

# SIGNIFICANCE OF PRATYAHARA IN MANAGEMENT OF TECHNO-STRESS

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**Abstract:** Today in the Modern era most people are becoming short-tempered, anxious, criminals, impulsive, sensory overloaded from media, sensory indulgence in a glamorous world, all because of technology. As technology is giving every asset for the comfort of the human being, due to which dependency on technology has increased and as byproduct stress is also increased. Man is loaded with stress and due to which he takes several strange reactions and also invites many diseases. Man is just chasing the money and for this purpose, he uses his all senses in outward direction but in this race, he forgets the real bliss that lies within. And this race of technology gives birth to anxiety, greed, sadness, depression, and many other physical as well as mental disorders. So, to prevent ourselves from all these problems the most effective solution is to practice Pratyahara or reversal of senses or mastery over unruly senses. We need to focus on ourselves; we need to be patient, stable, understanding, and full of real wisdom so that we can differentiate between right and wrong. We should use things only for need and do not get addicted to things. This could be possible only when we have our senses in our control, so Pratyahara (indriya pratyahara, karma pratyahara, mano pratyahara, and prana pratyahara) is best for control or withdrawal of senses. We have to live in a society of technology but in such a manner that it will not affect our inner self.

If we go to any centers to get rid of technostress many people suggest that meditation is best for dealing the stress but if we do not have a practice of Pratyahara than one could not be able to perform meditation. Pratyahara will not just work on outer aspects but on the inner aspects of humans, it means it is not possible to move directly from asana to meditation. Because they have different levels and we need to cross levels one by one. So Pratyahara practice will help us to move towards meditation and it is the higher stage to train our mind.

**Key words:** Unruly Senses, Pratyahara, Techno stress, Yoga, Internalizing, Indriya Pratyahara, mano pratyahara, karma Pratyahara, prana Pratyahara.

## 1.INTRODUCTION TO PRATYAHARA

The term “pratyahara” [1] is combination of two Sanskrit words that is, prati+ahara. “Ahara” means “food or things which we take inside of ourselves from the outer sources.” Whether it is air, water, thoughts, food, emotions all are food of our body and soul. “Prati” means “control” or “away.” “Pratyahara” means “control of ahara that we are taking from outside”. We can understand it with the example of tortoise. Assume tortoise’s shell as the mind and its limbs as senses so when any foreign body comes in its contact it contracts all his limbs inside the shell. Same we need to do we did not let technology affect our selves by the means of pratyahara we can stay away from techno stress and stress related disorders.

Pratyahara is two dimensional techniques. It includes withdrawal from wrong impressions, wrong food, and wrong associations, while simultaneously moving towards right impressions, right food, and right associations. We cannot control our mind without right food that is thoughts inputs that we intake, satvik food, and right company.

When we withdraw from wrong emotions our mind get strengthens, when we withdraw from wrong food our body strengthens and when we withdraw from wrong associations our whole personality strengthens. So to be away from stress caused by technology we need to be strong from mind. Away from the habit of ease and comfort, laziness, and realize the need means things to be used only that much is necessary. For this purpose we need to control our unruly senses. That always wonder outside and in result acquire stress.

## 2. TYPES OF PRATYAHARA [2]

1. Indriya-pratyahara — control of the Indriyas or senses,
2. Prana- pratyahara — control of prana or vital energy,
3. Karma-pratyahara — control of action or deeds,

	CHAPTER/ VERSE	SUMMARY
1. PATANJALI YOGA SUTRA[12]	2/54,55	<i>Savishayasamprayogechittaswaroopanukaar evendriyanam pratyahara (2/54).</i>  <i>Tatah parma vashyatendriyanam (2/55).</i>
2. GHERAND SAMHITA[13]	6/1-7	(6/1) Now I shall expound the excellent pratyahara by knowing which enemies like desires are destroyed.  (6/2) wherever the wondering and unsteady mind goes it is to be withdrawn from there and brought under the control of self.  (6/3) whatever the sight falls the mind follows therefore bring it under the control of self.  (6/4) mind should be withdrawn from what is heard whether it is respectful or insulting pleasant to hear or terrible and it should be brought under the control of the self.  (6/5) mind should be withdrawn from the sensation caused by cold and heat and it should be brought under the control of the self.  (6/6) one should withdrawl the Mind from smells whether sweat or stinking and bring it under the control of self.  (6/7) The Mind should be withdrawn from taste such as sweet sour and bitter and brought under the control of the self.

<p>3. VASISTHA SAMHITA[14]</p> <p>3/58-61</p>	<p>1. The withdrawal of the sense organs which By Nature indulge in the sense object.</p> <p>2. Whatever one sees all that should be seen by oneself within the self.</p> <p>3. The performance of the obligatory duties mentally within the self and without any external aids.</p> <p>4. Holding the air successively at the 18 vital points after putting it from proceeding points.</p>
<p>4. RUDRYAMAL TANTRA[15]</p> <p>2.27/28-30</p>	<p>(2.27/28-30) The Mind connected with senses and their objects is irresistible, firm, difficult to control and unwilling to obey the withdrawal of it by the power of will is called Pratyahara by practice of Pratyahara the Yogi becomes calm and is able to concentrate deeply. This leads him to yoga.</p> <p>Fluctuation in mind is caused by desires, when desires are controlled by Pratyahara the mind becomes still and concentrates on God.</p>
<p>5. YOGA CHUDAMANI UPNISHAD[17]</p> <p>Mantra 120-121</p>	<p>Eyes and other sense organs get attracted towards their attractions and to bound or control of senses at that time is called Pratyahara</p> <p>Pratyahara is compared with the drowning sun.</p>

### 3.IMPORTANT TEXTS WHICH INCLUDES THE CONCEPT OF PRATYAHARA(table-1)

## 4. TECHNIQUES LEADING TO PRACTICE OF PRATYAHARA [16]

### 4.1 Control of the Senses (Indriya-pratyahara)[7]

Indriya-pratyahara, is the most important form of pratyahara, although many don't take much interest in it in today's culture. The constant use of televisions, mobiles, books etc causes a sensory overload. Today's society functions by invigorating our interests using our senses. Every day and every time we have to face dramatic sensations like dazzling colors and deafening noises. Sensory indulgence is the main form of entertainment in the prevailing society. But the problem is that the senses are like toddlers and they have the tendency to work at their own will which can be said to be innate in nature. They command the mind to do things and if not disciplined they end up dominating us with infinite orders. We have made ourselves so accustomed to the existing sensory activities that we have lost the ability to have a quiet mind and have become prisoners of the senses. These allurements have distracted us from our goals in life. For this reason, pratyahara is the most important branch of yoga for today's generation.

Pratyahara acts as the tool for managing these sensory impressions. The simplest way to control our impressions is to abstain from them by meditating or by taking a break from all the electric appliances or reading etc. to cleanse and rejuvenate the mind. Yoni mudra is one of the most important pratyahara techniques for controlling the sensory impressions. It involves using the fingers to block the sensory openings in the head — the eyes, ears, nostrils, and mouth — and allowing the attention and energy to move within. It is done for short periods of time when our prana is energized, such as immediately after practicing pranayama. (Naturally we should avoid closing the mouth and nose to the point at which we starve ourselves of oxygen.) Another method of sense withdrawal is by withdrawing our attention from our sense organs but along with that keeping them open also .this helps in ceasing the intake of impressions without actually closing off our sense organs. The most common method, shambhavi mudra, consists of sitting with the eyes open while directing the attention within,

Another sensory withdrawal technique is by focusing the mind on inner impressions and withdrawing attention from external impressions. We can create our own inner impressions by imagination or we can contact the subtle senses that come into play when the physical senses are quiet.

Visualization is the easiest way of creating inner impressions. In fact, mostly yogic meditation practices begin with some type of visualization, such as "seeing" a deity, a guru, or a beautiful setting in nature. These all forms of pratyahara help in clearing the mental field of external impressions and creating a positive inner impression which serves as the foundation of meditation. Preliminary visualizations are helpful for most forms of meditation and can be integrated into other spiritual practices as well. Yoni mudra, shanmukhi mudra, shambhavi mudra, trataka, kapalbhati are the best techniques to control indriya.

### 4.2 Control of the Prana (Prana-Pratyahara) [8]

Control of the senses requires the development and control of prana because the senses follow prana (our vital energy). Unless our prana is strong we will not have the power to control the senses as scattered prana leads to disturbed senses. Pranayama is a preparation for pratyahara. Prana is gathered in pranayama and withdrawn in pratyahara. Pranayama is the most useful technique for control over prana. Because as it is said "chale vatam chalam chittam" when we control prana we control our mind also. Yogic texts describe methods of withdrawing prana from different parts of the body, starting with the toes and ending wherever we wish to fix our attention — the top of the head, the third eye, the heart or one of the other chakras. Perhaps the best method of prana-pratyahara is to visualize the death process, in which the prana, or the life-force, withdraws from the body, shutting off all the senses from the feet to the head. Ramana Maharshi

achieved Self-realization by doing this when he was a mere boy of seventeen. Before inquiring into the Self, he visualized his body as dead, withdrawing his prana into the mind and the mind into the heart. Without such complete and intense pratyahara, his meditative process would not have been successful.

#### 4.3 Control of Action (Karma-Pratyahara) [9]

Sensory organs cannot be controlled unless we control our motor organs. Motor organs directly link us with the external world around us. The impulses that we receive through our senses are expressed by the motor organs which causes more involvement of the sensory organs. Right work and right action helps us in controlling our motor organs. This involves karma yoga — performing selfless service and making our life a sacred ritual. Karma-pratyahara can be performed by surrendering any thought of personal rewards for what we do, doing everything as service to God or to humanity. The Bhagavad Gita says, "Your duty is to act, not to seek a reward for what you do." This is one kind of pratyahara. It also includes the practice of austerities that lead to control of the motor organs. For example, asana can be used to control the hands and feet, control which is needed when we sit quietly for extended periods of time.

#### 4.4 Withdrawal of the Mind (Mano-Pratyahara) [10]

Mind is the sixth sense organ and is responsible for coordinating all the other sense organs. In a way we are always practicing Pratyahara even when we are focusing on something. The mind's attention is limited and we give attention to one sensory impression by withdrawing the mind from other impressions. Wherever we place our attention, we naturally overlook other things. We control our senses by withdrawing our mind's attention from them. According to the Yoga Sutras II.54: "When the senses do not conform with their own objects but imitate the nature of the mind, that is pratyahara." More specifically, it is mano-pratyahara — withdrawing the senses from their objects and directing them inward to the nature of the mind, which is formless. Vyasa's commentary on the Yoga Sutra notes that the mind is like the queen bee and the senses are the worker bees. Wherever the queen bee goes, all the other bees must follow. Thus mano-pratyahara is less about controlling the senses than about controlling the mind, for when the mind is controlled, the senses are automatically controlled. Mano-pratyahara can be practiced by consciously withdrawing our attention from unwholesome impressions whenever they arise. This is the highest form of pratyahara and the most difficult; if we have not gained proficiency in controlling the senses, motor organs, and pranas, it is unlikely to work.

### 5. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Vrata or Tapa [11]- It provides a control over taste and also on your hunger it gives a bliss where we determined for fasting and our body functions in that manner, don't feel the hunger, mon vrata it controls excessive talk and at that time we better get connected to ourselves mind for somehow reaches in zero condition.

Kapalbhati kriya [12]- After doing kapalbhati for around 5-10 mins or more than 10mins i feel the sensation throughout the brain and a very calm and soothing sensation. Feels a different kind of enlightenment where thoughts becomes powerless and brain becomes still.

Shanmukhi mudra [13] - For a while all contacts with outer environment get disconnected though eyes, nose, ear and tongue all get blocked it creates a Atmosphere where you can see inward means you can watch or observe your own thoughts your own internal activity which we generally never mind. Strengthens the stillness of mind.

Trataka [14] - A candle's flame though it is an outer object but helps to focus inwards because we just focus on its flame by open eye and then with close eyes we try to see that flame inside our eyebrow center it enhances the focus and also determination power. In result it causes soothing effect.

Swadhyaya [15] -Leads to positive thinking and encourages the real journey towards meditation and inside ourselves. We use to read our ancient scriptures and it motivates towards our real goal and each time make us realize the uncertainty of this world. Doing swadhyay gives new perception for doing yoga practice and need of pratyahara.

Satvik ahara- Fully control over taste and increases satva guna in body which is essential in yoga sadhana. It will take u away from wrong path. Rajasik and tamasik ahara misleads us that's why in ancient texts only satvik ahara is prescribed for yoga practitioner. Satvik ahara by increasing satva guna in body help in sadhna. Anna directly affect body and mind.

Satsang- Broadens the area of thinking and comes to know the more deeper things about yoga. Through satsang we come to know about others experience and also sometimes gets the real idea about our position whether we are on right track or not.

## 6.CONCLUSION

Pratyahara is related to all the limbs of yoga. All of the other limbs — from asana to samadhi — contain aspects of pratyahara. For example, in the sitting poses, which are the most important aspect of asana, both the sensory and motor organs are controlled. Pranayama contains an element of pratyahara as we draw our attention inward through the breath. Yama and niyama contain various principles and practices, like non-violence and contentment, which help us, control the senses. In other words, pratyahara provides the foundation for the higher practices of yoga and is the basis for meditation. It follows pranayama (or control of prana) and, by linking prana with the mind, takes it out of the sphere of the body. Pratyahara is also linked with dharana. In pratyahara we withdraw our attention from ordinary distractions.

In dharana we consciously focus that attention on a particular object. Pratyahara is the negative and dharana the positive aspect of the same basic function. Many of us find that even after years of meditation practice we have not achieved all that we expected. Trying to practice meditation without some degree of pratyahara is like trying to gather water in a leaky vessel. No matter how much water we bring in, it flows out at the same rate. The senses are like holes in the vessel of the mind. Unless they are sealed, the mind cannot hold the nectar of truth. Anyone whose periods of meditation alternate with periods of sensory indulgence is in need of pratyahara. Pratyahara offers many methods of preparing the mind for meditation. It also helps us avoid environmental disturbances that are the source of psychological pain.

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