

HOW TO DESIGN A BREATH-CENTERED YOGA PRACTICE

1 SET AN INTENTION

What are you trying to accomplish with this yoga practice? Breath-centered practices work especially well for physiology-related issues and specifically for the three pillars of physiological well-being: energy levels, sleep issues and stress management.



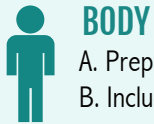
Ex Help your student move from frazzled, stressed-out state toward more balance and focus.

2 PICK A BREATH TECHNIQUE BASED ON THE INTENTION

Ex Pratiloma Ujjayi technique works great for lengthening the breath, balancing the system and developing focus. IN – both nostrils (Ujjayi), EX – left nostril; IN – left nostril, EX – both nostrils (Ujjayi), IN – both nostrils (Ujjayi), EX – right nostril, IN – right nostril, EX – both nostrils (Ujjayi).



3 DECIDE ON HOW YOU WILL PREPARE THE BODY AND BREATH FOR THE CHOSEN TECHNIQUE



BODY

- A. Prepare the lower back, upper back, neck and hips for sitting.
- B. Include specialized preparation for the technique.

Ex For Pratiloma Ujjayi you need to prepare the neck and shoulders for holding the arm, intercostals for deeper breathing and include asymmetrical poses to facilitate right/left brain integration.

BREATH

Choose a breath pattern (theme) to carry throughout the practice that will help prepare the breath for the technique.



Ex For Pratiloma Ujjayi you need to lengthen both Inhalation and Exhalation. Breath theme: gradually deepen both IN and EX as you move the arm in the pose: IN/EX: 6 sec, 7 sec, 8 sec.

4 SELECT 3 POSES THAT WILL PREPARE THE BODY FOR SITTING AND SUPPORT THE BREATH THEME

Choose the poses that will be effective, yet simple and familiar to your students. In breath-centered classes, alignment instruction is minimal, just enough to insure student's safety. Most of the attention is being directed toward the breath.



UTTITHA PARSVAKONASANA / ARDHA SHALABHASANA / JATHARA PARIVRTTI

These poses prepare the lower back, upper back and hips for sitting; neck and shoulders for the technique; and intercostals for deeper breathing. They are also asymmetrical which facilitates right/left brain integration.

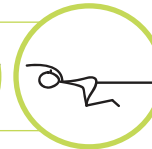
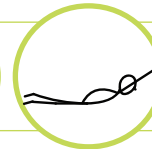
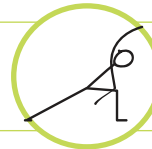
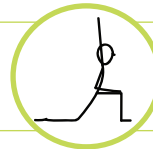
5 ORGANIZE THE POSES

Arrange asanas in order that supports the intention, add compensation and transition poses.

6 INTERWEAVE THE BREATH THEME THROUGHOUT THE PRACTICE

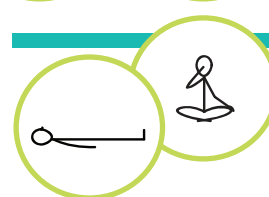
A breath theme needs to be simple and consistent. There is no need to work with the breath in every pose; allow free breath in between. When you do work with breath in poses, make sure that this is where the attention goes.

Ex Use the breath theme (IN/EX: 6 sec, 7 sec, 8 sec) in the following poses: Keep your breath deep and flowing in all other poses.



7 DECIDE ON WHETHER TO PLACE PRANAYAMA BEFORE, AFTER OR INSTEAD OF SAVASANA

This choice will depend on your intention, your students and the context. Traditionally, pranayama is placed after Savasana and before meditation. But other factors come into play: your students might need to rest after practicing pranayama, or you might not need Savasana if you are doing an energy building practice in the morning, etc.



8 CHECK THE SEQUENCE FOR LOGIC, COMPENSATION, CONSISTENCY, ETC.

Review your sequence to make sure that there is enough preparation for the body and breath, that the breath theme is carried throughout, that there isn't too much focus on the physical details, that the sequence develops from simple toward more complex gradually, etc. Try it yourself and see if it works!