

THYROID CONDITIONS AND PRANAYAMA



Controlled
breathing
can cure many
diseases

Human body converts food, water and oxygen into tissue, energy and waste products through metabolism. Every cell participates in this continuous process. Our metabolism is controlled by endocrine glands, such as thyroid gland, parathyroid glands, adrenal glands, pituitary glands and pancreas.

Thyroid Gland

Thyroxine is a hormone secreted by the thyroid gland situated in front of the neck.

Thyroxine regulates the general metabolism of the body. When the thyroid gland malfunctions, it secretes hormone in excess or in less quantity. An excess secretion is a condition known as Hyperthyroidism, while low secretion is called Hypothyroidism.

Hyperthyroidism is more common in women in the age group of 30-50 years. Under this condition, patients tend to become uneasy, irritable and anxious. When metabolism increases, the heart rate goes up with palpitation. There may be frequent bowel movements, sweating, menstrual disturbance and bulging of eyes.

Yoga for Thyroid

Yoga practices help in controlling this disease. *Sarvangasana* is the most suitable and effective *asana* for the thyroid gland, as also *Matsyasana* and *Halasana*. Other effective *asanas* include *Surya Namskara*, *Pavamuktasana*, *Yoga Mudra*, *Suptavajrasana* and most backward bending *asanas*.

The most effective *pranayama* for thyroid problems is *Ujjayi*. It acts on the throat area and its relaxing and stimulating effects are due to stimulation of reflex pathways within the throat area, which are controlled by the brainstem and hypothalamus.

This practice also gives us direct access into the *pranic* and psychic network, the substructure of metabolic activity.

The literal meaning of *Ujjayi Pranayama* is 'victorious breath'. In this exercise, the process of inhalation (*pooraka*) and exhalation (*rechaka*) are both done through the nostrils.

During the process an “ocean-like sound” is formed by moving the glottis, which is part of the larynx consisting of the vocal

chords and the slit-like opening between them.

As the throat passage is narrowed, the passage of air through that creates a “rushing” sound. The diaphragm controls the length and speed of our breath.

It is said that *rishis* of the past performing the *Ujjayi Pranayama* could melt the snow in the process!

As the incidence of Hypothyroidism is increasing day by day, there is attempt to treat the disease through *ayurvedic* system of medicine, which is considered natural and safe. As a support measure, patients are advised to avoid or minimise eating goitrogenic foods, such as cabbage, sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet potatoes, soya and pearl millet.

These foods contain natural goitrogens, which are chemicals that cause the enlargement of the thyroid gland by interfering with thyroid hormone synthesis 🕯

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