

# HOW TO TAKE YOUR YOGA PRACTICE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The best-kept yoga secret is pranayama. Not complex, long, random, boring breath work, but simple, straightforward, logical and inspirational life force expansion.

Here are five ways of integrating different elements of breath awareness into your existing yoga practice to take it to a completely different level of meaning and awareness.



## BEGIN YOUR PRACTICE BY DEEPENING YOUR BREATH

Make it intentional: sit with your eyes closed and gradually deepen your inhalation to about 6 seconds, and your exhalation to about 6 seconds. To make it even more useful, add directionality to your breath.

## MOVE WITH YOUR BREATH THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PRACTICE

The pace of a class should be determined by students' breath. Every single movement needs to be guided by the breath. It is best to keep both the inhalation and the exhalation about 6 seconds long – it will deepen your practice significantly.

## DO PRANAYAMA

Spend several minutes at the end of the practice focusing on your breath and doing some sort of ratio or technique that fits with the overall theme of the practice. Keep it simple and at least 12 breaths long.

## PREPARE FOR PRANAYAMA DURING THE PRACTICE

Just like your body needs preparation for more difficult postures, your breath needs to be prepared for pranayama. The less complex this preparation is the better, but it should be consistent with your pranayama choice.

## CHECK IN AT THE END

At the end of the practice take few moments to pause and observe the effect of the practice on your energy and overall state. Note the quality of the breath and whether or not it helped you achieve the energetic shift you were after.