

About Breath

A few concepts to remember (please read before the workshop!):

- “Belly Breath” doesn’t happen in the belly, we just feel as if the belly was breathing.
- All breath is diaphragmatic, since the diaphragm is the main muscle of respiration.
- “Diaphragmatic” breath is a term that has been used to describe a deep breath where the abdomen is relaxed and the sensation is as if all the torso was filled gently by the air one breathes, and then expelled without effort. Some people call it “belly breath”. Very useful to learn this.
- Directional flow of breath: IN= in and down/ EX= up and out, since diaphragm moves down on IN, up on EX
- Natural exhalation is the result of the relaxation of muscles which were contracted on inhalation (mainly diaphragm & intercostal muscles, plus some auxiliary muscles) See video on next page*
- Breath happens automatically, and yet, we can influence breath, and train ourselves to regulate breath to some degree, which will affect the nervous systems and all systems in the body, as well as emotions, the mind, mood and thinking process.
- Smooth, subtle and comfortably long breath, as well as long exhalations, are known to calm the system, move it into parasympathetic response (out of stress response).
- Smiling gives information to the system that there is no threat, also helpful to calm the system when it’s activated without need. The system “reads” a frightened or tense facial expression as a threat, and activates the system into what some call “fight flight freeze” (helpful when it is a threatening situation, detrimental when it’s not).
- It is extremely important to NEVER force the breath. That would be detrimental to the system.
- The same breathing technique may have different effects on different people, or in different moments. Always look for expert guidance, calibrate and recalibrate to yourself.
- **“The test for intelligent effort is the response of the breath”** – T.K.V. Desikachar.
Always monitor your system by noticing if the breath is easeful and smooth. If it’s not, then pause and rest, stop, or back off a bit. Listen to your body! 😊

- Susana Laborde-Blaj

Please Watch These Videos Before the Workshop!

(Important information about the mechanics of breath that I will not be explaining during particular intensive workshop).

*Mechanism of Breathing (cute with a lot of live drawings)

[Armando Hasudungan](#)

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GD-HPx_ZG8I&t=396s

3D View of diaphragm (short video movement of diaphragm in respiration)

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hp-gCvW8PRY>

A beautiful very short video, same theme, adding other muscles and organs

"The Art Of Breathing" by Jessica Wolf. Link: ["The Art Of Breathing" by Jessica Wolf](#)

Pranayama Techniques (please read before “Dive Into Pranayama”):

Ujjayi: *valving* at the throat, should be smooth, subtle and almost quiet. Usually heating, helps to focus attention and lengthen the breath. Not to do when the system is over heated.

Sitali or sitkari: *valving* with the positioning of the tongue. It can be cooling, calming and soothing

Nostril *valving* techniques. Use “mrgi mudra” if possible. Blocking one nostril and partially blocking the other one (*valve*) is what is taught in the Krishnamacharya lineage. Here they are:

Anuloma Ujjayi: IN with ujjayi, EX through a *valved* nostril (partially closed, blocking the other one) very safe, usually calming, soothing. Helps to extend exhalation. May help to tone vagus nerve and also to decrease inflammation (qualities of a long and smooth exhale).

Viloma Ujjayi: IN through *valved* nostril, EX ujjayi. Possibly helps to be more awake and alert, energize.

Pratiloma Ujjayi: possibly balancing, may help to increase mental focus and improve brain function

One round is:

EX ujjayi, IN ujjayi

EX Left *valved* nostril, IN *valved* Left nostril

EX ujjayi, IN ujjayi

EX Right *valved* nostril, IN Right *valved* nostril

Nadi Shodana: master technique, balancing, cleansing the nadis, purifies the system

One round is:

EX, IN Left *valved* nostril

EX, IN Right *valved* nostril

Chandra Bhedana: IN Left *valved* nostril, EX Right *valved* nostril

Surya Bhedana: IN Right *valved* nostril, EX Left *valved* nostril