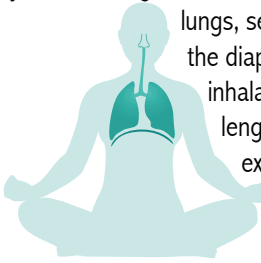


BREATH CONTROL OPTIONS IN YOGA

Breath awareness

We can pay attention to each individual breath, either trying to deepen it, or just observing it. We can notice the flow of breath, the expansion of the lungs, sensations in the nose or throat, the movement of the diaphragm. We can also choose to deepen the

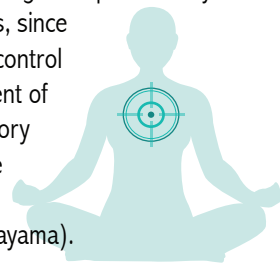
inhalation and lengthen the exhalation (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



Directing breath to different parts of the body

We cannot literally direct the breath into different body parts; what we CAN do is move our awareness AS IF we were breathing into specific body areas. We cannot control the action of the lungs, since lungs do not have muscular tissue, but we can control

the movement of the respiratory musculature (in Asana/ and/or Pranayama).



Control of the breath flow

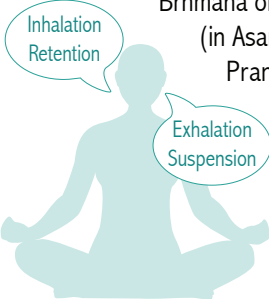
We can intentionally control the respiratory musculature to bring the sense of directionality to the flow of breath. For example, we can CHOOSE to expand the belly first and then the chest on the inhale, or we can CHOOSE to expand the chest first then the belly (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



Working with ratios

Breathing ratio reflects a relative relationship between 4 parts of the breath: Inhalation - Retention - Exhalation - Suspension). We can gradually lengthen one or more parts of the breath to increase our breathing capacity and achieve

Brhmana or Langhana effect (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



Krama (segmented) breath

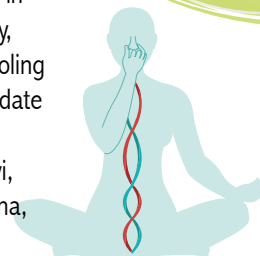
We can break the inhalation OR the exhalation down into 2-3 parts for the purpose of lengthening the breath.

This technique is not very widely used, but it works exceptionally well and has a very pronounced energetic effect (Brhmana or Langhana) (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



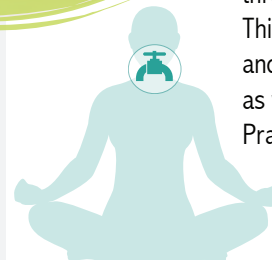
Nostril breathing

We can breathe through one nostril or the other depending on the effect we are after. Breathing in through the right nostril will have heating quality, breathing in through the left nostril will have cooling quality; breathing out through the nostril will sedate the corresponding channel. We can do this in a variety of patterns: Anuloma Ujjayi, Viloma Ujjayi, Pratiloma Ujjayi, Suryabhedana, Chandrabhedana, Nadi Shodhana (in Pranayama).



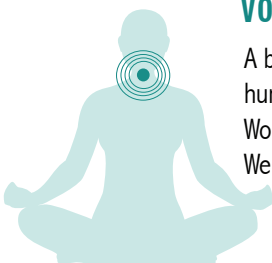
Valved breathing

We can breathe through the valve that we form in the throat (Ujjayi breath) or mouth (Shitali, Sitkari). This adds a vibrational quality to the breath (Ujjayi) and can be used for heating or cooling the system, as well as lengthening the breath (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



Vocal breathing

A breathing technique called Bhramari (or "bee humming") creates both sound and vibration. Working with sound affects the system energetically. We can change the volume and pitch of sound to produce a more soothing or more stimulating effect (in Asana and/or Pranayama).



Kriyas

Breathing practices like Kapalabhati and Bhastrika involve rapid vigorous breaths, therefore they are considered cleansing practices rather than pranayama. Both techniques are facilitated by repeated lower abdominal contraction and are usually done in a seated position.



YOGA BREATHING TECHNIQUES, EFFECTS AND PREPARATION

Most pranayama techniques require preparation during asana practice: you need to prepare the body for extended sitting (lower back, upper back, neck and hips) AND there are specific suggestions for individual techniques that include body preparation and breath preparation (listed below).

Krama Inhale



TECHNIQUE: Inhale is broken down into 2 or 3 parts with pauses in between, Exhale is long and flowing.
EFFECT: Brhmana, useful for increasing the breathing capacity.
PREPARATION: Focus on poses emphasizing Inhalation (Backbends and Lateral bends); lengthen Inhalation throughout the practice, introduce Retention (hold after Inhale).

Krama Exhale



TECHNIQUE: Exhale is broken down into 2 or 3 parts with pauses in between, Inhale is long and flowing.
EFFECT: Langhana, useful for increasing the breathing capacity.
PREPARATION: Focus on poses emphasizing Exhalation (Forward bends and Twists); lengthen Exhalation throughout the practice, introduce Suspension (hold after Exhale).

Anuloma Ujjayi



TECHNIQUE: Inhale using Ujjayi breath, exhale through alternate nostrils.
EFFECT: Langhana (calming, sedating).
PREPARATION: Focus on poses emphasizing Exhalation (Forward bends and Twists); prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); lengthen Exhalation throughout the practice.

Viloma Ujjayi



TECHNIQUE: Inhale through alternate nostrils, Exhale using Ujjayi breath.
EFFECT: Brhmana (energizing, stimulating).
PREPARATION: Focus on poses emphasizing Inhalation (Backbends and Lateral bends); prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); lengthen Inhalation throughout the practice.

Pratiloma Ujjayi



TECHNIQUE: IN: Ujjayi, EX: Left nostril, IN: Left nostril, EX: Ujjayi, IN: Ujjayi, EX: Right nostril, IN: Right nostril, EX: Ujjayi / 1 cycle, 4br.
EFFECT: Samana (balancing), focusing.
PREPARATION: Focus on asymmetrical poses and movements within poses; use movements for right/left brain integration; prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); lengthen both Inhalation and Exhalation.

Suryabhedana



TECHNIQUE: Inhale through the right nostril, Exhale through the left nostril.
EFFECT: Heating.
PREPARATION: Focus on asymmetrical poses and movements within poses; use movements for right/left brain integration; prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); long flowing breath.

Chandrabhedana



TECHNIQUE: Inhale through the left nostril, Exhale through the right nostril.
EFFECT: Cooling.
PREPARATION: Focus on asymmetrical poses and movements within poses; use movements for right/left brain integration; prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); long flowing breath.

Nadi Shodhana



TECHNIQUE: IN: Left nostril, EX: Right nostril, IN: Right nostril, EX: Left nostril / 1 cycle, 2br.
EFFECT: Samana (balancing), focusing.
PREPARATION: Use movements for right/left brain integration; prepare the shoulder and neck for prolonged arm holding (while working with nostrils); long flowing breath.

Shitali



TECHNIQUE: Start with chin down, tongue curled and fully extended. IN: Seep the air in, raising the chin to just beyond level. First fold the tongue back and drop the chin, then Exhale (through alternate nostrils).
EFFECT: Soothing, cooling.
PREPARATION: Prepare the neck using chin lift/drop action throughout the practice; long flowing breath.

Sitkari



TECHNIQUE: Start with chin down, tip of the tongue on the back of the front teeth. IN: Draw the air in between the tongue and the palate. Drop the head, fold the tongue back on itself, then Exhale (through alternate nostrils).
EFFECT: Cooling, relaxing.
PREPARATION: Prepare the neck using chin lift/drop action throughout the practice; long flowing breath.

Bhramari



TECHNIQUE: Inhale smoothly, on the Exhale make a low-pitch or medium-pitch humming sound for as long as it's comfortable.
EFFECT: Calming, focusing, helps to "metabolise neurosis" (process mental chatter). You can use higher pitch or increase volume for a more stimulating effect. It works well to go from loud to quiet, or from high pitch to low pitch for more grounding effect.
PREPARATION: Warm up the neck; lengthen Exhalation; use chanting or sound throughout the practice.

Kapalbhati Bhastrika



TECHNIQUE: Inhale rapidly, relaxing the abdomen; on the Exhale rapidly and vigorously contract the abdomen, forcing the air out.
Bhastrika: Do it through alternating nostrils. IN: Left nostril, EX: Left nostril, IN: Right nostril, EX: Right nostril
EFFECT: Heating, stimulating; increases digestive capacity; clears the sinuses and nasal passageways.
PREPARATION: Strengthen the core; practice abdominal contraction; warm up the neck; lengthen Exhalation with progressive abdominal contraction.