

Yoga Education Teacher Training

2024

Module 2

Pranayama Class Practice

Level 1



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Opening prayers

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श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ॐ

Om Om Om

Sri Gurubhyo Namah Harih Om

Salutations to the Gurus!

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

aum saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu
saha vīryam karavāvahai
tejasvi nāvadhītam astu mā vidviṣāvahai
aum śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

*Aum. May that Brahman protect us together. May it nourish us together.
May we both gain great vitality. May our learning be brilliant.
May we never argue.
Om peace, peace, peace.*

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

- 1. Stages to a full breath**
 - 1. Lying down abdominal breathing - 2 minutes**
 - 2. Lying down intercostal breathing - 2 minutes**
 - 3. Lying down full breathing - 2 minutes**
 - 4. Repeat 1-3 in sitting position - 2 minutes**
- 2. Resonance breathing - 2 minutes at 6:6 seconds**
- 3. Single nostril breathing - 2 minutes at 6:6 seconds**
- 4. Alternate nostril resonance breathing - 2 minutes at 6:6 seconds**
- 5. Kapalabhati kriya - 10 pumps > 3 resonance breaths > 3 rounds**
- 6. Bhramari - 3 rounds**
- 7. Rest - 5 minutes**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

First practical lesson: 30 minutes

1. Full Breathing process

1. Lie down

2. Bend your knees, feet flat, hip width apart

3. Feet a few inches away from your buttocks

4. Chin slightly down, or a pillow under the head

1. The head should not be tilted back

2. Breathe through your nose, keep the mouth closed

**3. Keep the tongue up flat on the hard palate,
tip behind the upper front teeth but not touching the teeth**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Abdominal breathing

- 1. Hands on your belly, one on top of the other just to sense the movement of the belly up and down - but don't exaggerate the breath**
- 2. Abdomen should move out as you inhale, and down or in as you exhale**
- 3. As you breathe, feel a fullness of expansion in solar plexus, and belly.**
- 4. The whole biosphere is breathing, and we are part of that breathing body. The atmosphere is actually breathing us.**
- 5. That means that when your diaphragm goes down and breath comes in, it is one cohesive movement.**
- 6. When your diaphragm goes up and your breath goes out, it is another cohesive movement.**
- 7. Do that for a minute or two, and feel the sensations of breathing.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Intercostal breathing

- 1. Place your hands on the sides of your lower ribs**
- 2. Or keep your palms flat on your lower ribs**
- 3. Breathe feeling the lower ribs move out and in**
- 4. Then point your thumbs to the back of your body and keep the inner edge of your hand pressing at the lower ribs**
- 5. Feel the ribs moving out and in, like the wings of a bird expanding and contracting**
- 6. Exhale and apply pressure with your hands on your ribs to feel the movement of the ribs, on the next inhale feel the expansion**
- 7. This increases the volume of the thoracic cavity, enabling more air to flow in**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Thoracic breathing

- 1. Place one hand on your abdomen and the other between your heart and your collar bone**
- 2. As you inhale the abdomen slightly rises and then the chest**
- 3. As you exhale the chest sinks and then the abdomen relaxes**
- 4. The shoulder blades should stay down**
- 5. All of this happens in 360 degrees, so as you do this last part of the complete breath, you may feel your ribs move at the back.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Keep it SIMPLE folks

- 1. You might be teaching kids, restless teenagers, elderly with cognitive decline**
- 2. We want to teach people to breathe better so it makes their lives better in whatever way they need their life to improve - we don't always know what that is (even for ourselves) so we do not want to impose things upon them, just help them to do what nature provided us with better.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Resonance Breathing

- 1. Slow paced breathing at 5-7 breaths per minute - this ratio can vary person to person**
- 2. Brings the baroreceptors (which regulate blood pressure), respiration, and heart rate variability into the same pattern**
- 3. Helps reset the baseline function of the autonomic nervous system, reducing stress and improving cardiovascular health.**
- 4. Importantly, it makes the nervous system receptive to the changes in breathing patterns that we use in pranayama.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing

- 1. We will be using The Breathing App for pacing the timing of our breath.**
- 2. In the app, you can either breathe along with the sounds, or follow along with the animated breathing ball.**
- 3. We will be starting with two minutes, at a ratio of inhaling for five seconds, exhaling for five seconds (6 breaths per minute).**
- 4. For some of you, this pattern may feel like its not long enough—just pretend you are a beginner and you are putting yourself in their breathing lungs.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing through both nostrils

- 1. Sit comfortably and straight.**
- 2. On the floor or in a chair with your feet flat on the floor.**
- 3. Pay attention to the flow of the air through your nose.**
- 4. The breath may move in your abdominal region, or in the mid thoracic, but try to avoid upper chest breathing.**
- 5. The eyes can be open or closed. If they are closed, you'll be listening to the sound.**
- 6. See if you can let your awareness rest with the rising and falling of the diaphragm.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing

- 1. We will do this for two minutes. When working with new students, this is a good place to start.**
- 2. Resonance breathing can also be done as a stand alone practice for 10-20 minutes per day.**
- 3. Doing this practice twice per day enhances the effects, as the nervous system becomes accustomed to the new rhythm.**
- 4. For some people, starting with slow breathing is agitating. For those people, starting with kapalabhati can be helpful. We will cover that in more detail later.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing through both nostrils

- 1. One effect of resonance breathing can be more saliva in the mouth. This is because the parasympathetic nervous system (which rules digestion, repair, and rejuvenation) is becoming activated.**
- 2. For those who feel that the slow breathing at this pace is a little stressful, just hang in there, and see if after a few minutes it becomes more comfortable.**
- 3. If necessary, you can take a break for a few breaths and then try again.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing through single nostrils

- 1. With the right hand we will use a mudra called nasika mudra.**
- 2. Evenness and symmetry of the body is important for this practice.**
- 3. The thumb will press on the right side of your nostril (not inside the nostril). The ring finger will press on the left side of your nostril.**
- 4. The area it will press is the indentation on the upper ridge of your nostril in between the hard and soft cartilage.**
- 5. Try not to press so hard as to distort the nose off to the side.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing through one nostril

- 1. If one nostril is completely blocked, breathe through the other one.**
- 2. We will begin breathing through the left nostril for two minutes, followed by breathing through the right nostril for two minutes.**
- 3. We will take a short pause before moving from left to right.**
- 4. Use the same bodily and breath awareness in this practice as we did while breathing through both nostrils.**
- 5. Keep the breath smooth, even, and unbroken.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Resonance Breathing through alternate nostrils

- 1. Make the nasika mudra with your right hand.**
- 2. Begin by inhaling through the left nostril.**
- 3. Close your left nostril and exhale through the right nostril.**
- 4. Then inhale through the right nostril, followed by an exhalation through the left nostril.**
- 5. We will follow this pattern for two minutes.**
- 6. After we complete the two minutes, rest your hand on your knee, and allow your awareness to notice any changes you feel in the breath, body, or mind.**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Kapalabhati - There are 16 instructions

- 1. Kapalabhati means “shining” or “glowing skull”**
- 2. Your posture should be comfortably straight, without slouching or leaning forward**
- 3. For beginners it is ok to do this with chair support or even lying on the floor with the knees bent, feet flat on the floor**
- 4. Kapalabhati is performed by exhaling quickly, as if you were blowing your nose, and then relaxing your abdomen to allow an inhalation. You can also imagine that there is a fly just under your nose and you are trying to blow it away without using your hands**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Kapalabhati continued

- 5. Kapalabhati is a cleansing practice, a “kriya”
it is not a pranayama**
- 6. The action of the exhalation is in the area of the navel and lower
abdomen**
- 7. The abdominal pumps are even, steady and measured**
- 8. The abdomen should stay relaxed in order for the breath to be
properly pumped out, and then to flow in again**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Kapalabhati continued

9. We will begin with 10 active exhalations and passive inhalations

10. After the 10 breaths are completed, do three resonant breaths

11. Then let your breath fall into any natural pattern

12. Sometimes you might feel that the breath naturally pauses here; if it does, sit quietly and enjoy the pause

13. Kapalabhati reverses the natural mechanism of breathing, so that the inhalation is passive, and exhalation is active

14. At this time, we will not be using retentions for kapalabhati, but later we will

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How to do Kapalabhati continued

15. Kapalabhati should not be done too vigorously or too many times

16. It should not be done if you are pregnant, have had recent abdominal surgery, have a hernia, glaucoma or uncontrolled high blood pressure, after food, or if menstruating

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

Blocked Nostrils

- 1. It is normal for one nostril to feel more blocked than the other**
- 2. This is because of the changing cycles of the autonomic nervous system (more on this later in the course)**
- 3. After doing full breathing, resonance breathing, and alternate nostril breathing, your nostrils might feel more open**
- 4. If one is still completely occluded (blocked), it could be from allergies, diet, a cold, a deviated septum, or other reasons that sometimes need professional consultation**
- 5. Or, perhaps, the next practice will clear them open!**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Bhramari

- 1. Bhramari is a female bee**
- 2. This pranayama is performed by exhaling through the nose and making a high-pitched humming sound**
- 3. The sound is a nasalized sound like if were saying “numb” or “ring” so the sound is slightly further back in the palate than if you were saying “mmmm”**
- 4. The shanmukhi mudra, or simply closing the ears with the thumbs, can be done to heighten the vibration and resonance in the ears**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

How to do Bhramari

- 5. We will start with 3 rounds of Bhramari**
- 6. The exhalation should be longer than your inhalation**
- 7. There should be no strain in trying to exhale for too long**
- 8. The sound should be pleasant and resonant in your own ears, and does not need to be too loud**
- 9. You can feel the vibration in the nasal cavities**
- 10. After completing three rounds, sit quietly and observe your mind, breath, body, and the heightening of the senses**

Level 1 Pranayama Class Practice

- 1. Rest for 5 minutes lying down on your back**
- 2. The knees can be bent and your feet flat on the floor if that is more comfortable for you than lying flat**
- 3. The eyes can be open or closed**
- 4. Take a few minutes to allow yourself to deeply rest, absorbing the practice, and feeling a sense of an even flow of prana throughout your body**

Note:

There are a number of savasana methods which will be introduced later

Closing prayers

लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

लोकाः समस्ताः सुखिनो भवन्तु ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

lōkāḥ samastāḥ sukhinōbhavantu ॥

lōkāḥ samastāḥ sukhinōbhavantu ॥

lōkāḥ samastāḥ sukhinōbhavantu ॥

AUM śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

May all worlds be happy.

AUM Peace Peace Peace!