

Yoga Kriyas: The Purifying Practices

Also called “Shatkriya” (6 cleansing practices)

Traditionally used to prepare the aspirant for yoga practices. They were once highly secret and prescribed and taught individually by an accomplished teacher. They are indicated in the cases of excess fat or mucus, or for imbalances of the doshas (Vata, pitta and kapha)

1) Dhauti: Gastrointestinal Cleansing

- *Gajakarani* - upper wash
- *Hrid dhauti* - stomach cleansing with cloth
- *Agni sara* - internal cleansing by fire
- *Shankaprakshalana* - complete intestinal wash

2) Basti: Cleansing of the Bowel

- *Jala basti* - water enema
- In Ayurveda, are many other nourishing enemas using herbal teas/decoctions and oils

3) Neti: Nasal Cleansing (with water or thread)

- *Jala neti* - using water
- *Sutra neti* - using string or catheter

4) Trataka: Gazing (internal or external)

Includes a large number of practices that involve focusing upon an object or image for an extended period of time. The result is an increase in the ability to focus attention, and the purification of the mind

5) Nauli: Abdominal churning

Requires the capacity to practice Agni sara. Both Agni sara and Nauli cleanse, strengthen and invigorate the abdominal organs.

6) Kapalabhati: Skull-shining pranayama

This is a vigorous breathing exercise that cleanses the abdominal viscera, lungs, nasal passages and sinuses; it also strengthens the heart and nervous system, and invigorates the entire body.