

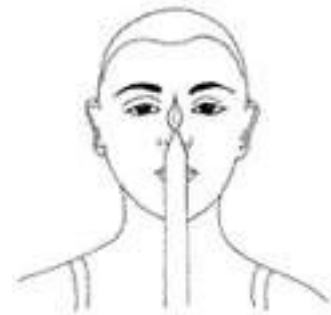
## TRATAKA (candle gazing)

tratak = look or gaze

### Technique

There are many variations given on how to perform Trataka.  
A good method is as follows.

Remove glasses and contact lenses if possible. Sit in a darkened room, which is free from drafts. Use any comfortable seated position where the spine is erect. Hands are placed in Jnana or Chin Mudra, both of which aid concentration. Place a candle at eye level ensuring the flame remains still.



Centre yourself quietly then opening eyes gaze gently just above the wick towards the middle of the flame. Gently continue gazing **without blinking** for up to 10 minutes or so and if the eyes become tired just lower eyelids a little. You may find your eyes start to water and tears form and this is perfectly okay, continuing if possible. Feel you can close eyes if necessary. Be as relaxed as possible.

A candle flame is usually used since it does not possess any attributes or associations other than its inherent brightness, which reflects the natural qualities of the eyes; the eyes are considered to be an organ of light and intelligence symbolized by fire, but we could also use any object. Remember whatever you place your focus upon fills our senses so we do need to consider what object we choose because at some level its qualities will enter us.

Note that trataka for cleansing purposes is different from trataka for meditation purposes because when we are using trataka for meditation we are primarily concerned with developing one-pointedness or the ability to concentrate whereas as a shatkarma we are focused upon cleansing and strengthening.

### Benefits

Trataka is said to cure diseases of the eyes and feeling of tiredness. It can help to develop the ability to focus the mind and strengthens our psychic muscles.

### Precautions & Prohibitions

Trataka, especially upon a flame should not be performed by anyone suffering from epilepsy since it may initiate a seizure, or M.S. & diabetes where the retina can easily be damaged. For these students we can use a black dot on a piece of white paper instead.

***See HYP chapter 2 v31 & 32 for more information***