

3HO FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

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Kundalini Basics



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THE YOGA OF AWARENESS

Kundalini Yoga is a dynamic, powerful tool that is designed to give you an experience of your soul.

The technology of Kundalini Yoga precisely and consciously combines breath, mudra, eye-focus, mantra, body locks, and postures to balance the glandular system, strengthen the nervous system, expand lung capacity, and purify the blood. It brings balance to the body, mind, and soul.

Kundalini Yoga is a yoga for householders, for people who have to cope with the daily challenges and stresses of holding jobs, raising families, and managing businesses. It is a path for everyone who wants the skills to cope successfully with the challenges of our times.



TUNING IN & CLASS STRUCTURE

In Kundalini Yoga, before every class and personal practice we tune in with the Adi Mantra - *Ong Namoh Guru Dev Namoh*. This mantra is used for connecting with the wisdom and divine flow within each of us. It is chanted at least three times before practicing Kundalini Yoga. It is also very useful when we just need to be focused.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tune in before every class or personal practice
- Chant the mantra - 3 to 5 times
- Hands are held in Prayer Pose, palms together at the center of the chest with the fingers slightly away from the thumbs, whose sides firmly touch the sternum. Fingers are pointing up.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The typical structure of a Kundalini Yoga class is as follows:

- Tune In
- Warm-up exercises
- Kriya or series of kriyas
- Deep relaxation
- Meditation
- Closing affirmations and singing *Long Time Sun*



WHAT IS A KRIYA?

The word kriya means action. In Kundalini Yoga a kriya is a series of postures, breath, & sound that work toward a specific outcome. There are kriyas that support the liver, balance the glandular system, stimulate the pituitary, increase the flexibility of the spine, and many more. Each kriya has a different effect, but all work on all levels of your being.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Before You Begin:

- Consume only a light snack and water in the 2-3 hours prior to practicing.
- Turn off all cell phones and other distractions.
- Have drinking water handy.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing and a natural-fiber head covering (e.g., bandana, scarf, cap), if you choose.
- Have a soft surface like a yoga or exercise mat to sit on.
- Have a shawl/blanket to keep the spine warm in relaxation or meditation.
- If you are tight in the lower back, hips, or legs, use a pillow or cushion to elevate yourself during meditation and seated postures.
- Tune-in with the Adi Mantra: chant *Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō* three times before beginning any warm-ups, kriyas, or meditation.

During Your Practice:

- Listen to your body; do what works for you.
- In a live class, feel free to ask for clarification on instructions.
- Drink water as needed between exercises.
- Remember the Moon! During the heaviest part (one to three days) of a woman's monthly menstruation, avoid strenuous yoga. In particular, do not do: Bow Pose, Breath of Fire, Stretch Pose, Camel Pose, Locust Pose, Root Lock, Sat Kriya, inversions (e.g., Shoulder Stand), or strenuous leg lifts. Instead, visualize yourself doing the posture or ask the teacher for a modification.

After Your Practice:

- Drink lots of water.
- Pay attention to your physical, emotional, and mental self.
- Consider incorporating what you experienced in class into the rest of your life, particularly the “simple” things like long, deep breathing and a lengthened spine.

MEDITATION

Meditation in Kundalini Yoga includes specific, practical tools that carefully and precisely support the mind and guide the body through the use of breath, mantra, mudra, and focus. The range and variety of meditation techniques in the Kundalini Yoga tradition is vast. There are meditations that reduce stress, work on addictions, and increase vitality, to name a few.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

When to Meditate

Meditation can be done anytime that works for you, particularly if it is the same time every day. Keep in mind that first thing in the morning, the amrit vela (2.5 hours before sunrise), is best because it sets you for the whole day and is naturally a quiet, reflective time. In the evening (at sunset or just before going to bed) is also a good time.

Location

Choose a place where you won't be disturbed, feel vulnerable, or get distracted. Try to use the same place daily. Make it your spot; you can fill it with candles, flowers, spiritual images, pictures of beautiful places, and anything else that is uplifting, calming, inspiring. Sit on a soft surface or, if needed, a firm cushion or on a chair dedicated for this purpose.

Tune-in with the Adi Mantra

Chant *Ong Namo Guru Dev Namo* three times before beginning the meditation. You can also choose to do a yoga kriya or some warm-ups after tuning in.

Set Your Intention

Have a clear picture of what the result of this meditation will be for you. Why have you chosen to do it? The clearer your focus and intention, the more power behind the meditation.



PRANAYAM

BREATH IS THE PLACE TO START

The first and last things we do in this physical lifetime are to take a breath. Along with oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide, the breath contains *prana*, the life force. We are regularly taught we can't live without oxygen; it is also true we can't live without prana, the vital force that energizes the mind, body, and consciousness.

Principles to Remember

- Your rate of breathing and your state of mind are inseparable.
- The slower your rate of breathing, the more control you have over your mind.
- The mind follows the breath, and the body follows the mind.

The breath is a fundamental tool for the Kundalini Yoga student. The average rate of breathing for most people is about sixteen times per minute. When the rate of breathing increases, or if it becomes rapid and irregular, the mind also becomes disturbed and erratic.

Breath and Mind Connection

Why or how does the breath control the mind? When your mind is calm, meditative, and under your control, your rate of breathing will be slow, steady, and calm. By breathing slowly and steadily you will calm your mind. As you change your rate of breathing, you change your state of mind.

Of all the positive changes a person can make, learning to breath deeply and completely is probably the most effective tool for developing higher consciousness and for increasing health, vitality, and connectedness in one's life.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMON PRANAYAM TECHNIQUES HERE](#)



BREATH OF FIRE


AGNI PRAN

Breath of Fire is one of the foundational breath techniques used in the practice of Kundalini Yoga. It accompanies many postures, and has numerous beneficial effects.

Key Points

- Breath of Fire is rapid, rhythmic, and continuous. It is equal on the inhale and the exhale, with no pause between them.
- Practice through the nostrils with mouth closed, unless stated otherwise.
- The breath is powered from the navel point and solar plexus. To exhale, the air is expelled powerfully through the nose, by pressing the navel point and solar plexus back toward the spine. This feels automatic if you contract the diaphragm rapidly. To inhale, the upper abdominal muscles relax, the diaphragm extends down, and the breath comes in as part of relaxation rather than effort.
- The chest stays relaxed and slightly lifted throughout.
- There are restrictions for doing Breath of Fire while pregnant and menstruating.

[Learn more about common mistakes in Breath of Fire, the many benefits, and how to start a practice here.](#)

A woman with dark hair and bangs, wearing a purple tank top, is shown from the chest up. She has her eyes closed and a serene expression. She is wearing large hoop earrings, a necklace with circular pendants, and a ring. Her arms are crossed in front of her chest, with her hands pressed together. She has extensive black ink tattoos on her arms, including a large face on her right arm. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with green foliage.

Breath of Fire expands lung capacity, increases vital strength, and strengthens the nervous system

MANTRA

Mantra is the use of sound to affect consciousness; *man* means mind and *trang* means wave or projection. Everything in this world, down to the subatomic level, is in constant motion, vibrating. The denser a material, the more slowly it moves; often the vibration is so slow or so fast that we can't notice it with our direct senses. This vibration is pure energy.

SOUND AND VIBRATORY FREQUENCY

There is a vibratory frequency that corresponds to everything in the Universe. Happiness or sorrow, joy or regret are vibratory frequencies in the mind. When we chant a mantra we are choosing to invoke the positive power contained in those particular syllables. Whether it's for prosperity, peace of mind, increasing intuition, or any other possible benefits inherent in mantras, simply by chanting them we are setting vibrations into motion that shall have an effect. It doesn't actually matter if we understand the meaning of the sounds or not.

In addition to the vibrations set in motion, something else happens when you chant. This is really important. There are eighty-four meridian points, or pressure points, in the roof of the mouth. Every time you speak, you stimulate them and their associated glands and organs—with the tongue. And every time you chant a mantra, you are tapping out a particular sequence, rhythm, and position that initiates a chemical reaction in the brain and body.



COMMONLY USED MANTRAS

Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō - The Adi Mantra

This mantra is used for “tuning in” to the divine flow and self-knowledge within each of us. It is traditionally chanted at least three times at the start of each Kundalini Yoga class.

Sat Nam

This mantra reinforces the divine consciousness in everyone. It is used as a greeting as well as the mantra for Kundalini Yoga exercises, inhaling Sat (truth), exhaling Nam (name, identity).

Guru Guru Wahe Guru Guru Ram Das Guru

This mantra invokes the fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Ram Das, known for his humility and grace. It is a mantra of humility, relaxation, self-healing, and emotional relief.

Wahe Guru

This mantra expresses the indescribable experience of going from darkness to light. It is a mantra of infinite ecstasy.

Aad Guray Nameh - The Mangala Charan Mantra

This mantra clears the clouds of doubt and opens us to guidance and protection.



COMMONLY USED MANTRAS (continued)

Ra Ma Da Sa Sa Say So Hung

This mantra stimulates the kundalini energy for healing and activates the neutral mind.

Sa Re Sa Sa

This mantra takes away negativity from within oneself awakening the Infinite Creative energy to burn away obstacles to achieving higher consciousness.

Ang Sang Wahe Guru

This mantra eliminates haunting thoughts.

Chattar Chakkar Varti

This mantra removes fear, anxiety, depression, insecurity and phobias.

Gobinday Mukanday - The Guru Gaitri Mantra

This mantra eliminates karmic blocks and past errors, balances brain hemispheres, purifies the magnetic field, and brings compassion and patience.

Ek Ong Kar Sat Gur Prasad

This mantra stops anything negative and removes all obstacles. It brings great intuition.

Har Har Har Har Gobinday

This mantra fixes the mind to prosperity and gives power to break down barriers of the past. It converts fear to determination and invokes guidance.



MUDRA

Hands are more than just functional; they are an energy map of our consciousness and health. Each area of the hand corresponds to a certain area of the body and to different emotions and behaviors. By curling, crossing, stretching, and touching the fingers and palms, we can effectively talk to the body and mind. Given below are a few of the most common mudras experienced in Kundalini Yoga.

Gyan Mudra (Seal of Knowledge)

How: Touch the tip of the index (first) finger and the tip of thumb together. The other three fingers are straight.

Effect: Stimulates knowledge, wisdom, receptivity, and calmness.

Shuni Mudra (Seal of Patience)

How: Touch the tip of the middle (second) finger and the tip of the thumb together. The other three fingers are straight.

Effect: Promotes patience, discernment, and commitment.

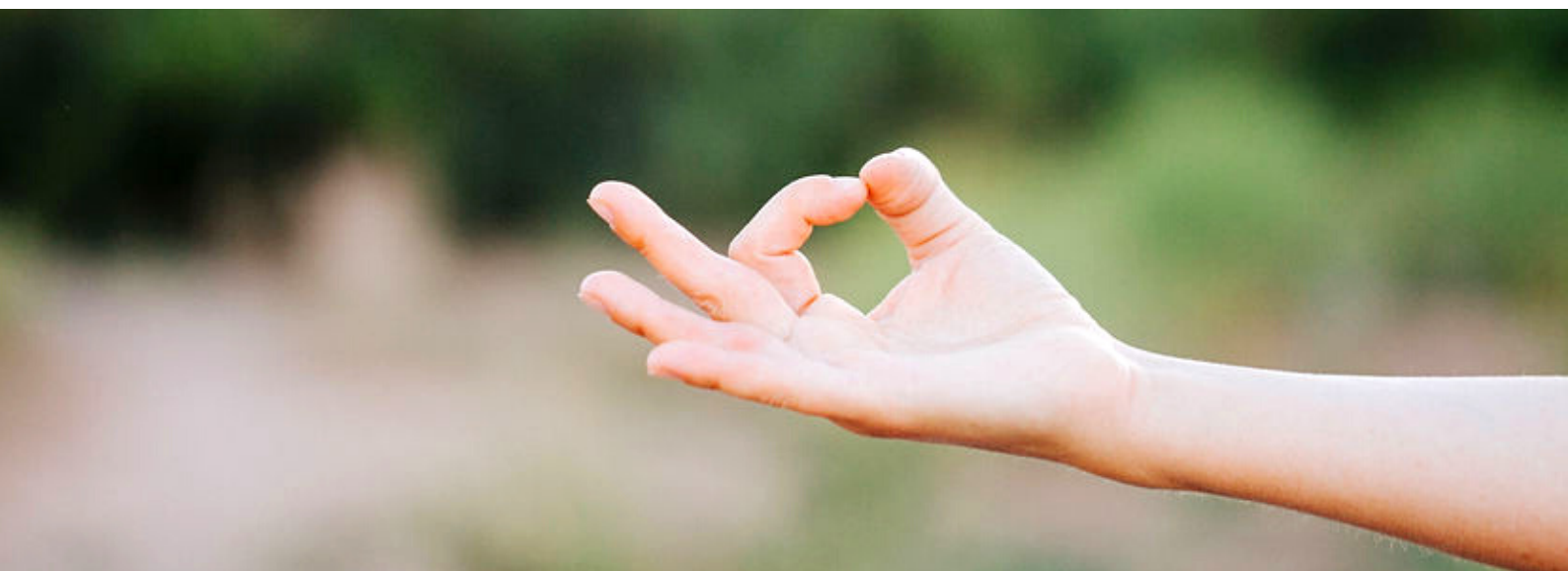
Surya or Ravi Mudra (Seal of Sun, Life)

How: Touch the tip of the ring (third) finger and the tip of thumb together. The other three fingers are straight.

Effect: Revitalizing energy, nerve strength, and good health.

Buddhi Mudra (Seal of Mental Clarity)

How: Touch the tip of the little (fourth) finger and the tip of thumb together. The other three fingers are straight. Effect: Creates capacity to clearly and intuitively communicate, stimulates psychic development.



BANDHAS

OPENING THE FLOW OF KUNDALINI ENERGY

The *bandhas*, or body locks, direct the *prana* and *apana* - the generative and eliminating energies - during the practice of Kundalini Yoga. With continuing, deepening practice of the bandhas, the body systems are cleansed, restored, and refined through this circulation of kundalini energy.

Neck Lock (Jalandhar Bandh)

This is the most basic and most generally applied lock. It regulates gross and subtle movement in the upper part of the body. Lift the chest and sternum up while lengthening the back of the neck by pulling the chin toward the back of the neck. Neck, throat and face muscles remain relaxed.

Root Lock (MulBandh)

Root Lock coordinates, stimulates, and balances the energies of the lower three chakras. Three actions are applied together in a smooth, rapid, flowing motion. First, contract and hold the muscles around the anus. Then contract and hold the muscles around the sex organ (like stopping the flow of urine). Finally, contract the muscles of the lower abdomen and the navel point toward the spine. Women on their moon cycle should not apply Root Lock.

Diaphragm Lock (Uddiyana Bandh)

Diaphragm Lock vertically integrates emotions, pranic energy, and functions that occur above and below the diaphragm muscle. Pull the entire abdominal region up and back towards the spine. The navel point is not contracted although it will move upwards. Lift the chest while gently pressing the lower spine forward. Hold for 10 to 60 seconds without straining. Then relax the abdomen, gradually inhaling without releasing the Neck Lock or raising the chin.

Great Lock (MahaBandh)

The Great Lock is part of the central infrastructure of Kundalini Yoga. With the breath held out, apply all three locks (Neck, Diaphragm, and Root) simultaneously.