108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 4 – Prāṇāyāma

प्राणायाम

Root:
an
Devanāgarī:
प्राणायाम
Translation:
extending the breath
Similar words:
vāta, vāyu, prāṇa
Related concepts:
recaka, pūraka, kumbhaka, samavṛtti, viṣamavṛtti, ujjāyī, bhastrikā, nāḍī, śodhana, bhrāmarī, śītalī, sītkārī, anuloma, viloma, pratiloma, haṭha, kapālabhāti, āsana, mudrā, bandha, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, āyāma, vaikharī, prāṇa, mūrcchā, nāḍī śodhana, anuloma ujjāyī, viloma ujjāyī, pratiloma ujjāyī, sūrya bhedana, candra bhedana, bāhya kumbhaka, anuloma krama, viloma krama, pratiloma krama, jihvā bandha, jālandhara bandha, uḍḍīyana bandha, mūla bandha, aṣṭāṅga, aṣṭāṅgayoga, antar kumbhaka, āyāma
Appears in:
Yoga Sūtra:
Chapter 2: 29 , 49
Bhagavad Gītā:
Chapter 5: 27
Haṭha Pradīpikā:
Chapter 2: 1
Yoga Rahasya:
Chapter 1: 45 , 89
Chapter 4: 31
Chapter 2: 45
Chapter 1: 84

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- Āsana & Mudrā Practice Techniques Glossary – Grouped into Standing, Kneeling, Lying, Inverted, Backbend, Seated & Sitting
- Prāṇāyāma & Bandha Practice Techniques Glossary – Grouped into Primary, Secondary & Ancillary Techniques
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

– Prāṇāyāma Practice Articles

- Compendium of Quotes from TKV Desikachar on the Yoga of T Krishnamacharya……
- Correct vibrational intonation was an important emphasis within all aspects of Mantra initiation
- Prāṇa – Its origin, function and malfunction
- Prāṇāyāma – Where to Start? Part One
- Prāṇāyāma – Where to Start? Part Two
- Prāṇāyāma – Where to Start? Part Three
- Prāṇāyāma – Where to Start? Part Four
- Prāṇāyāma within Rāja Yoga and Haṭha Yoga
- Reflections on TKV Desikachar's Teaching and Svatantra……
- Sound – A Means Beyond Āsana and Prāṇāyāma……
- Studying, Practicing and Learning the Tri Bandha involves Theory, Techniques and Cautions…
- The breadth, depth and potential of Desikachar's teachings on practice……
- The breath can be a key to unlocking the mystery of the relationship……
- The Link between the practice limbs of Āsana, Mudrā, Prāṇāyāma and Dhyānam
- The presence and actions of Prāṇa Śakti……
- The Viniyoga of Inversion as an Āsana or as a Mudrā……
- Though there are many different aspects to formal 'home' practice……
- TKV Desikachar talks on Śraddhā in the light of the Yoga Sūtra……
- YOGA: SURGERY SANS INSTRUMENTS – Interview with TKV Desikachar 1998

– Prāṇāyāma Practice Theory

- A fundamental facet in the principles of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma practice……
- Āsana practice as a prerequisite to exploring how to integrate Prāṇāyāma
- Cale Vāte Calaṃ Cittam – As is the Breath so is the Psyche……
- Compare and discuss the effects of Samavṛtti and Viṣamavṛtti breathing ratios on Prāṇa Sthāna and Apāna Sthāna
- Cultivating the skills within Yoga Practice Planning for Indvidual Students
- cYs Practitioner Training Programme Retreat Extract 1 – Self Planning & Self Practice
- cYs Practitioner Training Programme Retreat Extract 2 – Self Planning & Self Practice
- cYs Practitioner Training Programme Retreat Extract 3 – Self Planning & Self Practice
- cYs Practitioner Training Programme Retreat Extract 4 – Self Planning & Self Practice
- Deepening our relationship with Prāṇāyāma deepens our relationship with Āsana……
- Design a 50' practice to experience the link between Mudrā & Prāṇāyāma
- Design an evening Practice before going out (as if) to teach Yoga…

- Design a Practice around Jaṭhara Parivṛtti, Mahā Mudrā and Pratiloma Ujjāyī Prāṇāyāma
- Design a Prāṇāyāma for yourself to include Śītalī, Anuloma Ujjāyī and Nāḍī Śodhana
- Design a Prāṇāyāma for yourself to include a crown ratio of 1.1.1.1. in Nāḍī Śodhana
- Design a Prāṇāyāma practice to increase the length and stamina of the inhalation within Viloma Ujjāyī
- Design a Prāṇāyāma practice to influence Prāṇa Sthāna, choosing either Samavṛtti or Viṣamavṛtti ratios
- Discuss the different aspects of Vinyāsa Krama in Prāṇāyāma...
- Exploring Prāṇāyāma within Cikitsā, Rakṣaṇa and Śikṣaṇa Krama...
- Guidelines for exploring the Breath in Āsana Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma
- Know your breath and its unique characteristics in Āsana and you will.....
- Laṅghana Kriyā has two functional dimensions...
- Prāṇāyāma was taught according to the principles of Cikitsā, Rakṣaṇa and Śikṣaṇa.....
- Religiousness in Yoga Study Guide: Chapter Twelve Practice
- The breath can be a key to unlocking the mystery of the relationship.....
- What are the concepts of Sṛṣṭi Krama, Sthiti Krama and Antya Krama?

– Prāṇāyāma Sample Practices

- 20 Minute Prāṇāyāma Practice
- Viniyoga Vignette 2 – Combining techniques in Prāṇāyāma
- Commentary on Viniyoga Vignette 2 – Combining techniques in Prāṇāyāma
- Viniyoga Vignette 3 – Śītalī and Anuloma Ujjāyī Prāṇāyāma within Āsana
- Viniyoga Vignette 4 – Combining Prāṇāyāma within Āsana

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"The ideal Dhyānam,
which becomes easier with practice,
requires certain preparations to reduce
the tendency of the mind to be distracted,
either by being jumpy and agitated, or dull and inert.
Chief among these preparations are proper diet and Prāṇāyāma."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The greater the Śraddhā, the more meaning there is in the techniques such as Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Dhyānam, Bhāvanaand all the others. Without Śraddhā, these techniques have little effect on the state of the mind and the progress to Citta Vṛtti Nirodha. However, sometimes some minor benefits that we get through Āsana or Prāṇāyāma practice, open up the Śraddhā within us. Śraddhā is within each of us but is covered. It could be any experience that uncovers it."
– TKV Desikachar on Śraddhā in the Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 20

"It is not the number of hours in Meditation,
the type of Ratio in Prāṇāyāma,
the number of times you turn the Mālā,
it is the intensity of the attempt."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 22

"Can these four Yoga Aṅga – Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma
– be practiced by everyone at every stage of life?
How often and how long should one practice?
How can we adapt our practice to changing circumstances?
These questions and others like them must be answered by a competent teacher,
according to each student's individual circumstances."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 30

"The use of Āsana and Prāṇāyāma is
an investigation of all the 9 obstacles
in Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 30.
Those things that come between how
we are and how we would like to be."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 30

"In Veda, Āyurveda and Yoga Sūtra,
various techniques are offered to aid in healing the sick.
In addition to herbs and medicines,
Patañjali suggests that Āsana, Prāṇāyāma and Vairāgya
are particularly beneficial and, as any medicine,
should be used with care and discipline."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 34

"Slow and regulated breathing using special techniques
to lengthen the the inhale and exhale processes
are also helpful techniques to quieten the disturbed mind
and reduce the unpleasant consequences of this state.
Along with these breathing techniques examination of food habits
and changing them to suit is also a must."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 34

"Prāṇāyāma must be properly instructed.
The posture used, seated erect for example,
is also important.
The duration and regularity in terms of time
is also as important as proper instructions."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 34

"For curing an illness,
Prāṇāyāma practice of at least 24 breaths
should be done several times each day
– ideally eight times.
All other unnecessary physical activities should be curtailed.
Food should be limited to liquids – primarily milk
and hot, dry foods avoided.
Breathing practice should be done without the aid of any tools or instruments."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 34

"In the Yoga Sūtra,
Āsana is basically something linked to Prāṇāyāma,
since Prāṇāyāma is a very important practice there,
linked to Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 46

"Prāṇāyāma leads to this. Pratyāhāra,
to see without the senses distracting or pulling the mind,
and Dhāraṇā –
To see without the mind losing itself,
because of colouring or expectations.
Dhyānam arises out of this."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 49

"Within the practice guidelines for Prāṇāyāma
Length and Subtlety are the fruits of a process,
they are not tools for use within this process.
The tools here are Deśa, Kāla and Sāṃkhya.
By these the breath becomes Dīrgha and Sūkṣma,
in other words the breath becomes Long and Subtle."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 50

"Some Prāṇāyāma Techniques prioritise Length.
Other Prāṇāyāma Techniques prioritise Subtlety.
While yet other Prāṇāyāma Techniques prioritise Both."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 50

"When working with the Breath in Āsana,
it's perhaps less appealing initially,
but ultimately more attractive, satisfactory
and effective, to integrate a Bhāvana on
the Samāpatti of Śaithilya and Ananta,
within a developmental Prāṇāyāma Sādhana,
focused towards the Siddhi of Dīrgha or Length,
supported by its counterpoint, Sūkṣma or Subtlety."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 50

"As Prāṇāyāma dissolves the covering of the light,
fitness of the mind for concentration arises."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 53

Prāṇāyāma is a key to the door of Dhāraṇā.
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 53

"Pratyāhāra is both a Sādhana and a Siddhi.
In that, it is a Siddhi of Prāṇāyāma,
as well as a Sādhana for Dhāraṇā."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 55

"Just as Mūla Bandha, Uḍḍīyāna Bandha,
Jālandhara Bandha and Jivha Bandha
are very important for Prāṇāyāma,
Mano Bandha is very important for Dhyānam.
Mano Bandha is Dhāraṇā."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Three verse 1

"Without Āsana,
Prāṇāyāma cannot become accomplished.
Without containing Prāna,
the mind cannot achieve steadiness."
– From T Krishnamacharya's composition,
The Yoga Rahasya Chapter One verse 45

"According to one's capability and reference,
Prāṇāyāma done along with Mantra yields fruits
in the treatment of all kinds of diseases."
– From T Krishnamacharya's composition,
the Yoga Rahasya Chapter One verse 84

"There is a particular order of teaching Āsana,
so also an order to follow when teaching Prāṇāyāma."
– From T Krishnamacharya's composition,
the Yoga Rahasya Chapter One verse 89

"In the Sthiti Krama the most important Yoga Sādhana
for the householder, according to my view, is Prāṇāyāma."
– From T Krishnamacharya's composition,
the Yoga Rahasya Chapter Two verse 45

"When the body is disordered,
make use of the body to reduce.
When thought is agitated,
make use of Prāṇāyāma to reduce."
– From T Krishnamacharya's composition,
The Yoga Rahasya Chapter Four verse 31

"Haṭha Yoga is Prāṇāyāma."
- T Krishnamacharya

"Some disturbances will respond to Āsana.
Some of the more resistant, to Prāṇāyāma."
– T Krishnamacharya

"Use Āsana for problems of the body and
Prāṇāyāma for problems of the mind."
– T Krishnamacharya

"We cannot say that this Āsana or this Prāṇāyāma can be given for this disease."
– T Krishnamacharya 1984

Question to T Krishnamacharya:
How necessary is Yoga in these modern times?
Krishnamacharya's Response:
"For the strengthening of the Aṅga,
Yoga Āsana practiced with long
inhalation and exhalation is important.
To reduce the disturbances of the mind,
to gain mental strength and to increase longevity,
Prāṇāyāma is necessary."

"One could say, of course, that I have taught Yoga to hundreds of people, of different ages, states, origins, but by Yoga I mean only postures and breath control, and do not count meditation or interpretation of the texts.
These I have only taught to a few people and only to those I deemed worthy after several interviews, designed to give me an idea of their personality and the firmness of their intentions.
I discouraged those who appeared to have superficial reasons for learning Yoga, but never those who came to find me because of health problems and who had frequently been turned away by the medical profession."
– From interviews with T Krishnamacharya by Sarah Dars, published in Viniyoga Review no 24, December 1989

"We normally practice Ujjāyī for a long time
before introducing Nāḍī Śodhana Prāṇāyāma."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Nine Page 121

"Mental attitude is very important in the practice of Prāṇāyāma.
In Prāṇāyāma we have no body movement to see; it involves mostly what we feel.
The only thing dynamic in Prāṇāyāma is the breath.
Yet, we must have the same attitude of attention in Prāṇāyāma, as in Āsana."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Nine Page 125

"The Yoga Sūtra says that as we practice Prāṇāyāma,
more and more of the covering of the mind,
Avidyā, is removed and there is clarity."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Ten Page 137

"If we are completely absorbed in the breath in Prāṇāyāma,
automatically there is Pratyāhāra."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Eleven Page 153

"Āsana and Prāṇāyāma can, according to the Yoga Sūtra,
create a condition where the mind is fit for Dhāraṇā."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Eleven Page 156

"Another simple posture is Adho Mukha Śvan Āsana.
the next step is to try them in some sitting postures such as Mahā Mudrā.
These Bandha can also be done in the headstand.
It is easy to do Bandha in this position because the lifting,
Uḍḍīyana Bandha, and holding up, Mūla Bandha,
of Apāna to the flame is almost automatic
because now the Apāna is above the flame.
If we can do the three Bandha in these postures,
we are ready to introduce them in our Prāṇāyāma."
– TKV Desikachar 'The Concept, Preparation and Techniques of Bandha'
Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Fourteen Page 197

"Before studying Prāṇāyāma one must understand something about the breath."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1978

"My understanding of Prāṇāyāma is that the Kumbhaka should be an aid.
The aim is to get a feeling difficult to put into words, but different from normal states.
The question is how much does Kumbhaka play a part in this?
So Investigate the use of Kumbhaka and only use it when it helps you be with the breath."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1978

"One's own actions can develop or make one Guṇa prominent.
Thus we can plan or practice Āsana or Prāṇāyāma to promote one Guṇa.
The practice of Yoga can influence the Guṇa.
the room where you practice can affect the Guṇa
by photographs, colour of paint, smell.
Even Mantra are classified into Guṇa.
This needs to be considered when using Mantra for the individual.
Meditation can be related to the Guṇa.
The object of our inquiry must be related or,
in accordance with what we want to produce."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"We can use Āsana to explore the breath and
then use Prāṇāyāma to experience the breath."
– From personal lessons with TKV Desikachar

"Then he has certain ideas also about Kuṇḍalinī.
The force is Prāṇa,
the force called Śakti or Kuṇḍalinī is indeed Prāṇa.
The only means that can have any effect is the use of Prāṇāyāma,
with emphasis on exhalation and the Bandha,
aided by devotional chantings.
And the evolution of Kuṇḍalinī is very much linked to the person's state of mind and Vairāgya."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1981.

"Because of the different uses of breathing,
he strongly believes that the beginning of Prāṇāyāma is in Āsana.
Āsana, and Āsana alone,
with proper breathing techniques,
leads you to the idea of Prāṇāyāma."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1981

"Further, he also added long ago, the idea of Bhāvana in the practice of Prāṇāyāma. Long, long ago, he said, the breathing, inhalation, exhalation and retentions have some sort of relationship with the highest force, Lord Nārāyaṇa.
Inhalation is like an inspiration from God himself.
Retention is some sort of meditation, because you are with Him.
Exhalation is some sort of movement towards God,
and retention after exhale is like a surrender to God."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1981

"And, in the Prāṇāyāma also, the different types, like Vaikharī,
the different Vṛtti, the different Krama, he put them all into practice.
One of the greatest contributions, I would say, of Krishnamacharya to Prāṇāyāma,
is the use of Bāhya Kumbhaka, and the importance of Recaka, or exhalation."
– TKV Desikachar Switzerland 1981

"Patañjali has proposed 3 approaches to verify the indications.
Tapas – Process of action
Food, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma.
You will be doing something that you will not be habitually doing.
For example one day no salt, cigarettes, Prāṇāyāma.
Tapas is from the root to create thirst.
It means to deprive.
It will tell us about ourselves.
It will reveal our Saṃskāra and Pariṇāma or changes in ourselves.
From this Tapas we will start to get an indication of our individual nature.
For example active or lazy.
Tapas indicates the the beginning of the Bheda, through the Bhāva."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"One important thing is food.
Different combinations have different effects on the body.
When we work with Āsana and Prāṇāyāma we need to consider which foods to take.
Your mind is according to your food.
The type of food you take influences your mind.
The subject is vast."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Some people say they practice Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Meditation.
Among these things which is close to Sādhana and which is not close to Sādhana?"
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Śikṣaṇa Krama – do something perfectly or correctly.
Anything is taught to achieve perfection in the practice of Āsana and Prāṇāyāma.
In other words teaching children and healthy people where you can take risks with no problems.
Not a valid approach for groups.
We need to use intelligence and Viveka,
not follow the idea of no pain, no gain to become painless,
or to get to a point without suffering."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"The great yogin Yājñavalkhya said that the constant and intensive
practice of Prāṇāyāma brought Prāṇa and Agni together,
and gradually the obstacle at the base of the Suṣumṇā would be totally dissolved.
He gave this block the name 'Kuṇḍali' meaning coiled
or 'Kuṇḍalinī' meaning 'rolled up' in other texts.
Kuṇḍalinī represents that which blocks access to the central energetic channel.
When this obstacle is eliminated, Prāṇa penetrates
and begins to rise in the central channel.
This is the most precise description we have of the process.
This is also the most clear and coherent."
– 'Concerning the Cakra' by TKV Desikachar

"There are simple postures for Prāṇāyāma and Dhyāna,
so that we can relax in the body and not be distracted by it.
There are challenging postures,
to enable us to master our bodies and for young people who
will be engaged by the performance aspect of the posture.
There are also corrective postures."
– TKV Desikachar England 1992

"There are many postures to suit a variety of different body types.
Āsana practice is to prepare the body, to sit for Prāṇāyāma.
Āsana also helps to get rid of impurities
so that it is possible to do something deeper, inside the mind."
– TKV Desikachar England 1992

"The hands should be upwards for counting and breathing,
with elbows slightly bent to keep the shoulders relaxed."
– TKV Desikachar England 1992

"The practices dealing with the body and the
breath are known as Āsana and Prāṇāyāma.
They are interlinked, in Āsana the body is
the focus and the breath serves this focus.
In Prāṇāyāma the regulation of the breath is the focus,
the body is prepared adequately via Āsana for this
regulation to materialise without any resistance."
– TKV Desikachar Madras 1996

"The purpose of Āsana and Prāṇāyāma are twofold,
to reduce symptoms of ill-health or,
to prepare the mind towards fulfilling the
main emphasis of Patañjali, which is Meditation.
However according to the teaching I have received,
both of these roles can be fulfilled with relatively
few Āsana postures and Prāṇāyāma techniques."
– TKV Desikachar Madras 1996

"Krishnamacharya's understanding of Cikitsā
or Yoga therapy and the arrangement and
sequencing of postures, along with modifying
the posture and using different breathing
patterns, plus the use of sound and different
Bhāvana or mental foci was profound.
This allowed for many possibilities to be
offered, for a great number of students
with problems, from a range of relatively
few postures and breathing techniques."
– TKV Desikachar Madras 1996

"Apart from Āsana and Prāṇāyāma there are some special techniques.
Amongst them, those known as Mudrā need special mention.
Mudrā are essentially some more refinements to
Prāṇāyāma to intensify the effect."
– TKV Desikachar Madras 1996

"Question: What were his favourite foods?
Response: You might be surprised that he relished good food. He was from Andhra and so, relished food that was hot and spicy. He was very fond of sweets and would eat them in great quantities. With all this he would always have ghee. Ghee formed a very important part of his diet and whatever the food, it would be accompanied with large quantities of ghee. Of course, he was also doing Āsana for three to four hours daily in addition to his Prāṇāyāma. His practice was extremely rigorous and that may account for his being able to handle these large quantities of spicy and sweet foods."
– TKV Desikachar answering questions on T Krishnamacharya

"Mahā Mudrā is the bridge
between Āsana and Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"One primary prerequisite to initiation into a Tri Bandha Sādhana
was an ability in Prāṇāyāma within a Vinyāsa Krama around
Nāḍī Śodhana where the crown was 12 breaths at 12.12.12.12.
Thus, before being taught Uḍḍīyana Bandha,
an essential precursor to Mūla Bandha,
there needed to be competence in sustaining Prāṇāyāma,
within a Vinyāsa Krama leading to a crown ratio of 1.1.1.1.
with the Pūraka, Antar Kumbhaka, Recaka and Bāhya Kumbhaka
each set at 12 seconds in a crown of 12.12.12.12. for 12 breaths.
Thus, a Vinyāsa Krama peak of almost 10 minutes sustaining the crown
ratio within a Prāṇāyāma practice, with the entire practice itself totalling
over 20 minutes, all performed with one technique, Nāḍī Śodhana.
This technique alone is already in itself demanding to sustain with
an inaudible softness, as if pouring oil slowly and smoothly amidst
an almost undetectable deftness of finger movement on the nostrils.
A further example of how there needs to be an effortless skill in working
with the Kumbhaka and how our fluency with all four components of the
breath sets a practice direction and evolution in that, amongst other goals,
it determines our readiness to incorporate the Tri Bandha into our Sādhana."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"As with Prāṇāyāma, the role and practice of Mudrā
needs to be considered from two distinct, but
complementary and developmental viewpoints.
In other words, there are Mudrā that are primarily
utilised within the context of Haṭha Yoga and there are
Mudrā that are utilised within the context of Rāja Yoga.
Within these two viewpoints, there are also those Mudrā
that can be applied in either context, depending on the
Saṃkalpa and Bhāvana employed by the practitioner."
- 108 Mudrā Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma as a Tool in the Morning,
- Can be a Means to Hone the Mind.
Prāṇāyāma as a Tool in the Afternoon,
- Can be a Means to Refresh the Mind.
Prāṇāyāma as a Tool in the Evening,
- Can be a Means to Clear the Mind.
Prāṇāyāma as a Tool in the Night,
- Can be a Means to Settle the Mind."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"When using Mṛgi Mudrā to control the nostril flow in Prāṇāyāma,
the ring finger and thumb remain as if glued onto the nostrils,
with one nostril being fully closed and one nostril partially closed,
with adjustments to the pressure according to technique and ratio.
Even when using Ujjāyī within techniques such as Anuloma Ujjāyī,
the finger and thumb remain as if sealed on the sides of the nostrils.
Externally it's as if there is nothing to observe in terms of the body.
Internally there is a vibrant flow within the dynamics of the breath."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Bhāvana for the Breath in Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma
- Pūraka – Lifting from the Viśuddhi Cakra
- Antar Kumbhaka – Expanding from the Anahāta Cakra
- Recaka – Contracting from the Svādhiṣṭhāna Cakra
- Bāhya Kumbhaka – Sustaining from the Mūlādhāra Cakra"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Pratiloma Ujjāyī is both
an elegant and eloquent
Prāṇāyāma technique."
– 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Pratiloma Ujjāyī is
a gentle and gracious
Prāṇāyāma technique."
– 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"In terms of setting learning priorities for Prāṇāyāma,
the ratio is seen as more important than the technique.
Though the ratio can indeed be enhanced by technique."
– 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"The longer term measure of our Prāṇāyāma
potential is determined by our skilful efforts
within all four components of the breath in Āsana.
For example, can we maintain a ratio of 8.8.8.8.
in Parśva Uttānāsana or 12.6.18.12 in Mahāmudrā?"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma, the same as with Āsana and Dhyānam,
was taught according to the core principles within
Cikitsā Krama, Rakṣaṇa Krama and Śikṣaṇa Krama.
Thus we have breathwork practice possibilities
ranging from Cikitsā, using simple ratios to settle
an irregular breathing pattern or pulse fluctuation,
to Rakṣaṇa, with a visible competence and fluidity
within a range of basic techniques and mild ratios,
to Śikṣaṇa and a skill base encompassing all techniques,
and ratios and especially, the application and integration of
Kumbhaka with long holds both after the inhale and the exhale."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"These days, it appears that
there is not much place for, or
interest in the use of Kumbhaka
within the practice of Prāṇāyāma.
If used at all it appears to be mainly
Cikitsā or about recovery, or at best about
Rakṣaṇa or constitutional support, rather than
Śikṣaṇa and a personal developmental exploration."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"When reflecting on the intimacy of the relationship between
Prāṇāyāma and Āsana experientially, we could consider
exploring the practice of Prāṇāyāma and its developmental
conjunction with Āsana, via the following reference points.
Within the age-old coalescence of Prāṇāyāma and Āsana,
Prāṇāyāma can have three potential roles in influencing
the physical, energetic, psychological or emotional
effects arising from the prior practice of Āsana.
In this context the application of Prāṇāyāma can be
from one of three directions. It can be used to either
pacify, or to stabilise, or to intensify, the various
experiences arising from the practice of Āsana."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"One of the joyful experiences that can emerge within our morning practice
is the feeling that arises on arriving at our Prāṇāyāma seat and taking
that first breath within an atmosphere of having more than enough time
in hand left to engage with this aspect of our on the mat Sādhana that day.
The sense of Sukha is palpable and offers a spaciousness that facilitates
the breath both releasing and entering into the spirit of, as Krishnamacharya
spoke of in terms of Āsana, Prayatna Śaithilya and Ananta Samāpatti.
This feeling in itself can both automatically lengthen and deepen
the flow of the breath without any conscious effort on our part.
A precious gift to start the days journey into exploring this vital area of practice.
A constant reminder, if not rejoinder, to not forget
to leave more than enough time for Prāṇāyāma,
rather than it being the token twiddle at the end of the practice,
or that which is oft easily at best compromised or at worst,
forgotten within the seduction of the bodily experiences."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma is common to both Haṭha and Rāja Sādhana,
whether working with the Prāṇa Śodhana of Haṭha Yoga,
where you were taught to practice it at each
of four transitional points through the day,
or with the Citta Śodhana of Patañjali,
where it is the pivotal Bahya Aṅga,
Prāṇāyāma is seen as the primary means to engage
the Élan Vital, the vital force or creative principle."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma, in relation to
Haṭha and Rāja Yoga Sādhana,
has differing priorities, albeit
en route towards similar goals.
In Haṭha Yoga the intended outcome
of Prāṇāyāma is Prāṇa Śakti.
In Rāja Yoga the intended outcome
of Prāṇāyāma is Manas Śānti."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"You are presuming when working with Prāṇāyāma
that the student has already put three things in place.
1. A physical possibility in terms of access to a steady seat.
2. An energetic possibility in terms of access to open channels.
3. A psychological possibility in terms of access to concentration."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"What defines the transition between
Cikitsā Krama, Rakṣaṇa Krama and
Śikṣaṇa Krama is the desire to practice
Prāṇāyāma for the sake of Prāṇāyāma,
rather than for purposes such as recovery, or
preventative health, or constitutional support,
or reducing agitation, or promoting relaxation.
Exploring Prāṇāyāma as Prāṇāyāma offers the
potential to propagate a fresh perspective into
the relationship between Prāṇa and Nirodha."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"In order to access its inner dimensions,
I feel Prāṇāyāma needs to be sustained,
in terms of both frequency, consistency and
competence, rather than it being a sporadic,
or perhaps nominal foray, into its potential as
a primary tool within Bāhya Aṅga Sādhana.
Maybe this is because of insufficient interest
in a long-term exploration into Prāṇāyāma?
On this point, one might offer observations
on the environment and expectations within
which the styling of modern group classes
are framed, seemingly 'posing' as if 'Yoga'?
Or, perhaps because this cursory glance at its
form and function arises from us just looking
for nominal, immediate or even external fruits?
As one might with Āsana, when experiencing
a structural, energetic or psychological issue?"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"What can define a transition between
Cikitsā Krama, Rakṣaṇa Krama and
Śikṣaṇa Krama in terms of the breath?
Is it that in Cikitsā Krama, the priority is
within Āsana practice and establishing a
core relationship with using the breath?
Whereas, in Rakṣaṇa Krama, the priority
is within Āsana practice, and developing
the core relationship, primarily with the
exhale and secondarily with the inhale?
Whereas, in Śikṣaṇa Krama, the priority is
within Prāṇāyāma practice, and developing
the core relationship, primarily with the exhale
and the inhale, and secondarily with the holds?"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"What can define a transition between
Cikitsā Krama, Rakṣaṇa Krama and
Śikṣaṇa Krama in terms of Prāṇāyāma?
Is it that in Cikitsā Krama, the priority is
establishing an Āsana practice with the aim
of developing a core relationship with Ujjāyī?
Whereas, in Rakṣaṇa Krama, the priority is
establishing a Prāṇāyāma practice with the aim
of developing a core relationship, primarily
with Anuloma and secondarily with Pratiloma?
Whereas, in Śikṣaṇa Krama, the priority is
developing a core relationship, primarily with
Nāḍī Śodhana and secondarily with Sūrya Bhedana?"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Exploring Prāṇāyāma as Prāṇāyāma within
Śikṣaṇa Krama requires a mastery of the inhale.
For that using Viloma Ujjāyī is recommended.
It is a short-term technique taught specifically
to develop and refine the inhale as a preparation
for working with long-term bi-channel techniques
such as with Nāḍī Śodhana and Sūrya Bhedana."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Is the primary obstacle to
experiencing Prāṇāyāma as a
developmental process, coming
from what arises within the mind,
rather than from within the breath?"
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"As an adjunct or extension to the Āsana element of a practice,
Prāṇāyāma can be applied to either enhance, stabilise or reduce
the impact of accumulative effects arising from the Āsana element.
The skill is being able to choose which is appropriate for that day,
in relation to where we are coming from in terms of that day's Āsana,
and our personal choices as to where we are going to need to be after."
- 108 Prāṇāyāma Practice Pointers

"Āsana is an interface between the body
and the systemic energy processes.
Prāṇāyāma is an interface between the
systemic energy processes and the psyche.
Dhyāna is an interface between the psyche
and the awareness that pervades our sense of being."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Prāṇa is the élan vital.
It is the mover and the sustainer of the body in all living beings.
Because of this all pervasive movement and irrepressible vitality,
it is also hard to keep reined in through the ten sensory horses.
When the personalised field of Prāṇa becomes unreined,
it transforms into Vāta and the system becomes disturbed.
The primary practice in Yoga to minimise the conversion of Prāṇa into Vāta is Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"One of the primary roles for Āsana
is to make the spine a fit vehicle for Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"In the beginning of our journey into the arts of Āsana and Prāṇāyāma, the outcome of our exploration into the breath in Āsana sets a direction and parameters for the beginnings of our exploration into how and where to develop the breath in Prāṇāyāma.
As we establish, progress and refine our practice of Prāṇāyāma, the strengths and issues that arise from our practice of Prāṇāyāma invite a subtler investigation of the breath in Āsana.
This investigation with its reciprocal and yet increasingly subtle direction offers a more precise guidance for where and how we revisit and engage with our work with the breath in Āsana.
Over time we come to both realise and experience the uniqueness of the breath within each of these two arts and the increasingly subtle development of the qualities of the relationship between the breath in Āsana, with that of the breathin Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"One of the major tools in bringing or
refining the level of observation to the
subtler aspects of our body, emotions
and mental patterns is Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"In Āsana, the Breath is an accessory to the Āsana.
In Prāṇāyāma, the Āsana is an accessory to the Breath."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"There are those who can't find time
for Prāṇāyāma but don't make time.
There are those who can't find time
for Prāṇāyāma but do make time."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"We can make a profession out of the myriad of ways we find
to use Āsana to stay too busy to make time for Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Āsana is the primary choice to work the breath.
Prāṇāyāma is the primary choice to refine the breath."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Don't get stuck on the sticky.
Learn Prāṇāyāma.
Learn Pratyāhāra.
Learn Nādānusandhāna.
Learn Adhyayanam.
Learn Dhyānam."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The ABC of the Viniyoga of Yoga
is the bespoke long term cultivation of
a personalised, pertinent and progressive
Āsana Practice as a foundation for a separate
Breathing Practice with its own identity alongside a
Chanting Practice to honour teachings and transmission.
Dhyānam is the fabric that time weaves from these related threads."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Āsana works from
the outside inwards.
Prāṇāyāma works from
the inside outwards."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"What constitutes lazy Prāṇāyāma practice?"
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Prāṇāyāma is regarded as a Tapas,
a Kriyā, which cleanses the Nāḍī,
It is a Sādhana which sharpens Agni
and helps to dissolve obstacles, thus
making the mind fit for attention."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"The art of Viniyoga is about
how you bring life to the Prāṇāyāma
rather than expecting the Prāṇāyāma
to bring life to you."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Explore how the Breath can:
- Challenge Standing Āsana.
- Support Lying Āsana.
- Develop Inverted Āsana.
- Stimulate Prone Backbend Āsana.
- Refine Sitting Āsana.
- Channel Sitting Mudrā.
- Transcend Seated Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"In the beginning, the breath in Āsana
sets the direction for our Prāṇāyāma practice.
As we develop this, the breath in Prāṇāyāma
sets the direction for our Āsana practice."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"In Āsana the emphasis is
more on Body, Breath, Mind.
In Prāṇāyāma the emphasis is
more on Breath, Mind, Body.
In Dhyānam the emphasis is
more on Mind, Breath, Body."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā and Laṅghana Kriyā, as
expansive and contractive activities, are two
potentials explored through Āsana and the Breath.
Alongside the practice of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma,
they are actualised through a theoretical understanding of
the primary principles that inform Haṭha Yoga and Āyurveda.
The alchemical process underpinning this understanding
is the relationship between the two primary principles of
Prāṇa and Agni in order to influence Haṭha Yoga concepts such
as Prāṇa, Apāna, Sūrya, Candra, Nāḍī, Cakra and Kuṇḍalinī.
In terms of Bṛṃhaṇa Kriyā and Laṅghana Kriyā, the
Viniyoga of Bṛṃhaṇa effects a dispersion of Agni from
the core to the periphery and the Viniyoga of Laṅghana
effects a concentration of Agni from the periphery to the core.
Integrating the application of these two specific processes
facilitates access, through the Merudaṇḍa, Prāṇa and Agni,
to either energising or cleansing potentials, or as collaborative
outcomes within the practice of Āsana, Mudrā and Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Svatantra within Āsana, Mudrā
and Prāṇāyāma implies knowing
the self-application and effects of
breath ratios, as well as you know
the self-application and effects of
the forms of the important Āsana."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"In Āsana the breath is
a mirror for the body.
In Prāṇāyāma the breath
is a mirror for the mind."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Better not to confuse:
– Bodywork with Āsana.
– Energywork with Mudrā.
– Breathwork with Prāṇāyāma.
– Mindwork with Dhyānam.
– Voicework with Mantra.
– Soulwork with Puruṣa."
- 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers

"Amongst the Antarāya that
relegate Prāṇāyāma to the wish list
is the choice of a long relaxation as
a substitute ending to Āsana practice."
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"A suggested strategy is to
focus primarily on the length
of the breath when working in
group class situations with Āsana.
Whereas, a suggested strategy is to
focus primarily on the subtlety of
the breath when working in group
class situations with Prāṇāyāma."
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers

"In terms of Prāṇāyāma from
a one-to-one perspective,
we need to consider whether
the practice starting point for
the practitioner is from a Rakṣaṇa,
Cikitsā, or Śikṣaṇa Krama viewpoint.
From a Rakṣaṇa Krama viewpoint,
the situation we are focusing on initially
is on developing the length of the breath.
From a Cikitsā Krama viewpoint,
the practitioner's energy and
respiratory capacity may be low,
so the scope for working on the length
of the breath may well be limited.
Therefore a suggested strategy initially,
is to focus on the subtlety of the breath.
Whereas, from a Śikṣaṇa Krama viewpoint,
the potential is there to work and develop
both the length and the subtlety of the breath.
So both options can be explored from the onset."
- 108 Yoga Teaching Path Pointers