

Yoga Breathing Techniques

Abdominal Breathing

The most common breathing technique in basic yoga. It helps foster healthy, efficient breathing in general. It's also known diaphragmatic or belly breathing.

Try it:

- Inflate your abdomen as you inhale.
- Exhale, trying to empty your abdomen of as much air as you can.

Ujjayi or "victorious" breath

A type of deep breathing that allows you a slow and smooth flow of breath. It's often used in flow classes to help regulate breathing as you move through the poses.

Try it:

- Constrict the muscles in the back of your throat and breathe in and out with your mouth closed.
- Some say this breathing technique sounds like Darth Vader; others say it sounds like the ocean. In any case, the sound should be audible to you only (not your neighbor).

Interval or interrupted breathing

You'll be instructed to pause and hold the breath during inhalation, exhalation, or both. It's helpful in learning how to control the breath, especially when trying more advanced breathing techniques.

Try it:

- Inhale fully.
- Release one-third of the breath.
- Pause.
- Release another third of the breath.
- Pause.
- Exhale the rest of the breath.
- Repeat.

You can then do a couple rounds of interrupted breathing during exhalation.

Alternate nostril breathing

This technique is also called Nadi Shodhanam and said to be effective in balancing the nervous system to create a state of internal tranquility, stability, and peace of mind, while balancing and

©2021 Demystifying Your Health. All rights reserved.

Demystifying Your Health does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

regulating energy through the left and right side of the body. It's recommended to try the technique before meditation.

Try it:

-Hold one nostril closed with the opposite thumb and inhale through the open nostril for a count of 5.

- Using a different finger on the same hand, close the nostril and exhale through your nostril for a count of 5.

-Switch your hands and nostril before repeating.

-Repeat whole process 3 to 9 times.

Ujjayi pranayama

You create an ocean sound by contracting the epiglottis, the leaf-shaped flap of cartilage located behind the tongue at the top of the voice box. This sound aims to anchor the mind during your practice. It's most commonly used in Ashtanga and Vinyasa yoga.

Try it:

-Breathe in and out through your nose.

-Breathe in for 4 counts and breathe out for 4 counts. Complete 4 rounds of this.

-On your fifth breath, slowly breathe in through your mouth, as if you were sipping through a straw but with your mouth closed.

-As you breathe out, see if you can slowly exhale, as if you were steaming up a mirror but with your mouth closed.

-Continue this breathing all the way through your yoga practice.

Viloma pranayama

It's aim is to calm the brain and nervous system. It can be practiced at the start/end of a practice session, or on its own.

Try it:

-Lie down, or sit comfortably.

-Place one hand on your belly and the other hand on your heart.

-Close your eyes. Take a couple of deep breaths in and out through your nose.

-On your next inhalation, sip in a third of the breath through your lips, like you're drinking from a straw, into your belly and pause for a moment.

-Sip a third more into your side ribs and pause for another moment.

©2021 Demystifying Your Health. All rights reserved.

Demystifying Your Health does not provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

-Sip the final third of your breath into your chest.

-Exhale slowly through your nose.

-Repeat for 3 to 9 rounds.