

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
Prof. Ashish Pandey
Management Studies and Psychology
Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Pratyahara as the Intervention for Managing Self and Career
Lecture - 84
Methods of Pratyahara

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Few Day to Day Methods of Pratyahara



- Taking a "digital detox"
- Enjoying a meal or two in total silence
- Simply stop talking for a while

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A few day-to-day methods of Pratyahara are taking digital detox, enjoying a meal or two in total silence or simply stop talking for a while. Taking digital detox is the modern day vrat or upvas, what is that? We decide once in 15 days or once a month or once a week or maybe 6, 8 hours during the day when we keep ourselves away from all digital instruments and ways digital ways of being connected with the world.

So, we do not use Facebook, Instagram or do not check E-mails, do not take phone calls, we can focus, we can do whatever we are doing, but without entering into, without using this electronic media to get connected with the world. That is that can be a very simple pratyahara in the current times.

Enjoying meal or two in the total silence, we can experiment that, we can decide that at least one meal a day we will be taking in total silence. So, we will keep our attention on tasting the food and keeping the attention either on the breath. This can be a very relaxing process.

I invite you all to experiment that right after this lecture whatever means that you can take that in the total silence. Just focus on the food, on the test, on other sensations in the body as you are taking the food in or keep your attention to the breath while eating your meal. This can be a simplest pratyahar which we all can do being fully busy in the professional life.

Another simple method of performing pratyahar is simply not talking keeping maun vrat for few hours or few days. You will be surprised to reflect after maun vrat that how much how many unnecessary words we speak and we can assess that how much energy of ours, energy in the form of thoughts or energy in the form of our words, spoken words is actually a waste which does not add any value it only dissipates our energy.

So, this is the simple pratyahar we can perform in our day to day life which is full of action, which is full of engagement in the professional activities or in academics.

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Through integrating *Shamanic* and *Upanisadic* views, Shri Yogendra along with his disciples have made a remarkable contribution on the meaning of *Pratyahara* which can be related to the modern world.

"It is a deconditioning of the mind from its customary activities towards internalization".

Cornelissen, M., Misra, G. & Varma, S. (2011). Foundations of Indian Psychology. Volume 1. Theories and Concepts. Darling Kindersley.

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Through the integrating Shamanic and Upanishadic views Sri Yogendra who established one of the first yoga center in Santa Cruz in Mumbai along with his disciples have made a remarkable

contribution on the meaning of pratyahar, which is which can be very well related to the modern world.

He writes that “It is a deconditioning of mind from its customary activities towards internalization” our mind is habituated for something, habituated for certain kind of food, habituated for the certain kind of thoughts, thought patterns, actions, hobbies, entertainments and so on and so forth.

Self-growth, managing growth, managing self, growing in our career, managing our career which result in joy requires many of our customary activities, many of our habits to be changed. Can we change our habit directly just by intention? Very difficult to most of us. How we can prepare our body and mind to change our habits for the better?

And when we see our habit, it is not only about hobbies, it is not only about action changing of the habits is also changing of habit of our mind, change of the habit of our food. How we can prepare ourselves to change our habit? Pratyahar is the answer.

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Savasana (Hathayoga Tradition)

What is it?

It is the classical Indian yogic technique. It is a combination of two words 'sava' and 'asana', which means the dead body posture.

How to practice?

The classical *hathayoga literature* does not provide detail instructions on how to use the technique and hence the instructions vary between teachers and the requirements of the students.

As the meaning of *savasana* is a dead body posture, hence one's body should be as far as possible tensionless at the muscular level, passive at the (*pranic*) level and relaxed at the mental level.

There are three practices we can look at. First one is savasan, it is classical Indian yogic technique, it is combination of the two word sav means corpse and asana is the posture. How to practice that? The classical hathayoga literature actually does not provide detailed instruction on how to use the technique.

And hence the instruction vary between the teachers and the requirements of the students, as a meaning of savasan is a dead body posture. So, that means, the body should be as far as possible tension less at the muscular level at the passive or pranic level and it must be relaxed at the mental level. And how we can do that? We can do that by performing yog nidra.

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Yoga-nidra (Upanisadic Tradition)

What is it?

Yoga nidra means psychic sleep. It is a state in which you are neither asleep nor awake. If you fall asleep, it is not *yoga nidra*. If you remain awake, then too it is not *yoga nidra*. If dreams overtake you, it is not *yoga nidra*. *Yoga nidra* is a state in which there is awareness of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious fields of your mind all at one time. It is a perfect therapy. It removes all psychological abnormalities and *samskaras*, and helps you to become your normal, natural self.

How to practice?

First do a few *asanas* and *pranayamas* and follow them up with *yoga nidra*.

This technique is best learned from the guru.

Not that it will harm you if you practise it without his help, but if you do it on your own, the chances are that every time you begin you will end up falling asleep.

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Yog nidra means psychic sleep, it is a state in which you are neither asleep nor awake. If you fall asleep it is not yog nidra, if you remain awake then too it is not yog nidra, if dreams overtake you, it is certainly not yog nidra. Yog nidra is a amazing state in which there is a awareness of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious field of your mind all at one time. So, it is perfect therapy, it removes many psychological abnormalities and sanskars and help us to become more normal and natural self.

It is practiced by moving our attention from different body parts to others. There is a systematic process, there is a step-by-step process Sri Ravi Shankarji Sri Jagdi Vasudev [FL] and Swami Niranjananand Ji all three great yoga masters and the gurus of current time have put up the protocol of yog nidra on the YouTube.

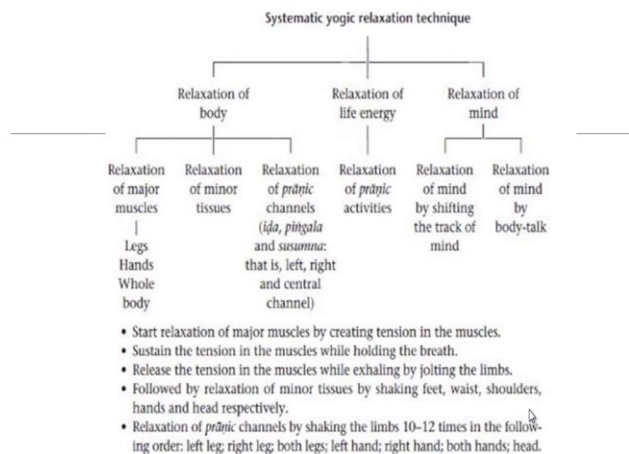
I will encourage all of you to look at and follow the instructions from there. I have seen hundreds of people who just by following these instructions given in these YouTube videos of these great

masters have experienced yog nidra. Ideally it should be followed by asanas and pranayam and in the yog nidra YouTube you will get those instructions.

So, first you perform your asanas and you remember we looked at what asanas are more appropriate for what type of prakriti perform, a set of asana perform set of pranayama and then go for yog nidra. It is a technique though is best learned from guru, not because of any religious reason. But many a time when we are not practicing it under the direct supervision of the guru our ego takes over, all our choices take over the real process and we begin to end up falling asleep or thinking about other things.

So, in order to control our flickering mind, we need a guru. So, yog nidra practice combined with savasana can be a great pratyahar practice.

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Cornelissen, M., Misra, G., & Varma, S. (2013). Foundations and Applications of Indian Psychology, 2e. Pearson India

Systematic yogic relaxation happens naturally in the savasana and the yog nidra. So, it moves from relaxation of the body, then relaxation of the prana or life energy and relaxation of mind. So, the step by step process of yog nidra. In fact, Bihar school of Yog Munger and the Swamiji named Swami Niranjananand [FL] who is currently leading that school it is a great school, one of the most reputed schools of yog.

He has released 3 sets of yog nidras. Yog nidra for the beginner, yog nidra for the intermediary and yog nidra for the advanced practitioners. In all 3 you will see the systematic relaxation of the body life energy and mind; you can take help of that.

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Preksa (Jain Tradition)

What is it?

It was propagated by Acharya Tulsi, a renowned Jain spiritual leader and a social reformer. The term means to observe and experience the internal psychic and vital functions in order to regulate them. It is quite similar to western bio-feedback technique, the difference being that the biofeedback technique is carried without any gadgets, while *Preksa* is done with the help of individual consciousness and will-power.

How to practice?

Like *Yoni-mudra*, *Preksa* also has a range of techniques for both beginners and practitioners and it has to be learnt under the guidance of a guru.

One can find more details in the following link: <http://www.preksa.com/>

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Preksha dhyana which is which has come from the Jain tradition is also an excellent method for pratyahara. It is propagated by the great Acharya Tulsi, a renowned spiritual leader, he has been a social transformer, the term means to observe and experience the internal psychic and vital functions in order to regulate them. We do not focus on regulation; we just focus on regulations naturally happen.

It is quite similar to the western biofeedback technique. The difference being that biofeedback technique is carried without any gadget while preksa is done with the help of individual consciousness and willpower. Like *uninidra*, preksa also has a range of techniques for both beginners and practitioners and it has to be learned under the guidance of the guru. And this YouTube video is given. YouTube link is given you can learn more about that.

