

Pratyahara and Inner Silence

Lecture

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The Five Koshas

				
Anamaya Kosha The physical body (bones, muscles, organs)	Pranamaya Kosha The energetic body (nervous system, prana, nadis)	Manomaya Kosha The everyday uncontrolled mind and emotions	Vijnanamaya Kosha The witness conscious, awareness of the self & other koshas	Anandamaya Kosha The bliss inherent in ourselves, our connection with the divine

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Vijnanamaya Kosha: Wisdom Body



- The next innermost sheath is the wisdom body comprised of our intuitive knowledge and innate knowing, and the witness consciousness
- Our wisdom that comes not from what we have learned in our lifetime but what we innately know to be true.

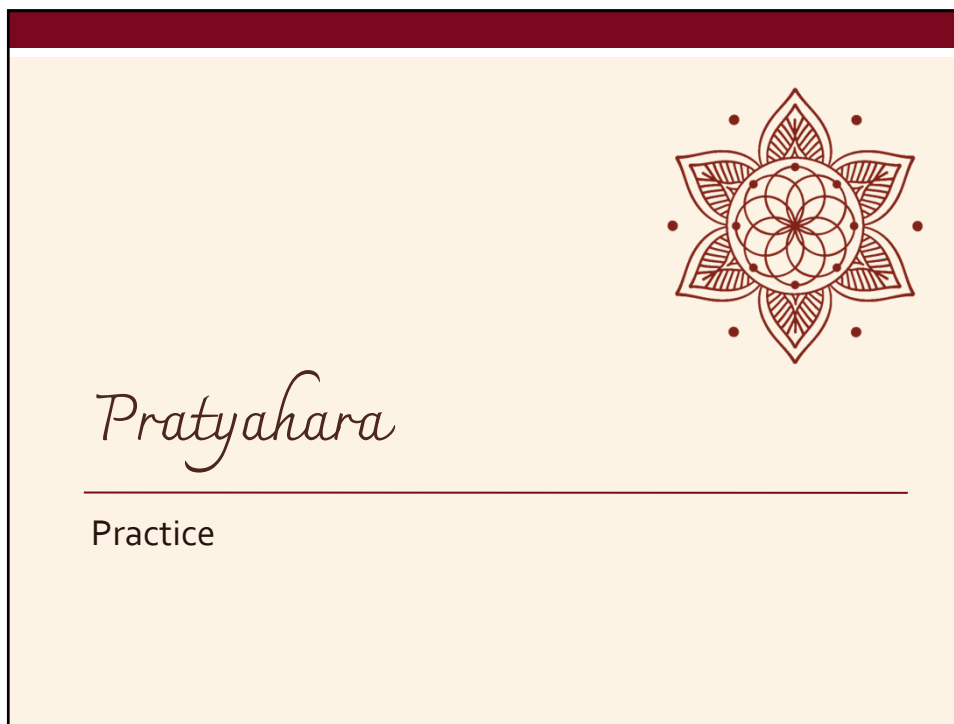
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Four Types of Pratyahara

- Pratyahara translates to control of 'ahara' or food, but it refers to anything we imbibe: food, drink, stimulation, etc.
 1. Indriya Pratyahara – control of the senses (food for the mind), limiting distraction, controlling what impressions you take in every day.
 2. Karma Pratyahara – control of action, act for the action's sake, not for the reward you might gain.
 3. Prana Pratyahara – control of prana
 4. Mano Pratyahara – withdrawing the mind from the senses; redirecting the mind from troublesome thoughts

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1. Indriya Pratyahara: Touch & Sound

Begin by experiencing the information your senses are telling you right now. Our mind constantly processes sensory impressions. Unfortunately, our minds often misinterpret this information, causing us to become overly concerned with seeking pleasure, avoiding pain, and distracting ourselves from how we truly feel.

- First, notice what you feel through your sense of TOUCH. Can you feel the texture of your clothing touching your skin? Can you feel the weight of fabric on the front of your body and the temperature of the air on your face? The weight of your body resting on the earth? Do you notice pleasant or unpleasant sensations arising from your body? Do you feel comfort, discomfort, or a neutral sensation?
- What else can you HEAR at this moment? Investigate the sound landscape; all sounds wash over you without pushing away any sound. Do the sounds cause a reaction? Do you judge them as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral? Are there any moments of silence?

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1. Indriya Pratyahara: Sight, Taste, & Smell

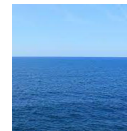
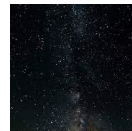
- Now observe what you SEE behind closed eyes. Can you make out movement and color? Does your internal sight distract you with thought or memory? Notice how your mind tries to create content out of what you see. Is the content emotionally charged? Is it good, bad, or neither?
- Next, notice any TASTE that lingers in your mouth. Is it a pleasant or unpleasant taste? Do you notice a sour, sweet, bitter, or salty taste? Notice how your sense of taste pulls your attention to the recent past.
- What SMELLS are you aware of at this moment? Can you discern any lingering aromas as you breathe through your nose? Can you smell food, cleaning products, or laundry? Are the smells pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?

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1. Indriya Pratyahara: Sense Withdrawl

- Focus on Uniform Impressions:
Gazing at the ocean, sky, or stars cleanses the mind when we are overstimulated
- Create Positive Impressions:
Meditate on trees, flowers, or rocks pacifies the senses
- Create Inner Impressions:
Focus on the mind and inner impressions, visualization
- Focus on the Mindscreen:
Witness your thoughts and images



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2. Karma Pratyahara

- Karma, or action, is the belief that the sum of our actions in this and previous states of existence decide our fate in future existences. Simply put, actions lead to consequences.
- Consider this example: volunteering at a soup kitchen.
 - Wrong Karma is volunteering so that you look helpful to others.
 - Right Karma is volunteering because you feel called to do so, or it is the 'right' thing.

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3. Prana Pratyahara

- Feel breath pass over nostrils, through sinus, into body
- Feel the expansion and release of lungs
- Can you direct breath into parts of your body that are not your lungs?

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Pingala Mudrā (activates Pingala Nadi)



Seal of the Solar Channel

Touch the tips of the thumbs and ring fingers together and extend the other fingers. Place the right hand below the navel with the palm up, place the left-hand palm down so that the joined fingertips almost touch.

Feel breath being directed into your right nostril, visualize that it flows through the right sinus, into the right lung and stimulates the right side of the body. This solar channel is filled with warm golden sunlight. What masculine qualities might you need to cultivate? Assertiveness, determination, logic?

- **Body Systems:** Pulmonary, digestive, cardiovascular
- **Physical Benefits:** Stimulates the left hemisphere of the brain, stimulates digestive fire and metabolism, warming and energizing.
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Prana and Samana vayus, activates Pingala nadi (right nostril), lengthens inhalation
- **Emotional:** Awakens the masculine (solar) side of our nature, increases determination and confidence
- **Mental Benefits:** Enhances focus, concentration, and analytical ability
- **Elements:** Activates fire and air
- **Chakras:** Balances Manipura chakra
- **Doshas:** Balances Kapha dosha
- **Practice Tips:** Hold 5-45 minutes

"I am energized by the rhythms of the sun"

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Ida Mudrā (activates Ida Nadi)



Seal of the Lunar Channel

Touch the tips of the thumbs and ring fingers together and extend the other fingers. Place the left hand below the navel with the palm up, place the right-hand palm down so that the joined fingertips almost touch.

Feel breath being directed into your left nostril, visualize that it flows through the left sinus, into the left lung and stimulates the left side of the body. This moon channel is filled with cool silver moonlight. What feminine qualities might you need to cultivate? Sensitivity, intuition, creativity?

- **Body Systems:** Pulmonary, reproductive, urinary
- **Physical Benefits:** Stimulate the right hemisphere of the brain, reduces blood pressure and stress, decreases inflammation, cooling and grounding
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Apana vayu, activates Ida nadi (left nostril), lengthens exhalation, directs breath into pelvis
- **Emotional:** Awakens the feminine (lunar) side of our nature, increases receptivity and sensitivity, enhances the ability to flow with life's challenges
- **Elements:** Activates earth and water
- **Chakras:** Balances Muladhara and Svadhisthana chakras
- **Doshas:** Balances Vata and Pitta doshas
- **Practice Tips:** Hold 5-45 minutes

"I flow with the rhythms of the moon"

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Bramhari: Bee Humming



Bee Humming

Inhale through nostrils. Place hands in Bramhara Mudra (thumbs close ears, fingers align along brows, eye lids, sides of nose, above or below mouth). Exhale while making a long smooth humming sound that resonates in the throat and head. Focus on the sound.

Feel the vibration and imagine prana flooding your brain and senses.

- **Physical Benefits:** Insomnia, sore throat, lowers blood pressure, promotes immunity
- **Emotional:** Reduces stress and anger
- **Mental:** Good for an overactive mind, improves focus
- **Practice Tips:** Repeat for 9 rounds, best performed in the silence of night. Can also use a higher or lower pitched hum. Try wrapping a soft bandage or scarf around the head instead of using the mudra; **it enhances pratyahara**
- **Contraindications:** Should not be practiced laying down

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