurred to cope with the fast changing world but it seems world is changing a little too fast. In modern times, external activities and concerns have increased in leaps and bounds. Competition is the way of life. This outwards focus forces *prana* to travel outwards and instigates a disconnection from within. A simple testimony is that our breathing becomes deep and slow, when we try to count our breath, as it naturally connects us inside the body through the breathing process. The disconnection, however, induces old age and creates room for various diseases. Lastly, one breathes out but cannot breathe back anymore. This last out-breath is known as death!

An Ironic Fact

By nature, a child is skilled in breathing the *sanjivani* way despite being innocent of its import. On the contrary, an average person, howsoever intelligent, breathes in an incomplete and shallow way. It is not only a matter of surprise but great pain that though we strive hard to build an attractive career, to fulfill our passions, to attain security and status etc. yet we completely

ignore the very foundation of our being and life – the *sanjivani* breath. Neither we make any effort to educate ourselves regarding this essential skill nor show any proclivity towards this subject. One should be aware that all voluntary or involuntary physical movements are possible due to *prana* and even our mind depends on it. This *prana* in turn is invigorated by the air we breathe, not just by its volume but the momentum towards the inside. Usually, we adults attract far less *prana* (about 10%) than our inbuilt potential. Besides, it lacks the force to travel all the way to the navel center and touch its base and then rise up to the brain centers. The reason: outwards focus creating gap from within and causing dissipation of *prana* (vitality) through various sense organs. The result: diseases, old age, and death.

It is a real irony that we may strive to become a doctor, an engineer, a scientist, a social worker or even a religious worker and spend whole life like that but we fail to maintain what we already are – a divine child. Breathing shallow and incomplete for the whole life, we self-prepare ourselves to make a pitiful entry into the mouth of death. Isn't it surprising that we spend all our energy and resources in pursuit of bodily comfort and mental relaxation, at the cost of our body and mind? No wonder, we live unhealthily and die diseased. As per worldwide surveys, more than 95% people die of diseases or other unnatural causes.

Without watering the roots, we hope to collect flowers and fruits; without being acquainted with our body and mind, we endeavor to win over the whole world that may instead bind; and without learning the secrets of life, for its extension and enhancement we strive.

A Shot in the Dark

In this health-conscious age, we are trying various physical exercises to stay fit. Exercising accelerates the breath, which draws greater quantities of air into the system. This way we are certainly successful in attracting more *prana*, the essence of life, still we cannot channel it to the *muladhara* and the *brahmrandra*. The

reason being our outward focus that reduces the force in the *prana* and keeps the inner channels closed. Such a breath may bring in plenty of oxygen but may not produce enough of *pranic* energy. This excess oxygen continues to circulate in the muscles making the body firm and attractive. However, this also forms free radicals that cause physiological malfunction and cellular destruction. As a result, subtle centers of the brain gradually become less active reducing immunity and the body becomes prey to a host of incurable diseases. Therefore, most of us who exercise excessively i.e. draw greater amount of *prana* but are not able to channel it deep, usually have shorter life spans and remain slaves to medicines throughout their lives.

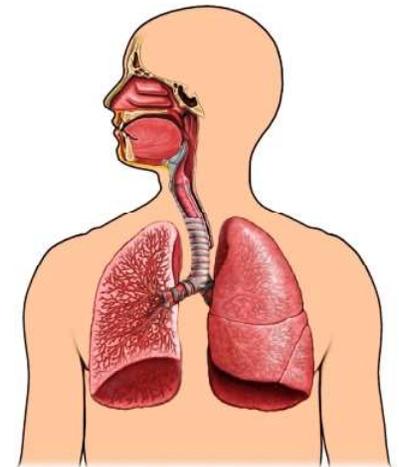
As one puts on extra weight (especially at the belly and the buttocks) by overeating, similarly another adds tight muscles by drawing in excess quantities of oxygen. On the face of it though the latter scenario may appear more attractive than the former, still at a fundamental level, in both the cases, the body is being overly burdened and hence, negative reactions in form of diseases and decay are unavoidable. One must understand that food does not survive a man and not even oxygen. The more we eat, more weak and unwell we become. Similarly, whole life we give oxygen to our body, still someday body ceases to absorb it.

Passing the Impasse

There was a time when miracle was the name for anything we did not understand. In present times, however, development of science has well established that there is a system behind any apparent miracle or mystery. It is just a matter of time before we unveil it. We had always believed that food survives us while death was regarded as a mysterious accident. However, contemporary science has proved that the more you eat, the sooner you die. Similarly, oxygen was always attributed to life but in form of free radical reactions and oxidative damage, many modern researches claim it to be majorly contributing to several pathological conditions including aging, carcinogenesis, and stroke. These findings impose a deadlock situation. So, how do we overcome?

Well, before dealing with this issue we need to realize that more than ingesting breath or food in greater quantities, it is important to digest it. Digesting, in simple terms, means thoroughly assimilating its energy to deepest levels and then excreting the remains. Generally, we fail in both the tasks due to weakness in *prana*. Ancient yoga texts inform us that *prana* is responsible for every reaction and reflex inside the body. As long *prana* moves freely and fully through the body, not just digestion and excretion but all the physiological systems function properly. Moreover, the feared free radicals are not formed and the process that damages the body (aging) is thus stalled. The purpose of breath and even that of food, therefore, must be to saturate the entire body, from top to toe, with *prana*.

To achieve this state, we would need a technique that facilitates activating the subtle centers in brain and navel that are responsible for pulling the fresh air in and pushing the contaminated air out respectively, and also filling each cell of our body with *prana* and push out the toxic by-products effectively. Besides, it should be helpful in maintaining the ideal O_2 - CO_2 ratio by balancing inhalation and exhalation. One should be aware that average lung capacity of an adult is around 6



liters but we hardly use 10% of it during normal breathing, which is called tidal volume. With effect of common breathing exercises or forceful breathing, our inhalation exceeds exhalation in volume since our IRV (inspiratory reserve volume) is almost 2.5 times greater than ERV (expiratory reserve volume). This excess oxygen not only produces free radicals but also reduces inflowing momentum of breath, further weakening the *prana*. Therefore, our technique should augment the absorption of *prana* to deepest

levels to avail a robust body and relaxed mind. Such a body and mind would help our consciousness enter into Samadhi, an important achievement apropos spiritual evolution.

Sanjivani Kriya: An ideal approach

The process or practice through which we may correct our normal breathing and rejuvenate our body-mind-soul is named *Sanjivani Kriya*. In present time, there is no dearth of options in any field and so many breathing practices, traditional or innovative, are already prevailing. Nevertheless, amid this ocean of information, one piece of information is still not very common—transformation of normal breathing. As long we breathe cautiously, everything is correct but as soon as we get into our day-to-day business, it goes topsy-turvy. The reason is simple, even though our intellect has grasped the system, body hasn't yet adapted to this understanding. Human body is a complex mechanism that runs on *prana* and *prana* in turn is tightly coupled with mind, which is spread all over the body and beyond. For complete adaption of any intellectual understanding, we must synchronize them all and focus inside. One of the most important and authentic book on yoga, 'Hatha Yoga Pradipika' describes it very lucidly, "When breath wanders mind also is unsteady while peaceful breathing calms down the mind. Through this peace, a yogi achieves long life. Therefore, one should learn to control the breath."

To get hold of breath, first we need to be aware of it and then involve our body, mind, senses everything into it. Alexander Lowen wisely writes in 'The Voice of the Body' – "It is a common belief that we breathe with our lungs alone, but in point of fact, the work of breathing is done by the whole body." To confirm this we may examine body of a child that expands with every in-breath. Not just chest, the whole body makes a rhythmic movement with every breath and visibly mind of a young child is focused inwards. Every breath of a child stimulates seat of *prana* in *muladhara* and in *brahmarandra*. No wonder, young children are very energetic and grow very fast. This scenario lays the thumb rule for *Sanjivani Kriya* as in that, under strict mental observation, breathing governs

all the physical movements. The selected movements are very simple and arranged in such a way that gradually the whole body gets involved in the process. The whole process is orchestrated similar to a musical composition where mind manages the melody, breath brings rhythm, body the beat, and devotion provides harmony. It plays like a divine music that brightens the body, mends the mind, inspires the intellect and soothes the soul.

The actual beauty of *Sanjivani Kriya* actually lies in its simplicity and generic approach. Old or young, diseased or healthy anyone can learn it irrespective of their physical, mental, social or spiritual condition. However, with regular practice, various ailments get relieved and the inner potential awakens to bestow the body with vitality and longevity. There are various levels of this *kriya* and as one advances on the path, many other *kriyas* or practices such as *Surya Kriya*, *Agni Kriya*, *Khechari*, *Shambhawi*, *Kriya Kundalini* may also be combined to boost up the transformation. At the culmination of it, in the uninterrupted continuation and accomplishment of *sanjivani shvaas*, the body, from tips of toes to the top of head, will remain saturated with *prana*. This is the state of *Samadhi* and *Kevala Kumbhaka*. Just like the flame in a lamp well oiled continues to light incessantly, so does a body full of *prana* continues to remain vigorous; the soul need not leave such a body. This is the celebrated state of deathlessness of the yogis and *siddhas*.

It may not be wise to get into further details of such a vast concept at such an early state. First, we need to get basic understanding of the yogic perspective of breath and then the process and practice of *Sanjivani Kriya*. Further, to institute this understanding deep inside, we would also need to distinguish between *Sanjivani Kriya* and other parallel practices.

Yogic Secrets of Breath

It is important to note that breathing is not a mere mechanical process, triggered by O_2 - CO_2 ratio, to supply oxygen. It is rather a process to reinforce *prana* inside the body by

connecting it with its cosmic reservoir. *Prana* is the life force that survives us all and keeps us healthy, which rocks between *muladhara* and *brahmarandra*. However, its scope not only covers the whole body but also extends beyond. It is quite analogous to magnetic force being governed by two poles that are directly connected with each other. The two poles in our analogy are *muladhara* and *brahmarandra* connected through *sushumna* (a subtle channel alongside spinal column). Breathing is the process to keep these centers active and balanced, and their connection strong. As long this connection is maintained, we are alive while in its absence, even if we attach oxygen cylinders to our lungs, revival is impossible. This may actually explain various pathological mysteries as of brain death and its revival, near death experiences etc. and even yogic feat of holding breath for very long time or stopping heartbeat without incurring any harm. However, due to our outwards focus, this ‘magnetic’ field between brain and navel center gets disturbed and shifts outside towards sense orifices, away from the central channel. This causes dissipation of *pranic* energy. Besides, accumulation of food wastes in navel region and cluttering (greed, anger, lust etc.) in brain center also reduce the potential of these centers. As a result, breath gradually loses the inside momentum and the inner connection grows weak causing bodily decay and mental stress.

There is a famous saying – “When you own your breath, nobody can steal your peace.” This is a real test for any practitioner – if you become upset or aggressive, if you worry or take stress, if you are fearful or greedy, if you easily wear out or get disheartened, or in short, if you lose peace of your body or mind, you disown your breath. Breath is life but we die because we disown our breath. Only a child breathes properly being focused inwards and closely connected with subtle centers inside. It is not an accomplishment but God’s Grace as the sense organs and orifices take few years to build. Once they are in shape, to some reasonable extent, consciousness starts travelling outwards in sensory objects and lo attachment, detachment, anger, greed, fear, reprisal, all such evils find their way in. The table below describes outward movement of breath in various activities:

Act	Outward breath movement (measured in finger width)
Relaxation	12"
Singing	16"
Eating	20"
Walking	24"
Sleeping	30"
Sex	36"
Heavy Work / Anger	30-60"

More the breath goes outside, more the *prana* grow weak, causing body to deteriorate. On the contrary, if the body is filled with *prana* then not only disease but old-age also dare not touch it. Such a breath, which helps spread *prana* all over the body from top to toe, is called yogic breath or *sanjivani* breath and the technique to achieve such a breath is called *Sanjivani Kriya*.

Sanjivani Breath

In a human body, two nostrils act as doors for entry and exit of breath while lungs process it further to extract oxygen and circulate throughout the body. Our lungs are like balloons and they expand in all the directions as we inhale the air. Ideally, inhalation causes thoracic cavity to expand and pushes the diaphragm down while exhalation contracts them back. This way almost entire body experiences the breathing movement but in general, even our nostrils do not take notice of this. Reason is that we don’t live in our body but outside in people, places and possessions of the world. Arbitrary eating habits and undisciplined lifestyle increases inertness and stiffness in our bodies. Worldly concerns and cravings always keep our mind agitated. Consequently, breath gets disconnected not just from navel center but also the brain center leading to end of journey.

For breathing *sanjivani* way, first and foremost, we need to relax our body so well that with every inspiration and expiration, keeping navel as the center, whole body pulsates. Nonetheless, it

is necessary that bodily movement is not forced but natural, under strict regulation of breath. Breathing, normally, is an involuntary act (though regular practice may provide better control) and hence put the control aside, we don't even care for it. Moreover, our mind is under strong influence of senses and senses are focused on external objects, hence awareness about body or bodily activities is barely possible. To harmonize breath with the body, we will have to shift our focus inwards. Keeping eyes closed during the practice is a good beginning. Additionally, in every sequence we shall closely observe the movement of the limb in focus, through which the sequence is being carried out. Mind and *prana* are mutually dependent, therefore whenever we focus our mind at some place, *prana* spontaneously travel there. In this way, *prana* reach every part of the body and fill it with energy as we proceed with the sequence. Owing to such properties, the name *sanjivani* (life giving) *kriya* is chosen for this technique. Sanjivani: properly or completely endow with the life energy; Kriya: technique.

An Essential Support to Every Practice

Is it really important to have another technique while we already have so much to try out? We are already into asana and *pranayama*, which offer the same goal, so what is the need to go for a new name or technique? Such questions may naturally arise in a sincere heart and we welcome them. In our answer, first thing we would like to tell is that it does not contradict with any prevalent practice rather supports them in a way indispensable for a novice as well as an adept. Secondly, it is a blend of asana-*pranayama*-meditation, packaged for convenience and time saving and aims at spiritual evolution in addition to healing and energy.

It is a common observation that each person has his/her capacity or limits. One cannot do every asana or *kriya* and this develops frustration and sometimes resistance in them. Moreover, asana and *pranayama* also have their limits for specific physical or mental conditions and hence proper guidance is very important. On one side, most of the people cannot know about the illness until it has advanced significantly while on the other side, many

people overlook their limits and minor problems due to over enthusiasm and thus incur injury or harms. Situation becomes more complicated in absence of an able guide. Many a times, people develop disease out of (incorrect) practice or they fail to heal or keep themselves fit. In such a state, most of the people relinquish yoga practice and even lose faith in it.

Sanjivani Kriya, however, combines very easy yet powerful practices in such a sequence that anyone can pursue and memorize them without any confusion or crisis. This practice can easily be performed in minor illness as well as during the menstrual cycles of women. Even in asthma, heart problem or in old age, it is pretty safe to follow as its focus is on correcting the normal breathing. Breathing is usual for everyone, let that be an ailing or a yogi, and all we have to do is to breathe sincerely and fully. There is a rhythm, slow and fast at times plus occasional retention in a specified manner and for a short while. There are some physical movements also but they just assist us in breathing properly and allow *prana* to expand all over the body.

In today's competitive world, full of hassles & hunt, every cell of the body is stressed out. This pressure inhibits the free flow of *prana* in the body. This causes fatigue in body and infuriates the mind that further leads to various disorders and diseases. *Sanjivani Kriya* aims at complete eradication of all these problems. Thousands of people have already demonstrated this feat.

Endorsed by Experience

The benefits from *Sanjivani Kriya* have been confirmed by our various experimentations as well as by the experience of thousands of people. In one of the camps, specially conducted for Dainik Bhaskar group in Indore, many participants had complaints of fatigue and heaviness due to a busy night at work. After just half hour of Sanjivani they were all revitalized. One of them was suffering from migraine since morning and despite taking medicines twice that day, he had no relief. However, soon after the practice, he felt light and relaxed.

SANJIVANI KRIYA

(Its Significance and Structure)

In one of the initial camps at ashram, we were astonished to learn that many people had lost 5-7 kilos in just three days. Few old-age patients of arthritis and frozen shoulders also experienced relief. Most importantly, asthma patients experienced substantial relief after this *Kriya*. It is important to note here that asthma patients are suggested very slight retention of breath in a specific manner and the others are also instructed to hold their breath only within limits. A normal check is that after retention of breath, sudden and forceful exhalation should not occur. Hypertension and Cardiac patients also reap considerable benefit in this manner.

During our camps in schools, many students have shared that *Sanjivani Kriya* keeps their body and brain energetic all time. In fact, alertness of the mind and vigor in the body is a common experience everywhere after *Sanjivani Kriya*. Another noteworthy experience is of a forest official in Lucknow who was suffering from depression for over ten years. His brother, a Yoga teacher, had tried so many therapies and treatments to no relief. However, after just three months of *Sanjivani Kriya*, he regained his confidence, peace and energy.

There are many such examples describing the miraculous effects of this *sadhana* to inspire us but the real benefit can be derived only by sincere self-practice. Hence, it becomes necessary that we carefully understand different aspects of this *sadhna*.

It must be clear by our previous discussions that in *Sanjivani Kriya*, we exercise certain physical movements strictly regulated by breathing to circulate energy of *prana* and mind all over the body. This energy consumes or cleanses the waste and toxic accumulations in the body. Blood flow and other physiological systems are regulated, each cell is energized, free-radicals are digested, seeds to various diseases are destroyed. Thus, the body gains strength and with the increase in life energy, it becomes younger while the mind becomes more introvert and concentrated. We then gradually enter into the deep state of Samadhi, the higher consciousness.

Before we explore the science and structure of *Sanjivani Kriya*, assessment of its distinctive features and a comparison with other popular practices shall provide us the necessary insight. In this age of innovations, not just traditional exercises but *yogasana*, *pranayama* and meditation are also undergoing regular experimentation and modification. As every individual is unique, his or her innovation also reflects some uniqueness. However, to make an appropriate choice for ourselves, it is a good idea to compare them with each other while keeping our personal limits and needs in mind. At any given time, every person and every practice would have certain limits, but they are necessary to give us a reasonable start. As we progress, things are bound to change, in and out. In the words of the famous Greek philosopher Heraclitus, "Nothing endures but change." All we have to ensure is that the change is in the right direction and helps us evolve.

This philosophy is the basis for *Sanjivani Kriya*. In fact, no practice, aiming at ultimate awakening, can ignore this. However, one will have to start from his or her level. *Sanjivani Kriya* facilitates this journey equally for young-old, unwell-healthy, novice- veteran unlike other popular practices, which have their preconditions. As one continues with the practice, the limits change, obviously for betterment. The body becomes gradually flexible, *prana* forceful and mind tranquil. This allows a practitioner to move quickly ahead on the inner path of divine power and knowledge.

Sanjivani Kriya, a complete tool in itself, can also be combined with traditional exercises, *yoga*, *pranayama* or other parallel practices to boost them up. This reminds me of a young man 'Amarpal' who participated in one of the *sadhna* camps held at *Shabad Surat Sangam Ashram* on the suggestion of his father. This man was into professional weightlifting, hence maintained a muscular body, and accordingly consumed a diet equal to 3-4 persons, rich in protein and carbohydrates. However, during the camp, diet was limited and light for everyone, consisting mostly salad, fruits, sprouts, rice and milk. He somehow managed with it for seven long days, as he was not doing weight training anyways. But, he was doing *Sanjivani Kriya*, *Surya Kriya* and *Agni Kriya* every day. After a week when he went back to gym, he had already lost 8 kilos and was a little hesitant to try heavy weight. Nevertheless, he started practice and soon he added 30 extra pounds to his normal limit, to his utter surprise. He learnt his lesson that power is not in muscles but in *prana* and became a fan of this *kriyayoga*.

However, before we get the opportunity to practice it together, to induce our intellect and motivate our mind, let us make a thorough examination of *Sanjivani Kriya* with relation to other practices:

Sanjivani Kriya and Fitness Exercises

1) Fitness exercises mainly consist of aerobics (running, cycling, swimming, tennis etc.) for cardiovascular endurance and anaerobic exercises (weight training, functional training etc.) to increase short-term muscle strength. The main objective of these all is to pump more and more air into the system and stimulate the muscles, tissues, cells of the body to increase metabolism and burn calories. In these exercises, breathing is ruled by physical movements as its rhythm apparently increases during the practice and slows down afterwards, making it shallow.

Sanjivani Kriya, on the contrary, keeps breathing primary. All the physical movements are performed under strict control of breath, fluently and harmoniously. This way *prana* spreads throughout the body rejuvenating and strengthening its every nook and cranny.

2) Fitness exercises always have a focus different and away from the body e.g. running a km. distance, hitting the ball into goal post etc. Besides, they usually depend on some external resource such as cycle, bat, ball, dumb-bell, parallel bar etc. Due to this external focus, *prana* sprints outwards, consciously and forcefully. Consequently, inner connection with divine force grows weaker even though involuntarily. This makes a person more dependent and passionate about worldly pleasure and objects, which in turn instigates anger, greed, frustration and restlessness.

Sanjivani Kriya trains the *prana* to turn inwards and helps us connect with the divine force inside, consciously & thoroughly. This inner connection makes a person aware of his or her divine potential. Such a person can never become slave to the material world but a master who can acquire and renounce riches selflessly.

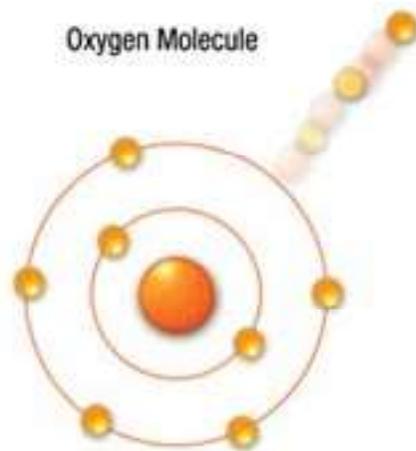
3) Fitness exercises, normally, demand rich and generous diet to meet the energy loss incurred by perspiration and *prana* depletion, or else the body becomes weak. Conversely, such a diet demands further workout to keep the body fit and free from fat. This creates a deadlock situation, which gets worse in due course owing to regular increase in outward flow of *prana*, natural in these exercises. It is evident from general experiences that as soon as you reduce on exercises or renounce them, body starts putting on weight again.

Sanjivani Kriya, on the contrary, awakens the *Yogagni* (fire of *yoga*) in navel region, which produces immense energy. With this energy, a person can survive without food for exceptionally

long durations, maintaining a highly vigorous and agile body. Into the bargain, this fire may easily digest whatever quantity of food is offered to it, that too without adding any flab. Furthermore, body gains the ability to absorb *prana* directly from the atmosphere, which leads its way to transubstantiation (divinization) of the physical body.

4) Fitness exercises certainly help in drawing more air into the system but outwards focus doesn't let it penetrate deep. The excess oxygen, as a result, gives birth to free radicals, which start accumulating in the body. This causes onset of diseases and old age, just like undigested toxic food accumulation. The surplus oxygen also begets oxidative damage to the body. We must realize that in running backwards, there is always a fear of going astray or lose our footing, especially when path is obstructed and uneven. Similarly, when we draw more air in our lungs with an outward focus, breath does not go deep reducing its absorption. This gives way to production and accumulation of damaging free radicals.

Sanjivani Kriya focuses on emptying the lungs to their limits so that the in-breath may gain momentum and travel to deeper levels. To open the otherwise dormant sections of lungs, we retain breath, on and off, after inhalation or exhalation. We have already discussed that the force, which pulls the breath in, is centered in *muladhara*, the base of the navel region. However, an average adult is neither aware nor connected with this center



and hence they breathe very shallow from the tip of the nostrils. As our focus shifts inwards and breathing becomes vigorous, center of breathing also shifts from the nose gradually towards its base, the *muladhara*. This way, oxygen gains the ability to penetrate deeper even beyond red-blood cells, at the level of plasma and energizes myriad of atoms that constitute the body. As the body-efficiency, in absorbing oxygen, increases and possibility of free radicals reduces, the causative long deep connected breaths slowly transform into the cherished goal of this practice: *sanjivani shvaas*. It must be stressed that this process would be possible only if inhalations and exhalations are vigorous and deep, and the various parts of the body are moved rhythmically with the breath. In fact, the purpose of physical movements here is to remove the inertness and spread vital *pranic energy* all over the body. Nevertheless, it would not be possible for anyone to assess his or her progress and even the performance without the help of a competent coach. Learning from books or other resources would not only depend but also be limited to our mental abilities. If we had to evolve from our level, we will have to seek guidance of an able teacher.

Sanjivani Kriya and Yog-Asana

Yog-Asana, an important ingredient of the *Ashtanga Yoga* propounded by Sage *Patanjali*, has gained immense popularity in recent times due to its perceptual nature. Owing to its great efficiency in treating infirmities and bestowing health, it alone has become a symbol of Yoga today. Body is indeed the basis for every pursuit, physical or spiritual and only a healthy body can assimilate *prana* to its deepest levels. However, the picture appears a little gloomier on a closer look. The consciousness of a modern man is entrapped in the sense organs ensuing an impulsive drive towards the sensory objects. This has made us neglect the two primary parts of *ashtanga yoga*, *yama* and *niyama*.

Yama describes the moral codes, which are essential to reclaim the scattered mind while *Niyama* is about personal discipline to strengthen the mind. Without them, the practice of asana too is reduced to gymnastics, a mere exercise in bodily postures etc. Even the many proclaimed yoga experts today practice and preach asana as a form of exercise.

Ideally, Asana is not about the movements but about the stability as suggested by its name. However, to make this possible, all the limbs, joints, plexuses and their subtle centers are to be made supple, to allow *prana* flow freely from top to toe. Because, wherever *pranic* flow is obstructed in the body, pain or numbness takes place, disturbing its stability. Besides, breath and mind also need to be anchored inside the body and stabilized. Only then, one can gain access to next level of *Ashtanga yoga*: the *pranayama* and benefit from it. Otherwise, in the name of *kapalbhati*, *bhastrika* etc. one would make fool of himself thinking that the practice of *pranayama* is underway, though the results of this illustrious practice remain a cherished dream and instead what befalls is a handful of unfortunate, unanticipated diseases.

Evidently, it is not possible for a common man, who has many responsibilities to look after, to follow the long path of asana in order to prepare the ground to learn the art of complete breathing. Many important asana are downright difficult to be performed by a commoner. Besides, to find an able teacher and secure required time for a focused, disciplined practice of postures seems quite improbable for those engrossed in the tussles of life.

All such questions find a simple answer in *Sanjivani Kriya* as in this, various simple postural exercises are such combined with a specific breathing pattern that they permeate all the joints, knots and plexuses in the body with the life force. Even with no arduous asana, one develops the capacity to breathe, as one ought

to i.e. like a newborn baby, vigorously from the navel center. The very first level of *Sanjivani Kriya*, prepares one for the special practice of *pranayama*. As one grows upon it, levels are changed, not in complexity but profundity.

In recent times, numerous innovative practices have emerged to address contemporary issues with physical health, mental peace and spiritual evolution. Evidently, they all aim at awakening our inner potential and gaining direct access to the reservoir of happiness and strength centered inside, forever. However, the points expounded during our comparison of *Sanjivani Kriya* with fitness exercise and asana shall equally apply to most of these contemporary innovations.

Sanjivani Kriya and Pranayama

Pranayama is an all-important limb of Yoga as it binds body with mind and drives the consciousness from outside in. Numerous breathing techniques have evolved under different names and styles by yogis all around the world. Before we make our comparison, it is imperative that we examine contemporary breathing practices in the wake of the *pranayama*.

Prana is the life force and *ayama* denotes residency/expansion, therefore *pranayama* means life force residing and expanding in the body. As per the most authentic yoga book “Hath Yog Pradeepika”, *pranayama* is a conscious yet effortless retention (*kumbhak*) of breath/*prana*, which rejuvenates every single cell of the body. This eventually induces Samadhi, a state in which body is free from disease, decay, distress and finally from death.

In persistent state of *pranayama*, *kundalini shakti*, the latent energy centered in *muladhara*, awakens and rises upwards, eliminating all the clutter at physical or subtle levels, to finally enter *brahmarandra* (the door to divine situated as a subtle center

inside head). On its entry there, subtle glands of brain secrete nectar – a heavenly fluid, which nourishes the body of the practitioner to such an extent that external sustenance becomes unnecessary. Decay and diseases cannot touch this body. In advanced stage of absolute retention (*keval-kumbhak*) or *Samadhi*, even external breath becomes unwanted as the whole body is filled with *prana*, from tip of the toe to top of the head. However, this is possible only when *prana*, coupled with mind, turns inwards from all the sense orifices and flows into the central channel of *sushumna* with full force. This is the real *pranayama*.

On the other hand, many contemporary practitioners and even instructors of *pranayama* carry signs of diseases and flab. When the tangible body itself is not under their control, then who would know what lies in their minds – anger, lust, envy and what not. If they were doing the authentic *pranayama* then why don't they get bona fide results? In fact, many a times, a little increase in practice time brings adverse result for them. We come across so many such people while touring around the world who incurred some or the other harm from yoga practices, especially *pranayama*. I cannot avoid sharing one such case as it troubled me for long. During one of our camps, we learnt about a young woman 'Niharika' who was diagnosed with breast cancer in its second stage. She was a brave heart as she decided to fight her cancer right in the face. Instead of going for a surgery, she planned to buy some time trying alternative therapies. Everything was going fine until she met with a renowned yoga instructor who enthused her about yoga. Initial week, she went on her bike to attend the class where she was taught various *pranayama* techniques. Nevertheless, second week she felt weak to ride herself. Third week, she was too weak to ride even pillion and was later taken to hospital. Alas! She lost the battle as cancer had spread beyond recuperation. I really wonder as to how somebody

could use yoga for healing or even teaching without completely knowing the nature of body and the diseases. That person did not know the simple thing that forceful breathing and retention will only stimulate cancer cells.

If doctors fail in healing someone or even themselves, it is no surprise as their knowledge is limited to books and efforts depend on tools. However, the title 'yogi' suits to only that person who has gained complete knowledge and control of his or her body, mind and *prana*. Besides, consciousness of a yogi is directly connected with the divine and hence he or she can easily relate to anyone and everyone, especially for healing purpose.

Let us take an example to understand why people incur diseases and pain in lieu of health and vigor. Suppose you are driving a car with very less air in its tyres. As long as the road is smooth and you drive gently, you may not face any problem but if the road is rough and you drive at speed then only God can save you from having a flat tyre. Similarly, in many of the popular breathing practices, we apply lot of force and efforts but we don't breathe to our potential save channelizing it to deep levels. Therefore, it becomes just a physical exercise in the name of *pranayama*. When we perform it for short duration, body becomes warm and active. Caught in tussles of modern lifestyle, we hardly exercise our body and hence this warmth itself feels to us like energy and lightness. Nevertheless, a little increase in length of *pranayama* reveals the reality in form of heaviness or reeling of head, upset stomach, muscular strain, and much more. Many a times, such erroneous practice may even aggravate already existing problems.

All this leads to the inference that even before we start *pranayama* practice, we must learn to breathe deeply and completely. *Sanjivani Kriya*, offering this lead, is thus dubbed an

essential foundation for *pranayama*. It mobilizes every joint, tones up every muscle and rejuvenates every cell. The *kriya* begins in standing position to activate the body, followed by prone pose to channelize *prana* from top to toe and from front to back, and then comes sitting posture to allow the *prana* move inwards. This eventually culminates in meditation as the focus is fixed on breathing all the time, which flows deeper and deeper, towards its base. This inward flow of *prana* forcefully turns the mind inside and that is meditation.

It must be made clear that the goal of *Sanjivani Kriya* is spiritual evolution and healing is secondary. However, as we progress, body and mind become healthy and composed, as inward force of *prana* removes all the blockages, clears accumulated waste, regulates bodily systems and increases immunity. This accords with the basic principle of spirituality – self-realization is possible only through inward focus of mind and *prana*, but as long as the mind is entangled in worldly pleasures and pains, desires and gains, it is not possible. Moreover, until body is diseased and dependent, loaded with solid waste, mind and *prana* cannot make free movement inside; they will compulsorily be tied to the body and forced outwards.

Sanjivani Kriya, like any other genuine spiritual practice, relieves all the diseases and flab of the body, turns the mind-*prana* inwards, and connects our awareness with the universal consciousness centered inside the body. As we progress with the practice, more and more advanced techniques of *pranayama* and meditation are naturally merged in it. In higher levels, science of *swara* (nostrils) proves very handy. This science tells us that right nostril stimulates navel region while the left one activates brain centers. This knowledge plays a crucial role in channelizing *prana* to subtle centers inside body. Further, it evolves into '*Kriya-Kundalini-Pranayama*', which drives *prana* into the *sushuma*.

Consequently, melodious *naad* (subtle sounds) begin to play incessantly, which bind the mind so firmly that it cannot wander in material world anymore. This eventually leads the practitioner into highly advanced practice of '*naadanusandhan*' that opens the doors to self-realization. It is an amazing journey, which starts with *Hath-Yoga*, subsequently develops into *Bhakti-Yoga* and *Raj-Yoga*, and culminates into *Jnana-Yoga*.

Science and Structure of Sanjivani Kriya

Sanjivani Kriya aims at rejuvenating each cell of the body by filling it with *prana*, the life force. To accomplish this ambition, three centers are selected in the body and accordingly the whole system is divided into three phases, focusing on one specific center in each phase. First phase is performed in standing posture, second in prone pose and the third in sitting. Preferably, eyes are kept closed throughout to keep the mind alert and aware about the body and not the outside world.

1) First phase with standing exercises makes the body active, eliminating lethargy and stiffness. Efforts in maintaining body balance keep a person alert and make him fully aware of his or her body, which is the first step to embark upon the journey inside. This also enables the learner to concentrate his or her breath inside and gradually extend it to the subtle centers. This phase represents awakened state, although this awakening is about the divine or universal self and not about the world of duality, which creates attachment and enmity.

2) As we go prone in second phase, the back becomes relaxed while front is compressed. This forces *prana* to flow backwards. Generally, back is the basis for relaxation as well as strength. Frail or bent back is not just a sign of old age but an open invitation to pain and problems. Back down means to

concede defeat. *Sushumna*, the central channel of energy is situated in the back but before we could gain access to it, *prana* has to fill completely from front to back. *Sushumna* is the direct door to divine powers and bestows the ability to conquer disease, decay and even death. Entry in *sushumna* transforms the total personality of the practitioner into an ethical and ideal one. *Kundalini* power, the life force, is also seated at the base of *sushumna*, in *muladhara*. Although, this power is awakened in everyone, as its absence means no life, but normally this awakening is very slight in anyone. The very goal of human life is to awaken it in its full potential.

Alongside backbone, a number of subtle energy centers or chakras are situated, which get stimulated by this inward momentum of *prana*. These chakras, once opened, become a magnet for *prana* and hence exert a pull on breathing also, gradually shifting its center deeper and deeper. Depth of inhalation directly affects the intensity of exhalation. While profundity of inhalation augments the *pranic* force, intensity of exhalation helps in eliminating blockage and contamination at physical as well as at subtle level. Completely free from any seed of disease, such a light and lively body becomes a reliable base for longevity and even immortality.

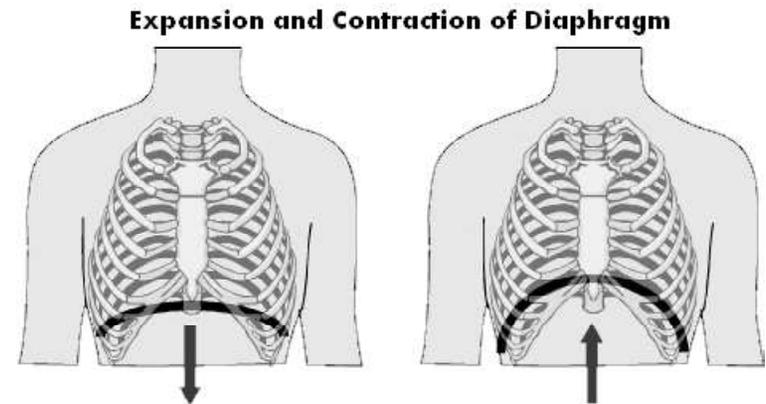
3) Once the whole body is energized and purified in first two phases, third phase is set in motion to pave the way for *pranayama*. Having the whole body and especially back filled with *pranic* energy, along with inward focused mind, *prana* pounds on various chakras to make its way into the *sushumna*. This stimulation in the subtle centers of back naturally pulls the consciousness inwards that further helps *prana* to turn from sense orifices towards its base in *muladhara* and knock at the door of *kundalini*. Moreover, sitting erect in a comfortable pose and doing *sanjivani* breath readily aligns all the chakras and enforces a natural

root lock (*mulabandha*), which thrusts the *kundalini* power to rise up all the way to *brahmarandra* opening all the chakras on its way. However, it should be kept in mind that it is a slow but sure process, which heals the body and mind before entering the highest state of Samadhi. In this process, along with meticulously done inhalation and exhalation, appropriate retention of breath is equally important. This way the body is saturated with *prana* to its last pore and the process of *keval-kumbhaka* thus commences.

The Three centers used in Sanjivani Kriya

To charge each cell of the body with *pranic* energy, *Sanjivani Kriya* divides the body in three segments, keeping three main centers in focus – 1. Chest, 2. Belly, 3. Back.

1. The Chest: The lungs occupying the chest or more specifically thorax are the main centers to ingest air into the body. Lungs are analogous to a balloon or a bladder. When air is pumped into a bladder or a balloon, it expands on all sides. Similarly, when we breathe in, the chest should expand completely in all the directions i.e. up and down, front and back, and sideways. A very simple and logical explanation but followed by very few. It would not be an exaggeration saying that almost 90% people breathe



shallow and incomplete. If they expand the upper regions of the chest, the lower regions contract, so much and so on. However, in *Sanjivani Kriya*, systematically practicing various steps in suggested three positions, even dormant parts of the chest are brought into action. Thus, a practitioner slowly and gradually gains the ability to utilize the lungs to their maximum potential and breathe in an appropriate manner.

2. The Belly: The entire region below the chest to the abdomen is called the belly. Though, the air we breathe enters into the lungs, the center to draw this air through the nose into the lungs is the navel-base, called the *agni kund* (the pool of fire) in mystic language. As the fire in this esoteric pool increases and rises into the chest, the capacity of the chest to ingest air also increases more and more. This subtle fire cleanses the *nadis* (subtle energy channels) of the accumulated waste. Hence, the body so purified can be filled with prana. Practicing while standing, lying down and sitting, the navel is activated through inhalation, exhalation, retention in a special way, which increases the fire within. This opens the path to health and spiritual awakening.



3. The Back: The great importance of the back has already been discussed in detail. The complete region extending from back of the neck to the surroundings of the anal region is being termed as the back here. In scriptures, this is termed as The Eastern Path or The Royal Path. This is the core of the body-temple

where the inherent potential of man lays dormant, waiting to be awakened by sincere efforts of a practitioner. The *sushumna*, subtly located within the spine is the channel through which the divine manifests from its seat in *brahmrandra* (subtle regions of the head). The seat of the serpent power *kundalini* and the path of its ascent also lie in the back, in *sushumna*.



It is very important for a serious aspirant to realize that until the vibrations, arising out of the air being filled in the chest and the navel, are not channeled to the back and merged into *sushumna*, the *prana* will continue to dissipate through sensory organs. The process of *pranayama* will not commence. The mind will remain a slave to the sensory objects. The spiritual awakening will not happen.

In *Sanjivani Kriya* with the application of the *mulbandha* (contracting the anal muscles) while performing inhalation, exhalation and retention of the breath, the back is saturated with *prana*. In this way the back, heated and vibrated up, forces the consciousness inwards and channels it into the *sushumna*. This is what is popularly called as the awakening of the serpent power, the *kundalini*. In *Sanjivani Kriya*, this process dawns of its own accord.

Therefore, we must bear in our minds that *Sanjivani Kriya* is not a fitness drill and not even refreshing yoga. It is a tool to realize our divine self by awakening our hidden potential. Indeed,

its regular practice fills our body and mind with inward focused energy to bring health and harmony. Finally, complete manifestation of divinity leads us to the kingdom of ultimate happiness.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

(Preparation and Procedure of
Sanjivani Kriya)

Groundwork

Whatever practice we undertake in the name of supreme health or happiness, purpose can never be different from attainment of God – the absolute truth-knowledge-bliss personified. Therefore, it is important for an aspirant to seek refuge in God's Grace, which is the essence of life. Besides, expert guidance and kind support of an able Guru is imperative to tread this path. Hence, paying reverence to the lotus feet of Guru is also essential. This veneration is actually crucial before commencing any spiritual practice, as it makes us aware and confident of our goal.

Resolution: We should bear in our mind that all-pervading God also lives in our bodies and his grace is helping us always, visibly or invisibly. With this faith, we should make a resolution to awaken this awareness in every cell and every pore of the body by channelizing the *prana*, apparent grace of God, all over. This resolution shall strengthen our determination of going inside and connecting with the source of life and also inspire us to apply sincere efforts in *Sanjivani Kriya*.

Preparation: It is always better to do warm-ups before making any exercise, as it makes body and mind more flexible and receptive. However, the work out before *Sanjivani Kriya* ought

to be focused and fitting. Therefore, we have chosen a specific set as follows:

1. Awakening the mind in the body

Let us stand up, keeping both the feet at shoulder distance so that the body weight is equally distributed to them. Eyes should be kept closed or aligned parallel to the ground, if closed eyes disturb the body balance in the beginning. Body should stand upright yet completely relaxed keeping belly in and breast out. Now, taking both the hands all the way up, above the head, drop them loose at the wrists while keeping the arms straight. Start waving the hands up and down effortlessly at that height in air without touching your head. Gradually raise the speed to maximum so that the sensations spread from the tip of the fingers to the shoulders & further into the body. The whole body should start vibrating. Continue for 1½ to 2 minutes before you stop the movement all at once and hold your hands where they are, up in the air. Calm down your breath, relax your body and feel the sensation throughout with the closed eyes.



After a short while, bring your hands down and pat all over your head from front to back and vice versa. Now give a gentle massage to your face, especially to eyes and ears. Further,

massage your neck, shoulders, chest, stomach and the whole body, front and back. However, your eyes must be kept closed and mind should be observing not the body but the inner centers of the hands wherefrom vibrations are spreading. This doing will relax the body and make the mind aware of it.

2. Balancing the nostrils

Have you ever wondered why do we have two nostrils to breathe? Actually, the left nostril, called '*Ida*', is attached with lunar center in brain responsible for various nourishing secretions while the right one is attached with solar center in navel and called '*pingla*' responsible for fire or heat of the body. We have already discussed that *prana* moves inside the body due to the pulling force of these two centers and the breath is divided in two nostrils just to keep them both active. Moreover, when both the nostrils and their channels are saturated with *prana*, the central channel *sushumna* opens up to unite both the subtle centers inside head and the navel region. This union is the ground for guiding our consciousness into *Samadhi*. Therefore, the task of activating, opening and balancing the two nostrils is indispensable, before we get into any spiritual practice.

For activating both the nostrils and their respective channels all the way into *sushumna*, place both the hands on either side of the nose so that the forefinger of right hand touches the right nostril and that of left hand touches the left nostril. Now move your hands up and down to close and open the nostrils



alternatively i.e. when you move right hand up, the right index finger is lifted to open the right nostril while the left hand comes down to close the left nostril with its index finger and vice versa. Together, take long deep breaths so that both the nostrils are altered at least 4-5 times in every in and out breath. The length of inhalation and exhalation should be kept equal and breath should be forceful enough to produce sound both ways. Continue this for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes or even a little more if desired before you inhale deeply and hold your breath briefly. Finally exhale silently and bring your hands down to relaxing position.

3. Renewing the lungs' reserve

Lungs keep a great reserve of air all the time, which is probably essential to maintain the required pressure for breathing in and out. However, this reserve is replaced only little by little, letting contaminated gases to stay there for long. Moreover, it slows down the in-breath momentum disallowing *prana* to penetrate deep. It is thus essential that we empty the lungs as much as possible to breathe deeply and completely.

For this, standing shoulder distance apart, stretch both the hands over the head and bend backwards as you breathe in. Try to arch your spine tolerably backwards but without straining your neck or back. Immediately after that, without pausing your breath even for a fraction of second, return to front and bend down letting your body



hang loose, as you breathe out through your mouth. This out breath should be audible enough but the sound should be produced by rubbing of breath in the nasopharynx and not in the vocal cord. Make sure that the body movement is fluent and balanced, and the forward bend is maximum. Go over for 5 to 7 times before taking a break.

Now, repeat the process with 'ha-ha' sound from the sound box while breathing out. Soon this sound should turn into laughter and get louder with every round. This will help pulsating the abdomen excessively and emptying the lungs to their limits. We may bend sideways too for additional gain. With this, we are ready to embark upon our journey inside the body, instigated by *Sanjivani Kriya*.

Crux of the matter

Ahead of practicing *Sanjivani Kriya*, it should be well established in our minds that the basis of our life is *prana*, which is physically manifested as breath. As long breath is connected with its source in navel region, life persists. However, as we grow old, being ignorant of science of breath and entangled in worldly chase, our breath becomes shallow and incomplete. Usually, the center of inhalation in a common person is in nose and that of exhalation is in throat. This gap exists due to the discord we carry in our life between our feelings and our behavior, and it only grows with our age. Modern science has also recognized this fact and development of lie-detector is an evident proof of this. When we behave differently from what we feel inside, there is subtle change in our breath, our pulse, our heartbeat and our brainwaves or putting briefly, the flow of *pranic* energy is disturbed inside the body. This disturbance creates a gap between our perception and our persona. This undesired and generally unknown gap causes a breach between inhalation and exhalation as well. This gap, an

indicative of ignorance, is a haven for darkness and dullness that infect our body and mind in form of diseases, disorders, distress and desolation. More the gap, more the weakening and as a final point, this reaches a complete disconnection when a frail puff of air is exhaled but cannot be inhaled back. This is the end of life because body cannot hold on to *prana* anymore.

In *Sanjivani Kriya*, various exercises are arrayed in such a way that the breath travels deep to satiate the body, from top to toe, with *prana*. As a result, every cell is energized, every joint is mobilized and every muscle is toned up. The gap between in and out breath is narrowed down to zero and by holding the breath in between, *pranic* flow is thrust inwards to enter the *sushumna* and unite with its source.

Important tips

It is important to note that *prana* and mind mutually affect each other. Whenever mind is stirred or attracted towards anything in or outside the body, *prana* tags along while flow of *prana* always attracts mind to its set. Therefore, it is important that the whole body is completely relaxed to keep the mind free and eyes remain closed to protect it from any external stimuli. Together, mind should be kept involved by observing the bodily movements, which are in turn combined intimately with the breath. Although, we move just one limb in every step, the whole body follows its rhythm to allow the *prana* spread all over freely. To understand this more clearly we should observe a baby breathing, as its whole body pulsates with every single breath. Anyone can easily notice that with every in-breath its body is expanding and with every out-breath it's compressing in a natural rhythm.

Retention of breath is another delicate affair that requires extreme care as it is normal to stress our body, especially the breast, in the process. Ideally, breath should be held with the help

of *mulabandha* (closing the anus and pulling it upwards) to keep the body relaxed while concentration should always be fixed on the third eye (seat of pineal gland inside the brain). Apart from intentional retention, breath must not pause for even a small fraction of second. Inhalation should promptly merge into exhalation and vice versa, leaving no pause or gap in between. This continuous breathing may require some efforts at first, reducing the length of every single breath and increasing its pace. However, increasing the length at the cost of gap between in and out breath is just ill-advised.

There are few more points that we must bear in our mind while practicing *Sanjivani Kriya*. Normally, breathing should be forceful and produce sound both ways, in and out, which is heard easily and continuously. The length of inhalation and exhalation should be kept equal and the facial expressions should always be delightful. No stress should appear on forehead or face while breathing and making movements. The body should be steady all time except when we are making deliberate movements. All the movements must be synchronized with breath having mind persistently focused on third eye.

We have already learnt that there are three phases of *Sanjivani Kriya* – standing, prone and sitting. Every phase has three different steps and in every step, we make three retentions after twenty breaths. After making twenty inhalations and exhalations, we take a long deep breath and hold it inside (inner retention) as per our capacity. It is then followed by an extended yet easy (soundless) exhalation that culminates into an external retention (holding the breath outside). This pattern of breathing is ideally repeated three times in every step accompanied with different bodily movements. In the beginning, however, it may not be easy to make twenty such breaths along with physical movements. Hence, we may start with five or seven counts, whatever our body

may allow and gradually increase that. Similarly, it may not be easy to make long retentions without straining our body. An ideal time for inner retention in a healthy body is 40 seconds but we may start with even 5-10 seconds to avoid any harm in the early days. Regular practice will increasingly raise our limits and enhance our strength. At any point of time, if you feel tired or strained or if you have problem breathing properly, then you should take a break and refresh your body and mind before starting again. Although, *Sanjivani Kriya* is set in a very simple and fatigue-free manner to suit everyone, still the condition and ability of each one is different. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that we start in accordance with our limits. However, right and regular practice will naturally enhance our ability and strength.

First Phase: Standing Position

Let's start with the standing position. Keeping your feet $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 feet apart and parallel to each other, place them firmly on the ground. Body weight should be equally distributed to both the feet. Although, it will be better to keep your eyes closed, but initially you may want to keep them open to maintain your poise. Body awareness also helps in keeping the balance. However, your mind should be focused inside the brain on third eye.

1) In first step, rib cage is expanded on both the sides to allow lungs spread out sideways. For this, both the hands are brought to the chest level facing downwards while elbows are stretched out at shoulder level keeping arms parallel to the ground. Both the thumbs touch the center of chest while middle fingers of both the hands touch each other. Now, together with inhalation, spread your hands sideways, opening the arms so that both the arms are straightened on sides at shoulder level. Without any pause or delay, come back to initial position with exhalation. Repeat it for maximum twenty times with no gap in between.

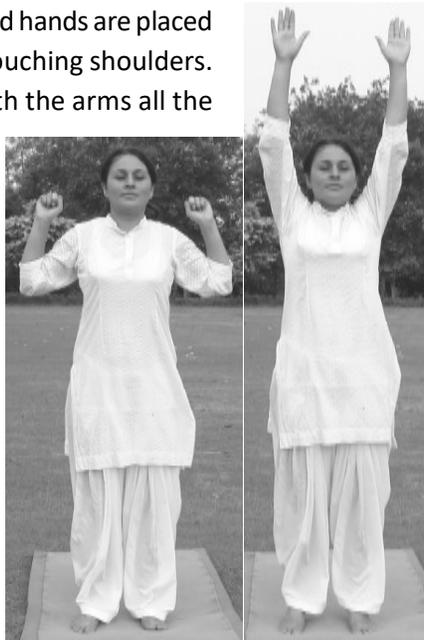
The sound of breath would declare how much force is applied in it. The length of exhalation and inhalation should be equal as per your capacity, neither very long nor very short, so that you may maintain its rhythm easily for twenty counts.



After twenty breaths inhale as much air as possible before you hold it inside. Relax the body and observe the sensations spreading all over. Don't push your retention limits hastily even though you may feel like doing so. Give sufficient time to your body to adjust. Exhale silently but completely and retain the breath outside for a short while before you take up next repetition of twenty breaths followed by retentions. Three repetitions are enough for one phase. After that, bring your hands down and relax. If you feel stress in shoulders or anywhere else, give a dry massage there complemented with short breaths. In fact, dry massage accompanied with short breaths is very effective in relaxing the body after every step. Now we are ready for the next step.

2) In this step, we stretch our body upwards. In standing position, as specified in the beginning, bend both the arms at elbow in such a way that the elbows are touching the

lowest rib on sides while fist hands are placed on either side of the body touching shoulders. Now with inhalation, lift both the arms all the way up and simultaneously opening your hands, stretch the fingers upwards. With exhalation, bring the hands back to initial position. With inhalation, not just hands but also the whole body should move upwards lifting heels off the ground. After twenty forceful breaths, inhale deeply and make inner retention, followed by external one.



Repeat this for ideally three times or as many times as you did in previous step. This is important that we maintain same length and repetition for every step. Now we can move on to third step.

3) Third step is a little different from earlier two as we don't move hands. Placing both the hands at lowest part of spine and firmly holding our waist in that position, we bend backwards as far as possible. Neck is aligned with the spine and not hanging loose. Keeping the body stable in this position we repeat the same breathing process i.e. and exhale for twenty times, make inner and external retention, repeat for three times, finally come back to standing position and relax.



Reflection: After completing the first phase, take total attention of your body, which is now filled with energy and all the fatigue and dullness is removed not just from body but also from mind. The whole body is vibrating with *pranic* current and the consciousness is centered in the body. *Sushumna*, the central channel of *prana* that is slightly activated, is now pulling the mind and *prana* inwards from all the sensory organs. Therefore, we move on to next phase in which we will unlock the entry to *sushumna* by guiding the *prana* backwards in prone pose.

Second Phase: Prone Position

When we lie down on our back in supine pose, back is naturally compressed while the front portion, where all the sensory organs are situated, is relaxed. This causes *prana* to move towards senses and activate them further. On the other hand, lying on our face in prone position creates reverse effect i.e. it relaxes the spine and thrusts *prana* towards *suhumna*. However, it is possible only after *prana* has gained some momentum with the first phase practice. Second phase is also divided in three steps:

1) In first step, you need to lie down on your belly keeping head, spine and feet aligned straight. Both the heels are joined together while toes are facing outwards. Stretch arms sideways at shoulder level. Now bending those at elbow bring both the hands below your forehead placed one above the other. Whole body should be as stress-free as a corpse. Let your shoulders, breast, abdomen etc. sink towards ground in order to transfer all your body weight to the earth. Keeping the whole body stable in



this position, you need to bend just your neck to move your head back and forth, as you breathe in and out. With every inhalation, you lift your head moving it backwards and with exhalation bring it back to first position. After twenty such breaths, inhale deeply and make inner retention followed by an external one. Repeat the whole process for three times before moving on to next step.

2) In the second step, lying on your belly as before, place the chin on your hands. Now in lieu of head we will be moving our legs bending them at knees to such an extent that both the heels hit the buttocks. With every inhalation move your feet all the way to the buttock hitting them slightly and with exhalation move them back to normal position.



There is an important point to note that generally our waist is also lifted a bit as we move our feet to buttocks due to

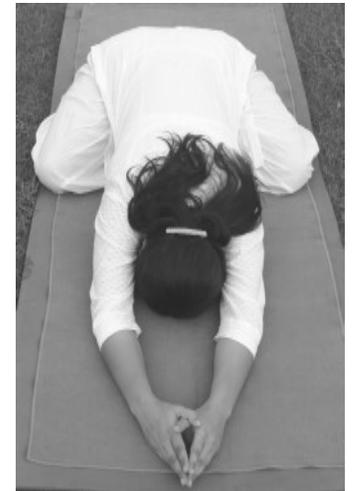


solidity and mass in the bottom region. This area is fairly connected with abdomen or more precisely with the navel center, which is responsible for digestion and distribution. As we have already learnt that due to wrong breathing and outward focus, digestive fire in the navel center diminishes. This leads to accumulation of waste in bottom region making abdomen and buttocks bulky, stiff and sluggish. This explains why it is so common to develop stiffness and troubles in back with growing age. Therefore, it is imperative

to keep the groin flat on ground while moving our feet, even if this restricts our heels from touching the buttocks. With gradual practice, bottom area will regain flexibility allowing our heels to hit the buttocks and cause further stimulation there.

As a standard, inhale and exhale for twenty times, make inner and external retention, repeat the whole process for three times, and finally relax to prepare for next step.

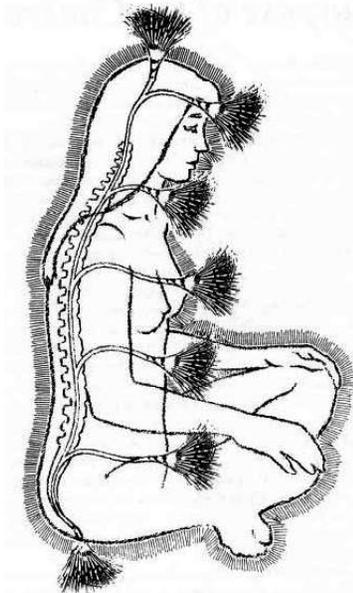
3) Third step is meant to fan the flames of fire in the navel region. For this, bend your knees in prone pose itself and place them by the side of your body like a frog so that the belly and groin remain connected with the ground. Join both the hands together in praying pose above the head touching the ground and keeping the arms straight. There are certain subtle points to bear in mind while breathing in this pose, which are exceptionally essential to stir up the latent energy in navel region. One, keep the jaws tightly joined and two, apply *mulabandha* (root lock) strongly i.e. strictly close the anal opening. As you breathe in, abdomen expands especially the lower part and with exhalation, it contracts completely. However, mentally observing the breathing process, make sure that the jaws and anal (root) lock is firmly maintained as you breathe intensely through abdomen. Breathe in and out for twenty times before you make inner retention followed by external one. Repeat the whole process thrice.



There is an easy alternative for those people who cannot bend their knees so much. Such people can pursue this process in

cat pose i.e. standing on one's knees and hands keeping back parallel to the ground.

Reflection: Observing the vibrations running down the spine and all over the body, shift your breathing center further inside. Normally, our breathing stimulates just the surface i.e. the level of nose and mouth, which is sufficient to keep our sense orifices active but not for long. All the sense organs are actually



rooted in *sushumna* and therefore it is imperative to drive the *prana* in there. Since our back is now energized, we can pull the *prana* from that depth, stimulating rear of throat and that of brain where *brahmarandra* is situated and even *muladhara* is stimulated this way. The more we go deep inside, more of life force we attract or else we become increasingly deprived of it, breathing at surface level. Superficial breathing cannot compensate the amount of life force we spend in normal exhalation (12" distance). Even a

healthy young person cannot drive the in-breath more than 10" resulting in a normal 2" gap between the force of inhalation and exhalation. This gap causes a natural reduction of life force that only increases over the time. Moreover, we are not able to maintain the normal length of in-breath owing to diseases, old age and so many stresses in life. As a result, this 2" gap only increases with time and as a final point, we fail to compensate the exhaled air. This is last breath or in simple terms, death.

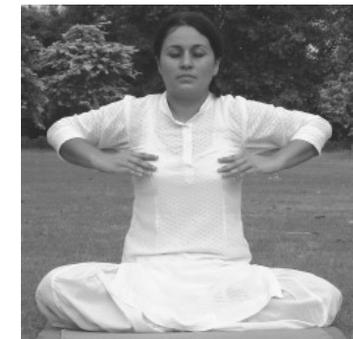
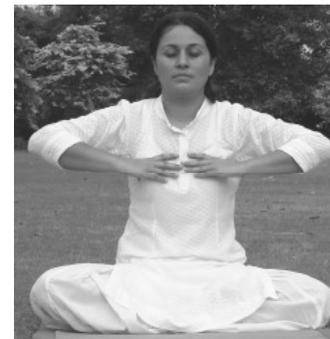
Bearing this in mind, we must stay alert to breath from

deeper levels in *sushumna*. The first two phases focus on this very fact. Accordingly, the third phase paves the path for real *pranayama* in which life force occupies the whole body, filling it from top to toe.

Third Phase: Sitting Position

This is the standard position for *pranayama* as it allows free flow of *prana* in *sushumna* from *muladhara* to *brahmarandra* and vice versa. Moreover, anal opening is naturally compressed in sitting posture, making root lock spontaneous. This, in turn, forces *kundalini* power to ascend through the *sushumna*, once it is properly aligned and freed from blockages. You may sit in *padmasana* (lotus pose), *vajrasana* (thunderbolt pose) or even in *sukhasana* (easy pose) as long your back and neck are in a straight line. It is possible to do these steps even sitting on a chair.

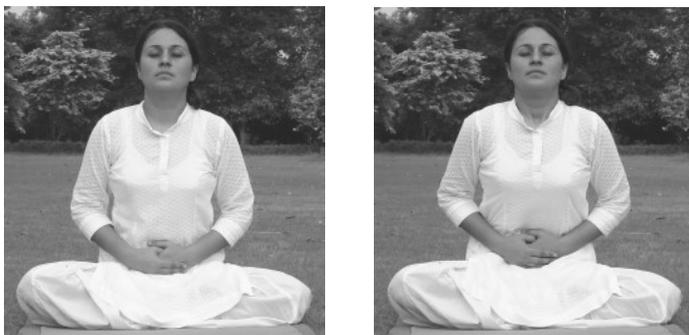
1) First step is about expanding the chest cavity. To begin with this, exhale and pull your stomach slightly in but expand the region of chest. Keeping your gaze fixed on the third eye, mentally observe and expand the back of your chest. In this position, grip your torso tightly so that your thumbs go in armpits while fingers cover your chest. As you inhale, the entire torso should expand against the hand pressure, especially the midpoint where chest meets abdomen. With exhalation, the whole torso



should compress including the midpoint. Generally, this midpoint behaves conversely in deep breathing i.e. it compresses during inhalation and expands in exhalation due to a blockage developed by outward focus, which needs to be corrected. Remember, key to this correction lies in relaxation of the body and inward focus. Don't forget to keep patience, as practice makes a man perfect. The pressure of hands is maintained throughout, during exhalation as well as inhalation.

After twenty inhalations and exhalations, take a deep breath and make an inner retention immediately followed by an external one. Repeat the process three times. Relax and get ready for the next step.

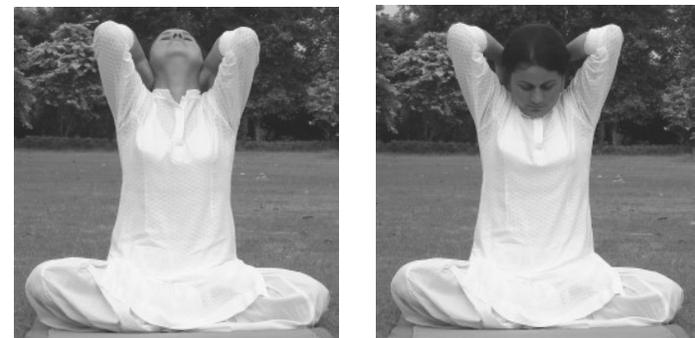
2) Place your hands below the navel, one above the other, applying a little pressure. Elbows should be touching on both sides of the body to keep the chest expanded and shoulders slightly lifted. As you breathe in, body should expand, stretching the abdomen against the pressure applied by hands and with exhalation it should compress. After twenty breaths, make inner retentions followed by external one as usual. Repeat the whole process three times before you move on to the next step.



This step is focused on letting the *prana* get to abdomen in full flow, particularly the lower part, which is directly connected with the seat of *kundalini*. Once the front portion is completely

filled with *prana*, it will be easy to direct it backwards into the *sushumna* and then all the way up to *brahmarandra*. All the sensory organs are situated in front portion, through which *prana* is being depleted consistently, but once *sushumna* is activated, *prana* naturally flows inwards. Third step helps in channelizing the *pranic* flow backwards.

3) Taking both the hands all the way up, above the head, bend them on elbows and place them on the back of the shoulders. Bend your head backwards as much as possible. Now, with inhalation, move your head frontward and with exhalation move it backwards. At first, it may seem tricky as typically body moves in reverse order i.e. with inhalation backwards and with exhalation frontwards. However, it happens due to outward flow of *prana* and if we want to turn the flow inwards, this technique is indispensable. Repeat the standard breathing process i.e. twenty deep breaths followed by an inner and an external retention. Three repetitions are sufficient for the whole process as usual.



Reflection: The three phases of breathing practices have filled the whole body with *prana*, from top of the head to the tip of the toes. This gives us an opportunity to turn the *pranic* flow inwards into subtle realm of *sushumna* and further into *brahmarandra*. In other words, we are all set to attempt *pranayama* and permeate *prana* to all the levels of our existence.

However, to accomplish this, we would need to intensify the *pranic* flow in both the nostrils and their respective channels to such an extent that they merge into each other. This merger would grant access to *sushumna* and then proper *pranayama* would drive the *prana* into it. Once *sushumna* is completely permeated with *prana*, the subtle centers in brain (*brahmarandra*) and base of spine (*muladhara*) would come into direct contact. This would bring about the awakening of *kundalini*, the latent power within. This awakening is the basis for attainment of bliss whether it is through mantra, meditation, devotion, yoga, tantra or any other means. In supreme state of *pranayama*, body becomes free from all kinds of disease, distress and decay. Such a body, saturated with *prana*, is the most ideal form of spiritual accomplishment. Keeping this in mind, we now undertake *pranayama*, in its real effective form.

Pranayama: Combining Left & Right Nostril

Sitting comfortably and keeping our spine erect, we start with alternate nostril breathing. Starting with the active nostril, we inhale through one nostril and exhale through the other, after that inhale through the nostril we exhaled with and then exhale from the other. Repeat this process over and over again for a predefined time or count. It is highly recommended to use right hand for guiding the nostrils and close the left nostril with last



two fingers while right nostril should always be closed with right thumb. To close the nostrils, just a slight touch of fingers should suffice. Extra pressure may tilt the nose, which would rather obstruct the free flow of breath and hence not suggested.

We use a typical breathing pattern for this exercise in which we start with normal breathing without making any sound. After that, we produce rubbing sound initially from *nasopharynx* and then from throat as we do in *ujjayi pranayama*. Subsequently, we increase the speed and breathe forcefully in and out similar to *bhastrika pranayama*. Finally, we do the retention with the help of *mulabanda* (root lock). We may take 5-10 breaths in every step. This makes one cycle, in next cycle we divide every in and out breath in two parts i.e. we breathe a little, pause for a while and then breathe again. Similarly, we breathe out a little, pause briefly and then breathe out completely. The pattern would remain the same consisting normal breathing, *ujjayi* and *bhastrika* before making retention. Further, we divide our breath in three parts. We may go on and on for a large number of installments, but for the first level of *Sanjivani Kriya* just three installments are more than sufficient.

Breathing in installments plays a crucial role in opening the subtle channels and driving the *prana* inwards. Besides, it enhances the capacity of lungs and strength of connected muscles. Remember, it takes time to change the orientation of muscles and nerves so one must keep patience. Haste may only impose risks for an aspirant and impede his or her progress.

Entering the Domain of Meditation

The aim of *Sanjivani Kriya* is to enter the subtle domain of meditation i.e. turning the mind inwards from all the sensory objects or their respective organs & focusing it into *brahmarandra*, wherefrom it expands further to be united with universal mind.

To begin, sit relaxed keeping eyes closed and neck tilted a little backwards. Place both the hands in your lap such that they remain in touch with navel. Keeping your gaze fixed at the third eye, rotate your neck left and right forming a half circle. The movement should be very smooth and easy as if moving on its own. Short and silent breaths should accompany this movement causing no strain. Subsequently, mind should come under the influence leaving the practitioner light-headed. This should in turn give rise to subtle sound (*naad*) and light (*prakash*) inside the brain and infuse the whole body with soothing vibrations. Stay there as long as you wish and finally lie down on your back. Observe each and every part of your body from top to toe, feeling the vibrations everywhere. This will induce yogic sleep (*yog-nidra*) but make sure you wind up in maximum ten minutes or else you would actually fall asleep. Don't forget to spread these enjoyable vibrations all around and pray for well-being of everyone, before you conclude the session. This prayer will further help expanding your consciousness. This whole process takes just 40-45 minutes.

Final Note

This is just the first level of *Sanjivani Kriya*, which revitalizes the body and revivifies the mind by upgrading our normal breathing into complete yogic breath. As we progress, *pranayama* happens in every breath that keeps us connected with the source of life, every time. *Sanjivani Kriya* is actually an integrated part of *Siddhamrita Surya Kriya* (another innovative technique of absorbing *prana* directly from Sun, the universal source of *prana*, which is published separately). Though they are practiced separately in the beginning but as we advance, they both come together. Both the practices aim to awaken the divinity in us and unite us with the supreme while still living in the body.