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## YOGASANAS-PRANAYAMAS AND GENERAL HEALTH IN CONTEMPORARY EPOCH

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### ABSTRACT

Yoga is a perfect art and science of healthy, happy and harmonious living for human being. Yogasanas and Pranayamas have a particularly powerful and beneficial effect on one or more of all glands in our body. Yoga is the best way of exercising the body as well as the mind. Present study was planned to examine the effect of Yogasanas-Pranayamas on general health. A sample of 90 people, age range 18-55 years was selected from yoga centers of Chandigarh on random basis. For the purpose of the study, the sample was divided into two groups i.e., experimental group and control group. The experimental group was given the treatment of yogic exercises according to the specially prepared exercise schedule for three months. After treatment of three months, scores of general health was collected from both the groups. PGI Health Questionnaire by Verma and Verma (1989) was administrated. Results indicated that practice of Yogasanas-Pranayamas have positive effect on general health. Both are positively correlated and interdependent. Yoga works on all aspects of person- the physical, mental, emotional, psychological and spiritual.

**KEY WORDS:** *Yogasanas, Pranayamas, General Health*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow. The awareness, knowledge and practice of yoga among people create a sound base for the coming generations. So, yoga is the science of right living and as such is intended to be incorporated in daily life. The word “yoga” means “unity” or “oneness” and is derived from the Sanskrit work ‘yuj’ which means ‘to form’. This unity or joining is described in spiritual terms as the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. Yoga today has acquired global recognition and aglorious status as an ancient health-building solution. Yoga is not just a physical exercise but a holistic medical science. Modern scientific researchers in India and abroad have amply proved that Yoga is a perfect art and science of healthy, happy and harmonious living.

## **YOGASANAS**

Practicing of Yogasanas (postures) provide gentle stretching and movements that increase flexibility and help in correct bad postures. It is the first step of yoga according to philosophy of Hatha-Yoga (Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Swami Muktibodhananda). But according to Patanjali, asana or posture is at third place. Yogasanas bring steadiness, health and lightness of limb. A steady and pleasant posture produces mental equilibrium and prevents fickleness of mind. Yogasanas are not merely gymnastic exercises; they are postures. To perform them, one needs a clean airy place, a blanket and determination, while for other systems of physical training one needs large playing fields and costly equipment. Yogasanas can be executing alone. By practicing them, one develops agility, balance, endurance and great vitality. Yogasanas have been evolved over the centuries so as to exercise every muscle, nerve and gland in the body. They secure a fine physique, which is strong and elastic without being muscle-bound and they keep the body free from disease. Yogasanas reduce fatigue and soothe the nerves. But their real importance lies in the way they train and discipline the mind.

## **PRANAYAMAS**

Pranayama is comprised of the two words prana & ayama, which means ‘pranic capacity or length’. It is not merely breath control, but a technique through which the quantity of prana in the body is activated to a higher frequency. It is fourth step of Astangyoga given by Patanjali and it is second step according to Hatha Yoga.

Pranayama is practiced in order to understand and control the pranic process in the body (Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Swami Muktibodhananda). The duration of inhalation, retention, and exhalation (ratio is 1:4:2 respectively) of breath is regulated with the aim of strengthening and cleansing the nervous system and increasing a person's source of life energy. Practice of different Pranayamas also makes the mind calmer and more focused. The functions of breathing i.e. inhalation or inspiration, which is termed puraka (filling up), exhalation or expiration, which is called rechaka (emptying the lungs) and retention or holding the breath, a state where there is on inhalation or exhalation, which is termed kumbhaka. Pranayama (Breathing Exercises)-Breathing patterns can affect the spine in various ways, such as movement of the ribs and changes in pressure within the chest and abdomen.

### **GENERAL HEALTH**

*'A Sound Mind in a Sound Body'* and *'Pehla Sukh Niroghi Kaya'*, in the past, physical health was given more importance. Now health can be understood by mental health and physical health. Both mental and physical health are equally important factors for human life. Health is the level of functional or metabolic efficiency of a living being. In human, it is the general condition of a person's mind, body and spirit, usually meaning to be free from illness, injury or pain (as in good-health or healthy). The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health in its broader sense as 'a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. This means that health is a resource to support an individual's function in wider society rather than an end in itself. A healthful life style provides the means to lead a full life with meaning and purpose. The Yogic-science has described various resources of Yogic-practices to achieve the holistic approach for the general health of a human being. The Hathayogic School of Yoga as well as Astangayoga of Maharishi Patanjali have emphasised that a spiritual aspirant can't achieve the goal of liberation without healthy mind in healthy body.

### **NEED OF THE STUDY**

The Yogasanas-Pranayamas are designed to free out the mind and body from tension and stress. It relaxes, rejuvenates, and energizes the body and aims to bring the body and the mind into a harmonious union. Yogasanas-Pranayamas should be done with comfort, ease, alertness and steadiness, achieving a balance between ease and effort. Yoga is an Indian technique which has wide scope in all the aspects of life.

To live the life, healthy yoga provides an ideal path. One, who follows yoga in routine life, is always fit and healthy both mentally and physically. Yogasana-Pranayama is two main parts of yoga. Asanas are helpful to physical health whereas Pranayamas are beneficial for mental health. Both have direct effect on general health. Because yoga is very growing and popular now a days, People think it can be helpful for maintaining health. To prove the effect of Yogasana-Pranayama on health, investigators have selected this topic. In present days, the importance of practice of yoga is increasing day by day. People are engrossed in all kinds of comfort and convenience provided by many inventions of modern science and technology. But this comfort is limited up to the physical level. Mentally, emotionally and spiritually people have drifted apart. As a result people are suffering and their lives are full of stress and anxiety. In other words, yoga is a way of divine life which can be practiced by anyone from any religion, caste creed, colour or gender.

#### **STATEMENT**

*Yogasanas-Pranayamas and General Health in Contemporary Epoch*

#### **OBJECTIVE**

To study the effect of practice of Yogasanas-Pranayamas on General Health.

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

The practice of Yogasanas-Pranayamas would affect positively on General Health.

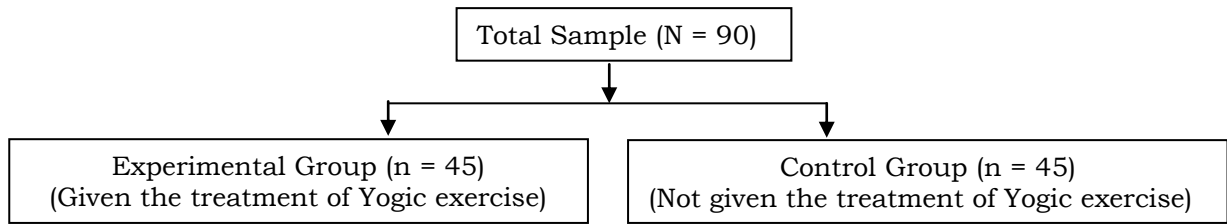
#### **DESIGN**

The present paper entitled '*Yogasanas-Pranayamas and General Health in Contemporary Epoch*' is basically an experimental based study. For the study the sample was divided into two groups i.e., experimental group and control group. The experimental group was given the treatment of yogic exercises according to the specially prepared exercise schedule for three months. After treatment of three months, scores of health was collected from both the groups. After collecting the raw scores, statistical computations were done.

#### **SAMPLE**

A sample of 90 people was randomly selected from the yoga centres of Chandigarh City. The sample was equally divided randomly into two groups i.e. experimental group and control group.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE**



### **TESTING TOOL**

PGI Health Questionnaire by Verma and Verma (1989).

### **PROCEDURE AND ACTUAL COLLECTION OF DATA**

After selecting the sample, it was planned to administer test to all subjects individually. To ensure the best possible conditions for administering the questionnaire, the in-charges of all yoga centers from where the sample is drawn, were approached and their co-operation was also sought. Subjects were prepared for the test. They were seated in calm and ready position; they were given instructions and were told about the aim of test. The respondents were requested to answer frankly and honestly since the information provided by them was to be kept confidential and would only be used for research purpose. After the data collection was over, all the questionnaires were scored as per the scoring pattern prescribed in the respective manual. The raw scores were obtained. After administering the pre-test, the investigators gave certain yogic exercises to experimental group and control group was not given any yogic exercises. After three months of intervention, post-test was conducted on both the groups. Special lectures were delivered to be familiar with Yama (These are the universal moral commandments. Perpetual Yama curbs the tendency towards violence and possessiveness. It inspires truthfulness, trustworthiness, goodness, honesty and non-stealing) and Niyama (This is the restraint of the mind by means of its own rules and regulations. It is purity, self-contentment, self-study and above all, the surrender of the self to God, self purification through discipline. It is also the study of scripts and holy texts).

Following schedule for yogic exercises was given to the experimental group for three months daily for 45 minutes duration.

## **SCHEDULE OF YOGIC EXERCISES (YOGASANAS-PRANAYAMAS)**

Surya Namaskaar

five minutes / two rounds

**AND**

### **NAME OF THE YOGASANAS**

1. Tirkonasana
2. Virasana
3. Vrikshasana
4. Bhujangasana
5. Nokasana
6. Vipritkarniasana
7. Mandookasana
8. Ustrasana
9. Shirshasana
10. Mayurasana

### **TIME DURATION**

two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times  
two minutes/two times

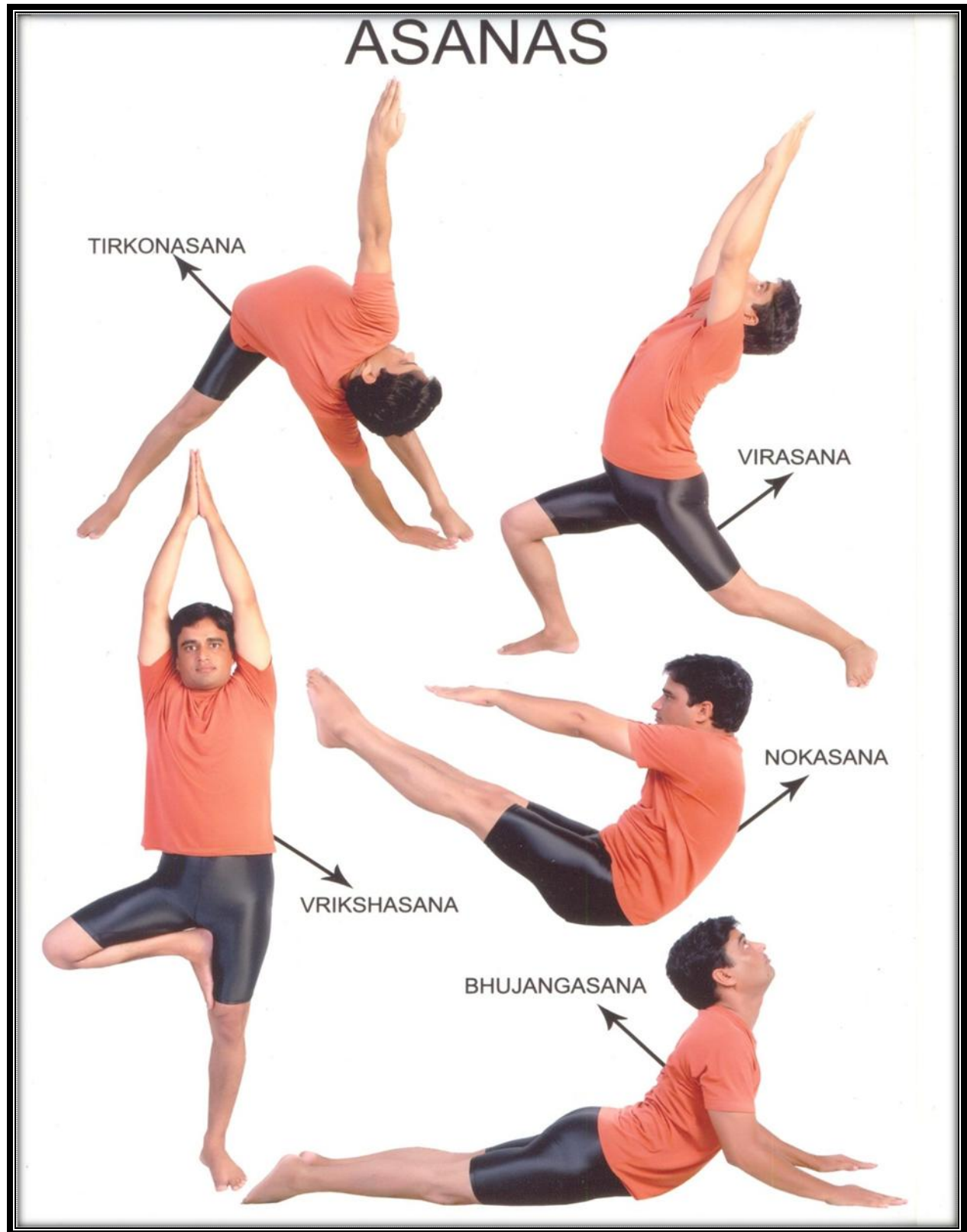
### **NAME OF THE PRANAYAMA**

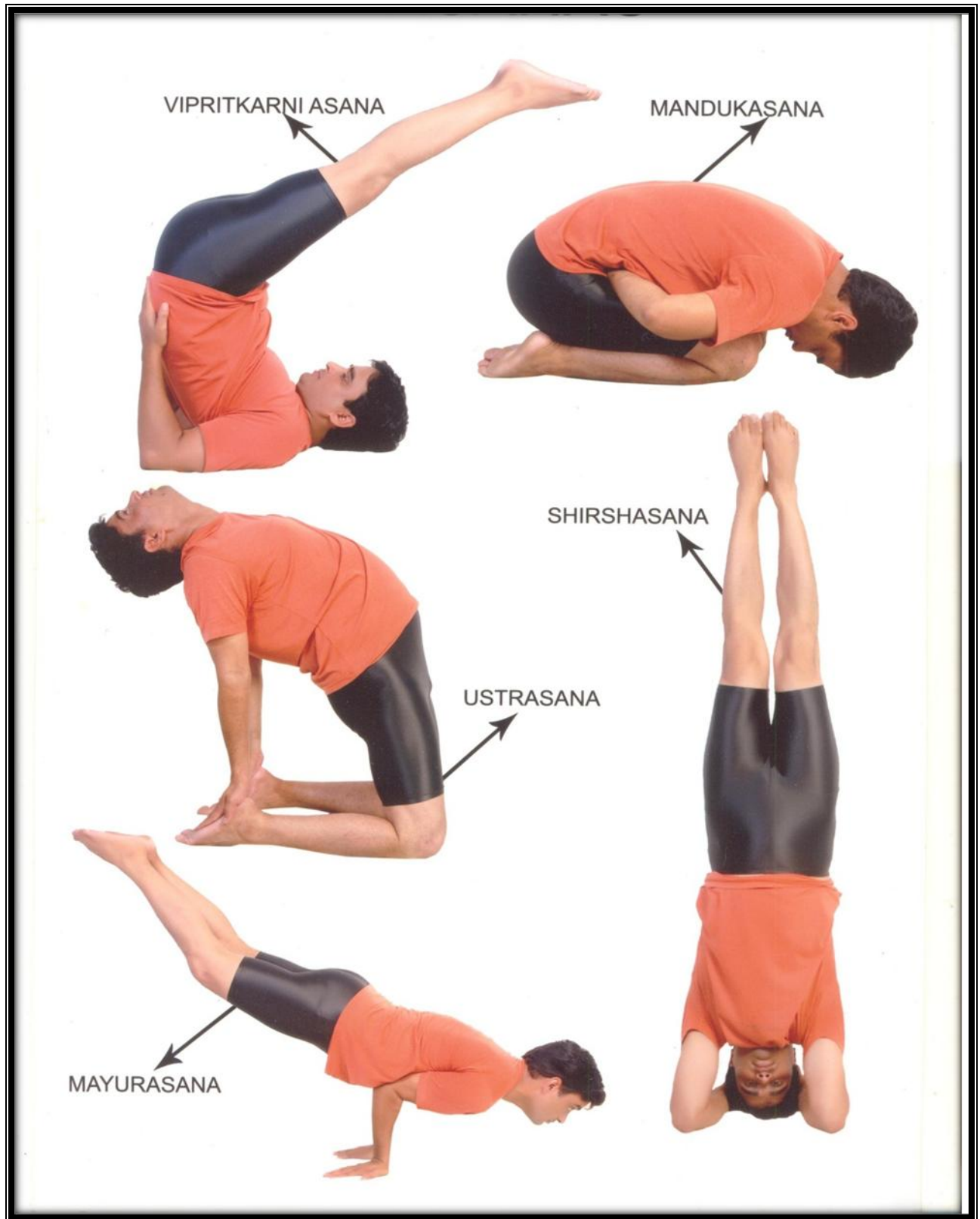
1. Anulom-vilom
2. Bhramari
3. Ujjai
4. Bhastrika

### **TIME DURATION**

five minutes  
five minutes  
five minutes  
five minutes

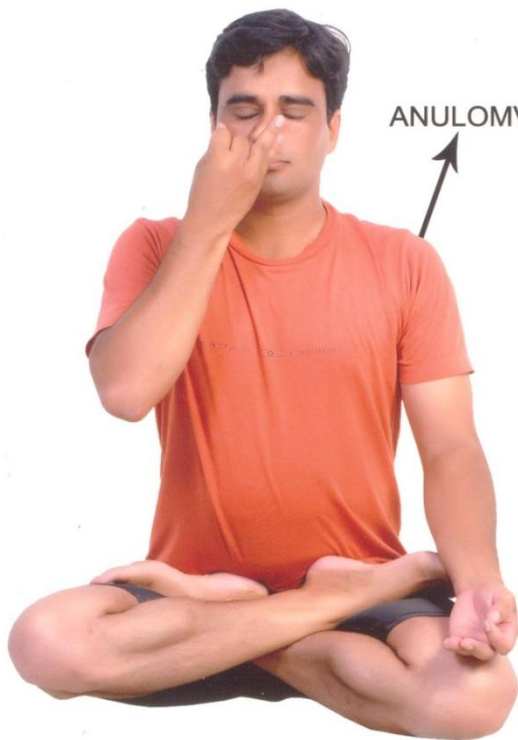
# ASANAS



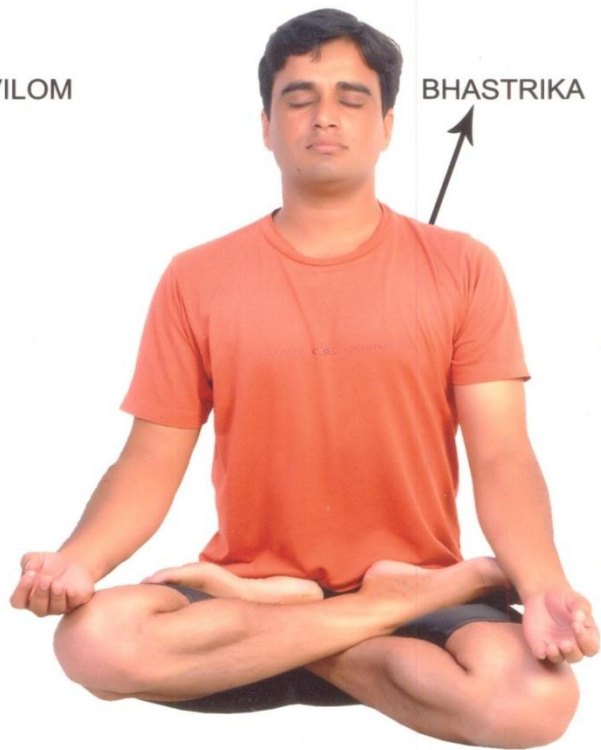




# PRANAYAMAS



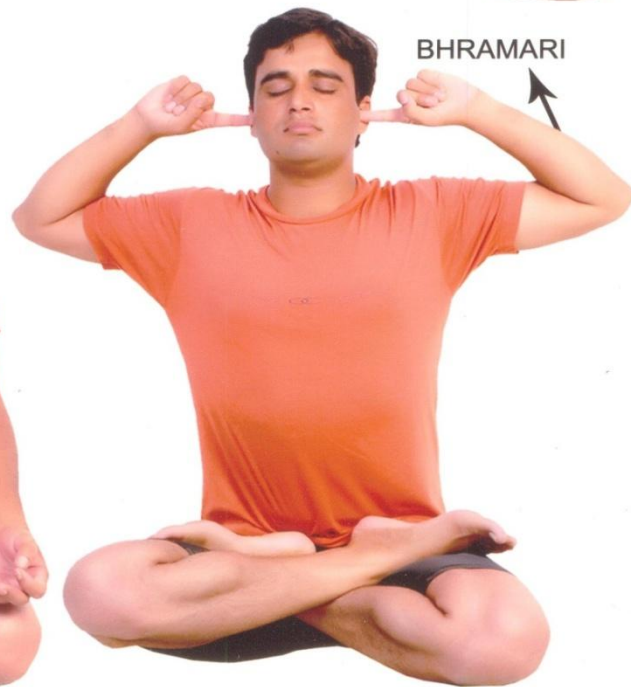
ANULOMVILOM



BHASTRIKA



UJJAI



BHRAMARI

## STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

For analyzing the data, Descriptive statistical technique viz mean, median, mode, standard deviation, skewness, Kurtosis of raw scores were used. To find out the significance of difference between the means of the two groups (the experimental group and control group), the t-ratio was calculated. To see the effect of Yogasanas-Pranayamas on general health, results were discussed on the basis of analysis of data.

## RESULTS

The data has been organized namely mean, median and standard deviation to study the general nature of the sample for the variables of health. Skewness and kurtosis were worked out to see the trend of departure of the sample distribution from the normal probability curve. To find out the significance of difference between the means of the two groups (the experimental group and control group), the t-ratio was worked out.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Mean, Median, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of General Health (total sample N - 90)</b>		
	<b>Experimental-Group</b>	<b>Control-Group</b>
Mean	14.707	7.200
Median	15.000	7.000
S.D.	2.363	1.583
Skewness	-0.276	-0.072
Kurtosis	-0.955	-0.898

**TABLE 2**

<b>t-value between experimental group and control group for the General Health</b>	
<b>Variable</b>	<b>t-value</b>
General Health	9.562 *

\* significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

The entries made in the Table-1 depict that the mean scores of the general health are 14.70 and 7.20 of the experimental group (given the treatment of yogic exercise) and the control group (not given the treatment of yogic exercise) respectively. The median scores of general health are 15.00 and 7.00 for the experimental group and the control group respectively. The values of standard deviation are 2.36 and 1.58 for the experimental group (given the treatment of yogic exercise) and the control group (not given the treatment of yogic exercise) respectively. The skewness and kurtosis have been found out to see if the results are within the normal limits.

The entries made in Table-2 depict that the t-value for the variable of general health of the experimental group (given the treatment of yogic exercise) and the control group (not given the treatment of yogic exercise) is 9.562. This value is significant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance. Thus, this shows that there exists a significant difference between the general health of the experimental group (given the treatment of yogic exercise) and the control group (not given the treatment of yogic exercise) on the variable of general health. These findings indicate that the hypothesis 'The practice of Yogasanas-Pranayamas would affect positively on General Health' of people has been accepted.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of the present study have some very important implications for improving the quality of life and general health of people. The above mentioned treatment of Yogasanas and Pranayamas for people can enhance their general health. The present study also helps the parents, teachers, yoga therapists, doctors and sports coaches for encouragement of their children, students, clients, patients and players respectively to improve their general health. This will enhance their quality of life and performance. Present exploration 'Yogasanas-Pranayamas and General Health in Contemporary Epoch' is an attempt to study the most common behavioral feature of the people and positive effect of yogic exercises. This study can be used for future work in this field.

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