

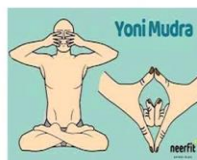
**Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life**  
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**Pratyahara as the Intervention for Managing Self and Career**  
**Lecture - 83**  
**Indriya-pratyahara: Control of the Senses**

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### Indriya-Pratyahara: Control of the Senses

#### The Right Intake of Impressions



1. Focusing on Uniform Impressions
2. Creating Positive Impressions
3. Creating Inner Impressions

*Yoni mudra* (also known as *shanmukhi-mudra*) is one of the most important pratyahara techniques for closing the senses.

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Let us look at all these Pratyahar or Control of the Senses. That can be done by focusing on uniform impressions by creating positive impressions and by creating inner impressions. This is beautifully explained by David Frawley. He explains that many time because of the uncontrolled food intake that uncontrolled can be in the form can be in the can be because of the poor timings because of this uncontrolled unregulated food intake we suffer indigestion when we suffer indigestion.

What is generally recommended? We are asked to control our food intake or take that food which is uniform. So, we take khichdi in all parts of India. At least we are aware that when our digestion is not good we are recommended some other form of khichdi which is generally the combination of pulse and rice.

Nonetheless in the situation of indigestion we are asked not to take variety of food, but consistently one type of food only limited to certain fruits or certain form of grains in prepared in a specific way which is devoid of oil, which is which has less of spices etcetera.

In the same way our man our mind also sometime feel indigestion because of over exposure to the senses, over indulgence in the senses, over being and because of this mental indigestion we can feel unhealthy within ourselves. So, if I have to get rid of this mental indigestion; what is the way? Pratyahar is the way.

How it is done? By focusing uniform impressions meaning we do not let our mind wander in 10 different directions. We can focus on one thing, we can focus on tree, we can focus on flowing water clear water, we can focus on sky, we can focus on akash, we can focus on our breath, we can focus on our senses and by focusing on uniform impressions our mental indigestions comes under control.

And as a result of that our agitated mind becomes calmer and only calm mind can perceive with clarity and make right decisions right which is right for not only for ourselves, but good for others as well. That is about focusing uniform impression. Then comes the next stage in the indriya pratyahar is creating positive impressions.

Positive impressions can be attained through many practices you must have seen prayers in various religious places or spiritual places that is a way of creating positive impressions. If you look at prayers, they all talk about well-being for us, well-being for others; they all are about submitting to some supreme power which is embodiment of all good qualities. Prayers are also about asking to imbibe the best qualities best humanly qualities. So, these are the ways of creating positive impressions.

We have also seen kirtan or [FL] these are the methods of creating positive impressions because either we are remembering the great divine qualities of the supreme or we are asking supreme to give those qualities the quality of compassion, courage, wisdom self-control doing good for others altruism we ask for those qualities. So, in this way we are creating consistent positive impressions that the second aspect of pratyahar.

The third aspect of pratyahar is creating inner impressions. Just by focusing on our sensations you can do it and experience it right away. If you are watching this video just start noticing and take your attention to your toes; wherever you are sitting, just bring your attention to your toes. You must have noticed that your sitting posture must have become better.

Now, take your attention from your toes to your ankle. You can start this process with the right leg. You take your attention to the toes of the right leg. Now, take your attention to the right ankle, right calf muscles, right knee, right thigh. Then you can take your attention to the left toes, left ankle, left calf muscles, left knee, left thigh, take your attention to the stomach.

Notice the movements going on in the stomach with breathing. Then you can take your attention to your chest and if you wish to you can close your eyes as well. From the chest you can take your attention to the right shoulder. Relax your shoulder left shoulder, relax the left shoulder, neck, face, top of the skull. Notice your breath. Now, you can choose any sensation in the body from toe to head and be with that sensation.

Even this simple practice would have brought some level of calmness within ourselves. This is an example of creating inner impressions. This is one way of doing indriya pratyahar. There is a vast field of knowledge and practice called vipassana. Vipassana beautifully uses this practice. Vipassana incorporates pratyahar into it of course, it is more than pratyahar it is [FL] it can be samyak samadhi it can lead to samyak samadhi.

But vipassana very beautifully starts and take into account of the process which we study in pratyahar because it starts with focusing our attention to one or few sensations in the body. So, this is the indriya pratyahar very famous mudra or practice for indriya pratyahar is yoni mudra.

In the yoni mudra, we make the hand posture as mentioned in the as shown in the pictures. The index finger on the eyelashes close our eyelashes we put thumb on the ear openings we close it with the sufficient pressure we also put other fingers on our nose and the right below the nostrils. We focus on our breath and we continue to be in this posture and count the breath to 21 times minimum. That is a quick method of performing indriya pratyahar.

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## Forms of Pratyahara



### **Prana-Pratyahara- Control of Prana**

Pranayama is a preparation for pratyahara. Prana is gathered in pranayama and withdrawn in pratyahara.

### **Karma-Pratyahara— Control of Action**

This involves karma yoga—doing the actions necessary to life and avoiding those based on desire and self-gratification.

### **Mano-pratyahara—withdrawal of mind from the senses**

Mano-pratyahara by consciously withdrawing our attention from unwholesome impressions whenever they arise

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Then there is a pran pratyahar control of pran control of vital energy. This is preparation for the pratyahar in fact, the pran is gathered by taking our attention from the toe to head and then centering our attention on maybe in the stomach or between the eyebrows in this way we can perform a pran pratyahar a control of prana.

Karm pratyahar is about control of action this involves karm yog, karm yog is deeply connected with our action, with our work, with our career and with our career choices. In nutshell, karma pratyahar is doing action necessary to life and avoiding those based on desire and self gratification; that means, look looking the action or decision whether it is arising from my desire my lalasa or because of the sense of duty and for the well-being of all.

Swadharm and lokasangraha we will be discussing these terms in the upcoming sessions, but karm pratyahar is about controlling action and directing it towards the dharma and dharm is not religion dharm is sustainability; dharm is harmony within and without. Whether my action is arising from that and leading from that or it is arising from my desire cell gratification and leading to desire and self-gratification that is the control of action.

Mano pratyahar is withdrawal of mind from senses. Yoni mudra can be helpful in mano pratyahar as well because when we perform yoni mudra, we are not only controlling our indriyas by focusing

our breath and focusing on the moments in the stomach we are also performing mano pratyahar withdrawal of mind from senses. Mind is the rein through which the horses of the senses are controlled.

Rein is held by the mind. Rein is held by the intellect or buddhi rein itself is man. So, indriyas or senses follow man. It is also compared with the honeybee; queen honeybee and the worker honeybee. Queen honeybee is like man wherever queen honeybee sits or goes that is where all the worker honey bees go and make their nest there.

In the same way, wherever our man our mind goes our senses follow that. That is why you must have noticed that many a time your senses are here, but you are not able to see what is going on here because your man or mind is somewhere else that establishes that indriyas follow man.

Mano pratyahar is done with the help of breath, with the help of attention. That is why even in the in performing asanas we do little bit of pratyahar, but there are some more intense practices of the pratyahar we are going to look at in the upcoming slides.