Our physiological functioning is affected by the flow of prana along its five major currents: Prana, Apana, Vyana, Samana and Udana. This is much like the inner-workings of a very sophisticated engine. Prana brings in the fuel, Samana converts this fuel to energy, Vyana circulates the energy to the various work sites, Apana releases the waste materials or by-products of the conversion process, Udana governs the positive energy created in the process and determines the work that the engine is able to do. The physiological processes in the body (circulation, digestion, elimination, reproduction, immunity, etc) are governed by one or more vayus. By learning to work with the vayus we can get access to our physiology.

**PRANA VAYU**
Prana vayu is responsible for intake. It moves downward and inward, providing the basic energy that drives us in life. It is primarily located in the head, lungs and heart. Imbalances in Prana flow can show up as anxiety, fear, anger (head); breathlessness, asthma, sleep apnea (lungs); heart palpitations or stroke (heart).
Some of the ways to keep your Prana vayu in balance include:

- Emphasis on Inhalation (to encourage taking things in)
- Prana Breath (IN: Pull the energy in through the sensory openings in the head (nose, eyes, ears, third eye); hold for a moment; EX: Release the energy through the third eye)
- “Positive impressions”: contact with nature, visualizations, rituals
- Sensory therapies: colors, sounds, aromas
- Meditation generates prana in the mind
- Wherever space and stillness is created, prana flows

**UDANA VAYU**
Udana vayu is responsible for growth. It moves upward and is a result of other vayus working properly. It governs our ability to stand, our speech, effort, enthusiasm and will. It is concentrated near the diaphragm and throat and is responsible for certain respiratory functions, speech and mental functioning (by supporting the blood movement to the brain). Imbalances in Udana vayu functioning include asthma, emphysema; stuttering, voice hoarseness; depression, poor memory, lack of creativity, direction or goals.
To help with Udana functioning you can try:

- Focus on Exhalation, particularly diaphragmatic breathing
- Udana Breath (IN: Breathe in through the mouth, attention at the throat chakra EX: Chant OM)
- Jalandhara Bandha-like movements
- Chanting
- Working with all other Vayus

**APANA VAYU**
Apana vayu is responsible for elimination. It moves down and out, and also helps retain things in.
It is primarily located in the lower abdomen and is associated with functions of elimination, reproduction and bone health (regulating the absorption and retaining of minerals). Imbalances in Apana flow can show up as constipation/diarrhea, IBS; menstrual problems, sexual issues; bone density issues.
Some of the ways to keep your Apana vayu in balance include:

- Focus on Exhalation and Suspension of breath (hold after inhale)
- Apana Breath (IN: Pull the energy into the belly EX: Direct the energy from the belly into the feet/ground; hold the air out for a moment. Attention at the root chakra)
- Mula Bandha – like contraction of pelvic floor muscles
- Nourishing foods, less junk

**VYANA VAYU**
Vyana vayu is responsible for distribution. It moves outward in a circular, pulsating motion. It is located in the heart and lungs and is involved in cardiac activity, circulation and voluntary nervous system. Imbalances may show up as poor circulation, blocked arteries, heart attack, edema; peripheral neuropathy, symptoms of MS.
Practices that benefit Vyana vayu include:

- Focus on Inhalation and expansion
- Retention of breath (hold after inhale)
- Vyana Breath (Place the hands on your chest. IN: Bring the arms out, expanding from the center out into the periphery, filling up the lungs; Hold 2 seconds; EX: Place the hands back on your chest. Keep your focus at the heart center)
- Using asanas as prana pumps
- Heart opening routines
- Prayer, ritual
- Any activities that give you joy, touch your heart

**SAMANA VAYU**
Samana vayu is responsible for processing things and moves toward the center in a churning motion. It is concentrated around the navel. It is responsible for digestion on all levels, including the mind. It is associated with processes of digestion, absorption and assimilation. Imbalances in Samana function include metabolism issues, poor digestion, bloating, loss of appetite.
To get Samana vayu back on track you might try:

- Focus on Exhalation with abdominal contraction
- Suspension of breath (hold after Exhale)
- Progressive abdominal contraction (Zip-up)
- Uddiyana Bandha-like practices
- Samana breath (IN: Imagine pulling the energy in toward your belly EX: Contract the abdomen, imagine the energy becoming more concentrated; hold contraction for a moment.)
  - Kapalbhati (to stimulate agni)
  - Quality food, fasting