

A silhouette of a person in a yoga pose, standing on one leg with the other leg raised and bent at the knee. The person's arms are raised and their hands are joined in a prayer position above their head. The background is a gradient of colors from purple at the top to yellow in the middle, and red at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The person's shadow is cast on the ground below them.

YOGIC BREATHING
STEP-BY-STEP

◆ Yogic Breathing Step-by-Step

Most people are not aware of their breathing unless they are feeling challenged by it. This may happen when you have a cold or if you feel winded following a run. In yoga, paying close attention to your breath is important, and breathing in a certain way is fundamental.

◆ Follow these steps for beneficial yogic breathing:

Find a quiet time to learn about your breath.

- Wear loose clothing as it is vital that your breath flows naturally. Lie down on a carpet or a yoga mat in a quiet area. You should be warm and comfortable.



Raise your knees, placing your feet flat against the floor about hips' width apart.

- If you feel uncomfortable, place a pillow beneath your head and neck. You can also cover your eyes with a small pillow filled with lavender or buckwheat.



Feel yourself relax into the warm arms of gravity.

- Just enjoy the feeling for a moment.



Put your right hand on your stomach and the left on your chest.

- Close your eyes and focus your attention inward. Feel the breath entering and exiting your body.



Breathe slowly through your nose, paying attention to each breath.

- Allow your attention to gravitate toward the way your body moves along with your breath. Enjoy several minutes of relaxed breathing.

Abdominal Breathing: Observe as your abdomen rises and falls with each breath. With each inhalation, deepen, extend and lengthen the motion of your belly. Allow your abdomen to rise and fall to its limit, keeping your chest still the entire time. Continue for 20 breaths, then rest.

Thoracic Breathing: Begin by observing your normal breath, this time focusing on your chest. Observe your breathing pattern for several moments, and then begin to extend, deepen and lengthen the movement of your chest. Expand and lift your rib cage when you inhale, then let your lungs collapse completely when you exhale. Continue for 20 breaths, then rest.

Yogic Breathing: Inhale, filling your abdomen. Expand your breath upward to fill your chest. Exhale from the chest, then the abdomen, continuing to exhale as you draw your abdomen in completely. This is a single round of yogic breath. Repeat this process for 20 rounds, then rest.

Over time, yogic breathing will come naturally. Practice for a few minutes each day, and you'll likely find yourself feeling increasingly peaceful and calm, even when you're not actively paying attention to your breath.

Breath is a fundamental source of nourishment for all of us. If you spend a little time becoming familiar with yours, you'll feel more rested and alert, in touch with yourself, and connected to others.