

# SUNDAY

Your Companion for a Funday

## From health to spirituality: Why Pranayama should be practiced daily

Anybody who has ever attended a Yoga class or seen people do Yoga on TV must be knowing what Pranayama is. Many people think of Pranayama as merely a breathing exercise which can at best clear their nostrils. But, Pranayama is actually much more than that.

In fact, Pranayama is that one simple yogic practice that can help people walk on the path of their spiritual journey. For people who seek inner growth, peace, clarity and calm, Pranayama is like the ultimate tool. As said by Sadhguru in one of his blogs, "Prana" means "the vital energy", "yama" means to gain control over that. So, it is a subtle process through which one can gain control over his inner energies."

Is there a right time? While many say that Pranayama can be done any time of the day as long as the person doing it is concentrated and away from distractions, many elders and experts state that Brahma Muhurta is the best time.

Traditionally, early morning hours, that is during the 'brahma muhurta' of 4 to 6 AM, doing Pranayama is encouraged. At this time the atmosphere is calm, and the mind is naturally more receptive to positive energies. Thus, performing Pranyama during the early morning hours helps enhance spiritual practices.

How does Pranayama help? One of the primary ways in which pranayama helps in spiritual practices is by bringing together the mind, body, and spirit of the person who performs it. By regulating the breath, practitioners learn to be more aware of their life force and its importance.

The awareness about the simple function which enables us to live helps maintain a deeper connection with the energy around us. Through consistent practice, individuals develop a sense of inner peace and contentment, which helps them forget about the outside world and the distractions it comes with.

Clears the mind



Pranayama has always been known as a strong tool when it comes to matters of the mind. In our fast-paced lives, it's easy to become overwhelmed by stress and anxiety, which directly and indirectly stops us from our spiritual journeys. Something as simple as ego or jealousy are considered to be obstructions in the path of spirituality.

And this is where Pranayama comes to the rescue. It offers a means to quiet the incessant chatter of the mind, allowing practitioners to experience moments of stillness. When people learn to breathe consciously and deeply, mental agitation reduces.

Improves concentration The regulation of breath in pranayama also improves concentration and focus, which are both very important parts of spirituality. By being more aware of your energies and setting them in the right way, people become more disciplined and attentive. As their mind and concentration sharpen and improve, people finally start realising the real meaning of life and the time they spent in jealousy over others accomplishments.

Pranayama and the smooth flow of energy Pranayama, through discipline and breathing, promotes the purification of the subtle energy channels, or 'nadis' within our body. Once these channels are cleared out, this helps with the free flow of prana.

It is said that when these energy paths that are present inside your body are facing any blocks, i.e., in the form of ego, jealousy, anger, distractions and the likes, this will lead to turmoil inside the body. High stress could lead to physical problems, jealousy could make way for mental issues and all of it together results in a human who is not in touch with self.

And then through Pranayama, a person is able to clear out these pathways and let positive energy flow within them.

## Signs of mental health struggles in children



Children are not as expressive as adults, which is why it becomes extremely challenging for parents to read their minds and understand their emotions. But there are several ways kids express their discomfort and troubles. While adults may overlook a child's distress or tag it as insignificant, it is important to acknowledge and address any signs of mental health problems. Here are some signs that your child might be struggling with mental health.

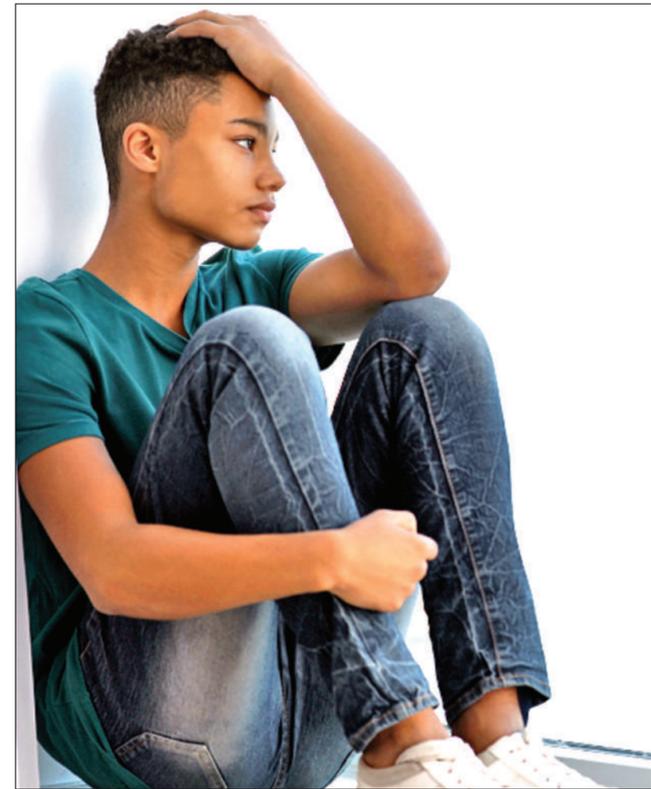
**Persistent sadness** There is a thin line between sadness and persistent sadness. While sadness can be a temporary feeling, persistent sadness that lasts for two weeks or more can indicate mental health struggles in kids, according to the Mayo Clinic. The health body also describes it as persistent depressive disorder, which is a continuous, long-term form of depression. One may feel sad and empty, may lose interest in day to day activities and also have low self-esteem.

**Changes in behavior and mood** A child dealing with mental health struggles may have a wide range of emotions, may develop changes in their behavior and experience outbursts or extreme irritability. These out-of-control behavior may also be aimed at harming oneself. Your child might feel sad, anxious or get aggressive.

**Avoidance behavior** An avoidance behavior is when your child maintains his or her distance from social settings and situations that cause uncomfortable and distressing feelings. They constantly withdraw from or avoid social interactions. Every child deals with this behavior differently. Little kids may throw tantrums, cry or leave a situation. Older children may have a different way of coping with it. They may act as though they don't understand what a person is talking about.

**When they talk about death and suicide** Never ignore conversations that dwell on death and suicide. If your child continuously initiates death-related topics or discussions or says things like 'I would be better off dead or I wish I were dead,' then you must intervene immediately and try to understand the cause of the issue. Let them know what makes them special and how loved that they are.

**Physical symptoms** Most of the time, children with mental health struggles aren't able to vocalize their emotions and feelings. However, as parents, you can identify it through physical symptoms in them. Kids often complain of headaches, fatigue, and stomach pain. This is common in most cases. But if it is persistent, then it is best to consult a pediatrician. If the doctor rules out physical problems, then time to consult another professional.



## 7 reasons why empathy is important in relationships

In the intricate web of human connections, empathy emerges as an essential, albeit often overlooked, element that binds hearts and minds together. Whether within familial bonds or romantic partnerships, empathy stands as the cornerstone of understanding and compassion. Here, we present seven compelling reasons elucidating the paramount importance of empathy in fostering healthy relationships:

**Improved communication** Acting as a vital conduit, empathy facilitates deeper emotional connections between individuals, thereby nurturing open and authentic communication. Through active listening and genuine comprehension of each other's perspectives, partners can navigate conflicts with empathy, paving the way for more constructive resolutions.

**Establishment of trust** Trust forms the bedrock of every successful relationship, and empathy plays a pivotal role in its establishment. When individuals feel genuinely understood and validated, they are more inclined to place their trust in their partners, fostering an environment where they can confide without apprehension of judgment or rejection.

**Deepened intimacy** Empathy serves as a catalyst for intimacy by fostering emotional closeness and vulnerability between partners. Through empathetic understanding of each other's feelings and experiences, couples create a sanctuary where intimacy can flourish, fortifying their bond and intensifying their connection.

**Effective conflict resolution** While conflicts are an inevitable facet of any relationship, empathy has the transformative power to turn them from destructive confrontations into opportunities for mutual growth and understanding. By empathizing with each other's emotions and perspectives, partners can approach conflicts with compassion, thus facilitating the discovery of mutually beneficial solutions.

**Provision of support and validation** In moments of distress or uncertainty, empathy serves as a steadfast source of support and validation. When partners empathize with each other's struggles and celebrate each other's triumphs, they reinforce their emotional bond, offering reassurance of unwavering support and understanding.

**Enhancement of emotional well-being** Empathy plays a pivotal role in promoting emotional well-being by validating and affirming each other's emotions. When partners feel genuinely understood and accepted, they experience heightened emotional satisfaction and fulfillment within their relationship, leading to an overall sense of happiness and well-being.

**Cultivation of empathy in future generations** By embodying empathy in their relationships, couples set a powerful example for future generations. Children raised in environments characterized by empathy learn the value of compassion and understanding, laying a solid foundation for healthier and more empathetic relationships in their own lives.

