

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, straight brown hair. Her eyes are closed, and she has a serene expression, suggesting a meditative or focused state. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of her face, containing the text 'Pranayama Intensive' in white.

Pranayama Intensive

PRANAYAMA JOURNAL & CALENDAR

YOGA VEDA INSTITUTE

Daily Journal Template

A daily journal is an essential tool to help you reflect on your day as well as your pranayama practice and to keep track of your progress. This template is simply a suggestion. You may find that you need more space or that you prefer to type your entries on a computer or app.

Thoughts, insights, realizations:

Write about what happened in your mind during your pranayama practice, especially any realizations you had about the pranayama technique. If you were distracted by intrusive thoughts or by pleasant sensations, it might help to write about those as well.

Notes about your practice:

Describe the details of your pranayama experience. Were you able to stay aware of the breath? Did you experience drowsiness or distractions? Was your posture comfortable? Did you experience a sense of one-pointed absorption in the pranayama practice?

Calendar

Sometimes, it helps to be able to track your progress in a tangible way. Use this calendar to stay on track with your specific meditation for the day. Feel free to write on it or mark off days as you go so you can see how many days in a row you've completed your meditation.

Full Yogic Breath:

- Sit in a meditation posture or lie in shavasana and relax the whole body.
- Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand fully. Try to breathe so slowly that little or no sound of the breath can be heard.
- Feel the air reaching into the bottom of the lungs.
- At the end of abdominal expansion, start to expand the chest outward and upward.
- When the ribs are fully expanded, inhale a little more until expansion is felt in the upper portion of the lungs around the base of the neck. The shoulders and collarbone should also move up slightly. Some tension will be felt in the neck muscles. The rest of the body should feel relaxed. This completes one inhalation.
- Now start to exhale. First, relax the lower neck and upper chest, then allow the chest to contract downward and then inward.
- Next, allow the diaphragm to push upward and toward the chest.
- Without straining, try to empty the lungs as much as possible by drawing or pulling the abdominal wall as near as possible to the spine.
- Hold the breath for a few seconds at the end of exhalation.

This completes one round of yogic breathing. At first, perform five to ten rounds and slowly increase to ten minutes daily.

Alternate Nostril Breathing:

Stage 1: Begin with equal inhalation and exhalation, using the ratio 1:1.

- Close the right nostril with the thumb and inhale through the left nostril. At the same time, mentally count, "1, Om; 2, Om; 3, Om," until the inhalation ends comfortable. This is the basic count. Breathe deeply without strain.
- Close the left nostril with the ring finger and release the pressure of the thumb on the right nostril. While exhaling through the right nostril, simultaneously count, "1, Om; 2, Om; 3, Om." The time for inhalation and exhalation should be equal.
- Next, inhale through the right nostril, keeping the same count in the same manner.
- At the end of inhalation, close the right nostril and open the left nostril. Exhale through the left nostril, counting as before.
- Practice five to ten rounds.

Extension: After one week, if there is no difficulty, increase the length of inhalation/exhalation by one count. Continue to increase the count in this way until the count of 10:10 is reached.

Ujjayi:

- Sit in any comfortable meditation asana.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Take the awareness to the breath in the nostrils and allow the breathing to become calm and rhythmic.
- After some time, transfer the awareness to the throat.
- Feel or imagine that the breath is being drawn in and out through the throat and not through the nostrils, as if it is taking place through a small hole in the throat.
- As the breathing becomes slower and deeper, gently contract the glottis so that a soft snoring sound, like the breathing of a sleeping baby, is produced in the throat. If practiced correctly, there will be a spontaneous contraction of the abdomen, without any effort being made.

Both inhalation and exhalation should be long, deep and controlled.

Psychic Breathing:

- Sit in any comfortable meditation asana.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Practice awareness of the natural breath without trying to affect the pattern of the breathing cycle.
- Once you are able to achieve the step above, replace the natural breath with the ujjayi pranayama. Create an awareness of the movement and sound of the breath as it passes in and out through the throat.
- Create an awareness of the psychic passages. Begin with the frontal passage (between manipura and vishuddhi), then the full frontal psychic passage (mooladhara to ajna), then the shumna nadi, and then the ida and pingala nadis.
- Create an awareness of the psychic centers/chakras.
- Create an awareness of the psychic sounds by withdrawing the auditory perception so that external sounds are no longer heard.
- Create an awareness of the psychic symbol, which is experienced through the practice of concentration on any symbol (for example, yantra, mandala, candle flame, scene from nature, etc.)

Bhastrika Pranayama:

- Sit in a comfortable meditation posture with the hands resting on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra. Keep the head and spine straight, close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Take a deep breath in.
- Breathe out forcefully through the nose.
- Immediately afterwards, breath in with the same force. Do not strain.
- Continue in this manner, counting 10 breaths.
- Take a deep breath in and breathe out slowly.

This is one round. Practice up to 5 rounds.

Kapalbhati Pranayama:

- Sit in a comfortable meditation asana. The head and spine should be straight with the hands resting on the knees in either chin or jnana mudra.
- Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
- Exhale through both nostrils with a forceful contraction of the abdominal muscles. The following inhalation should take place passively by allowing the abdominal muscles to relax.
- Inhalation should be a spontaneous recoil, involving no effort.
- After completing 10 rapid breaths in succession, inhale and exhale deeply.
- Allow the breath to return to normal. This is one round.
- Practice up to five rounds.

Pranayama Journal

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

How often did you practice meditation?

For example:
every day, 2 days, etc.

Did any aspects of your practice prove challenging?

For example:
Did your mind wander excessively? Were you physically uncomfortable?

Did any aspects of your practice improve this week?

For example:
Did you feel less concerned about distractions? Were you able to be more open to just experiencing the present moment?

Did any aspects of your practice carry into the rest of your daily life?

For example:
Did you feel less reactive to stress or feel less judgemental when you notice it?

Date:

Pranayama Technique:

Start Time:

End Time:

Notes:

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