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## Trataka

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### Abstract

Trataka is a method of meditation that involves staring at a single point such as a small object, black dot or candle flame. It is said to bring energy to the “third eye” and promote various psychic abilities. Trataka is of two kinds: internal and external. Internal Trataka is called Dharana or concentration because in this practice the eyes are closed and the mind concentrated upon some subtle element within. External trataka means fixing the eyes on some object outside. The word trataka means to gaze steadily. Trataka is gazing without blinking at an object placed directly in front of the eyes. At the time of practicing trataka, the eyeballs should remain steady and the eyelids should not flicker. No object except the one on which trataka is to be performed should be seen, and the mind should not wander hither and thither but be merged in observation of the object. The sadhana of trataka will help a great deal in understanding the mind and making its unseen powers active, so as to prepare for self-realization.

**Keywords:** Relationships, meditation developed, Trataka, physical, mental, social and spiritual health

### Introduction

Daily life is a system of practice consisting of eight levels of development in the areas of physical, mental, social and spiritual health. When the body is physically healthy, the mind is clear, focused and stress is under control. This gives the space to connect with loved ones and maintain socially healthy relationships. When you are healthy, you are in touch with your inner self, with others and your surroundings on a much deeper level, which adds to your spiritual health.

Yoga is a traditional method of meditation developed by the saints of ancient India. The Shatkarma is a combination of six purification techniques mentioned in Hatha Yoga Pradeepika. Shatkarma makes the body clean, strong, and free of diseases. It removes toxins and improves concentration. It improves the flow of into the organs. The six techniques are Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli and Kapalabhati.

The word Trataka means ‘to look’ or ‘to gaze’

It acts as stepping stone between physically oriented practices and mental practices which lead to higher states of awareness. It forms a bridge between Hatha yoga and Raja yoga. Trataka affects the Ajna chakra or third eye. It is preliminary for sambhavi and unmani mudras. Trataka creates awareness of the Agya Chakra. Experts believe that Trataka can improve vision by promoting mental focus and by strengthening and relaxing our eyes muscles. Such muscles are responsible for controlling the eyeballs movements towards the upward, downward, left and right directions. Trataka as described in the important hatha yogic texts, consists of steady gazing in a well-composed manner, at a particular point or minute object, without winking, until tears begin to flow.

### Yogic exercise

Trataka is a method of meditation that involves staring at a single point such as a small object, black dot or a candle flame. It is said to bring energy to the “third eye” and promote various psychic abilities.

**Trataka is of two kinds:** Internal and external. Internal Trataka is called Dharana or concentration because in this practice the eyes are closed and the mind concentrated upon some subtle element within. External trataka means fixing the eyes on some object outside. The word trataka means to gaze steadily. Trataka is gazing without blinking at an object placed

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directly in front of the eyes. At the time of practicing trataka, eyeballs should remain steady and eyelids should not flicker. No object except the one on which trataka is to be performed should be seen, and the mind should not wander hither and thither but be merged in observation of the object. The sadhana of trataka will help a great deal in understanding the mind and making its unseen powers active, so as to prepare for self-realization. The practice of trataka is independent in its own way and is meant for aspirants of higher categories. Trataka is a very powerful sadhana. Gandhari had mastered trataka. Ramana Maharshi also practiced trataka. Many sadhus in the mountains have practiced this sadhana. Trataka shows us that eyes are the instruments by which the mind and the soul are reached. The impression of the object falls on the optic nerves. The shadow of the object falls on the eyes and then on the retina. The optic nerves of the retina are connected by the sensory nerves with the brain. The brain has several centers which are connected with the optic nerves. These centers receive information through the optic nerves and send out commands. Many of these centers are asleep or inactive. Trataka does not merely increase the function of perception. Through the medium of perception, the centers of the brain, which remain inactive in an ordinary person, are awakened. Man is capable of becoming a superman, if he is able to awaken and activate those glands and nerve centers which in the natural course of evolution are in an inactive state. It is a very ancient practice and it is mentioned in Hath Yoga and Pradeepika by Swami Swatmaram. Those who practice trataka, receive clairvoyance and future vision. At the physiological level, it is a wonderful practice to overcome all the eye problems; it relaxes all the eye muscles and all the eye nerves that are directly related with the brain. Primarily, the practice of Trataka stimulates the Ajna chakra, the place of intuition, the place of wisdom. This practice brings balance in different brain centers and brings balance in the autonomic and central nervous system. Trataka is known to relieve conditions like eye strain and headaches, astigmatism, myopia, as well the early stages of cataract. Even those without eye problems find that their sight becomes clearer and they are able to see Better than before. Further, it is therapeutic in poor concentration and memory, depression, insomnia and anxiety. It also results in one-pointedness of the mind and helps enhance willpower while improving memory and powers of concentration.

### Types of Trataka

Trataka is of three types:

1. External Trataka or “An Taranga”
2. Middle Trataka or
3. Internal Trataka or “Bahiranga”

#### 1. External Trataka

External trataka consists of gazing at a particular object with eyes opened and focusing on the same stimulus until tears drop from the eyes. The most popular & practiced choice of gazing object is ‘candle flame’ trataka (described below).

It is the preparatory exercise for beginners who wants to deepen in meditation practice. It also builds Dharna (concentration), 6th in 8 limbs of yoga, in the practitioner.

#### 2. Middle Trataka

In *Madhya* or middle trataka, no external object is chosen to gaze rather than gaze is focused on the middle of the eyebrows (*Shambhavi Mudra*) and at the tip of your nose

(*nasikagra drishti*). It can also be practiced by fixing the gaze on a black dot printed on white paper. *Madhya* Trataka increase the alertness in the person and also cultivate awareness in Ajna Chakra.

#### 3. Internal TRATAKA

When the practice of external trataka is mastered, then the practitioner able to gaze into the void; it's the internal trataka. In this trataka, the Practitioner concentrates the mind on an internally imagined object with closed eyes. The most imagined internal object in internal trataka is the middle of the eyebrows, heart, or the belly button.

#### Guidelines in practicing

- This practice is to be done in the dark preferably in the evening.
- Remove glasses, wristwatch and belt and make yourself comfortable in the posture.
- Sit with your head, neck and spine erect. Always open your eyes with a few blinks.
- During eye exercises head should not to be moved but the eyeballs.
- Start looking at the floor and then slowly bring your gaze onto the flame.
- Breathe slowly and deeply with awareness during palmig.
- Palms are placed in such a way that there is complete darkness in front of eyes. During palming don't let the palms touch or press the eyeballs.
- The facial muscles, eyebrows and eyelids should remain totally relaxed.
- Trataka should be performed after Asanas and Pranayam.
- Practice Trataka on a steady flame. Avoid undue strain to the eyes.

#### Benefits of Trataka

Some of the benefits associated with trataka are:

- Improving eyesight and vision.
- Improving concentration, intelligence and memory.
- Enhancing self-confidence, patience and willpower.
- Developing greater work efficiency and productivity.
- Calming the mind and providing inner peace and silence.
- Bringing greater clarity in mind and improving decision-making ability.
- Helping to overcome mental, behavioral and emotional ailments.
- Providing stress relief and deep relaxation.
- Deepening the sleep and curing sleep-related disorders such as headache, insomnia, nightmares, etc
- According to Gheranda Samhita (Shloka 5.54), Trataka promotes clairvoyance or perception of subtle Manifestations.

#### Conclusion

Trataka is a very effective procedure with multidimensional benefits at physical, mental and spiritual aspects. For effectively counteracting the increased instances of psychosomatic illnesses occurring now a day, this procedure should be popularized in the society for practice by one and all.

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