

Prāṇāyāma

A Practical Handbook



॥ श्रीः ॥

Sama Yoga/ॐ Press

Compiled and edited under the direction of
Ākāśa (Sky) Caitanya

Prāṇāyāma: A Practical Handbook

Table of Contents:

Benefits and Techniques	–	–	–	–	Page 1
Health Benefits	–	–	–	–	Page 2
Āyurvedic Recipes	–	–	–	–	Page 3

Nine Prāṇāyāma Disciplines:

Bhastrikā	–	–	–	Page 5
Kapālabhati	–	–	–	Page 7
Nāḍī Śodhana	–	–	–	Page 9
Agni Sāra Dhauti	–	–	–	Page 11
Bhramarī	–	–	–	Page 13
Ujjāyī	–	–	–	Page 14
Śītalī	–	–	–	Page 16
Utgīṭ	–	–	–	Page 17
Anuloma Viloma	–	–	–	Page 18

A Prāṇāyāma Practice With Vedic Mantra	–	–	–	Page 20
--	---	---	---	---------

Supporting files for this booklet, including jpg images and MP4 videos may be found at:

www.samayoga.info

Prāṇāyāma

Benefits and Techniques

The Sanskrit word prāṇāyāma is actually a compound of two smaller words; prāṇa and āyāma. The word prāṇa means 'vital life force'. This force directly sustains the gross body, making physical activity possible. It also regulates the flow of cellular 'intelligence'. Prāṇa is the subtle aspect of breath, and is a property of the subtle body. It is similar in many respects to the Chinese force called 'qi' (as in qigōng) and the Japanese 'ki' (as in Aikido). Āyāma (from the root yañ) means expansion; regulation; deathless. One can unfold the full word to mean 'consciously focusing one's life force using specialized breathing techniques'. Prāṇāyāma can also mean 'regulation of the movement of air while breathing' and 'extension of the breath'. These techniques have been 'revealed' to Humankind by the Ṛṣis (sages/seers with heightened intellects) who are highly revered in the ancient Vedic texts.

Prāṇāyāma is used to condition the body-mind complex. It is especially useful for balancing the emotional aspect of the mind. The reasons why this effect is important will become clear when one decides to combine a daily prāṇāyāma practice with the study of Vedānta under the guidance of a qualified, traditional teacher.

dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasaḥ

धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः

“[By practicing prāṇāyāma], the mind gains the strength to deal with unwanted or hindering thought-forms [which helps to deepen concentration].”

From the 'Yoga Sūtras' (2:53) of Patañjali

Sixteen Health Benefits Directly Associated With The Practice Of Prāṇāyāma

- Calms and quiets the mind
- Stabilizes the nervous system
- Balances the endocrine system and hormone levels
- Helps to cure respiratory diseases
- Increases digestive capacity
- Improves the absorption and assimilation of nutrients
- Reduces cholesterol, excess fat and the symptoms of diabetes
- Increases the efficiency of all the organs
- Strengthens the immune system
- Balances the left and right hemispheres of the brain
- Reduces the risk of heart disease
- Regulates bladder and bowel elimination
- Increases overall strength and stamina
- Relieves depression/sadness
- Brings cellular renewal and regeneration
- Brings luster to the skin and the eyes

Āyurvedic Recipes for Maintaining A Healthy Respiratory System While Maximizing The Benefits of Prāṇāyāma

Rejuvenation tonic for building prāṇa (rasāyana) :

5 grams of pippali (black pepper)

5 grams of honey (local, organic, wildflower is preferable)

5 grams of ghī (clarified butter)

Mix and take at room temperature after the morning meal.

Note that herbs taken after a meal work more effectively on the upper part of the body.

Supportive, household herbs for decongestion:

Ginger, black pepper, cinnamon, coriander, clove, fennel, basil (tulsi basil and holy basil are preferred), ajwan (celery seed), cardamom (which also neutralizes mucous formation from the ingestion of dairy products), saffron, bay leaves, mustard seed, eucalyptus, camphor (externally), peppermint, honey (which scrapes mucous from the respiratory system. It is recommended one takes honey in combination with any/all of the above.

For dryness in the lungs (and for the colon which is directly related to the lungs):

Slippery elm (for restoring proper functioning of the mucous membranes in the lungs), licorice, flax seed, ghī, peaches, (and a yummy one...) a blended ripe banana mixed with 1 teaspoon of honey, a pinch of black pepper, warm milk and turmeric powder.

Blocked nasal passages:

Some possible reasons for blocked nasal passages may be due to hay fever, allergies, irritation and swelling of the mucous membranes, colds, bacterial infection and dust and dirt inside the nostrils. Difficulty in breathing may also be due to a deviated septum, which will require special attention (a surgical operation or a dedicated yoga practice called sūtra neti).

Simple remedies for blocked nasal passages include:

- Steam inhalation using ajwan, ginger, eucalyptus, peppermint or any of the VICKS products designed for decongestion.
- Jala Neti: Flush the nostrils with salt water in the morning on an empty stomach using a neti pot.

Thoroughly mix 10 grams of non-iodized salt into 1 liter of pure, body temperature spring water. Follow the instructions supplied with your neti pot on how to perform jala neti.

- Snuff a saline solution for nasal cleansing.
Thoroughly mix 2 grams of sea salt into 100 ml of pure, body-temperature spring water. Add the mixture to a nasal/nasal-mist spray bottle.
- For severe congestion, put 2 - 3 drops of raw garlic juice directly into each nostril with a nose-dropper.

Peel the skin from the cloves of 5 bulbs of fresh garlic and liquefy the peeled cloves in a food processor. Pour the liquid paste into a mesh sieve over a bowl and press the paste into the sieve with a large spoon. Pour the garlic juice from the bowl into a nose dropper bottle.

- Drink a mixture of fresh ginger with 5 grams of honey, 2 - 3 times per day.

Peel, scrape or cut the skin from 30 grams of fresh, organic ginger and liquefy in a food processor. Put the ginger paste in a bowl and mix with 10 grams of organic, wildflower honey.

Foods, drugs or practices to limit when taking on a disciplined prāṇāyāma practice:

Dairy products, cold drinks, ice cream (both dairy- and nondairy-based), hydrophilic substances (any form of salt; hydrophilic foods include chia seeds, pears, okra, oatmeal, barley, Brussels sprouts, kidney beans, chickpeas, oranges and agar), exposure to cold and damp, any kind of smoking or vaping of any substance, over-eating, exhaustion, fever, pregnancy, menstruation, and above all, avoid taking alcohol. It might be prudent, if one has a propensity toward allergies, to find out which foods and substances to avoid by consulting a qualified medical practitioner.

Nine Prāṇāyāma Disciplines

Bhastrikā

भस्त्रिका

The Bellows Breath; powerful thoracic breathing. The purpose of bhastrikā is to increase the vital capacity of the lungs. This is done by inhaling fully and deeply with a full thoracic expansion (expanding the front, back and sides of the rib cage).

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position and deeply inhale through the nose.
- 2) Exhale with some force to completely empty the lungs (while contracting the diaphragm).
- 3) Deeply inhale through the nose with a quick-filling action that brings an immediate expansion of the rib cage (feeling a stretch all the way around and from the top to the bottom of the rib cage).
- 4) Immediately exhale again forcefully, contracting the abdominal muscles.
- 5) Continue this powerful rhythm of full inhalation and exhalation for 16 rounds while gradually increasing the tempo (imagine a steam locomotive slowly picking up speed).
- 6) After the 16th round, exhale and hold the breath out until the urge to breathe arises. One may choose to engage the jalandhara and uddyāna bandhas (throat and abdominal locks) for this step.

Benefits of Bhastrikā

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- dilating the bronchi
- increased breath capacity
- stimulation of metabolism
- reduction of body fat and cholesterol levels
- reduction of excess weight
- invigorates the gross and subtle bodies
- brings lightness and brightness of mood
- increases circulation to coronary arteries which in turn, may help to reduce the possibility of heart attacks
- tones the diaphragm
- improves thyroid function
- increases digestive fire
- helps relieve the symptoms of asthma and allergies

Contraindications:

Avoid this practice if you are menstruating, are pregnant or running a fever. If you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, please consult a competent medical practitioner before practicing bhastrikā.

Kapālabhati

कपालभति

The skull-shining breath; abdominal pumping breath. The purpose of kapālabhati is to stimulate and massage the abdomen and internal organs. This practice will also open up the sinus cavities and clear the nostrils in preparation for the practice of nāḍī śodhana (alternate nostril breathing).

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position and inhale through the nose. Feel the striking action of the breath at the brow.
- 2) Start with a quick exhalation by drawing the navel inwards, emptying the lungs.
- 3) Allow for the inhalation to come naturally as the belly re-inflates.
- 4) Continue this pumping action of the belly, keeping a steady and comfortable rhythm for up to 60 breaths (ideally, with a rate of 1 breath/second, this should take about one minute to complete).
- 5) After the final exhalation of each round, hold the breath out (bāhya-kumbhaka) for as long as it is comfortable.
- 6) Make a smooth transition by inhaling and then immediately exhaling, clearing all the breath from the lungs. Inhale again to a comfortable-sized breath and this time hold the breath in (āntara-kumbhaka) while engaging the jalandhara and uddyāna bandhas (throat and abdominal locks).
- 7) Exhale, rest and breathe normally until the heart rate normalizes. More advanced practitioners may choose to perform up to 9 rounds of kapālabhati in a ten minute period.

Benefits of Kapālabhati

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- strengthening of the heart
- increasing oxygenation
- exercising the glandular system which balances hormone levels
- removing stale and toxic air from the respiratory system
- increasing mental clarity
- enhancing memory
- helping reduce the symptoms of allergies
- normalizing thyroid/parathyroid functioning
- reducing feelings of depression
- clearing the sinuses
- stimulating and strengthening the parts of the brain that regulate the sense of smell as well as the entire limbic system
- increasing healthy kidney function
- helping the physical body stay supple and slim
- helping to reduce lumps in the breasts and uterus
- massaging ovaries/fallopian tubes
- helping prostate function
- strengthening the abdomen and detoxifying the lungs

Contraindications:

Kapālabhati should not be practiced while menstruating, during pregnancy, during a high fever, in the presence of high blood pressure or if one is suffering from acute lung disease.

Nāḍī Śodhana

नाडी शोधन

Alternate nostril breathing; cleansing of the subtle energy channels. The purpose of nāḍī śodhana is to open up the right and left breath channels (both subtle and gross), and to activate the subtle central channel known as the suṣumṇā nāḍī. This will increase overall energy levels and help to balance the mind (stimulating creative and rational thinking).

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Place the right hand just above the nose, palm down. You should be able to easily close the right nostril with the thumb, and the left nostril with the ring finger (as if one were playing a two-holed flute). The index and middle fingers may be folded in toward at the wrist, or pointing out with the tips of the fingers resting on the area between the eyebrows. Close the right nostril with the thumb, inhaling slowly, smoothly and deeply through the left nostril. Completely fill the lungs with this breath without straining
- 2) Close the left nostril with the ring finger and fully exhale through the right nostril slowly, smoothly and deeply.
- 3) Keeping the left nostril closed, inhale slowly, smoothly and deeply through the right nostril.
- 4) Now close the right nostril (again, with the thumb) and exhale through the left nostril. This completes one cycle. Keep the inhalations and exhalations the same length (sama vṛtti; with an equal breathing ratio of 1:1).

- 5) Maintain a steady, balanced rhythm for three to five minutes or 12 rounds.
- 6) As one advances in this practice, one may choose to keep the breath held in for the same duration as the inhalations and exhalations (1:1:1).
- 7) After a few weeks of daily practice, one can modify the breath ratio (inhalation-retention-exhalation) to 1:4:2. This specific practice is known as sahita-kumbhaka (breath with retention).

Benefits of Nāḍī Śodhana

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- giving the mind immediate clarity
- helping to steady the mind
- increasing brain health (balancing left and right hemispheres)
- supporting healthy hypothalamus and pineal gland function
- helping to regulate all physiological functions and cycles (heating-cooling, sleep, weight, menstrual, etc.)
- helping to clear all 72,000 nāḍīs (subtle channels)
- helping to activate the suṣumṇā nāḍī (allowing a freer flow of energy with increased brightness and clarity; an overall balancing effect for the body-mind complex)

Contraindications:

Nāḍī śodhana should not be practiced during menstruation, pregnancy or when a fever is present.

Agni Sāra Dhauti

अग्नि सार धौति

Fire washing; massaging the abdominal organs. The purpose of agni sāra dhauti is to warm and stimulate the navel center. This is accomplished by first exhaling completely, then closing the airway (by engaging the jalandhara bandha), then pulling the abdomen up and in towards the backbone via an expansion of the ribcage (keeping the spine in a neutral, spacious adjustment). The navel center is then quickly released and then quickly drawn in and upward in a rapid, in-and-out movement. This in-and-out action may be repeated as many times as comfortable until a new breath is needed.

Technique:

- 1) Start by standing tall with the feet slightly wider than the width of the hips.
- 2) Inhale deeply while raising the arms above the head.
- 3) Exhale fully and forcefully through the mouth while simultaneously swinging the arms forward and bending forward (try to keep the head in line with the spine). This action will remove all the air from the lungs.
- 4) Establish a stable posture with bent knees and hips while keeping the breath out. The hands should be placed just above the knees with the arms straight and the shoulders down. The head should continue to stay in line with the spine.
- 5) With the breath still out, use the deeper abdominal muscles to pull the belly up and in towards the backbone. This will create a vacuum (this effect will be prominently felt in the throat). Keep the chin tucked in, 'locking' the throat (jalandhara bandha).
- 6) Still keeping the breath out, release the belly outward by relaxing the abdominal muscles.

- 7) Engage the mūlā bandha (root lock).
- 8) Repeat this in-and-out movement as rapidly as possible for as long as the breath can comfortably be held out without straining.
- 9) Inhale gently, stand up tall, stretching the arms overhead to lengthen the belly (again, without straining).
- 10) Repeat.

Start with three rounds. Over time, increase the repetitions to 12 rounds (beginning with 20 'pulls' or as many as possible without discomfort, increasing to 80 'pulls' per breath).

Benefits of Agni Sāra Dhauti

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- increasing digestive power
- kindling agni (the fire element of the body which is responsible for transforming all incoming gross material into useable energy)
- purifying the digestive tract
- massaging the intestines and reducing flatulence
- developing stronger breath control
- maximizing absorption and utilization of nutrients
- helping to protect the body from the possibility of hernia, gall stones and asthma
- reducing fear
- stretching the front of the spinal column
- helping relieve constipation and heal hemorrhoids
- stimulating the secretion of insulin (helping to decrease the risk of diabetes)*
- reducing obesity

*Please consult a qualified medical practitioner if one is at risk for diabetes.

Contraindications:

Agni sāra dhauti should not be practiced during menstruation, pregnancy, if one has a hernia, or when a fever or stomach ache is present.

Bhramarī

भ्रमरी

Humming (like a bumble bee). The practice of bhramarī creates a vibration in the skull (sound therapy for the brain) by focusing the voice internally.

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. To create the internal perception of the 'humming', the ears and other sense organs in the head will be 'blocked'. Fold the ears forward with the thumbs; place the index fingers lightly over the closed eyes; place the middle fingers lightly on the nostrils; place the ring fingers just above the top lips pressing lightly downwards; place the little fingers just below the lower lips pressing lightly upwards. This will create a 'sound chamber' in which to perceive the humming of the bumble bee.*
- 2) Inhale, and on the exhale begin humming and keep humming while slowly exhaling. Adjust the pitch and resonance to achieve the maximum vibration inside the skull without straining.
- 3) During this practice, one can also make contact between the tip of the tongue and the dome of the hard palate to further potentiate the effect.
- 4) Begin with 7 rounds of bhramarī and over time increase to 21 rounds without straining.

*A simpler form of this practice would be to close the ear canals by gently pushing the tragus of each ear inward with the middle finger of each hand and then beginning to hum.

Benefits of Bhramarī

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- strengthening of the singing voice
- strengthening and stimulating the glandular system
- improving memory and potentially reducing tumors
- enabling neural networks to maintain a healthy patterning
- activating the secretion of melatonin and dopamine
- relaxing the facial muscles, jaw and sinus cavities
- relaxing the entire nervous system

Ujjāyī

उज्जायी

Victorious (over the fluctuations of the mind). The practice of ujjāyī stimulates the thyroid and parathyroid glands by creating a slight constriction in the glottis (the muscles used for swallowing) so that an audible sound can be heard. Note that this is the classical version of ujjāyī where the sound produced by the throat is pitched and very high. The arms are active in this practice, with each arm rising alternatively during the inhalations (for timing and for lung stimulation).

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Close the mouth and with the head tilted slightly forward, pull the chin inwards, maintaining a comfortable constriction in the throat.
- 2) Inhale slowly through the nose drawing air across the throat. This will produce a high-pitched humming sound. Raise the right arm while inhaling. Try to time it so that the arm reaches its apex when the breath has almost completely filled the lungs.
- 3) Hold the breath in for from 4 – 5 seconds.

- 4) Close the right nostril with the thumb of the right hand and completely exhale through the left nostril.
- 5) Keeping the mouth closed tilt the head slightly forward and pull the chin inwards, creating a comfortable constriction in the throat.
- 6) Inhale slowly through the nose drawing air across the throat. This will produce a high-pitched humming sound. Raise the left arm while inhaling. Try to time it so that the arm reaches its apex when the breath has almost completely filled the lungs.
- 7) Hold the breath in for from 4 – 5 seconds.
- 8) Close the left nostril with the thumb of the left hand and completely exhale through the right nostril.
- 9) This is one complete round of classical ujjāyī breathing.
- 10) Start with 7 rounds and slowly build up to 21 rounds.

Benefits of Ujjāyī

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- assisting in the removal of phlegm from the throat
- strengthening the singing voice
- helping focus the mind
- increasing appetite
- helping the regulation of coughing and fever due to any throat ailments
- stimulating and strengthening the thyroid and parathyroid glands (which regulate hormone levels), thereby balancing the body's natural cycles, for example; sleep, menstruation, cellular growth, etc.
- creating an overall warming effect

Śitalī

शीतली

The cooling breath. The practice of śitalī is designed to cool the body (which may have become overheated due to vigorous āsana practices and/or from other, more rigorous forms of prāṇāyāma) while calming the mind.

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Curl the tongue from the sides into a tube shape (some people are genetically unable to do this).^{*} Now, extend the tongue past the lips.
- 2) Slowly inhale through the tongue as if one were sipping air through a straw, drawing the air through the tube of the moist tongue.
- 3) 'Swallow' the air into the belly and hold the breath in for from 4 – 5 seconds.
- 4) Slowly exhale through the nose. This completes one round.
- 5) Start with 10 rounds and gradually increase to 40.

^{*}If one is unable to curl the tongue into a tube shape, flatten the tongue and press it to the back of the top teeth. Part the lips slightly so that air can pass by the sides of the tongue with a hissing sound. This practice is called śītkarī and has the same effect as śitalī.

Benefits of Śitalī

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- helping to cool the body
- increasing digestive efficiency and a reduction of heartburn and colic
- helping balance body temperature after rigorous āsana and/or prāṇāyāma practice

Utgīṭ

उत्गीट्

Opening the gateway of the throat. The purpose of utgīṭ is to ease stress and tension from the neck and heart. This is accomplished by smoothly generating sound on the exhalation while fully opening and closing the mouth.

Technique:

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Take a full inhalation through the nose while keeping the chin slightly tucked in. Have the fingers of both hands resting on the upper chest in the area of the clavicles, pulling the skin gently downward.
- 2) On the exhalation, make three distinct sounds. The sound during the first third of the exhalation will be 'ah' (while the head is slightly tilting back). The sound during the second third of the exhalation will be 'oh' (while the head is stretching up and back as far as it is comfortable). The sound during the final third of the exhalation will be 'm' (the mouth being closed while slightly tucking the chin in with the head still tilted all the way back).

Note: The sounds ('ah' – 'oh' – 'm') should be continuous with no stoppage of the breath. There should be a smooth, continuous movement of the head as well, as it tilts back, suggesting a howling wolf. The hands on the chest actively pull the skin down while the head tilts up and back, stretching the fascia in the throat. Note also that this vocalization should not be confused with the Sanskrit word 'om'.

- 3) Continue for 3 – 12 rounds, gradually lengthening the duration of the sounds.

Benefits of Utgīt

The benefits of the practice include, but are not limited to:

- helping to inspire vocal expression
- reducing facial tension including tension in the mouth and jaw
- helping to overcome shyness
- strengthening the vocal chords
- reducing pressure and tension in the upper body
- helping open the fascia tissue in the chest and neck
- increasing lung capacity
- helping opening the throat and the throat cakra

Anuloma Viloma

अनुलोम विलोम

Alternate nostril breathing with breath retention and paused exhalation. The purpose of anuloma viloma is to balance and direct energy flow through the subtle, central channel (suṣumṇā nāḍī). This is achieved by practicing steady, rhythmic breathing while applying alternate nostril breathing with breath retention and paused exhalation.

Technique:

This practice is very similar to nāḍī śodhana. The difference is the application of kumbhaka and the breath retention/paused exhalation ratios. For the sequence of inhalation - retention – exhalation – paused exhalation (keeping the breath out), apply the ratios of 1:4:2:1.

- 1) Sit in a comfortable position. Using the thumb on the right hand, close the right nostril and exhale completely through the left nostril. For the correct hand position, please refer to page 9 (the first technique for nāḍī śodhana).

- 2) Begin the sequence, inhaling through the left nostril for a slow count of 4 (this should completely fill the lungs).
- 3) Hold the breath in (āntara-kumbhaka) for a slow count of 16 (keeping relaxed and focused on the area of the third eye - ājñā cakra).
- 4) Close the left nostril with the index finger of the right hand and exhale completely through the right nostril for a slow count of 8. This should be a slow, deliberate, smooth exhalation.
- 5) Hold the breath out (paused exhalation/bahir-kumbhaka) for a slow count of 4.
- 6) Inhale through the right nostril for a slow count of 4.
- 7) Hold the breath in (āntara-kumbhaka) for a slow count of 16 (keeping relaxed and focused on the area of the third eye; ājñā cakra).
- 8) Using the thumb on the right hand, close the right nostril and exhale completely through the left nostril.
- 9) This completes one round of anuloma viloma.
- 10) Begin with 6 rounds and slowly perform up to a total of 12 rounds or more. As one grows more comfortable with the practice, the ratios may be gradually increased; for example, 5:20:10:5, 6:24:12:6, etc.

Benefits of Anuloma Viloma

The benefits of the practice are the same as for nāḍī śodhana. The benefits with the addition of breath retention and paused exhalation to the practice include, but are not limited to:

- strengthening and fortifying the nervous system
- helping to conquer fear
- helping to extend lung capacity

Contraindications:

Anuloma viloma should not be practiced during menstruation, pregnancy or when a fever is present.

A Prāṇāyāma Practice With Vedic Mantra*

Inhalation: Sit in a comfortable position and deeply relax the body. For the correct position of the hands, please refer to page 9 (the first technique for nāḍī śodhana). Close the right nostril with the thumb of the right hand and inhale through the left nostril (chanting mentally):

om bhūḥ	ॐ भूः
om bhuvah	ॐ भुवः
ogrṁ suvah	ओ॒गँ सुवः
om mahah	ॐ महः
om janah	ॐ जनः
om tapah	ॐ तपः
ogrṁ satyam	ओ॒गँ स॒त्यम्

Retention: While keeping the right nostril closed with the thumb of the right hand, close the left nostril with the ring finger of the right hand (chanting mentally):

om tat savitur vareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi
dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt

ॐ तत्स॑वितु॒र्वरे॑ण्यं

भर्गो॑ दे॒वस्य॑ धी॒महि

धि॒यो यो नः॑ प्र॒चोद॑यात् ॥

Exhalation: Close the left nostril with the ring finger of the right hand and exhale through the right nostril (chanting mentally):

om āpo jyotīraso'mṛtaṁ
brahma bhūrbhuvassuvarom

ॐ आपो॑ ज्योती॒रसो॑ऽमृतम्

ब्रह्म॑ भूर्भुव॒स्सुव॑रोम् ॥

Repeat the above. This time, while keeping the left nostril closed with the ring finger of the right hand, inhale through the right nostril. Retain the breath and then, while closing the right nostril with the thumb of the right hand, exhale through the left nostril. This is one complete round. Start with nine rounds and over time, work up to 54 or 108 complete rounds.

*This is one of the most exalted practices mentioned in the Vedas.

आकाश (स्कै) चैतन्य

Ākāśa (Sky) Caitanya

Sky began his yoga journey in 1990 after the death of his father, which inspired him to follow his heart and live life in a more balanced manner. Sky is fortunate to have been blessed with accomplished teachers who are passionate about the subjects they teach. He has practiced many forms of physical and mental disciplines including Haṭha Yoga, Kuṇḍalinī Yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Vinyāsa and qigōng. Sky had the great fortune to study Āyurveda with Dr. Vasant Lad, which further influenced his healthy approach to yoga. In 2001, Sky met his sad-guru, Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī; a saṁyāsīn and traditional teacher of Vedānta in the lineage of Śrī Pūjya Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī. Studying Vedānta under the guidance of his guru has allowed Sky to express his practice more fully via the heart. Practicing and teaching yoga over the past 20 years in Europe and Asia has matured Sky and provided him with a unique lifestyle. He continues to study Vedānta, chant Vedic mantras, teach yoga and relax in fullness. Sky currently travels with his family, teaching in Sweden in the summer and Bali in the winter.

www.samayoga.info

This book would not be possible without the guidance and blessings of my teachers: Dr. Vasant Lad, MASc., Clive Sheridan, and Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī. Thanks also to Sanna and Jayin for bringing light and love into my world.

Ākāśa (Sky) Caitanya

Special Thanks to ॐPress for this devoted renovation and editing of

'Prāṇāyāma: A Practical Handbook';

helping to make this little booklet so much more user-friendly.

Sama Yoga/ॐPress