

Breathing Practice – Pranayama

Quality of the Breath:

One of the most important aspects of Pranayama is the quality of the breath. It should be smooth and even and its sound should be constant and controlled.

Division of the Breath:

In Pranayama there are four parts to each breath:

Inhalation

Retention of the breath after the inhalation (holding the breath in)

Exhalation

Retention of the breath after the exhalation (holding the breath out)

Counting the Breath:

In Pranayama we practice counting the length of all parts of the breath; these counts can then be lengthened.

Benefits of lengthening the inhalation include:

Revitalise, invigorate, energise, increase mental alertness and improve self confidence

Benefits of lengthening the exhalations include:

Relax, release tension, calm the mind, slow the heart rate, promote sleep

Breathing Practise 1 – Samavritti – The Equal Breathing Technique

In this first Pranayama practice we are only working with an inhale and exhale, rather than including breath retentions. Samavritti literally translates as ‘equal movement’ – the same length inhale as exhale. In this practise the breath is slowly deepened and lengthened promoting relaxation and a calm mind.

Instructions

- Inhale for the count of 2 and exhale for the count of 2
- Repeat 3 more times
- Inhale for the count of 3 and exhale for the count of 3
- Repeat 3 more times
- Inhale for the count of 4 and exhale for the count of 4
- Repeat 3 more times

(Option to finish the practice here and in future develop on as lung capacity improves)

- Inhale for the count of 5 and exhale for the count of 5
- Repeat 3 more times
- Inhale for the count of 6 and exhale for the count of 6
- Repeat 3 more times