

Core Kriya Yoga (Ujjayi Pranayama)

Ujjayi (OO-jah-yee) is a technique of breathing that is easily combined with deep yoga breathing (above). Ujjayi is easy to learn.

There are several variants of ujjayi. Some of them accompany kriya yoga too. The core of several kriya methods is in fact ujjayi. [Cy]. The variant that is the most effective (powerful), is the unheard or nearly unheard variant of ujjayi.

On the way to the best variant, that is, inaudible breathing, listen to how a child who falls asleep breathes: I for one used to go to sleep by producing this relaxed way of breathing. I noticed a gently hissing sound - the hhh-sound - the sound of a "gentle snore". It is produced by relaxing the glottis area and the back of the throat, slightly constricting the passage of air. Make hhh very gently deep in the throat, then, and do not over-contract the throat. Restricting the flow of air through the larynx producing a "just audible" snoring sound. As the throat passage is narrowed, the airway is narrowed, creating such a "rushing" sound. So, contract your throat just a little to sense the hhh-sound. The hhh-sound is made while breathing out as well as breathing in. No nasal sound should be heard.

Here you have been told of what could very well be the best known ujjayi variant. This way of breathing is used along with almost all yoga postures and is often used during relaxation - and for kriya yoga. It is taught that the ujjayi method of breathing ensures a better intake of energy, and helps mental clarity and awareness, and promotes sound self-integration. There are no general restrictions on its use. If you do it right, you can sit and breathe like this for a long while and experience deep relaxation. To do it adequately, see the instructions for deep breathing (above) and the second ujjayi.

Basic Kriya Breathing: Inaudible Ujjayi

Prefer the inaudible variant. How to do the *unheard*, gentle variant: Sit, preferably with your shoulders back somewhat, or lie down. Breathe through the nose unless it is stopped. Breathe gently, calmly, without strain, all the time. On the way to the proper method, think of a rose, and seek to breathe in the fine and delicate fragrance by inhaling and exhaling over the back of your throat. Gently, unheard, refined somehow, and you kindly open the throat and glottis too. This is very important in doing the silent variant. You breathe in and out very, very gently, without making a sound, ideally, or next to no sound. The one sensory feedback you have, is the faint feeling of cool air in the throat, maybe a muffled vibration there too. Yet the breath itself is soundless, and so effortless that it "would not move a feather held in front of the face".

Do not tense your eyes, neck, nostrils, jaws, and root of the tongue, and do not hoist your shoulders either. But try to put the tongue somewhere further back in the mouth while you are at it - but do not strain yourself, so go ahead very gently. Alternatively, bend the tongue back so that the tip of the tongue presses the back of the soft palate on the roof of the mouth without strain. Some say you should lift the tip of your tongue to get twice the effect of the breathing practice, but if you just "make it thick" and draw it backwards somewhat, it may work a little better, along with the inaudible breathing.

If you hear any sound during the practice, it should be very close to the hhh-sound. The better you do the even, gentle breathing method, the less you hear of it. Be relaxed throughout,

and do not overdo it. And recall: ujjayi breathing by an experienced practitioner is (as good as) **soundless**. You might do well to go for that variant from the start.

Do maintain an even flow of breath when breathing in and breathing out - smooth and continuous. The time for breathing in and for breathing out should be equally long, that is, just a few seconds. Three seconds may be good for everyone. You *add the ujjayi way of breathing to deep yogic breathing* (above), and there you have it, even with variants of holding your breath for a second after breathing in and after breathing out - if such tiny pauses comes naturally.

Essential regulations

While there are few restrictions on the use of the first variant, audible ujjayi, the second variant can make you giddy fast unless you train yourself by regular, small steps to enjoy the powerful effects. Here are rules of the thumb, or more detailed suggestions:

- If you have a serious health issue, get your doctor's approval first.
- There are no particular rules for postures, although you may like to sit down during the practice, or right after it. Try doing it in a lying down positing too, if you have a health problem. [Yc 71-77]
- Stop whenever you get dizzy and tired during practice; do not overdo it. You may soon resume the method, for example after a couple of minutes.
- Go for wise regulation of the practice: Up to 10-14 rounds up to 5 times a day may be quite all right for the first few years - but individual differences should be allowed for.
- Focus on doing the breathing correctly, over and above doing it many times repeatedly.
- If in doubt, choose moderation. Gentleness and ease of practice comes first at all times - proper performance, that is.

Further counsel

You are advised to keep the attention focused on the heart while you practice - the area lies about 5 cm behind the breastbone (sternum), two fingerbreadth above the lower end of it, quite exactly.

Do not force the breathing a bit, stay as relaxed as you can at all times, and seek to notice how you feel from just three rounds of breathing in this way - after just about half a minute, that is. Let the length of your breath be natural and not forced. At the bottom of the out breath - while holding the breath a bit - you can **contract the perineum** somewhat for a couple of seconds. The practice is termed *mula bandha*. Some find it natural to do it. If so, you may continue that too.

Ujjayi can be done while moving, standing, sitting, or walking, but prefer to do the strong, silent variant while sitting. It can be done at any time of the day and night. Correct practice may steady the mind, bring calm and focus, and helps relaxation too. Done slowly, gently, it helps some against difficulty of falling asleep. along with yoga postures it is said to help you to stay present, self-aware, and grounded in the practice.

If focus is lost while doing it, simply return it to the breath and continue.

Keep the practice simple and within you own capabilities at all times, so that there will be no problems.

Mastery comes with time and good practice. [Cy 192-93, 200]

BENEFITS, ACCORDING TO SOURCES:

Yoga teaches that this way of breathing clears the head, and prevents diseases like asthma. It should help digestion, work toward normalising the blood pressure, and prolong one's life. [Lsy 79: Yc 71-77]

The Ujjayi breath gives energy and enhances the ability to assimilate prana (life force), and yields more delicate energy within your body. Thus, try it a little and see if it is true for you. There is good reason to stop when you feel giddy, dizzy. And you should stop before fainting.

Those with breathing problems such as asthma should seek medical advice and the guidance of a qualified teacher.

If you feel dizzy or light-headed, stop for a few minutes, then resume.

Care and Freedom

You may have come across that simple kriya can speed up your inner evolution fabulously. Ask for evidence that it is so, in case. Now, granted that core kriya is a delight to perform if you do it fairly well, would you like to back up some of its benefits by steering your life too? In that case this advice may give you help:

1. Practice your breathing regularly, without overdoing it, and sit or lie for at least ten minutes afterwards, focusing on your core (heart), then too. In so doing some use mantras. There are several methods. TM, Transcendental Meditation, is very good, and the best of the researched methods, according to David Orme-Johnsen [[Link](#)].
2. Study [basic Buddhism](#) and keep things simple, yet effective.
3. Hold on to your carefully selected, gently and delicately performed methods for at least five months to give them time to benefit you and effect whatever they can effect you for the better. Changes may show up in changed attitudes, interests, and preferences, for example. If you do not like the results, you are free to stop the practice for some time - maybe a week - and then resume it, or drop it altogether. Play safe if you practice on your own and otherwise too, in other words.
4. Try not to be severely outer-directed: the result of being governed by others may be "clipped wings".
5. If you are fairly pleased with what happens, there are more nuances to learn after, say, a couple of years of good self-help training - which is to be a pleasure.

KRIYA YOGA TECHNIQUE:

1. Sit in the meditation posture', on a chair,' feet flat on the floor; or cross-legged on the bed or floor. Hold the spine erect; chin parallel to the ground; shoulders drawn well back; chest out; abdomen in; hands (with palms upturned) resting on the thighs where they join the abdominal region.

2. With eyes closed or half-closed, concentrate the gaze at the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead, between the eyebrows.

3. Think of the spine as a hollow tube that extends upward from the coccygeal center at the base of the spine to the medulla center at the base of the skull, where the hollow tube curves forward through the cerebrum to the Christ Consciousness center in the middle of the forehead.

4. Expand the throat. To do this, first turn the tongue backward toward the throat. Do not strain. Then let the tongue return to normal position, but retain the expansion of the throat that results from turning the tongue backward.

5. Inhale through the mouth and nose, calmly and slowly making the sound of "AW" deep in the expanded throat. As you are drawing in the breath, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), feel a cool current being drawn up the spine from the coccyx to the Christ Consciousness center. Feel the coolness in the throat, and hear the sound of "AW," and mentally transfer both feeling and sound to the spine, as though the cool breath were coming up inside the spine with a sound of "AW. I' The sound of "AW" should be audible, but not loud.

6. Having drawn the cool current up to the Christ Consciousness center, pause briefly; a count of three should be long enough.

7. Exhale through the mouth and nose, slowly and calmly, to a count of 10 (or up to 15), making the sound of "EE" high in the expanded throat. Feel that the breath is a warm, fine (threadlike) current flowing down from the Christ Consciousness center in the forehead through the spine to the coccygeal center at the base of the spine. Feel the warmth in the throat, and concentrate on the sound of "EE, 'I and mentally transfer both the sensation of warmth and the sound of "EE" to the spine, imagining the warm breath to be going down through the spine with the fine sound of "EE. '

8. The initial concentration on the idea of transferring the sensation and sound from the throat to the spine is practiced merely to stimulate the movement of the actual currents of life-energy in the spine. As you begin to feel the actual currents, concentrate only on the currents, cool or warm.

9. Repeat 14 times, morning and evening.