
Anuloma Ujjayi

Anuloma translates as 'with the grain', suggesting a natural order or flow - there is a natural ease. This technique begins to naturally extend the exhalation, which creates a calming and balancing effect.

In this technique, we inhale through both nostrils using ujjayi breath and we exhale through alternate nostrils using the fingers to regulate the flow of the breath.

Applying the 'valve'

In pranayama techniques, there is often a 'valve' through which the breath is regulated.

In basic ujjayi breath the valve is created at the throat with a gentle constriction at the glottis (refer back to your Ujjayi handout from Day 2).

In Anuloma Ujjayi, an additional valve is applied using a mudra (hand gesture) to lightly press on to the nostrils.

Only one 'valve' should be used at a time, so when a nostril is closed do not use ujjayi.

Creating the hasta mudra (hand gesture)

There are two mudras that can be used in this technique; either Mrgi mudra (pronounced mree) or Vishnu mudra, or alternatively Nasagra mudra.

The thumb is used to close the right nostril, and the ring finger to close the left nostril.

Always use the right hand for these mudras.



Mrgi/Vishnu Mudra

With the right hand, fold the index and middle fingers in towards the palm.

The thumb will rest on the right nostril.

The ring finger will rest on the left nostril.

The little finger is softly extended.



Nasagra Mudra

Using the right hand, rest the index and middle fingers at the space between the eyebrows.

The thumb rests on the right nostril.

The ring finger rests on the left nostril.

The little finger is softly extended.

With the left hand you can lightly touch the tip of the index finger to the thumb in chin mudra (palm facing up) or jnana mudra (palm facing down), or use this hand to count the number of rounds.

Note: in some traditions, the nostril through which you exhale is partially sealed. This further extends the exhale but might not be comfortable or appropriate for everyone. Once you are familiar with the general technique you may wish to explore this option and see how it feels.

Technique

Come to a comfortable seated posture. Use any props or support that help you to maintain a steady upright spine.

Become familiar with the practice by using the basic technique without ujjayi:

Inhale: both nostrils
 Exhale: left nostril (right nostril closed with thumb)
 Inhale: both nostrils
 Exhale: right nostril (left nostril closed with ring finger)

This is one round. Practice 4 – 6 rounds.

Rest with the ebb and flow of your natural breath for a few rounds before closing your practice.

When you are comfortable with the technique, incorporate ujjayi on the inhale. Remember that ujjayi should be soft and gentle.

Inhale: ujjayi both nostrils
 Exhale: left nostril (right nostril closed with thumb)
 Inhale: ujjayi both nostrils
 Exhale: right nostril (left nostril closed with ring finger)

Practice for 4 – 6 rounds and gradually increase to several 2 – 5 minutes.

Considerations and cautions

The cautions are similar to ujjayi breath (refer back to your handout from Day 2).

If there is a blockage or congestion in the nostrils, or if the mudra makes you feel claustrophobic, then this technique works well with visualisation. Imagine or sense the stream of the breath or energy flowing out through the nostril without using the mudra.

Remember that the breath should never feel forced or strained, and you should never feel as if you are running out of breath. Check if any tension is creeping into the jaw, face or hands. If you notice any of these effects, ease back and invite gentleness into the breath. If the effects continue stop and choose an alternative practice such as the subtle breath awareness or full yoga breath.