



9

YOGA PRACTICES FOR VOICE CULTURE

The process of bringing the voice under control is known as voice culture. Though voice is used for both speaking and singing, the technique of voice production for singing is more complex. All varieties of voice intonation and voice leveling can be mastered only by developing correct breathing techniques and the capacity to hold and release the breath according to need. Incorrect breathing can cause hamper voice production. Yoga and Pranayama also integrate the voice training methods through a set of selected asanas, breathing exercises and meditation.

In this lesson you will be learning about the yoga practices that support voice culture. These practices helps to develop the voice and tones of the voice.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to :

- practice yoga for voice culture;
- use different kind of breathing exercises to promote voice culture;



Notes

- undertake different kinds of lip, mouth and tongue exercises that help and support voice culture and; and
- perform asanas and pranayama to improve voice.

9.1 PRACTICES FOR VOICE CULTURE

Incorrect breathing can cause disorders in voice production.

Breathing practices help to:

- bring breath awareness.
- normalize the breath rate and make the breathing uniform, continuous and rhythmic.
- increase the lung capacity.

Using these breathing practices one can easily start to culture the voice.

I. DOG BREATHING

- First come to sthiti Dandasana.
- Imagine how the dog forcefully pants and breathes out, imitate to sit like a dog
- Place the palms of the hands on the ground beside the knees.
- Make the spine slightly concave and fix the gaze straight ahead.
- Keep mouth open and wide; the tongue is to be pushed out to its maximum. Practice rapid,



Fig. 9.1

forceful inhalation and exhalation, expanding and contracting the abdomen vigorously.

- Repeat the practice for 30 seconds.
- Relax in Vajrasana.

It is important to note here that, the normal respiration rate of dog during rest is 10 to 35 breaths per minute. So in this exercise your breath rate should be 30 to 35 breathe per minute.

II. TIGER BREATHING

- First come to sthiti Dandasana.
- Imitate breathing like a tiger.
- Slowly sit in Vajrasana and lean forward.
- Place your hands flat on the floor in line with the shoulders with fingers pointing forward.
- Keep your arms, thighs and heels about one shoulder width apart.
- The arms and thighs should be perpendicular to the floor.
- Before starting the practice ensure that you are comfortable while standing on 'all-fours' (i.e., two hands and two knees).
- While inhaling slowly raise your head and look up.



Fig. 9.2



Notes

CLASS-III



Notes

- Simultaneously lower the spine making it concave.
- While exhaling, arch the spine upwards and bend the head downward bringing the chin towards the chest.
- This whole practice completes one round of tiger breathing.
- Practice it for five rounds.

It is important to note here that the normal respiration rate of tiger during rest is 10 to 30 breaths per minute. So in this practice your breath rate should be 10 to 30 breaths per minute.

III. TONGUE MASSAGING

Starting position : Dandasana

Practice

- Bend the right leg at the knee and sit on the heel.
- Bend the left leg at the knee and sit on both the heels (Sit in Vajrasana).
- Open the mouth wide and push the tongue forward.
- Give a massage while you are pulling the tongue as if you are mulching. With your right and left hands alternately with the thumbs below the tongue and the index fingers on the tongue.
- Practice twenty rounds.
- Stop the practice, close the mouth and relax for some time.



Fig. 9.3

It is important to note here that:

- Keep the tongue stretched out, but relaxed.
- Initially you may find it difficult but with a little practice you will get used to it.

Benefits

- This practice is very good for voice culturing. Improves the flexibility of the tongue muscles which is helpful in voice culturing.

IV. TONGUE IN AND OUT :

Starting position : Dandasana

Practice

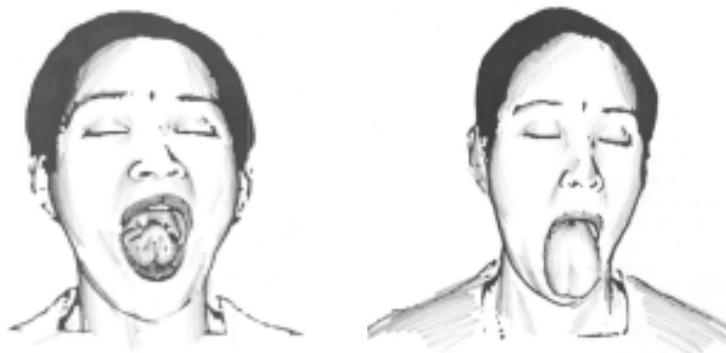


Fig. 9.4

- Open your mouth and move your tongue from inside to outside and hold.
- Repeat this practice 5 times.
- After repeating this practice we shall relax the tongue muscles.



Notes

V. TONGUE ROTATION

Practice



Fig. 9.5

- Stick out your tongue and move it slowly from side to side.
- Hold in each corner and relax.
- Make sure that your tongue actually touches each corner every time.

VI. LIP STRETCH AND LAUGHTER

Starting position: Dandasana or Vajrasana

Sit in Dandaasana or Vajrasana or Tadasana or sitting on a chair with the spine, head and neck erect and vertical to the ground.

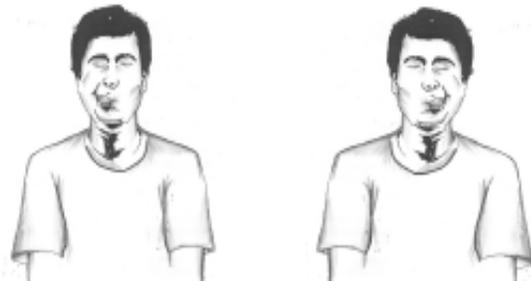


Fig. 9.6



Fig. 9.7



Notes

Practice

- Clench your teeth. Open your lips and stretch the lips forward, right side, left side, both the sides, up, down and diagonally.
- Repeat each practice for few rounds.
- Stop the practice, close the lips and relax for some time.

Laughter:

Starting position: Sit in any comfortable position.

Practice

- Start laughing in loud voice.
- Practice for three to five minutes.



Fig. 9.8

VII. MOUTH TWISTING

Starting position: Dandasana

Practice

- Bend the right leg at the knee and sit on the heel.

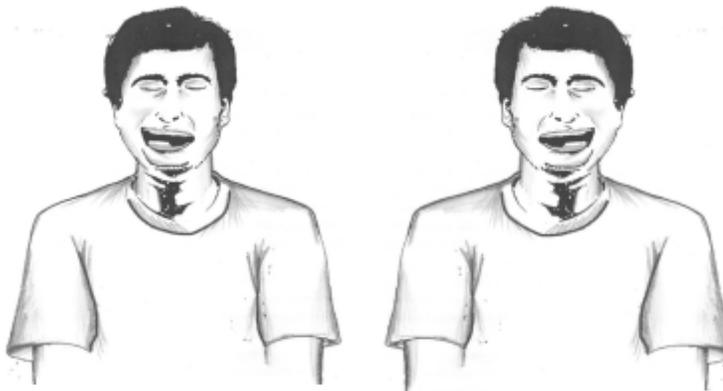


Fig. 9.9

CLASS-III



Notes

- Bend the left leg at the knee and sit on both the heels (Sit in Vajrasana).
- Twist the lips left to right and right to left. This is one complete round
- Repeat five rounds.

Benefits

- This increases the flexibility of lip muscles.

VIII. TONGUE TWISTING**Starting position: Dandasana****Practice**

- Open your mouth slightly and stretch the tongue forward a little.
- Twist the tongue from right to left and left to right in between the upper and lower teeth.
- Repeat the practice for ten times for each side.



Fig. 9.10

It is important to note here that:

- You may find it a little difficult to twist the tongue, you can do it easily with the help of upper and lower teeth pressing on it.
- Do it carefully to avoid an injury to the tongue.

Benefits

- This increases the flexibility of facial muscles.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.1

Fill in the blanks :

1. Incorrect breathing can cause disorders in _____.
2. While practicing dog breathing, the tongue is to be pushed out to its _____.
3. While practicing tongue twisting, twist of tongue should be in between upper and lower _____.
4. While inhaling in tiger breathing _____ your head and look up.
5. Tongue massaging improves _____ of the tongue.

9.2 KRIYAS

During Trataka practice, you have to focus on the flame or jyoti intensely, sharp focusing without blinking the eyes, tears may come out of the eyes, but these should not reduce the focus.



Notes



Notes

I. JYOTHI TRATAKA

Step I : Effortless gazing or focusing on the flame:

- Start Jyoti Trataka with ‘Effortless gazing or focussing’.
- Gently open your eyes with a few blinks and look at the floor. Do not look at the flame directly.
- Slowly shift your vision to the base of the candle stand, and then move to top of the stand, then to the candle and then slowly look at the flame of the candle. Now, start gazing at the whole flame without any effort. Do not blink your eyes. There may be an irritating sensations, but use your willpower and gaze at it in a relaxed way. If tears appear, allow them to flow freely. This is a sign of good practice. The tears will wash out the impurities from your eyes. Learn to ignore the irritation and watering of the eyes.
- Gaze at the flame about 30 seconds.
- Slowly close your eyes, rub your palms against each other for a few seconds, form a cup of your palms and cover your eyeballs.
- Give press and release palming.
- After completing five rounds, gently bring your hands down.
- Feel the cool sensation around the eyeballs. Relax for a few seconds. Do not open your eyes immediately.



Fig. 9.11



- Combine palming with breathing and Bhramari. First apply constant pressure around your eyes, then inhale and chant Bhramari Mm....; feel the vibrations of Bhramari throughout the body; repeat the same.
- Inhale and chant Mm.... as you exhale, inhale (Mmm) and the last round inhale Mm....; feel the sound resonance in the entire head region especially round the eye region.

Benefits

- It gives deep relaxation to the eye.
- It makes the eyes clear, bright and radiant. It also cleanses the eye.
- It helps to improve memory.
- It helps to develop a strong will-power.

LIMITATIONS

- In case of headache, one may avoid this practice.
- Trataka must be practiced using a steady flame.
- This is to be practiced in the dark, preferably in the evening.
- During palming don't let the palms touch or press the eyeballs.
- During palming breathing should be very slow, deep and with awareness.

II. KAPALABHATI

Kapalabhati is one of the Kriya or cleansing technique which cleans frontal lobe. This practice also cleanses nasal passage and it is good for voice culture.



Notes

Starting position: Sit straight in any meditative pose

Practice



Fig. 9.12

- Take deep breath.
- Exhale forcefully in such a way that the lower abdomen is contracted to expel out the air.
- Inhale spontaneously and passively without making any efforts.
- Let air enter the body through the passive inhalation. This is one practice set of Kapalabhati. Begin with 20 sets at a time. This completes one round.
- You can practice one to three rounds in a practical session.

Benefits

- It improves blood circulation of the whole body.
- You feel energized after doing this practice.



DO YOU KNOW

In ssanskrit, Kapala means 'skull' and bhati means 'shine'. So, it helps to improve the functions of the organs located in the skull.

9.3 PRANAYAMA

Pranayama popularly known as yogic breathing involves a conscious manipulation of our breathing pattern. Pranayama consists of the breathing techniques which are related to the control of breath or respiratory process.

I. VIBHAGIYA PRANAYAMA

Vibhagiya pranayama helps in utilizing all the three lobes or sections-abdominal, thoracic and clavicular which aid in deep breathing. Breathing becomes continuous, smooth and rhythmic. It corrects the wrong breathing pattern and increases the vital capacity of the lungs.

(i) Abdominal (Diaphragmatic) breathing (Adhama)

Starting position: Vajrāsana

Practice

- Rest the hands on the thighs in chinmaya mudra.
- Inhale deeply, slowly and continuously, till abdomen bulges out.
- Exhale with the abdomen drawn inwards continuously and slowly.
- Repeat this breathing cycle five times.
- There should be no jerks in the whole process.

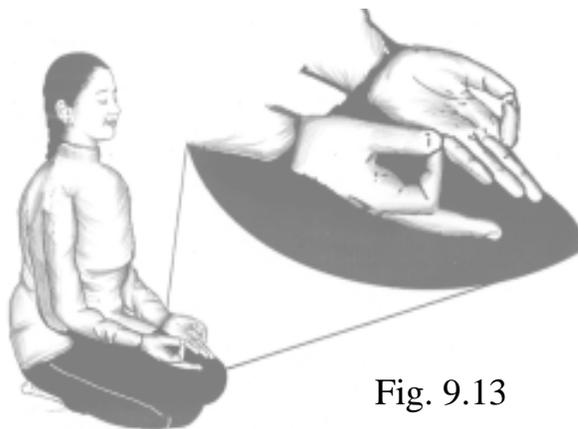


Fig. 9.13

Notes

CLASS-III



Notes

- It should be smooth, continuous and relaxing.

It is important to note here that:

- In abdominal breathing the air fills the lower lobes of the lungs.
- Avoid movement of the chest.

(ii) Thorasic (Intercostal) breathing (madhyama)**Starting position: Vajrasana****Practice**

- Rest the hands resting on the thighs in chinmaya mudra.
- While inhaling, expand the chest cage forwards, outwards and upwards.
- While exhaling relax the chest wall and return to resting position.
- Repeat this breathing cycle five times.

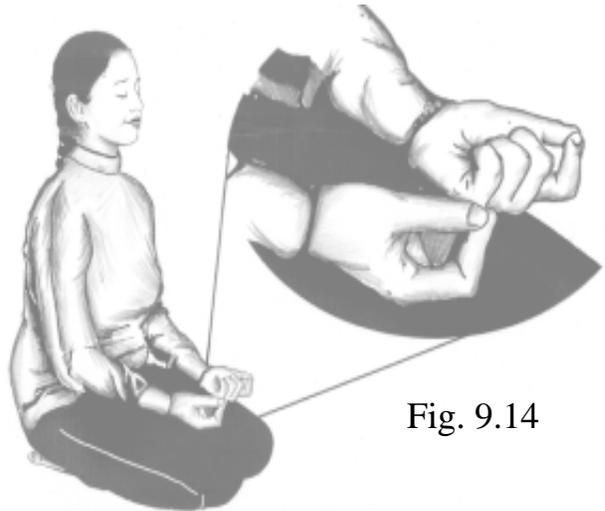


Fig. 9.14

It is important to note here that:

- Avoid movements of abdomen

(iii) Upper lobar (Clavicular) breathing (Ádya)

Starting position: Vajrasana

Practice

- Sit in any meditative posture.
- Place the hands resting on thighs in ädi mudra.
- While inhaling raise the collar bones and shoulders upwards and backwards.

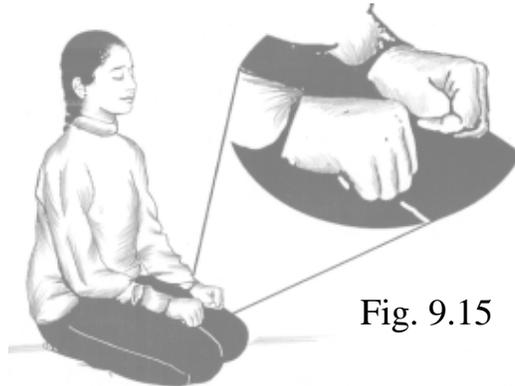


Fig. 9.15

- While exhaling drop down the shoulders to the resting position.
- Repeat this breathing cycle five times.

It is important to note here that:

- Try to avoid movements of the abdomen and chest

(iv) Full yogic breathing

Full yogic breathing is a combination of all the three sections of sectional breathing or Purnashvasa

Starting position: Vajrasana

Practice

- Rest the hands on the abdomen at the navel in Brahma mudrá.
- During inhalation, the Adhamamadhyama and adya pranayama occur sequentially. Now exhale in the same sequence (abdominal, chest and clavicular).
- Repeat this breathing cycle five times.



Notes



Notes

It is important to note here that:

- The whole process should be relaxing and comfortable, with a smile on the face.
- Observe the time of your inhalation and exhalation.
- All breathings should be performed through the nose and not through the mouth. As you increase the number of rounds of full yogic breathing day after day, you will come to develop this practice as an automatic and normal function of the body.

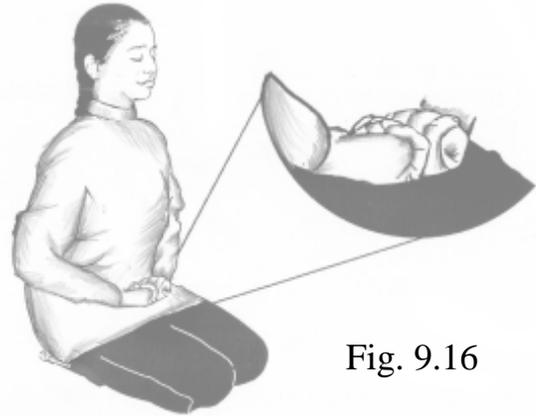


Fig. 9.16

Benefits

- The purpose of this practice is to make you aware of the three different components of respiration (abdominal, thoracic and clavicular) and incorporate them into full yogic breathing.
- Even 5 minutes of full yogic breathing daily can work wonders. You acquire more power and vitality, calmness in daily activities. Thinking and clarity of thought improves, Practice of full yogic breathing helps in calming down your mind and revitalizing it especially when you are feeling tired or angry.

II. NADI SHUDDHI

In Nadi Shuddhi Pranayama one inhales through the left nostril and then exhales through the right nostril, then the order is reversed by inhaling through the right nostril, and exhaling through the left nostril. It is also called Anulomaviloma.

Starting position: Sit in any meditative posture

Practice

- Keep the body erect and place the hands on the respective knees.
- Raise the right hand and place the right thumb on the right nostril and close it.
- Inhale slowly through the left nostril.
- Close the left nostril by the ring finger and the little finger and exhale slowly through the right nostril.
- Again inhale through the right nostril.
- Close the right nostril with thumb and exhale through the left nostril.
- This is one round of Nadishuddhi.
- Repeat it 10 times.



Fig. 9.17

Benefits

- It purifies the blood.
- It calms down the mind and improves concentration.
- It is helpful for children who are hyperactive.



Notes



Notes

III. BHRAMARI

The word Bhramari is derived from Bhramara which means a 'black humming bee'. In this Pranayama, the practitioner makes the sound which resembles the buzzing sound of a black bee, therefore it is named as Bhramari Pranayama.

Starting position: Sit in any meditative posture

Practice

- Assume chinmaya mudra.
- Inhale deeply.
- Exhaling, produce a low pitched sound resembling the humming of a female bee.
- Feel the vibrations in the entire head. After exhalation, bring your hands back on your knees and breathe in slowly. This completes one round.
- Repeat 10 rounds.

It is important to note here that:

- During the practice of Bhrámarè use 'N-kára' and not 'M-kára'.
- Let the tongue touch the upper (hard) palate.
- In the beginning, 5 to 10 rounds of Bhramari is sufficient.

Benefits

- It helps to reduce anger.
- It helps in improvement of concentration and memory.

IV. CONCENTRATION ON THE SOUND-NADANUSANDHANA

While practicing Nadanusandhana, you have to chant (A-kara , U-kara, M-kara, A-U-M) in a sequence. This Nadanusandhana practice gives a soothing effect to our body whole



Notes

(i) A - KARA CHANTING

Starting position: Sit in any Dhyana (meditative posture)

Practice

- Sit in any meditative posture and adopt chin mudra.
- Feel completely relaxed and close your eyes.
- Inhale slowly and completely.
- While exhaling chant 'AAA' in a low pitch.
- Feel the sound resonance in the abdomen and the lower parts of the body.
- Chant 'A' kara by opening completely your mouth completely.
- Feel the resonance in the lower part (below your waist region) of the body.
- Repeat nine times.



Fig. 9.18

(ii) U - KARA CHANTING

Starting position: Sit in any Dhyana (meditative posture).

Practice

- Sit in any meditative posture.



Notes

- Adopt chinmaya mudra.
- Feel the sound resonance in the chest and the middle part of the body.
- While chanting 'U' kara feel the resonance in your middle part (abdomen and thoracic region) of the body.
- Repeat nine times.

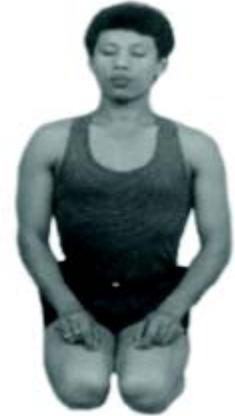


Fig. 9.19

(iii) M - KARA CHANTING

Starting position: Sit in any Dhyana sthiti (meditative posture).

Practice

- Sit in any meditative posture.
- Adopt Adi mudra.
- Inhale slowly and completely.
- While exhaling chant 'MMM' in a low pitch.
- Feel the sound resonance in the entire head region.
- Repeat nine times.



Fig. 9.20

(iv) A-U-M CHANTING

Starting position: Vajrasana

Practice

- Sit in any meditative posture.
- Adopt Brahma mudra.
- Inhale slowly and completely, filling the lungs.

- While exhaling chant 'A-U-M' in a low pitch.
- Feel the sound resonance throughout the body.
- Repeat nine times.

It is important to note here that :

while producing different sounds (A-kara, U-kara, M-kara and A-U-M chanting) try to maintain the same pitch.



Fig. 9.21

Notes



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.2

Fill in the blanks :

1. The normal respiration of a tiger is _____ breaths per minute.
2. The normal respiration rate of a dog is _____ breaths per minute.
3. To begin Jyothi Trataka, start with _____ gazing.
4. In Bhramari, the practitioner makes a _____ sound of a black bee.
5. Nadanusandhana requires _____ on the sound.

Incorrect breathing can cause disorders in voice production. By practicing voice culture it helps:



WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT

- To make the breathing uniform, continuous and rhythmic.
- Develop attentiveness on breathing.
- Increases your breathing capacity.
- Voice intonation and voice leveling can be mastered only when there is proper breathing capacity.



Notes

**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. What is the number of breaths taken in Tiger, dog breathing exercise?
2. How do kriya practices benefit you?
3. Explain the procedure of practicing the following :
 - (i) Tongue massaging.
 - (ii) Mouth Twisting.
 - (iii) Tongue Twisting.
 - (iv) Tongue Rotation.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS****9.1**

1. Voice Production.
2. Maximum.
3. Teeth.
4. Raise.
5. Flexibility.

9.2

1. 10-35.
2. 10-30.
3. Effortless.
4. Buzzing.
5. Concentration.