



Breathing Practice

This breathing practice is done lying on the floor (on a yoga mat or blanket) with your legs up on a low chair, sofa, or ottoman. Prop your head with a pillow if you wish. You may want to cover yourself with a blanket to stay warm.

Set a timer, so you are not distracted by keeping the time. It's optimal to do this practice for 20-30 minutes/day, but feel free to start with 10 minutes if that feels easier.

Breathe in and out through your nose. Breathe so that the sound of the inhale and the sound of the exhale are the same sound. Do a gentle ujjayi breath if possible (see next page for guidance); if that feels too confusing, just breathe in and out through your nose and listen to the sound of your breath in your ears.

When you are finished, bring your knees to your chest, interlace your fingers over your knees and pause. Roll to your side and pause. Use the strength of your arms to push you up into a comfortable seated position, keeping your spine soft and relaxed. Notice how you feel after your breathing practice.

When practicing lying down, your whole spine and central nervous system are supported by the earth; this gives the nervous system the message that it is safe and supported, and when it gets this message it is often able to let go of tension, holding, and stress. As the body releases tension, all the systems of the body can function with more ease, which supports your optimal health. Also, as tension dissipates, the body is able to drop into the deeper peace, presence, and relaxation that lies within us. This practice also increases the amount of oxygen in the blood, bringing more life force to all systems in the body.



How to Perform Ujjayi Breath

Breath in and out through your nose.

Take an inhalation through your nose that is slightly deeper than normal. Exhale slowly through your nose while gently constricting the muscles in the back of your throat. To create this gentle constriction, you can gently clear your throat, notice that a few throat muscles engage, and keep a few throat muscles engaged. If it feels comfortable, keep a few muscles in the throat slightly engaged during your breathing practice, on both the inhale and the exhale.

The sound of the inhale should be the same as the sound of the exhale.

The breath should be even and steady, and there should not be much, if any, efforting.

Notice that you do not tense the jaw or tongue...allow them to be soft and relaxed.

Listen to the sound of your breath in your ears.