**Basic Breath Series**

This set gives you a quick lift in energy, increased clarity, and a sense of balance. If you do the minimum times for each exercise, it only takes 22-25 minutes to completely reset yourself. It is an excellent set for beginners. You learn the relationship to the breath and you observe the differences in emotion and thinking that each type of breathing creates.

Even though breathing is the most natural and essential thing we do, conscious breathing can be quite a challenge. When you alter the breath you begin to oppose and release the habitual patterns of emotion and attention that are coded in the habits of your body and mind. As those patterns begin to alter, you may drift in concentration or interest. If you continue and command the breath, then you will gain a new sense of ease and control where you direct your mind.

This kriya is excellent to practice as a preparation for a more strenuous Kundalini Yoga set. It can be practiced in both beginning and more advanced stages. As a beginner, use the times listed here. For intermediate level practice exercises 1 through 4 for five minutes each. For advanced level, practice, exercises1 through 4 for 10 minutes each.

For all exercises, close the eyelids. Press the eyes up gently and focus at the Brow Point (the top of the nose where the eyebrows meet).

**1. Left Nostril Breathing**

Sit in Easy Pose. Rest the left hand in Gyan Mudra (touch the tip of the thumb with the tip of the index finger). The left arm is straight on the left knee.

Raise the right hand in front of the face with the palm flat facing to the left. The fingers of the hand are together and point straight up. Press the side of the thumb on the right nostril to gently close it.

Begin long, deep, complete yogic breaths through the left nostril. Inhale and exhale only through the left nostril.

Continue for 1 – 3 minutes.

To end, inhale and hold comfortably for 10-30 seconds. Exhale and relax.

**2. Right Nostril Breathing**

Sit in Easy Pose. Rest the right hand in Gyan Mudra.

Raise the left hand in front of the face with the palm flat facing to the right. The fingers of the hand are together and point straight up. Press the side of the thumb on the left nostril to gently close it.

Begin long, deep, complete yogic breaths through the right nostril. Inhale and exhale only through the right nostril.

Continue for 1 – 3 minutes.

To end, inhale and hold comfortably for 10-30 seconds. Exhale and relax.

**3. Alternate Nostril Breathing**

Sit in Easy Pose, with the spine relaxed and straight.

Make Gyan Mudra with the left hand. Rest the left hand over the left knee. Close the eyelids. Press the eyes up gently and focus at the Brow Point.

Block the right nostril with the thumb. Press just hard enough to close the nostril. Keep the rest of the fingers straight up.

Inhale deeply through the left nostril. When the breath is full, bend the right hand into a "U" extending the little fingertip over to press on the left nostril. Close the left nostril and let the right nostril open by releasing the thumb pressure. (You can also use the thumb and index finger.)

Exhale smoothly, and completely through the right nostril.

When the breath is completely exhaled, begin the cycle again with the inhale through the left nostril. Continue with long, deep, regular breaths for 1 – 3 minutes.

To end, inhale and hold the breath for 10-30 seconds. Exhale and relax.

**4. Alternate Nostril Breathing**

Repeat the previous exercise, except use the left hand to direct the inhale through the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril.

Continue with long, deep, regular breaths for 1 – 3 minutes.

**5. Breath of Fire**

Sit in Easy Pose with both hands in Gyan Mudra.

Begin a powerful, regular, and conscious Breath of Fire.

Continue for 3 – 7 minutes.

To end, inhale and hold the breath for 10-60 seconds.

Then mentally watch the energy circulate through the entire body. Relax the breath and concentrate on the natural flow of the breath as life force. Notice how your mind and emotions have changed.

Continue for 1 – 3 minutes.

**6. Meditation**

Sit in Easy Pose with both hands in Gyan Mudra. Focus at the Brow Point.

Silently meditate and then inhale deeply and chant long *Sat Naams.
Sa -a -a -a -a -a -at Nam*

Continue for 3 – 15 minutes. Then inhale, exhale, and relax.

Through the simple mechanism of closing or opening one of the nostrils, the yogi has a wide array of techniques to control his moods and energies.

The quality or Prana processed through the two nostrils differs corresponding with the qualities associated with the two sides of the brain. The nerves going out from the two brain hemispheres cross at the level of the eyebrows. The left hemisphere is connected to the right side of the body and right nostril; the right hemisphere to the left side of the body and left nostril.

We breathe predominantly through one nostril or the other at any given time. The dominant nostril alternates rhythmically every 90 to 150 minutes. The length of the cycle reflects universal rhythms, individual temperament, and the personal state of mental and physical balance. The rhythm itself is mediated mainly through structures in the hypothalamus and pituitary, though other areas in the brain are also involved.

You may use the technique of inhaling and exhaling exclusively through either the left or right nostril in order to benefit from the quality associated with that nostril. For instance, breathe exclusively through the left nostril to deal with compulsive eating habits.