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Using *Prana* to Positively Affect the Physical Body:

- Enhance physiological functions, i.e. breath, posture, muscular function, structural alignment and glandular system.
- Enliven and balance the autonomic nervous system (parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems).
- Strengthen visceral function.
- Diminish physical pain and symptoms as well as various pathologies such as sleep and digestion issues.
- Tools we can use to do this include physical as well as mental:
 - *asana*—an energy-moving process, muscular/mechanical—dynamic approach, repetition, muscular action in a pose
 - longer holds (in general), inversions and breath for toning the ANS
 - visualization/*bhav*
 - *yoga nidra*—increases deep and systematic relaxation

Using *Prana* to Positively Affect the Energy Body

- Enliven *marma* points.
- Access chakras.
- Reduce *dosha* (*vatta*, *pitta*, and *kapha*).
- Balance *vayu*, which is intricately enmeshed in the way you feel and think as well as your bodily functions; each of the five *vayus* has a defining quality and function (previously outlined in *Vinyasa Krama*).



- *apana*—physical and mental elimination
- *samana*—assimilation, ability to transform substance into energy or experience into wisdom
- *pran*—rules the physical heart, inhalation, responsible for re-energizing, re-charging, replenishing you
- *udana*—the energy of growth and enthusiasm
- *vyana*—the distributive energy that integrates you completely
- Enter *sushumna* (the sacred stream): accomplished systematically only after *ida* and *pingala* are purified and balanced, thus the critical role of *nadi shodhana* (alternate nostril breathing).
 - this is the basis of *kundalini yoga*—awakening *prana shakti*—to awaken the chakras and ascend from material-rooted, finite awareness to spiritually-oriented, infinite awareness
 - another approach is to activate only one of these two channels (*ida* or *pingala*), depending on whether you want to focus on more mental or physical enlivenment
- Similar to transforming the physical body, the tools we use to transform the *pranamaya kosha* are physical as well as mental:
 - *asana, bandha, mudra, breath, visualization, kriya and mantra*

Using *Prana* to Positively Affect Either Lower or Higher Mind

- For the lower mind, your orientation is to move from distraction and misapprehension (feelings of isolation, anger, loneliness, doubts, anger, anxiousness, sadness and confusion) toward:

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- stability, calm, increased *sattwa guna*
- the greater the sense of ease, the greater the access to rest and meditation
- Transform any of a variety of negative emotional or mental states by transforming energetic states, for example:
 - when you fully enliven the heart center with *prana*, your thoughts will reflect more joyfulness and freedom, compassion and caring, as well as emotional balance and independence
 - increased vital force at the navel center will elicit increased confidence, potency, ambition, passion and motivation
- For the higher mind, your goal is to access the otherwise untapped potentials of mind, some of which include:
 - intuition
 - clear perception
 - the highest level of insight, the most evolved stage of *buddhi*, which can then be applied for self-reflection or *vichara*, understanding the lower mind
 - *viveka kayati* (introduced in the *Secrets of the Sutras* training) the luminous aspect of discernment, where you are able to access the inner teacher or guide, the voice or vision which knows everything there is to know
 - *siddhi*—the dawning of the mind's miracle-like capacities
- To unfold these higher potentials there are several strategies:
 - activate the corresponding centers within the energy body such as the 3rd eye that unlock these capacities

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- increase *sattwa*
- build more upward and expansive *prana* (i.e. *udana* and *vyana*)
- alternate nostril breathing
- *prana dharana*
- build energy at the navel center, where psychic capacities abide
- 4-part spinal *kriya*
- The general principle is to contain *prana* (more energy inside your body, as opposed to outside), so you can turn—and hold your sensory awareness—inward; turn away from the finite and toward the infinite.

Using *Prana* to Access Spirit and Beyond

- This stage of working with *prana* focuses on three distinct orientations:
 - spiritual awakening
 - transforming *karma*
 - remote healing
- Spiritual Awakening, the *prana*-based practices that lead to spiritual awakening focus on:
 - balancing *ida* and *pingala* (i.e. alternate nostril breathing, *prana samvedana*, etc.)
 - the alchemy of *prana* and *apana*



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- *rudrani* (the awakened *prana shakti* at the navel center)
- normally, the dominant expression of *prana* at the navel center is *jathara agni* ("stomach fire," the vital force that digests food)
- a more subtle and deeper level of digestive fire is *bhuta agni* ("past" or "ghost" fire); *bhuta agni* is the force in the abdomen that subsumes the past, your limitations, the things that hold you back
- *rudrani* is the most complete and awakened expression of *prana* at the navel center (please refer to the *Tantra Shakti* training for review on awakening *kundalini*)
- Transforming *Karma*. There are three stages, consisting of highly evolved practices, all requiring extensive preparation and mastery of *chitta* and *prana*. None of these three orientations to practice are within the scope of this training but are worth mentioning here:
 - utilizing *prana* to maximize: fulfillment (*bhoga*), capacity (*riddhi*) and freedom (*moksha*)
 - transforming *sanchitta karma* (potential *karma*), these methods require the capacity to rest in *sunyata* (emptiness or void) as well as a highly evolved *buddhi* that can enter into its own field of *karmashaya* (the pouch or collective field of *karma*)
 - final orientation uses *prana* to shape and influence the forces of nature



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- Remote Healing
 - through mastery of *prana* we can deposit, enliven or infuse *prana* into any place, circumstance, person anywhere
 - when you have an intimate relationship to *prana*, you can easily and thoroughly direct life-force to another person
- A mind, completely merged into the field of *prana*, no longer seeks gain or to avoid loss, is freed of expectations, and is able to:
 - conduct vital force unconditionally
 - infuse sacred force into an object or place—known as *prana pratishtha*—the final stage of *prana dharana*



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- There are three main stages of *prana dharana*:
 - *prana anusandhana*
 - *prana dharana*
 - *prana pratishtha*
- Stage 1—*prana anusandhana* ("researching, investigating or becoming familiar with") *prana*. This stage includes:
 - *prana samvedana* ("to become sensitive, alert, in touch with or awake to what lies beyond the known"); this is the very process wherein you begin to perceive that the breath is more than just air movement; you sense the very source of the movement of the breath, as mind becomes quiet the characteristics and subtle qualities of the breath are experienced
 - *prana sanchaya* ("path, collection") *prana* now becomes anchored, stored or concentrated in a unique way; now *prana* as presence is collected and established in the 3rd eye
 - *prana prasara* ("to move with purpose") collected *prana* is transported (i.e. to awaken the heart or navel center)—often the last step preceding meditation
- Stage 2—*prana dharana*, which consists of:
 - *prana prachhardana*: as previously discussed in the *Secrets of the Sutras* training, this is a special application of *bhastrika*, wherein you apply a



supplemental contraction in the throat
(identical to the action of *ujjayi*)

- *vidharana*: breath retention combined with mental concentration, allows you to stabilize *prana shakti* in a specific place—body part or even altar or statue
- Stage 3—*prana pratishtha*, which consists of:
 - *prana preshana* ("to send, dispatch; to mandate"); once *prana* has become fully anchored and is completely intact, pure, holy, fully awakened, it can be moved in its totality, fully endowed with the Sacred, to take its seat in a highly specialized way
 - *prana-pratishtha*—the culmination of the practice, the movement of *prana* has completed its journey, rooted in a higher intention or purpose, now the chosen object is fully charged with *prana shakti* and can fulfill its ultimate purpose
- In conclusion, as it relates to the progression of *prana dharana*, remember that the practice begins and advances only with a clear, calm and tranquil mind, a steady moon—*chandra*.



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- The supine 4-Part Breath is a diagnostic exercise as well as a profoundly healing and soothing technique for the nervous system and mind.
- Applying deep and complete breath in a supine position allows you to observe the distribution of the five *vayus*, the extent to which each moves fluidly and completely in its respective location(s) and its ease of movement compared to the other *vayus*.
- *Vayu* means to “move,” to “animate.” Difficulty with or a lack of fluid movement and/or jagged, shaky, rushed or gasping breath in different sections of the torso associated with a particular *vayu* points to a *vayu(s)* that would benefit from remediation.
- Observe the first four of five *vayus* in the corresponding sections:
 - *apana vayu* in the pelvic area, from just below to just above the pubic bone
 - *samana vayu* from the pubic bone to just below the solar plexus
 - *prana vayu* from solar plexus to upper-middle chest
 - *udana vayu* is located between upper chest and collar bones (at the end of inhale you will want to observe some elevation or lift of the collarbones)
- *Vyana vayu* is everywhere, making a compromised *vyana* harder to diagnose. However, issues with *vyana* can be identified by observing at least one of two movement pathologies:
 - disruption in the transitions between any two or more consecutive *vayus*, (e.g. between *apana* and *samana* or *pran* and *udan*)



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- the second is more subtle, harder to recognize; it is a general lack of response when trying to improve the movement in a specific *vayu* or area
- difficulty improving a pattern once cued to resolve, can be an indication of weakness/ deficiency with the "distributive" intelligence, a sign of compromised *vyana*
- on the other hand, if you notice even a slight improvement, after having become aware of its deficiency, it indicates that *vyana* is not insufficient and instead the deficiency lies in the specific *vayu* related to the area in which it was perceived
- As observer, you are looking for fluid, smooth and progressive movement in each particular area, noting movement quality. Also look for the balance of inhale vs. exhale, the beginning and end of any single breath and its overall smoothness and consistency from beginning to end.
- The diagnostic process usually requires 5 - 7 minutes to complete.
- The practice consists of three stages:
 - Stage 1—resting on your back (spine elevated on a tri-fold blanket), involuntary breathing, simply experience the abdomen rise and fall watch the breath transition, eventually becoming increasingly smooth, even and subtle
 - Stage 2—slowly apply a near-silent *ujjayi* breath, focus is primarily on breathing into the lower lungs and pelvic area; establish a breath pattern that is as smooth, even and as continuous as

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possible, filling progressively through each region of the first three vayus, starting with *apana* and progressing through *samana* and perhaps the lower region related to *pran*

- Stage 3—transition to complete breathing, initially the pelvic bowl fills (on inhale) the area softens and there'll be some gradual movement between the pubic bone and lower abdomen (*apana*), breath continues progressing through regions related to *samana*, *pran* and *udana*; wherein the last stage of inhale collarbones rise
- Continue to breathe as evenly and smoothly as possible, notice any deficiencies or challenges in the flow of the breath. This is the where you as a teacher/observer first identify and then share (as efficiently as possible—preferably without touching your student) your insights about the student's breath pattern.
 - observe how completely they respond to your input by affecting a change in their breath pattern (9 out of 10 times, the insights on the part of both the observer and the breather are the same)
 - note: the most effective way to improve a restricted section of the breath is to relax as much as possible upon approaching that section
- Begin by first getting clear about your patterning, ideally with feedback from someone who can accurately observe you breathe and provide clear feedback. In time, you will be able to self-diagnose and recognize patterns in others.
- Key takeaways: the way you breathe may actually be creating or, at the very least, reinforcing the resistance (*karma*) that is keeping you from achieving more of what you want.

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- it's vital to bring qualitative awareness to how you breathe and the way it is distributed
- the very action of breathing into the *vayu* that is “weak” or challenged will mobilize that particular *vayu* and strengthen it
- if more than one *vayu* is challenged, focus on the one that's most related to the (mental) resistance that you are facing in your life
- In case you don't see a correlation between the mental/emotional challenge you are facing and the *vayu* that seems to be the most challenged:
 - you may not have diagnosed the most challenged *vayu* accurately or...
 - the answer to the question related to mental and emotional resistance has not been accurately assessed or was overly generalized and not specific enough
- Mental correlates to challenged *vayus* (general guidelines):
 - *apana* relates to having a lot to eliminate, needing to release or let go
 - *samana* relates to the need to process, digest, assimilate or integrate mental, emotional and/or experiential content
 - *pran* is related to fatigue, sensory overload; the result of putting out more than you are taking in; it provides vitalization for mind and body and refuels the senses
 - *udana* relates to a loss of enthusiasm, motivation and aspiration; being stuck in a pattern and being at a loss to pull yourself out of it

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- *vyana* relates to a lack of expansion, the freedom to flow in every or any area of life, to be effortless and spontaneous

Pranayama Hand Mudras to Mobilize Vayus

- These gestures enliven breath patterns and are used to supplement complete breathing as well as increasing the mobility of the *vayus*.
 - *apana vayu*: use *chin mudra* (gesture of wisdom or consciousness), index finger and thumb in contact; palm face up OR use *gyan mudra* (gesture of intuitive knowledge), index finger and thumb in contact, palm face-down; this is the more grounding of the two mudras for *apana*
 - *samana vayu*: use *chin maya mudra* (gesture of supreme intelligence), thumb and index finger in contact, the rest of the fingers touch the middle of the palm; palms face down
 - *pran vayu*: use *adi mudra* (gesture of the first or beginning), thumb into the palm and close the fingers around it to make a fist; palms face down
 - *udana vayu*: use *adi mudra* (gesture of the first or beginning), palms face up
 - *vyana vayu*: use *brahma mudra* (gesture of all-pervading consciousness) apply *adi mudra* (thumbs in palms, hands into fists, bring the knuckles to touch, little fingers toward the body, back of the hands face down, hands relax into the lap