



INTRODUCTORY AUDIO GUIDE FOR PRANAYAMA

Hello! Welcome to Yoga Home Practice Introductory Audio for Pranayama.

Pranayama practice strengthens and balances the nervous system. On a physical level it oxygenates the blood and facilitates the removal of toxins. The regular practice of pranayama allows a cleansing of the nostrils and the sinuses. When done properly it leaves you feeling calm and clear, bringing a sense of spaciousness into the mind. The practice can be likened to a cleansing or washing of the brain.

The word 'pranayama' is derived from two words - "*prana*" (universal life force) + "*ayama*" (expansion of). When combined pranayama translates to "expansion of the life force". On an energetic level the practice works at elevating your vitality through strengthening your nervous system.

Pranayama is an important component of yoga. It allows us to learn how to control the subtle energy of the breath. The skills we learn practising pranayama are essential for learning how to work with the yet more subtle energies of the mind.

Just like a child learns first how to crawl, then walk before running, in yoga it is helpful to learn how to work with the concrete energy of the body, then the more subtle energy of the breath, and then the elusive energies of the mind.

The techniques and skills we learn practising pranayama are very helpful when dealing with the non-material mind, it gives us a way to effectively get a hold of the mind. Pranayama provides a 'bridge' between the yoga asanas and meditation.

While Pranayama, Yoga Asanas, and Meditation appear as separate aspects they are really just a continuum of the same energetic reality of a human being. Like the colours of the rainbow, they are separate, yet they are also part of this continuum – one spectrum leading to the next, and to enjoy the full beauty of a rainbow all of the colours are needed.

PROGRAM DESIGN

There are 2 programs - a Foundation Program and an Intermediate Program.

Each of the classes in these programs has two components - the tutorial and the led practice.



The Foundation Program is designed to introduce you to the basics of pranayama. No previous experience is required. To get maximum benefit from the program we recommend that you follow it systematically. It is safe, highly beneficial, and like any tool, the extent to which you benefit from it depends on how you apply it.

The Foundation program has five classes comprised of:

- (1) Full Yogic Breath
- (2) *Ujjayi Pranayama* which is controlled expanded breathing.
- (3) *Viloma Pranayama 1, 2 & 3* which is staggered or staged breathing.
- (4) *Surya Bedhana* - Sun Piercing Breath; *Chandra Bedhana* - Moon Piercing Breath; and *Nadi Sodhana* which is alternative nostril breathing.
- (5) *Kapalabhati* which is an energising heating breathe, and *Sitali* which is a cooling breathe.

The Intermediate Program assumes prior knowledge and experience with the concepts and practices contained in the Foundation Program.

The Intermediate program has four classes comprised of:

- (1) *Ujjayi Pranayama* which is controlled expanded breathing.
- (2) *Viloma Pranayama 1, 2 & 3* which is staggered or staged breathing. At the intermediate level each of these parts are held for longer in comparison to the foundation level.
- (3) *Surya Bedhana* - Sun Piercing Breath; *Chandra Bedhana* - Moon Piercing Breath; and *Nadi Sodhana* which is called alternative nostril breathing. We also introduce breath retention.
- (4) *Bastrika* - "the bellows breath" - a forced breathe on both inhalation and exhalation, as compared to *Kapalabhati* which is only a forced exhalation.

PRECAUTIONS & DISCLAIMER

It is important for you to follow the instructions. Be sensible and back off if you feel uncomfortable.

If you find yourself consistently congested return to Ujjayi breathing, calm your mind and when you are ready, start again.

The practice of pranayama can release blocked energy in the body, and this may manifest as repressed emotions (eg anger, frustration, sadness, etc). If you are comfortable with riding this through, go ahead and continue. However if at any time you feel too uncomfortable, take a break and come back to your practice when you are ready.



A good rule of thumb is for the body to be comfortable and the mind relaxed. If your body or mind is resisting, then back off and wait for them to calm down before starting again.

Pranayama is part of a balanced yoga practice, which includes the philosophy, social and individual ethics, postures or your asana practice, and meditation. We recommend that you don't practice Pranayama in isolation from these other components.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Before commencing we recommend that you consult your doctor or health care professional to ensure it is appropriate for your circumstances. This is especially important if you have:

- ⇒ Epilepsy, heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma or if you are pregnant.
- ⇒ If you are pregnant, only practice the Yogic Full Breath and Ujjayi Pranayama. It is not recommended to do breath retentions during pregnancy.

THE SPACE AND WHAT YOU NEED

When practicing by yourself, find a peaceful clear area. Make sure the space is quiet and clean – free from any other activities or distractions.

When practising outside, make sure the conditions are pleasant. Turn your back away from the sun to keep the glare out of your eyes.

For the practice of Pranayama choose a comfortable sitting position. This means bringing the hips into a neutral position so that the spine maintains its maximum length, and may require the support of a firm cushion, folded blankets or a chair.

TIME AND DURATION FOR PRACTISE

We recommend that you do your Pranayama in conjunction with your asana practice. If this is not possible, you can alternate between pranayama and your asana practice.

For those new to pranayama, we recommend that you initially practice the five Foundation Classes individually. When you get familiar with them, you can slowly build up to practicing them all together as a single program.

For beginners, we recommend 5-10 minutes of practice, which over time you can build up to 30-40 minutes.



Traditionally pranayama is practised after asana and before meditation. By opening the body first, and then the breath, we have easier access to the mind. However, it is OK and safe to practice it in another order if you so choose.

In the mornings you tend to have more mental clarity relative to the evenings. You may also find that doing your practice first thing in the morning makes your day run smoother.

Enjoy the journey!

Yoga is a process and not a destination. As long as you are engaging your body, breath and mind you are doing yoga.

From the teachers and staff at Live Yoga Life - the home of Yoga Home Practice, we bid you courage to be who you are.

Namaste!

The Team from Live Yoga Life