

<http://www.yogapranayama.net/>

## -what is pranayama

is a [Sanskrit](#) word meaning "extension of the *prāṇa* or breath" or more accurately, "extension of the life force". The word is composed of two Sanskrit words, [Prāna](#), life force, or vital energy, particularly, the breath, and "ayāma", to extend or draw out

Pranayama is the art of breath manipulation and energy balance. Pranayama involves breathing techniques practiced thousands of different ways.

One of the most common and fundamental breathing techniques is [Ujjayi](#). In this practice 4 parts of the breath are continually studied, lengthened and fine tuned while making a 'sss' sound on the inhalation and a 'hhh' sound on the exhalation.

**These 4 parts are:**

1. [Inhalation - Puraka](#)
2. [Lungs full retention - Antara Kumbhaka](#)
3. [Exhalation - Rechaka](#)
4. [Lungs empty retention - Bahya kumbhaka](#)

Many of the breathing techniques in pranayama vary the use of these 4 parts and in the earlier stages the retentions are done lightly.

Almost every cell in the body benefits from the regular practice of pranayama. After a session breathing is naturally long and rhythmic. All of the body's organs are properly supplied with oxygen allowing them to function properly.

Breathing techniques are done to balance the intake of an invisible energy known as Prana which is thought to enter with the air. Just as air enters the body with water, yet both are separate, so too prana enters with the air.

With the regular practice of pranayama lines of energy are untangled. Energy flows freely.

Rhythms of breathing are perfectly balanced which means long healthy natural breathing occurs unconsciously after practice.

"A balanced breath leads to a balance mind."

[Ramamurti Mishra](#), who says that:

Expansion of individual energy into cosmic energy is called *prāṇāyāma*

Yoga primarily works with the energy in the body through the science of pranayama or energy-control. Prana also means 'breath.' Yoga teaches how to still the mind through breath-control and attain higher states of awareness. The higher teachings of yoga take one beyond techniques and show the yogi or yoga practitioner how to direct his concentration in such a way as not only to harmonize human with divine consciousness, but to merge his consciousness in the Infinite.

### **Puraka - Inhalation**

Inhalation must begin slowly and controlled.

When inhaling listen to the sound. Keep it smooth and harmonious. This will allow air to enter at the same rate throughout the inhalation.

Try to inhale deeply but stop when the chest or mind feels strain. Sometimes the breath must be stopped short of the deepest boundary because of tension or too much pressure. Be aware of this in achieving the largest volume intake, always seek balance in the pressure around the body and mind. Never be too forceful in deepening the breathing.

Use light force at the top of the breath. Add a touch of expansion where it is needed but not too as this will strain the heart and mind.

In many of the techniques one nostril is restricted partially or blocked. This can make the lungs struggle when drawing in the air and can also negatively affect the other parts of the breath. Be aware of this and modify to allow the air to flow in restricted but with ease. Strength and endurance grow with wisdom.

*"The retention and next exhalation will suffer the karma of an inhalation that is taken too deep or too forceful."*

If a full exhalation is done ([bahya kumbhaka](#)) the abdomen and diaphragm will be tucked in and up ([Uddiyana bandha](#)). The release can be tricky and the start of the breath is often shaky due to the sudden release at the beginning of inhalation. Master a smooth release of these muscles and learn to control these muscles over time so that they work in harmony with the breath.

### **Antara kumbhaka**

Antara Kumbhaka means full container. It refers to the part of the breath when the lungs are full of air. It can be done passively or with a lock called [Jālandhara Bandha](#).

Introduce the technique after inhalations have been mastered and harmonized rhythmically.

Once the lungs have filled with air cease forcing it in. Many practitioners try too hard when inhaling and as a result strain the nervous system. This can shorten the time the practitioner is able to retain after inhalation.

Using too much force when entering this kumbhaka results in a negative effect on the exhalation. The karma goes on to effect the pause after exhalation and the next inhalation. Avoid bad karma in breathing by entering antara kumbhaka with attentive care.

It is nice to allow this time of change to occur without the lock. This way feels like continual expansion even though the lungs are not filling with air.

When the lock is performed the air is trapped and gripped. This causes more pressure as the expansion is decreased by the lock.

Try antara kumbhaka without holding the breath instead allowing a large amount of time to pass as the lungs change direction. Continue to open the lower parts of the lungs as if air continues to enter even after the lungs resist the air. This is an energy expansion technique. This allows the time of the kumbhaka to increase as the entrance into its peak is approached with delicacy.

*"Master bliss at the top of the breath before practicing the antara kumbhaka."*

B.K.S Iyengar on pranayama during his 75th birthday teachings.

### **The Elements**

The air enters the lungs moving the earth and filling the space.

When the lungs expand fully the element of air touches the earth firmly.

At this time a little fire is applied to ensure the air and earth unify.

The water meets the air and the two become one even though they are separate.

Prana and consciousness are like this. Separate but moving together.

The 5th element sometimes referred to as consciousness also known as space and ether. Both play vital roles in

pranayama.

*"The is a wonderful euphoric feeling when the lungs are completely full. It is a time of illumination and bliss."*

### **Rechaka - Exhalation**

Rechaka means exhalation in pranayama. There is quite an art to exhalation.

When exhaling listen to the sound. Like finely tuning a musical instrument the sound is carefully adjusted so that its vibration is perfect throughout exhalation.

The sound effects the energy body and indicates the amount of pressure present. Too much pressure on the exhalation causes an increase in upward force around the temples.

If the heart feels strain at any time during exhalation relax and break the breathing technique. Take easy breaths until the heart feels relaxed and rejuvenated. Then it is safe to begin breathing exercises once again but allow each breath cycle to be less strenuous and breathe for less duration each breath so that it is easier on the nervous system and heart.

### **Bāhya kumbhaka**

Bahya Kumbaka refers to the time after exhalation and before inhalation. It is the time when the lungs have little or no air.

In advanced stages the lungs are completely emptied but in the earlier stages it is much more fruitful to allow a little air to remain in the lungs.

During Bāhya kumbhaka a lock can be performed. It is called [Uddiyana Bandha](#). The head is dropped and the lock of [Jālandhara Bandha](#) are also performed during Uddiyana Bandha.

*"There is a deep change in the mind waves when the lungs are completely empty. It is a time of deep detachment"*

### **How To clasp the nose**

Many pranayama breathing exercises require the practitioner to restrict the air entering and leaving the lungs. To do this the more dominant arm is bent and the biceps are placed onto the front, side part of the ribs so that the arm can relax and does not fatigue during practice.

The thumb and a chosen finger are used to control the incoming and outgoing air through the nostrils. Choose the finger that is most easy to use. Traditionally the ring finger was used and there are many reasons for this choice but if desired other fingers can be used exclusively or in alternation.

### **Instructions**

Find a comfortable [seated position](#). Gently exhale all of the air from the lungs.

Bend one arm and clasp the nose with the thumb and ring finger.

Lay the bent arm along the side of the chest.

Begin to restrict the air going in through both nostrils. Feel the air going in through the nostrils and restrict them accordingly so that an even intake of air passes through both.

## **The Forms of Prana**

There are five forms of prana. They have different names according to the bodily functions with which they correspond. These forms of prana are:

- udana-vayu, corresponding to the throat region and the function of speech
- prana-vayu, corresponding to the chest region
- samana-vayu, corresponding to the central region of the body and the function of digestion
- apana-vayu, corresponding to the region of the lower abdomen and the function of elimination
- vyana-vayu, corresponding to the distribution of energy into all areas of the body

Vayu is a sanscrit term meaning "air" or "breath". We will look at two of these forms: prana-vayu and apana-vayu.

### Prana and Apana:

That which enters the body is called prana and that which leaves it is called apana. The term apana also refers to the region of the lower abdomen and all the activities that take place there. Apana describes that part of prana that has the function of elimination and provides the energy for it, and it also refers to the lower belly and the rubbish that collects there when the power of prana is not in a state of equilibrium. When a person is slow and heavy we sometimes say that he has too much apana. Apana as pranic energy is something we need, but apana as refuse left from activating this energy actually prevents prana from developing within. All forms of prana are necessary, but to be effective they must be in a state of balance with each other. If someone has a lot of rubbish in the region of the lower abdomen then he or she consumes too much energy there, and this imbalance should be addressed. The goal is to reduce apana to an efficient minimum.

Apana as waste matter accumulates because of many factors, some of which lie within our control. The practice of yoga aims to reduce these impurities. People who are short of breath, cannot hold their breath, or cannot exhale slowly are seen as having more apana, whereas those who have good breath control are considered to have less apana. An overabundance of apana leads to problems in all areas of the body. We have to reduce the apana so that we can bring more prana into the body.

When we inhale, prana from outside the body is brought within. During inhalation, prana meets apana. During exhalation, the apana within the body moves toward the prana. Pranayama is the movement of the prana toward the apana and the movement of the apana toward the prana. Similarly, holding the breath after inhalation moves the prana toward the apana and holds it there. Holding the breath after exhalation moves the apana toward the prana.

## -Safety for pranayama

people with high blood pressure must perform it cautiously or may even have to avoid it.

Exercises which incorporate the [Valsalva maneuver](#), a moderately forceful attempt to [exhale](#) against a closed [airway](#)

People with epilepsy should not practice pranayama

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## Benefits

Practitioners report that the practice of pranayama develops a steady mind, strong will-power, and sound judgement,<sup>[22]</sup> and also claim that sustained pranayama practice extends life and enhances perception

Alternate nostril breathing (ANB) prāṇāyāma, also known as *Nadisuddhi prāṇāyāma*, is one of the beneficial prāṇāyāma for cardiopulmonary functions. Regular practice of ANB (Nadisuddhi) increases parasympathetic activity and lowers systolic blood pressure as well as respiratory rate.

## -Posture for pranayama

### How to sit in Pranayama - The Art Of Sitting

Pranayama involves sitting for long periods of time and performing breathing. In order to learn pranayama we must also learn the art of sitting.

### TRADITIONALLY PRANAYAMA WAS PRACTICED IN FULL LOTUS POSE!

Only do this if you can do it with ease. Sitting in Half Lotus does not provide as firm a base. Forcing yourself into either pose is not going to do you any favors. Try sitting on a nice seat that promotes a proper upright spine. Most seats make you slouch (Curve your spine forward) so put cushions behind your lower back.

Stiffness causes aches and pains that distract the practitioner continually sending signals of discomfort, pain and frustration to the mind. Therefore practice stretches before you enter a seated posture.



Try **rocking** your body forward and back in **Half Lotus** pose always being careful with the knees as it is hard on many parts of these joints. This can be done for a few minutes on each side.

Open the legs and stretch the **hamstrings** and inner **groin**. This also counter balances the **Half Lotus Stretch** which seems to stretch all the outside **muscles and ligaments** in the **knees**.



These stretches can be done **before, during** and after stretching in **Half Lotus** (the cross legged pose above) or full **Lotus pose**. If my legs get sore while performing Pranayama, which they do always as each session is **at least 45 minutes**, I stretch and move around so that **blood flow** increases and **nerve energy** can move along the blocked channels again. Do these stretches during your practice, breaking out of the breathing and performing them, and you will find more **comfort and ease** during practice. Do them **after** so that you can get up and walk around without **limping** with **stiffness**.

Flexibility helps you hold a seated posture for longer periods of time and there are many yoga asana that can be performed to enhance the flexibility necessary to sit comfortably.



Cobra Pose helps to open the chest and lower back. It is good to combine this pose with the ones above so that there are not too many forward bends.

Here is an example of a sequence you can do. There are many and it is best to listen to your body for which direction to go. This is just an example of one of hundreds:



The splits postures can be done one way and then the other. You can keep the sequence simple by doing one pose one way and then the opposite way which is the most balanced way but sometimes it's better to flow into many in a row as the poses blend well when one that is close to another is entered instead of the same pose the opposite way. You can do 5 poses in a row (any number) then do the same 5 the opposite way.

There are lot's of ways to open the body so experiment and feel how your body responds.

Use a cushion or towel to raise the pelvis. This increases the tilt allowing more space for the diaphragm. It also saves you stretching all the time.

Keep an upright spine while sitting. Allow a little looseness so that the muscles around the chest and torso have plenty of room to move and expand.

The head tilts down in traditional pranayama. If the neck muscles are stiff this can be challenging. If the area is too tight blood and oxygen flow is restricted. In these cases a mild tilt will produce better results in pranayama. If this continues to cause problems keep the head upright.

The lower back often moves out of alignment if the muscles are inflexible or if the mind wanders away from the breath. Be aware of this and always allow space around the front of the belly and below the navel.

The sitting posture may lose its integrity over time during a pranayama session. The volume of air that can be taken into the lungs reduces when this occurs. Keep the seated posture firm and upright.

Do some Yoga Asana to help if pain and discomfort is causing major distraction.

Feel free to break out of a pranayama practice and into a few yoga postures shown below or similar exercises to relieve and stretch the back and hips.

Find exercises that help relieve the pain and improve your seated posture.

Choose postures that are no strain to the nervous system and require little effort.

Choose postures that stretch the muscles that are acting against the body.

Some postures that may help your seated pranayama pose are below:



**Based on a book by B.K.S Iyengar**

**1. Supine Position.** The basic techniques of **pranayama** are best learned lying down; you won't be distracted by the challenge of maintaining a stable, upright, seated posture, and you can use a bolster to help expand your chest. Fold a blanket into a bolster—about 3 inches thick, 5 inches wide, and 30 inches long. Use a second blanket to form a thin pillow and lie back so the thin bolster supports your spine from just above your sacrum to the top of your head.

**2. Seated Position.** The optimal position for pranayama is a simple seated meditative pose—Sukhasana, Siddhasana, or Half or Full Lotus Pose—with the addition of jalandhara bandha, the chin or throat lock. To perform jalandhara bandha, raise the top of your sternum toward your chin, tuck the hinge of your jaw toward your inner ear, and softly lower your chin toward your sternum.

**3. Feedback.** In Pranayama you strive to distribute your breath evenly throughout your entire lungs—top and bottom, left and right, front and back. At first, you may have a hard time sensing the parts of your lungs that aren't opening; a gentle, steady touch (and verbal feedback) from a yoga buddy can increase your awareness and help you learn to breathe fully and evenly.

**4. Props.** You can use props to help you sense where your lungs may not be expanding fully. Belts cinched snugly around your rib cage—one up near the collarbones and one around your floating ribs—will quickly show you which parts of your lungs you tend to neglect. You can also bring awareness to the contact between your back and your bolster to see whether you tend to breathe more with the upper or lower portions of your back lungs.

-Bandhas

-Mula ://www.yogajournal.com/practice/217

In Sanskrit, "mula" means root; "bandha" means a lock or binding. Not only physically but also in more subtle ways, mula bandha is a technique for containing and channeling the energy associated with the *mula-dhara* ("root place") chakra. Located at the tip of the spine, muladhara chakra represents the stage of consciousness where basic survival needs dominate.

-uddiyana

Uddiyana Bandha literally means „flying up“. Uddiyana Bandha draws Prana (energy) out of its foundation, the Muladhara Chakra, up through the spinal column. Uddiyana Bandha connects you with the element air, the energy of the Anahata Chakra in the middle of the ribcage. Uddiyana Bandha gives lightness, helping you to overcome the force of gravity.

-jalandhara bandha

. You can achieve Jalandhara Bandha, when you lower the chin a little. Roll your tongue back and up against the palate and smile slightly. Jalandhara Bandha redirects the ascending energy in the spinal column in a spiral motion forwards. Jalandhara Bandha connects you with the ether element, with the Ajna Chakra in the middle of the head

-The four stages of breathing

-Puraka ( Inhalation

A single inhalation is termed puraka. It is a process of drawing in air; it is expected to be smooth and continuous. If a person should pause one or more times during the process of a single inhaling, the process might be spoken of as a broken puraka rather than as a series of purakas.

-Abhyantra Kumbhaka (Pause after Inhaling

Kumbhaka consists of deliberate stoppage of flow of air and retention of the air in the lungs, without any movement of lungs or muscles or any part of the body and without any incipient movements. A beginner may experiment by using some force to keep such pause motionless. Quite elaborate instructions and techniques have been worked out for this purpose.

### -Recaka (Exhalation)

The third stage, exhalation, is called rechaka. Like inhalation, it too should be smooth and continuous, though often the speed of exhaling is different from that of inhaling. Normally, muscular energy is used for inhaling whereas exhaling consists merely in relaxing the tensed muscles. Such relaxing forces air from the lungs as they return to an untensed condition. However, a person can force air out with muscular effort; so when he sits or stands erect and has his abdominal muscles under constant control, muscular effort may be used for both inhaling and exhaling. Especially if one deliberately smoothes the course of his breathing and holds the cycles in regular or definitely irregular patterns, he is likely to use muscular energy at each stage, including the pauses. However, in a condition of complete relaxation, one should expect effort to be needed only for inhaling.

### -Byahya Kumbhaka ( pause anfter Exhaling

The fourth stage, the pause after exhaling, is also called kumbhaka, especially when the stoppage is deliberate or prolonged. The fourth stage, the empty pause, completes the cycle which terminates as the pause ends and a new inhalation begins.

### -Rhythmic breathing

#### -Ujjayi Ujjayi breath means "victorious breath"

**Ujjayi means rising victoriously.** When practiced regularly the chest and torso remain up giving the practitioner a look of pride. This is also good for the lower back and reduces the mass around the waist line.

Ujjayi pranayama is the roots of yoga breathing techniques. It is the foundation of proper breathing and one of the most commonly practiced yoga breathing techniques.

In Ujjayi pranayama the body becomes a musical instrument. The ears and mind continually listening and fine tuning this instrument to create the perfect sounds during inhalation and exhalation.

Many yoga practitioners believe that our life is measured by the amount of breaths that are taken. For this reason Ujjayi is used to lengthen the breath and lengthen the span of life.

An unsteady breath leads to an unsteady mind therefore Ujjayi is also practiced to smoothen the flow of breath and harmonize the breathing rhythms.

#### **Ujjayi Stage 1**

**Inhale** gently allowing the air to pass into the body with ease and no resistance.

**Exhale** make a sound with the mouth closed that sounds like "hhhhha".

Make the sound the same throughout the exhalation. This will indicate the same amount of air leaves the lungs throughout the exhalation. An uneven sound usually indicates an unsteady nervous system. This will smoothen out during practice.

Resistance created by the sound slows down the breathing rate and creates a back pressure that helps keep the airways open.

Careful not to use too much force. A sound that is too loud indicates too much internal conflict. Muscles are used in the exhalation and other muscles are used in restricting the exhalation and also to create the sound. Use the muscles lightly so that the conflict of energy within is soft and pressure does not exits around the temples.

**Ujjayi Stage 2**

Inhale and restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Exhale allowing the air to pass out of the body with ease and no resistance.

Inhale and restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Exhale make a sound with the mouth closed that sounds like "hhhhha".

**Ujjayi Stage 4**

Inhale and gently allowing the air to pass into the body with ease and no resistance.

Pause at the top of the breath ([antara kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale and make the sound "hhhha" keeping the sound constant and smooth.



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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**Ujjayi Stage 5**

Inhale and restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the top of the breath ([antara kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale allowing the air to pass out of the body with ease and no resistance.



[Ujjayi Pranayama Mp3](#)

[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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**Ujjayi Stage 6**

Inhale and restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the top of the breath ([antara kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale and make the sound "hhhha" keeping the sound constant and smooth.



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Ujjayi Stage 7**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Exhale allowing the air to pass out of the body with ease and no resistance.

Pause at the bottom of the breath ([bahya kumbhaka](#)).



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Ujjayi Stage 8**

Inhale gently allowing the air to pass into the body with ease and no resistance.

Exhale and make the sound "hhha" keeping the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the bottom of the breath ([bahya kumbhaka](#)).



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Ujjayi Stage 9**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Exhale and make the sound "hhha" keeping the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the bottom of the breath ([bahya kumbhaka](#)).



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Ujjayi Stage 10**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the top of the breath ([antara kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale and make the sound "hhha" keeping the sound constant and smooth.

Pause at the bottom of the breath ([bahya kumbhaka](#)).



[Ujjayi Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Ujjayi Tips**

Reduce the amount of pauses if at any time the heart feels strain, mind feels starved of oxygen or nerves feel out of balance. If this is not enough break the breathing pattern take a few normal breaths or a few [Bhramari Breaths](#) so that the nerves can calm and control over breath can once again be found.

This consists in drawing air in through both nostrils with the glottis held partially closed. Ujjayi translates as "what clears the throat and masters the chest area." This partial closure of the glottis produces a sound like that heard in sobbing, except that it is continuous and unbroken. The sound should have a low but uniform pitch and be pleasant to hear. Friction of air in the nose should be avoided; consequently no nasal sounds will be heard. A prolonged full pause should begin, without any jerking, as soon as inhalation has been completed. Closure of glottis, use of chin lock and closure of both nostrils are standard. Prolong the pause as long as possible; but it should be terminated and exhalation commenced smoothly and slowly. When properly performed, exhalation proceeds slowly and steadily through the left nostril with the glottis partially closed as in inhalation. One may begin to exhale with release of air pressure by lifting the finger from his left nostril, loosening his chin lock and then partially opening his glottis. Exhalation should be complete.

Ujjayi breathing has many variations. For example, we can breathe in through the throat, then completely close one nostril and breathe out through the other nostril, which is only partly closed. This technique is called an anuloma ujjayi. In a pranayama technique called viloma ujjayi, we breathe in through the nostril and breathe out through the throat. This technique is used to lengthen the inhalation. In ujjayi pranayama it is important to follow this rule: when we regulate the breath through the nostril, we never breathe through the throat at the same time.

Although the total length of time required for a single cycle of breathing will vary with different persons, certain ratios of the periods needed for inhaling, pausing and exhaling are recommended. The period occupied by exhaling should be about twice as long as that occupied by inhaling. Practice inhaling and exhaling without a full pause. Then, when you feel ready, hold your breathing for a pause which is comfortable. With continued practice, this pause can be extended to a duration which is double that of the inhalation or equal to that of the exhalation. Advanced practitioners of yoga hold their pauses to four times the duration of inhalation and double the duration of exhalation.

*Pratiloma Ujjayi* utilises alternate nostril breathing and *Ujjayi* in a way that balances and centres the body/mind and extends the length of the breath. In this description there is no breath retention. Retention is a more advanced stage and again should be studied with a qualified teacher.

The body should be steady, shoulders back, relaxed and away from the ears, the back and neck long, this opens the chest to allow unrestricted breathing.

## -Nadi Sodhana aka *Anuloma pranayama*

### **Nadi Sodhana Pranayama**

Nādī refers to a line that carries energy. Nadis are thought to carry vital energy force known as prana in the same way wires and nerves conduct electricity.

Śodhana refers to purification and cleansing.

The term NadiSodhana refers to cleansing the energy lines (Nādīs) and nerves.

To choose which finger to use close the eyes and hold the nostrils with the thumb and first finger. Apply pressure with the thumb on one nostril and with one of the fingers on the other. Exhale and restrict the air flow out of both nostrils evenly. Alternate the fingers and feel the nostrils as if they are valves. Use the finger that seems most equal to the thumb's force on the other nostril.

Any of the fingers can be used and some practitioners alternate to properly exercise the Nādīs flow through the fingers. This can make it too complex at the beginning stages as it is hard enough to find a good breathing pattern let alone control the flow of air in and out with these valves we have created.

Traditionally the ring finger was used. It is easier to lay the elbow on the side of the ribs so that it does not fatigue and cause pain in the arm and shoulder.

NādīŚodhana pranayama is performed by inhaling through one nostril and exhaling through the opposite nostril. Then inhaling through the same nostril that was used in exhalation and switching nostrils after each inhalation. So the flow of air in Nadisodhana is like this, inhale through the left nostril, exhale through the right nostril, inhale through the right nostril, exhale through the left nostril.

These first 4 techniques are very important and often combined with the alternative nostril breathing. They involve restricting both nostrils on both inhalation and exhalation so that even air is present throughout a [breath cycle](#). Master these techniques for perfect equality in airflow in and out of the body. This is the art of perfect balance.

The following stages involve alternative nostril breathing which also balances left and right energy channels. Combining the first 4 stages with the latter stages for balance when performing pranayama.

### **Instructions**

Find a comfortable [seated position](#). Gently exhale all of the air from the lungs.

Bend one arm and pinch the nose with the thumb and a finger of your choice. Use the more dominant arm to begin with

but over the years of practice alternate so that the mind is exercised equally on both sides.

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### **Stage 1 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Block both nostrils partially. Allow an even intake of air through both of them.

Exhale through both nostrils blocking them so they release the same amount of air throughout the exhalation.



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 2 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Block both nostrils partially. Allow an even intake of air through both of them.

Hold at the top of the inhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Antara Kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale through both nostrils blocking them so they release the same amount of air throughout the exhalation.



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 3 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Block both nostrils partially. Allow an even intake of air through both of them.

Exhale through both nostrils blocking them so they release the same amount of air throughout the exhalation.

Hold after exhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Bahya Kumbhaka](#)).



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 4 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Block both nostrils partially. Allow an even intake of air through both of them.

Hold at the top of the inhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Antara Kumbhaka](#)).

Exhale through both nostrils blocking them so they release the same amount of air throughout the exhalation.

Hold after exhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Bahya Kumbhaka](#)).



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 5 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril.

Exhale through the left nostril.

Inhale through the left nostril.

Exhale through the right nostril.



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 6 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril.

Hold at the top of the inhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention.

Exhale through the left nostril.

Inhale through the left nostril.

Hold at the top of the inhalation briefly.

Exhale through the right nostril.



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 7 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril.

Exhale through the left nostril.

Hold after exhalation briefly. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Bahya Kumbhaka](#)).

Inhale through the left nostril.

Exhale through the right nostril.

Hold after exhalation briefly.



[Nadi Sodhana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 8 - NadiSodhana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril.

Hold at the top of the inhalation briefly.

Exhale through the left nostril.

Hold after exhalation.

Inhale through the left nostril.

Hold at the top of the inhalation.

Exhale through the right nostril.

Hold after exhalation.

-surya bhedana

### **Surya Bhedana Pranayama - Sun Energy Lines**

**This is a breathing technique in which air is drawn into the lungs through the right nostril and out through the left.**

**It is said that the air moves through energy lines called nadis. In this breathing exercise air moves in through the Sūrya (Sun) nadi or pingala energy line on the inhalation and through the Chandra (Moon nadi) (īdā) on the exhalation.**

#### **Instructions**

**Find a comfortable [seated position](#). Gently exhale all of the air from the lungs.**

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### **Stage 1 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril.

Breathe out through the left nostril. Allow the exhalation to be longer than the inhalation.



[Surya Bhedana mp3](#)

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**Stage 2 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. The first few times hold for a few seconds. Gradually increase the duration of the time after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the left nostril. Allow the exhalation to be longer than the inhalation.



[Surya Bhedana mp3](#)

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**Stage 3 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Exhale out through the left nostril. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. Gradually increase this time reflecting upon how the breath and nervous system responds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))



[Surya Bhedana mp3](#)

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**Stage 4 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the right nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the left nostril. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))



[Surya Bhedana mp3](#)

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#### Stage 5 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama

Breathe in through the right nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the left nostril partially blocked so that it lengthens. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))

This can be practiced without the retention Kumbhaka or it can be slowly introduced in a safe progressive way.



[Surya Bhedana mp3](#)

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#### Stage 6 - Surya Bhedana Pranayama

Breathe in through the partially blocked left nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the left nostril partially blocked. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))

This can be practiced without the retention Kumbhaka or it can be slowly introduced in a safe progressive way.

#### Chandra Bhedana Pranayama

Chandra is the moon. Bhedana means passing through. In Chandra Bhedana Pranayama inhalation is done through the left nostril and exhale through the right.

[Chandra Bhedana Pranayama mp3](#)

It is said that energy passes through ida (chandra) nadi on the inhalation and through pingala or surya nadi on the exhalation. These are larger nadis that hold the balance of magnetism and energy created by the sun and moon. They travel from the base of the spine to the point between the eyebrows.

#### Instructions

Find a comfortable [seated position](#). Gently exhale all of the air from the lungs.

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### **Stage 1 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the left nostril and out through the right. Allow the exhalation to be longer than the inhalation.



[Chandra Bhedana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 2 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the left nostril. [\(Puraka\)](#)

Hold after inhalation. The first few times hold for a few seconds. Gradually increase the duration of the time after inhalation. [\(Antara Kumbhaka\)](#)

Exhale out through the right nostril. Allow the exhalation to be longer than the inhalation.



[Chandra Bhedana Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 3 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the left nostril. [\(Puraka\)](#)

Exhale out through the right nostril. [\(Rechaka\)](#)

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. Gradually increase this time reflecting upon how the breath and nervous system responds. [\(bahya Kumbhaka\)](#)



[Chandra Bhedana Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 4 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the left nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the right nostril. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))



[Chandra Bhedana Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 5 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the left nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the right nostril partially blocked so that it lengthens. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))

This can be practiced without the retention Kumbhaka or it can be slowly introduced in a safe progressive way.



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#### **Stage 6 - Chandra Bhedana Pranayama**

Breathe in through the partially blocked left nostril. ([Puraka](#))

Hold after inhalation. ([Antara Kumbhaka](#))

Exhale out through the right nostril partially blocked. ([Rechaka](#))

Hold after exhalation for a few seconds. ([bahya Kumbhaka](#))

This can be practiced without the retention Kumbhaka or it can be slowly introduced in a safe progressive way.

## **Bhramari Pranayama**

Bhramari is a large bee. In this kind of pranayama a sound is made like a humming bee. It is a good choice for beginners or those suffering anxiety because of the calming effect of the vibration and the lengthening of the breath.

Keep the head straight rather than dropping it to the chin. When the chin is down the sound is suppressed.

In Bhramari Pranayama the mouth is kept closed making it slightly different than Aums which is usually done with the mouth open.

### **Instructions**

Find a comfortable [seated position](#). Gently exhale all of the air from the lungs.

### **Stage 1 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale allowing the breath to enter as easy as possible.

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 2 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "SSSS". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 3 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "SSSS".

Hold at the top of the breath. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([Antara Kunbhaka](#)).

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 4 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "SSSSS".

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.

Exhale and hold after exhalation. Gradually increase the time of the retention ([bahya Kumbaka](#)).



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 5 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale restrict the air flow to make the sound "SSSS".

Hold at the top of the breath. ([Antara Kunbhaka](#))

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.

Exhale and hold after exhalation. ([bahya Kumbaka](#))



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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#### **Stage 6 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale through both nostrils partially blocked.

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.

When a comfortable breathing rhythm is found introduce the retentions. Begin mild retention after inhalation ([Antara Kunbhaka](#)) then after some time introduce retention after exhalation ([bahya Kumbaka](#)). Increase their time slowly so that comfortable breathing rhythms are found always.



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 7 - Bhramari Pranayama**

Inhale through a partially blocked right nostril. The left nostril is completely blocked.

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.

Inhale through a partially blocked left nostril. The right nostril is completely blocked.

Exhale make a sound similar to a bee.

When a comfortable breathing rhythm is found introduce the retentions. Begin mild retention after inhalation ([Antara Kumbhaka](#)) then after some time introduce retention after exhalation ([bahya Kumbaka](#)). Increase their time slowly so that comfortable breathing rhythms are found always.



[Bhramari Pranayama mp3](#)

### **Plāvinī Pranayama**

Plāvinī pranayama has been buried for a long time. This technique is precious. It teaches us about the sparks of life that generate breath by listening within and catching their force.

This breathing technique is done by taking a normal inhalation unobstructed by any technique.

For the best results this technique is done in Savasana the corpse pose which is a posture done for rejuvenation in yoga. To do this lie with the back flat on the floor.

[Plāvinī Pranayama Intro mp3](#)

### **Instructions**

Rest on your back comfortably with the hands beside the hips in Savasana. This is a posture in yoga where you rest completely.

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### **Stage 1- Plavini Pranayama**

Breathe in with ease.

Relax at the top of the breath for a moment without straining the heart.

Exhale with ease and relax the muscles as much as possible.

After exhalation relax. Wait until a strong signal is sent from the navel chakra. It feels like a spark. Catch it and inhale.

Try to lengthen the time of stillness after exhalation.

Leave a little air in the lungs after exhalation. This allows a longer duration to be achieved after exhalation as well as deeper relaxation during his time.



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### **Stage 2 - Plavini Pranayama**

Breathe in with ease.

Relax at the top of the breath for a moment without straining the heart.

Exhale with the lips pressing together. Allow a little hole so that the air can escape with only slight pressure. Pursed lip breathing.

After exhalation relax. Wait until a strong signal is sent from the navel chakra. It feels like a spark. Catch it and inhale.

Try to lengthen the time of stillness after exhalation.

Leave a little air in the lungs after exhalation. This allows a longer duration to be achieved after exhalation as well as deeper relaxation during his time.



[Plāvini Pranayama mp3](#)

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### **Stage 3 - Plavini Pranayama**

Breathe in with ease.

Relax at the top of the breath for a moment without straining the heart.

Exhale making a slight hissing sound "hhhhh" like in [Ujjayi Pranayama](#).

After exhalation relax. Wait until a strong signal is sent from the navel chakra. It feels like a spark. Catch it and inhale.

Try to lengthen the time of stillness after exhalation.

Leave a little air in the lungs after exhalation. This allows a longer duration to be achieved after exhalation as well as deeper relaxation during his time.

### **Aum sound and Pranayama**

The sound of Aum has always been sacred in yoga. Science has proven that Earth gives off aum (Humming) of endless notes completely undetectable to the human ear.

This hidden symphony occurring always remains a mystery to science.

The origin of this Hum or many hums remains a mystery but remember the Yogis heard it first.

Something called **spheroidal oscillations** (one of the recognized wave Aums)

Some in science think the waves come from pressure from ocean waves (the water element) or atmospheric waves (the air element) or even the Sun itself (the fire element).

The Sun also hums and scientists call it "THE SINGING SUN". Sound cannot travel through space but with instruments scientists can hear noise from the sun. Perhaps old Yoga practitioners can hear this too.

In the Aum sound a conscious connection with the navel chakra is made to maintain good rhythm and strength.

Exhalation gradually lengthen after some breaths are made.

Quite often the yoga practitioner uses Aum to break down boundaries of separation and merge into the awareness of Yoga.

Aum has a very calming effect on the nerves. This is probably due to the vibration.

Different levels of sound can be made. Low tones are usually practiced but the practitioner must find the sound that affect every cell.

This can be performed in a seated or lying position. Lying down and practicing is a more effective way in reducing anxiety and stress.

### **Aum Breathing technique**

Reduce stress with old yoga breathing techniques. The intensity of anxiety and stress can be greatly reduced when these old breathing techniques. Try them see which ones work with you.

These techniques can be applied during an anxiety attack when breathing is fast and confusion is present to reduce its intensity. When practiced well these techniques will remove stress completely.

### **Instructions**

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#### **Stage 1 - Aum Pranayama**

Listen in meditation. The mind must be relaxed and empty to hear the Aum. Spend time emptying the mind and removing rising thoughts so they are not so dominant.

Inhale deeply without obstruction. Try to mentally open the sinuses and nostrils. Just thinking them open will make a big difference.

Create the sound of Aum on the exhalations for as long as possible.

Experiment with the position of the tongue to create slightly different tones.

Use low frequencies. Use your belly Chakra and diaphragm.

Cross back over to the inhalation with smoothness. Each time working on the transition and release of the diaphragm to improve it.

Repeat this technique. this is the best form of Aums. Unobstructed inhalations means inhalations without conflict. The exhalations are long enough and it may be argued that the later stages act as an obstacle in meditation. This is however a sight on pranayama.



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### **Aum Pranayama - Stage 2**

Inhale and restrict the air flow to make the sound "sssss". Keep the sound constant and smooth.

Create the sound of Aum on the exhalations for as long as possible.

### **Nirvana Pranayama - Pursed Lip Breathing**

In Sanskrit Nirvana means "blowing out". It often refers to leaving worldly attachments behind. Quite often when performing this the practitioner visualizes toxins leaving the body. At other times the practitioner reflects upon a worldly desire and visualizes it being blown from their consciousness.

There are many different ways to blow the air out of your lungs just as there are many ways to whistle. You can blow the air with the cheeks filled or keep the cheeks deflated. You can also blow the air out like you are giving a kiss.

It is the primary breathing control given by health care professionals for breathing problems, such as asthma and respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It lengthens the breath and delivers more oxygen to the body when performed. It also strengthens the diaphragm.

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### **Stage 1 - Nirvana Pranayama**

Breathe in deeply but be careful not to over breathe as this will strain the heart and shorten the exhalation. Breathe into your belly for a deeper breath and less strain on the heart. When you feel a little resistance stop.

Blow the air out of the lungs lightly. Not too forcefully as it will be longer when done gently. Be careful not to do your breathing techniques too forcefully otherwise conflict and pressure will be created in the heart and mind.



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### **Stage 2 - Nirvana Pranayama**

Breathe in deeply.

Allow the breath to take at least 2 or 3 seconds at the top of the inhalation without holding. Just allow it cross over really slowly to the exhalation.

Blow the air out of the lungs lightly. Make a special effort to blow all of the air out of the lungs. If you feel fatigued take a few breaths and try again.

Experiment with different lip positions.



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### **Stage 3 - Nirvana Pranayama**

Breathe in deeply.

Hold at the top of the breath gripping the air.

Holding too long will shorten the exhalation.

Blow the air out of the lungs lightly. Make sure all the air leaves the lungs.

-sitali

-Agnisara Dhauti