

Kundalini Yoga Basics

Kundalini Yoga is an ancient practice designed to develop self-mastery. It's a complete science that deals with the physical body, the triad of the body-mind-spirit, the subtle energies of the body (such as prana, or life force energy), and the chakras (energy centers in the body). It combines kriyas (yoga sets that create a particular effect), mental focus, breathing techniques (pranayama), sound vibrations (mantras), postures (asana), hand positions (mudras), relaxation, and meditation to provide a healthier, happier, and holier way of life for each person who practices it.

Mantras

Mantras are the creative projection of the mind through sound. Man=mind, Tra=wave or projection. Chanting mantras, either silently or aloud, is a conscious method of directing the mind. Every time you make a sound, vibrations travel throughout your body. Specific sounds are used to create vibrations that affect your physical, mental, and spiritual being.

Kundalini Yoga Mantras

Just as an instrument is tuned to have the best sound, we tune into our higher selves by chanting the following mantra(s) 3 X.

The Adi Mantra: Ong Namō Guru Dayv Namō

"I call on or invoke the creative consciousness within, I bow to the divine teacher within".

Ong: infinite, creative energy from which everything flows

Namō: to call upon/reverent greetings

Guru: that which takes one from darkness to light

Dayv: transparent, subtle energy

The mantra should be chanted loudly, from the back of the nasal cavity and from the throat. It is chanted in prayer pose, with the hands near the heart, palms together, and the knuckles of the thumbs pressed against the breastbone. Inhale deeply and focus your attention on your third-eye point. As you exhale, chant the mantra in one breath. If you can't do it in one breath, take a short breath after Ong Namō. For the ru sound in Guru, touch the tip of the tongue to the front part of the roof of the mouth as you would in making a "d" sound. The sound Dayv is chanted at a slightly higher tone than the other sounds.

The **Mangala Charyn Mantra** is often chanted after the Adi mantra, but is not required. It's a mantra of protection and allows us to be more receptive to the teacher within.

Aad Guray Nameh: I bow to the primal wisdom

Jugaad Guray Nameh: I bow to the wisdom thru the ages

Sat Guray Nameh: I bow to the true wisdom

Siri Guru Day-Vay Nameh: I bow to the great unseen wisdom

Closing Song: Longtime Sun Song (Old Irish Blessing)

**May the long time sun shine upon you
All love surround you, and the pure light within you,
Guide your way on.**

Sat: Truth **Nam:** Name, Identity "*Truth is my identity*"
During the exercises we silently repeat the mantra **Sat Nam** as a way of focusing the mind. We mentally recite "Sat" on the inhaled, "Nam" on the exhaled. It is also used in some yoga sets and is chanted 1-3 times after the closing song.

Breathing Techniques

Breathe through your nose unless otherwise instructed.

Long Deep Breathing: As you slowly inhale, your abdomen and lower back will expand and your diaphragm will drop down. Fill your lungs completely. As you slowly exhale, pull the navel back towards the spine slightly to get all the air out. Breathe slowly, aiming towards 3-6 breaths per minute. As much as possible during the day, bring your attention to this conscious way of breathing which will reduce stress and increase lung capacity.

Breath of Fire: This rhythmic breath involves pumping the navel and moving the diaphragm powerfully. On the exhale, forcefully pull the abdomen back, pushing the air through the nose. Then relax the abdomen and allow the air to enter the lungs. Start slowly and increase the pace as you feel comfortable. Breath of fire adds lots of oxygen to the blood and energizes the body.

Bandhas

Bandhas are internal, energetic locks or seals used to aid in the flow of energy throughout the body. Do not strain when applying Bandhas. Hold the locks while staying calm and present within.

Root Lock (Mula Bandha):

This lock is frequently used in Kundalini Yoga. It coordinates, stimulates, and balances energies in the lower triangle: the first three chakras. It is a smooth motion that consists of three parts. First contract the anal sphincter muscles, lifting them in and up. Then contract the area around the sex organ. This is a slight lift and rotation inward of the pubic bone. Then contract the lower abdominal muscles and draw the navel towards the spine.

Diaphragm Lock (Uddiyana Bandha):

This lock pulls the energy from the lower body to the upper body. It is rarely used without the other locks and is applied on the exhale only. Once all the air is breathed out, pull the entire abdominal area back towards the spine and upwards. Keep the chest lifted. To release, relax the abdomen before inhaling.

Neck Lock (Jalandhara bandha):

This lock, though subtle is always applied when chanting, during most breathing exercises, and whenever you are holding the breath out, unless otherwise specified. While sitting comfortably with a straight spine, gently pull your chin toward the back of your neck. Your head stays centered and the muscles of the neck and face stay relaxed.

Great Lock (Maha Bandha):

The great lock is the application of all three locks simultaneously while the breath is held out. With all locks applied, the body is in the perfect healing state. The glands, organs, and nerves rejuvenate, and all the chakras balance.

Tips for a successful Experience

- ◆ Always begin your practice by tuning in with Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō and end the set with the “Longtime sun” song followed by 1-3 long Sat Nams.
- ◆ When doing a kriya always follow it in the order given. The time of the exercises can be reduced (proportionally), but not increased.
- ◆ Keep your eyes closed and focused at the third eye point (center of the forehead).
- ◆ Focus on the breath, and let your thoughts drift by.
- ◆ When possible, practice bare footed since the soles of the feet are one of the key points for prana to enter the body, plus there are many nerve endings there.
- ◆ Relax your breathing. Mentally chant "Sat" on the inhale, "Nam" on the exhale.
- ◆ Drink water after your practice to balance and ground yourself.
- ◆ **Special Considerations for Women:** In the first few days of your period and after the third month of pregnancy, DO NOT use breath of fire. Do long deep breathing instead and avoid or greatly modify the following postures: Bow, Camel, Locust, Root Lock (do "kegels" instead), Shoulder Stand, Plow, Leg Lifts/Stretch Pose.

Meditation

Meditation is a procedure for focusing the mind, allowing thoughts to pass through the mind without attaching to them. It is not about controlling the mind but attempting to remain neutral within the chatter of the mind.

Meditation Affects (Minutes)

3 minutes: Affects the aura, circulation and blood stability.

11 minutes: Affects the nerves and the glandular system.

22 minutes: Balances the 3 minds and they begin to work together.

31 minutes: Allows the glands, breath, and concentration to affect all the cells and rhythms of the body. Affects the elements in the body.

62 minutes: changes the grey matter in the brain. Your subconscious and your positive projection are integrated.

2 1/2 hours: Holds the change in the subconscious mind through the cycle of the day.

The best time to meditate is between 4-7 a.m. when all is quiet. Another optimal time is between 4-7 p.m., when the sun is setting or before going to sleep.

Meditation Affects (Days)

40 days : Changes an old habit into a more positive one.

90 days : Confirms the new habit in you.

120 days : The new habit is who you are.

1000 days : You have mastered the new habit.

If you miss a day, start over. Try to begin the meditation before midnight. If you start after midnight, it counts as missing a day. Mastery of a meditation means that the state of mind you are in during the meditation becomes immediately accessible to you just by thinking about it.

Mudras

Mudras are hand positions used to direct the mind.

GYAN MUDRA:



The tip of the thumb touches the tip of the index finger, stimulating knowledge and ability. The index finger is symbolized by Jupiter, and the thumb represents the ego. Gyan Mudra imparts receptivity & calm.

SHUNI MUDRA:



Tip of middle finger (symbolized by Saturn) touches the tip of the thumb, giving patience.

SURYA or RAVI MUDRA:



Tip of the ring finger (symbolized by Uranus or the Sun) touches the tip of the thumb, giving energy, health and intuition.

BUDDHI MUDRA:



Tip of little finger (Mercury) touches tip of thumb for clear and intuitive communication.

Other Breath Patterns

By changing your breath pattern you can change your mind. The breath and it's movements are connected to the movements of all emotions and thoughts.

Left Nostril Breathing

Relaxes you, activating the right side of the brain and lowers the body's temperature and blood pressure.

Right Nostril Breathing

Energizes you, activating the left side of the brain and raises the body's temperature and blood pressure.

Shitali Breath

Curl your tongue into a "U" shape. Inhale through the tongue and exhale through the nose.

Has a powerful cooling effect on the body and emotions. Lowers fevers and aids digestion.

Breath Frequency

When we consciously lower the frequency of breaths per minute, we encourage great benefits. Normally, we breathe at a rate of 16-20 cycles per minute, but when we can slow that down to 8 cycles or less, positive shifts occur.