

Basic Breathing Techniques

Remember we always need to spend time with basic breathing techniques before embarking upon pranayama because this will lay a foundation for us by:

- Establishing a relaxed, natural breath where any dysfunctional breathing patterns are dismantled e.g. shallow breathing, paradoxical breathing etc.
- Learning to use the primary breathing muscles that are designed for prolonged use, rather than the secondary ones which can quickly become chronically contracted and then exhausted & weak.
- Helping to create a relaxed natural awareness of the breath so it is possible to objectively observe the breath and its effects without disrupting the breath.

Here the most significant basic breathing techniques include variations on the three part yogic breathing and we should regularly return to these whatever yoga experience we have, and remember we can teach basic breathing at a different point than pranayama in any one class. Examples of basic breathing:

Abdominal breathing into hands semi-supine
Ribcage/mid chest breathing into hands semi-supine
Upper chest breathing into hands semi-supine
Three-part breath breathe into hands semi-supine
Dynamic three-part breath semi-supine
Watching movement of diaphragm semi-supine
Feeling where breath moves body semi-supine

Standing rib stretch & Stand lung cleansing
Vedic breath standing
Seated yogic breath
Straw breathing
Hasta Mudras
Hathenas
This is not an exhaustive list.....

HYP Kumbhakas (a.k.a Pranayamas)

Q Which of these would you teach to a class?

1. **Surya bhedana / sun piercing– caution ANS**
e.g. In R & ex L stimulates SNS, good to balance vata, removing toxins– v heating so care needed
2. **Ujjayi / victorious breath**
Soothing to nervous system, increases sensitivity – care LBP
3. **Sitkari / hissing breath**
e.g. Cooling, increase magnetism, attractiveness – care inner dryness or cold
4. **Sitali / cooling breath**
e.g. Cooling, alleviates HBP, strengthens digestion – care inner dryness or cold
5. **Bhastrika / bellows breath**

Notes on the Progression through Basic Breathing, Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha

e.g. Equal in & ex, stimulate cardiovascular & resp system, removal waste & toxins, massages viscera, produces CF fluid, strengthens NS, revitalizes Many P & P eg HBP, stomach ailments, intestinal problems, ear or eye conditions etc.

6. **Brahmari / Humming breath**

e.g. Calming, heightens sensitivity, no precautions

7. **Murcha / swooning breath** In & ex whilst JB leading to hyperventilation and eventual hypoxia where little O₂ in blood leading to trance – not for use unless in ashram type situation with individual guidance

8. **Plavini / floating breath**

Air swallowed and retained not for use unless in ashram type situation with individual guidance

Additional pranayama techniques:

Nadi sodhana: Balancing PNS & SNS in right ex both, in left ex both

Calming, heightens perceptions, subtle cleansing, opens restricted channels in body and mind

Few p & p caution with respiratory problems such as asthma and those with anxiety states where anuloma may be better.

Viloma In or ex are interrupted by several pauses like climbing stairs,

Creates elasticity of lungs, rests nerves and soothes brain, learn to breathe deeply. Few p & p. Iyengar done lying down as a preliminary to other pranayama

Anuloma: With the grain i.e. in both ex left, in both ex right, Calming alert mind PNS increases, few p & p {emphasis on exhalation}

Pratiloma: Against the grain i.e. in right, ex both, in left ex both, Energising, stimulating primarily activates SNS, May be too heating or stimulating (emphasis on inhalation)

[Kapalabhati: This is a Kriya used primarily for cleansing purposes, there is an emphasis upon the exhalation, inhalation taking 3 times less than exhalation]

Ratios:

Good straightforward ratios for us to use:		
1:0:1:0	2:1:2:0	2:1:2:1
1:0:2:0	1:1:1:0	1:1:1:1

Note: Teachers vary regarding their view of whether 1:1:1:0 or 1:1:1:1 are more accessible

In the HYP we often find the development of ratios over time is: 1:0:1:0, 1:0:2:0, 1:1:1:0, 1:2:2:0, **1:4:2:0**, 1:4:2:3 although we have to be very cautious.

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We must teach ratio according to our own experience, and always use staging so that students can stay at the most appropriate stage for their level of experience & capacities. And we must always emphasize the need for a smooth and relaxed breath. So for instance staging might be:

To lead to ratio of 1:0:1:0

1. Attune to natural breathing
2. Ujjayi (no ratio – determine length of breath)
3. Ujjayi 1:0:1:0 (equalise in and out breath)
4. Natural breathing

Always used to start,
unless ratio of 1:0:2:0

To lead to ratio 1:1:1:1

1. Attune to natural breathing
2. Ujjayi (no ratio – determine length of breath)
3. Ujjayi 1:0:1:0 (equalise inhalation & exhalation)
4. Ujjayi 1:1:1:1 (equalise all parts of the breath)
5. Natural Breathing

Mudras and bandhas:

As you go through the list of mudras and bandhas below remember that sometimes they can be taught in a different fashion so for example we might introduce mula bandha in asana for beginners but then in pranayama for intermediates. We might introduce a simple form of viparita karana to beginners but then bring in moving awareness through the chakras to intermediates or advanced students. This means when you look at different techniques bear this in mind. You may also like to add other possible techniques to this list.

Ch3 v6 & 7

The HYP lists ten main mudras:

- Maha Mudra “Great attitude”
- Maha Bandha “The Great lock”
- Maha Vedha Mudra “The Great Piercing Attitude”
- Kechari Mudra “The Attitude of dwelling in supreme consciousness’
- **Uddiyana Bandha “The Abdominal Lock’**
- **Mula Bandha “The Perineum Lock”**

- **Jalanadhara Bandha “The Throat Lock”**
- Vipareeta Karani Mudra “The Attitude of Moving or Circulating energy”
- Shakti Chalana Mudra “The Attitude of Moving or Circulating energy”
- [Vajroli Mudra “Thunderbolt Attitude” Re-directing sexual energy, as our aim]

We can also include **Shambavi Mudra** “Eyebrow Centre Gazing’ Found in Ch4 V36, 37 often used within meditation

The Use of Mudras & bandhas in our practice

Mudras in Asana

General Drishtis in asana – focusing mental energies on specific locations of body whilst performing particular postures

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Mudras used in Breathing Practices

Chin Mudra, Chin Maya Mudra, Ardhi Mudra, Brahma Mudra – i) thumb on index finger, other fingers extended press into thighs ii) thumb on index finger, other fingers curled in palm, press into thighs iii) fingers curled around thumb press into thighs iv) fingers curled around thumb at chest height back of knuckles touch - exploring concentration of breath within body as moving between mudras

Yoni Mudra – Mudra of Silence – in seated pose close the orifices of the head with the fingers i.e. closing off the senses

Specific Mudras to address physical or psychological conditions

Pran Mudra – Life Seal - tip of thumb to ring finger and little finger – activate muladhara chakra, grounding, lessen anxiety, increase energy

Prithvi Mudra – Earth Seal, tips of ring finger & thumb touch, other fingers extended

Apana Mudra – Energy Seal – tips of thumbs to middle finger and ring finger, others extended – cleansing, balances mind, gives patience & serenity

Back mudra – right hand: thumb, middle and little fingers touch, left hand: thumb on nail of index finger – release backache

Joint Mudra – right hand: thumb and ring finger touch, left hand: thumb and middle finger touch – balances energy in joints

Ashwini Mudra – Horse Mudra – contraction of anus, holding for a short while on AK then releasing the anus can be done in seated position other poses such as inverted postures

The Bandhas or Locks “Specialised Mudras’ for altering flow of vayus i.e. bandhas

Jalandhara Bandha – Neck Lock – lowering chin to chest – can be explored in asana and used in pranayama

Mula Bandha – Root Lock – engaging perineum – can be used in asana or pranayama

Uddiyana Bandha – Abdominal lock – can be explored individually or used within pranayama

Simple mudras to aid concentration in seated meditation:

Chin or Jnana Mudra – forefinger touches base of thumb, other fingers spread apart palms facing upwards or downwards respectively.

Dhyani Mudra – Seal of Submission, left hand in right, thumbs touch, empty bowl of surrender

Singlepoint Mudras for Meditation

Boochari Mudra – Gaze into nothingness, focused upon little finger initially, great for concentration

Shambavi Mudra – Third Eye Gazing – in seated pose direct gaze inwards and upwards as if towards the centre of the forehead.

Nasikagra Drishti – Tip of Nose Gazing – in seated posture focus eyes upon tip of nose

Kaki Mudra – Crows Beak - in seated pose inhale through mouth, focus on tip of nose, hold for short while and exhale through nose.

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Whole body Mudras for Meditation

Yoga Mudra – Psychic Union Seal – seated in padmasana – hands behind back, inhale focus upon ajna chakra, exhale leaning forwards as breath and consciousness moves to muladhara chakra, BK for a short while and inhale sitting up, breath & consciousness traveling back to ajna chakra

Pashini Mudra – Folded Mudra – from halasana, knees to ears, shoulder and floor, wrapping arms around back of knees, focus upon manipura chakra

Viparita Karani – Inverted Attitude – as for shoulderstand concentrating on manipura chakra on first breath then anahata chakra on second breath, vishuddhi chakra on third breath, manipura chakra on fourth breath as so on. Hold for up to 36 breaths.

Maha Mudra I – The Great Seal I – JB and MB whilst in janursirsasana, can solely work as pranayama or introduce internal focal points

Maha Mudra II – The Great Seal II – JB, MB and UB whilst in janusirsasana, can solely work as pranayama or introduce prana moving to ajna chakra, using shambavi mudra

Maha Bandha/Bandha Traya - JB, MB and UB whilst in padmasana, can solely work as pranayama or introduce prana moving to ajna chakra, using shambavi mudra

Remember BWY perspective is an inclusive one using:

VINYASA KRAMA – SPECIAL PLACEMENT

USE OF MODIFICATIONS, ALTERNATIVES, VARIATIONS

GRADUAL PROGRESSION OVER TIME

Notes on the Progression through Basic Breathing, Pranayama, Mudra and Bandha

The Progression through Pranayama, Mudra & Bandha: To check you are thinking in the right way please see if you can use the notes given to select practices that can be introduced for each time period.....				
0 – 6 months	6 to 12 months	2 nd year	3 rd year onwards	Note:
				<p>There is no set fixed order.</p> <p>Your choices will depend upon:</p> <p>The ability & experience of the group</p> <p>The needs of the group</p> <p>The theme of the class or course</p> <p>But we must ensure there is a gradual development over time with foundational practices taught first.</p> <p>We must use staging, and alternatives where needed, so our teaching is always inclusive.</p> <p>Staging could be for instance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural breathing 2. 1:0:1:0 3. 1:1:1:1 4. Natural breathing <p>So here if kumbhaka is contraindicated stay at stage 2.</p>