



PRANAYAMA

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA

life force/to regulate, control

- We must be aware of the benefits and contraindications for each technique, if something works for one person, it might not work for another. Depending on body type, condition etc...
- Everything that exists in this creation has **prana** or the life force. The mind is not inside the body, but the body is inside the mind.
- Through pranayama, we transcend the physical body and experience the deeper layers of our existence.
- It is all about going back to your source.
- All pranayama should be done on an empty stomach.

BENEFITS OF PRANAYAMA

- Will help you strengthen your lungs.
- Will purify the cells.
- Will improve your digestion.
- Will improve sleeping pattern.
- Will help reduce the stress hormone (cortisol).
- Will activate the parasympathetic nervous system (rest & digest mode).
- Helps your body and mind relax.
- There is a direct correlation between breath and emotions. Anxiety/Stress = fast breath. Relaxed Mind = slow/deep breath.
- Pranayama will help you deal with both inner and outer world with more strength, happiness and enthusiasm.



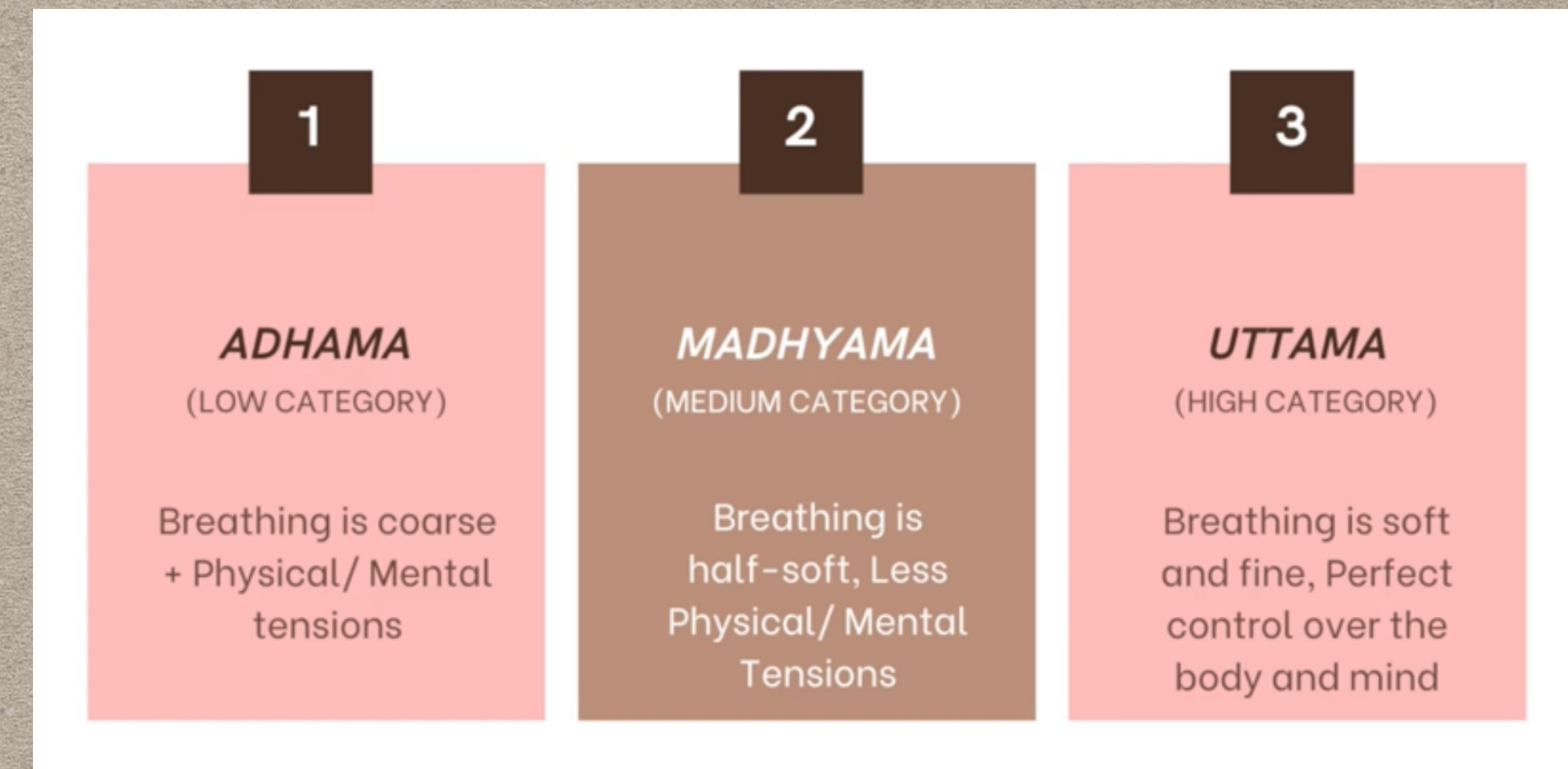
GRADES OF SADHAKAS UNDER PRANAYAMA

Sadhaka refers to the practitioner of Yoga, Meditation and Pranayama and someone who is following a particular *Sadhana* (practise). Even though, everyone is learning at his/her own place.

Within the three categories, there are three sub-divisions.

- **Adhama** - Beginner, complete novice. There are a lot of physical and mental tensions.
 - *Adhamadhama* (lowest of the low)
 - *Adhamamadhyama* (average of the low)
 - *Adhamottama* (highest of the low)
- **Madhyama** - the breath is half-soft on one hand, but the person is able to sit perfectly well and it can be vice versa as well. There can be more combinations.
- **Uttama** - sitting perfect and the breath is soft.

The final goal for every *Sadhaka* is to attain *Uttamottama* (the highest of the high). A particular *Sadhaka* who is going slow, but in a controlled manner, with pure intention is the one who will excel, and not the one who is going very fast, just to achieve the goal somehow.



MENTION OF PRANAYAMA

(Patanjali Yoga Sutras, Chapter 2 - Sadhana Pada, Sutra 50)

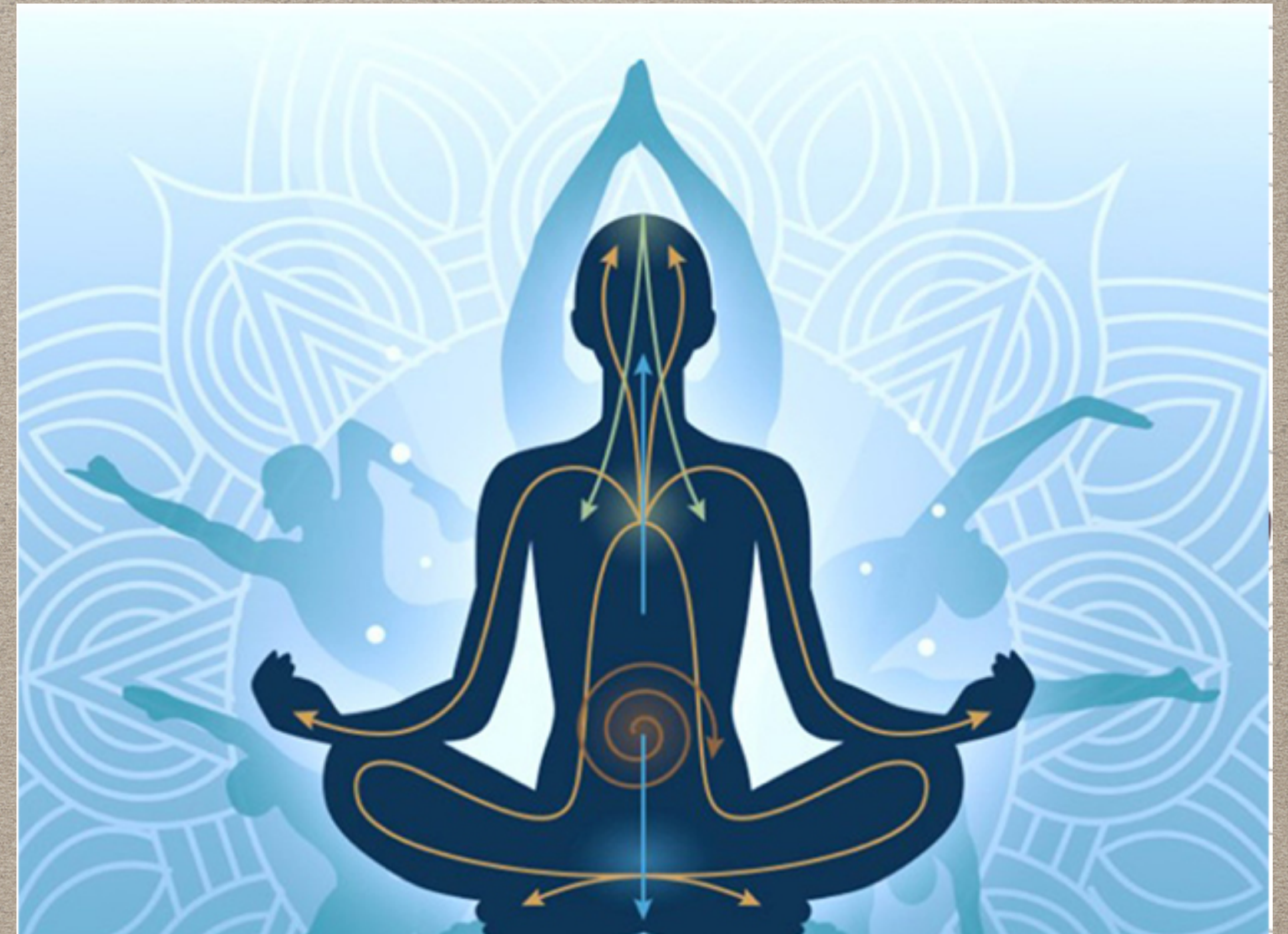
बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिर्देशकाल
संख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घसूक्ष्मः ॥

bāhya-ābhyantara-stambha-vṛttiḥ deṣa-kāla
saṁkhyābhiḥ paridrṣṭaḥ dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ

Breath can either be held internally or externally.
Pranayama can be classified based on the place, time, count,
length and subtlety.

PRANA

- The foundation of all life, of the whole universe, is the subtle life force energy that Yogis call **Prana**.
- You can't see it, or touch it or taste it, but most Yogis have had an experience of Prana, the subtle energy that flows through our bodies.
- This mystical energy moves through our bodies and animates our every action - from gross physical movements to minute biochemical processes.
- There are 5 types of Prana. Also known as *Pancha Prana*.

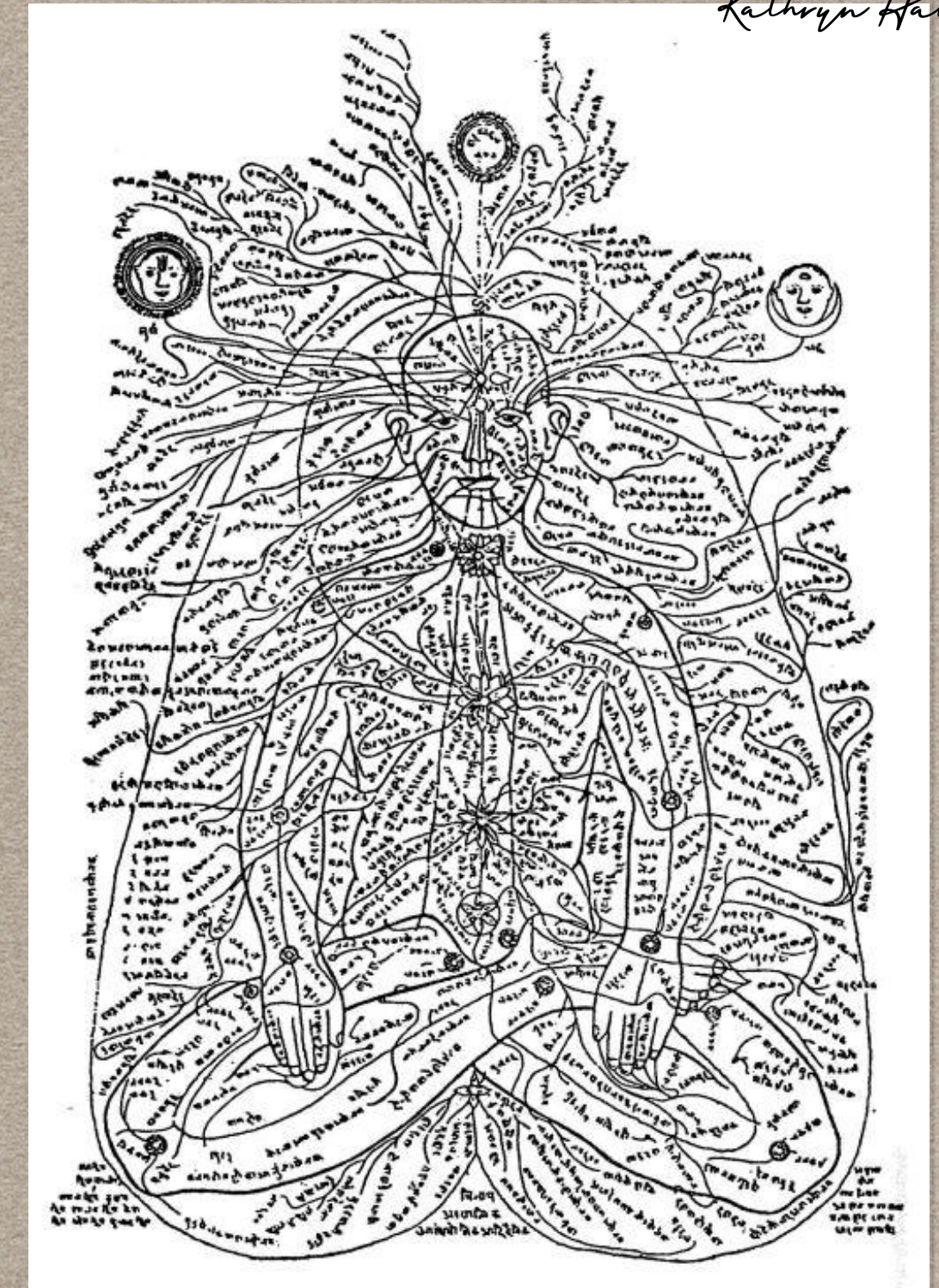


- ❁ **APANA:** Governs elimination, downward & outward movement
- ❁ **SAMANA:** Governs assimilation, discernment, inner absorption, consolidation
- ❁ **PRANA:** Governs intake, Respiration
- ❁ **UDANA:** Governs speech, expression, posture
- ❁ **VYANA:** Governs circulation on all levels



NADIS

- The prana flows within our body through energy channels known as Nadis.
- There are countless paths of energy channels within our body. Some yogic texts say 72,000, some say 350,000.
- There are 3 primary Nadis.
- **Ida** - feminine in nature. Cooling effect. Takes care of right hemisphere of the brain. Symbolises lunar or moon energy in body. Nourishes the body and mind. Energises emotions. Takes care of parasympathetic nervous system.
- **Pingala** - masculine in nature. Dynamic effect. Takes care of left hemisphere of the brain. Symbolises solar/surya or sun energy, warm and active in nature. Helps maintain body temperature. Takes care of sympathetic nervous system.
- **Sushumna** - the central channel of energy that runs through the spinal cord. Takes care of entire central nervous system.
- These relate to the Chakras.



3 PRIMARY NADIS



FOUR STAGES OF PRANAYAMA AND YOGIC TECHNIQUES (AS PER SHIVA SAMHITA)

- The 3rd Chapter of the ancient scripture of Shiva Samhita talks about the 4 stages of Pranayama.
- **Arambha Avastha** - initial stage that each novice or beginner must go through. It is a stage of first contact - when to begin/state you get your first impressions of a spiritual practise. The body perspires and trembles a bit. One must truly understand the form, function and anatomy involved in the practise.
- **Ghata Avastha** - denotes the mastery of the form and a deep understanding of the essence of the practise. Like an waterpot/state unbaked earthen pot, the physical body wears away. Becoming more aware of *prana shakti*. We transition from the intellectual understanding to the experiential understanding. There is integration of the *Pancha Koshas* (5 layers/ Sheaths) and 3 bodies. Gross body = *sthula sharira*. Subtle body = *sukshma sharira*. Causal body = *karana sharira*.
- **Parichaya Avastha** - now you are acquainted with the self. You become intimate with the spiritual knowledge and to be acquainted/state wisdom. You overcome the *Trigunas* (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas) and also become capable of controlling your Karmas.
- **Nispatti Avastha** - the final stage of consummation and resolution. A state of samadhi or enlightenment. Mentioned life/liberate. in the Bhagavad Gita. A person becomes *Jivanmukta* because of the knowledge of the absolute reality.



LAYERS TO THE SELF

5 KOSHAS

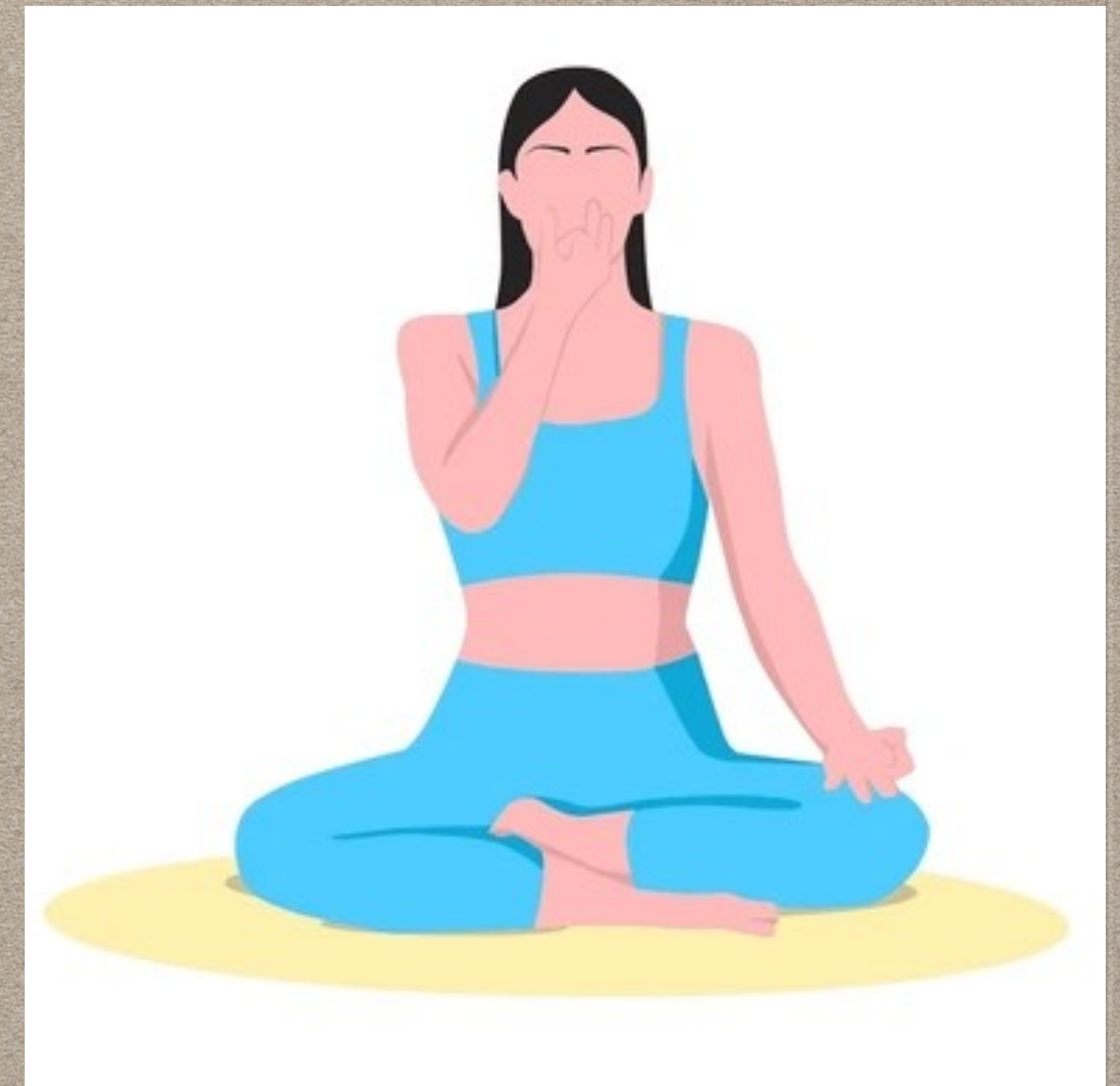


NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA

subtle energy channels/to purify/to control the prana, life force

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

- **Contraindications** - Avoid if suffering from fever, cold and cough.
- **Benefits** - To achieve a balanced state of mind. Can help you clean and purify the energy channels. Balances the right and left brain hemispheres. Must be done on an empty stomach.
- Ida = left nostril. Pingala = right nostril. Sushumna = central.
- Left hand in Chin Mudra. (Tip of index touches thumb, palm facing towards sky). Right hand - thumb on right nostril, index finger between eyebrows, middle finger between eyebrows, ring finger on left nostril and little finger rests.
- Inhale from both the nostrils and let it go from the left (to clean the breath). Then, inhale from the left and exhale from the right. Inhale from the right and exhale from the left. This is 1 round.
- Ratio of breath: 1:2 for beginners. 1:4:2 with breath retention for advanced practitioners.
- 5-10 minutes for beginners. 15-20 minutes for advanced.



CHANDRABHEDANA PRANAYAMA

moon, lunar energy/to pierce/to control the prana, life force

LEFT NOSTRIL BREATHING

- **Contraindications** - Avoid if suffering from fever, cold and cough. Low blood pressure.
- **Benefits** - More cooling impact on the body. Activates parasympathetic nervous system. Ida Nadi.
- Left hand in Chin Mudra. (Tip of index touches thumb, palm facing towards sky). Right hand - thumb on right nostril, index finger between eyebrows, middle finger between eyebrows, ring finger on left nostril and little finger rests. (Nasagra Mudra).
- You inhale from the left and exhale from the right. There is no reverse like Nadi Shodhana.
- Ratio of breath: 1:2 for beginners. 1:4:2 with breath retention for advanced practitioners.
- 5-10 minutes for beginners. 15-20 minutes for advanced practitioners.



SURYABHEDANA/SURYA BHEDI PRANAYAMA

sun/solar energy/to pierce/to control the prana, life force

RIGHT NOSTRIL BREATHING

- **Contraindications** - Avoid if suffering from fever, cold and cough. High blood pressure. Heart conditions, epilepsy.
- **Benefits** - It has a warm impact on the body. Pingala Nadi. Regulates body temperature, increases metabolism and digestion. Activates sympathetic nervous system.
- Left hand in Chin Mudra. (Tip of index touches thumb, palm facing towards sky). Right hand - thumb on right nostril, index finger between eyebrows, middle finger between eyebrows, ring finger on left nostril and little finger rests. (Nasagra Mudra).
- You inhale from the right and exhale from the left. There is no reverse like Nadi Shodhana.
- Ratio of breath: 1:2 for beginners. 1:4:2 with breath retention for advanced practitioners.
- 5-10 minutes for beginners. 15-20 minutes for advanced practitioners.



INTRODUCTION TO THE FULL YOGIC BREATH

Full yogic breathing is a deep breathing pranayama practise and is also known as *Dirga Pranayama* in Hatha Yoga.

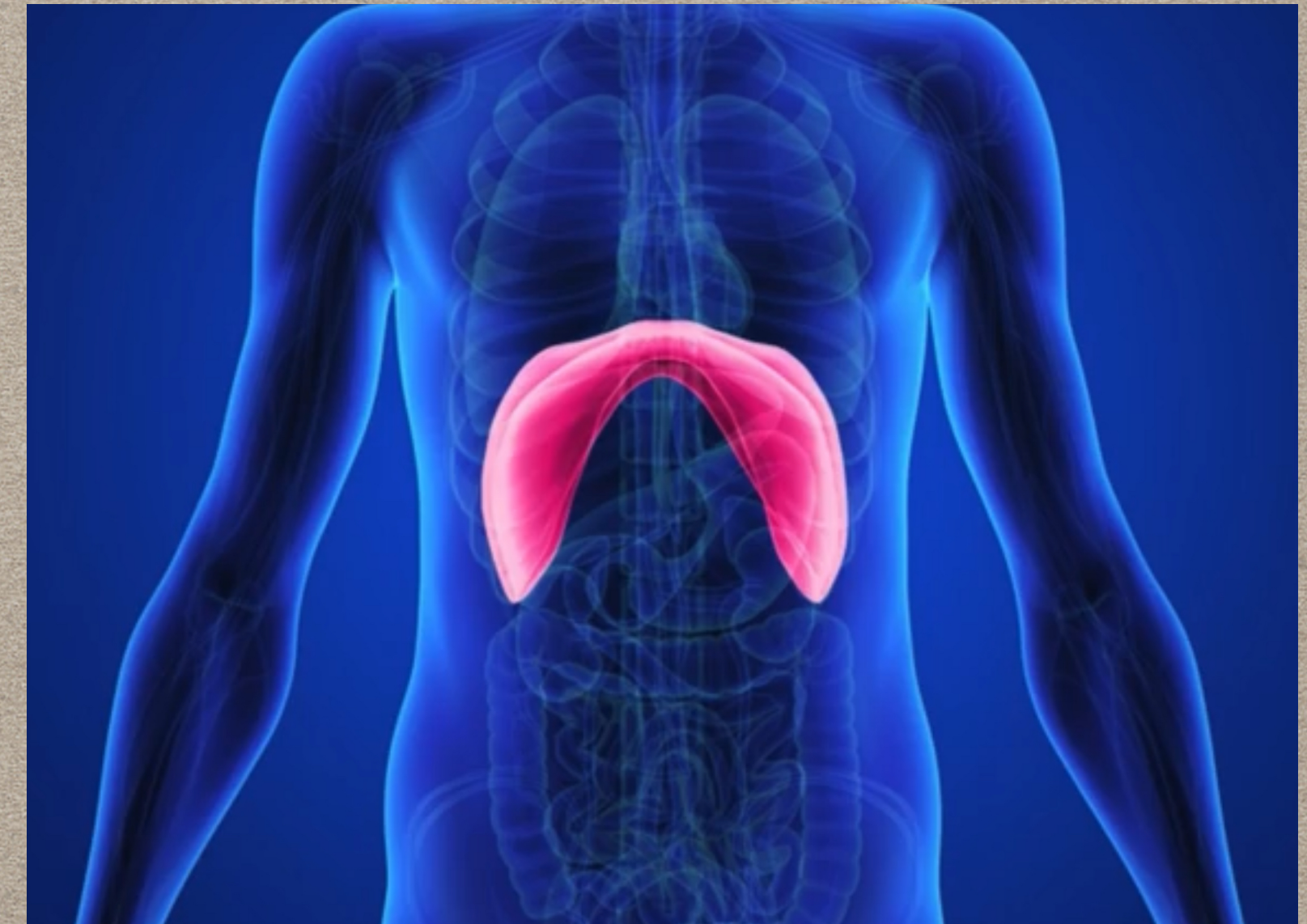
Benefits -

- Increases our lung capacity.
- Gives more time for exchange of gases between the lungs and our bloodstream, resulting in cleaner and richer blood that benefits every cell in the body.
- Calms down the nervous system and relaxes your mind through the release of endorphins.
- Gives an experience of becoming centred or grounded.
- Full motion of the diaphragm improves digestion and metabolic function.

The following three slides are the steps for the full yogic breath.

ABDOMINAL/DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

- This form of breath work focuses on healthy and full use of the diaphragm, while lessening the movement of the ribcage as air enters and leaves the lungs. It develops the awareness of breath in the lower part of the lungs, making way for greater understanding and control of the breath.
- Your diaphragm gets strengthened.
- Lung capacity improves.
- Stress hormones are reduced.
- In contrast to the inhalation, the exhalation is a passive process.
- INHALATION: diaphragm moves down massaging the abdomen. Moves out.
- EXHALATION: diaphragm moves up massaging the lungs. Moves in.
- Sit cross-legged with palms towards the sky, or one palm on the chest and one palm on the abdomen. Gradually deepen breath, expanding the belly as much as possible with the inhale. The ribcage does not expand.
- Can be done for 15 minutes, 3 x a day. Do this on an empty stomach with a gap between the meal and abdominal breathing.



THORACIC/CHEST BREATHING

- This helps you notice the middle area of the lobes of the lungs.
- Thoracic breathing is an economical method for drawing oxygen quickly into the lungs with minimal effort - making it vital for supporting the body during physical exertion, such as running or other intense exercise. Rather than emphasising the movement of the abdomen, you allow greater movement in the ribs and minimise abdominal movement.
- Whenever inhaling, the chest will expand and when exhaling, the chest will contract.
- Sit in the cross-legged position. Keep palms on the knees facing toward the sky or one hand on the chest and one on the abdomen. Slowly inhale and expand the ribcage. As you do, all the individual ribs go outward and upward, creating more space for the air to be drawn into the lungs. Expand your lungs utilising its fullest capacity. As you exhale your ribcage contracts. There is negligible movement in the left palm.
- Can be done for 15 minutes, 3 x a day on an empty stomach.



CLAVICULAR BREATHING

- Helps you develop sensitivity to the upper lobes of the lungs and build a holistic understanding of breath mechanics. This type of breathing is necessary during physical exertion; clavicular breath will naturally take over from thoracic breath when the respiratory and cardiac systems are under a high level of strain. It allows the body to absorb more oxygen into the lungs, quickly.
- Collarbones. Shoulders may get lifted up because we are utilising our lungs to its maximum capacity.
- Rest palms on thighs close to the knees.
- Let chest expand to the maximum. Then inhale a bit more/take an extra breath to feel the clavicular region more, your shoulders will go up. When you exhale, let go of all the efforts.
- Can be done for 15 minutes, 3 x a day on an empty stomach.



FULL YOGIC BREATH

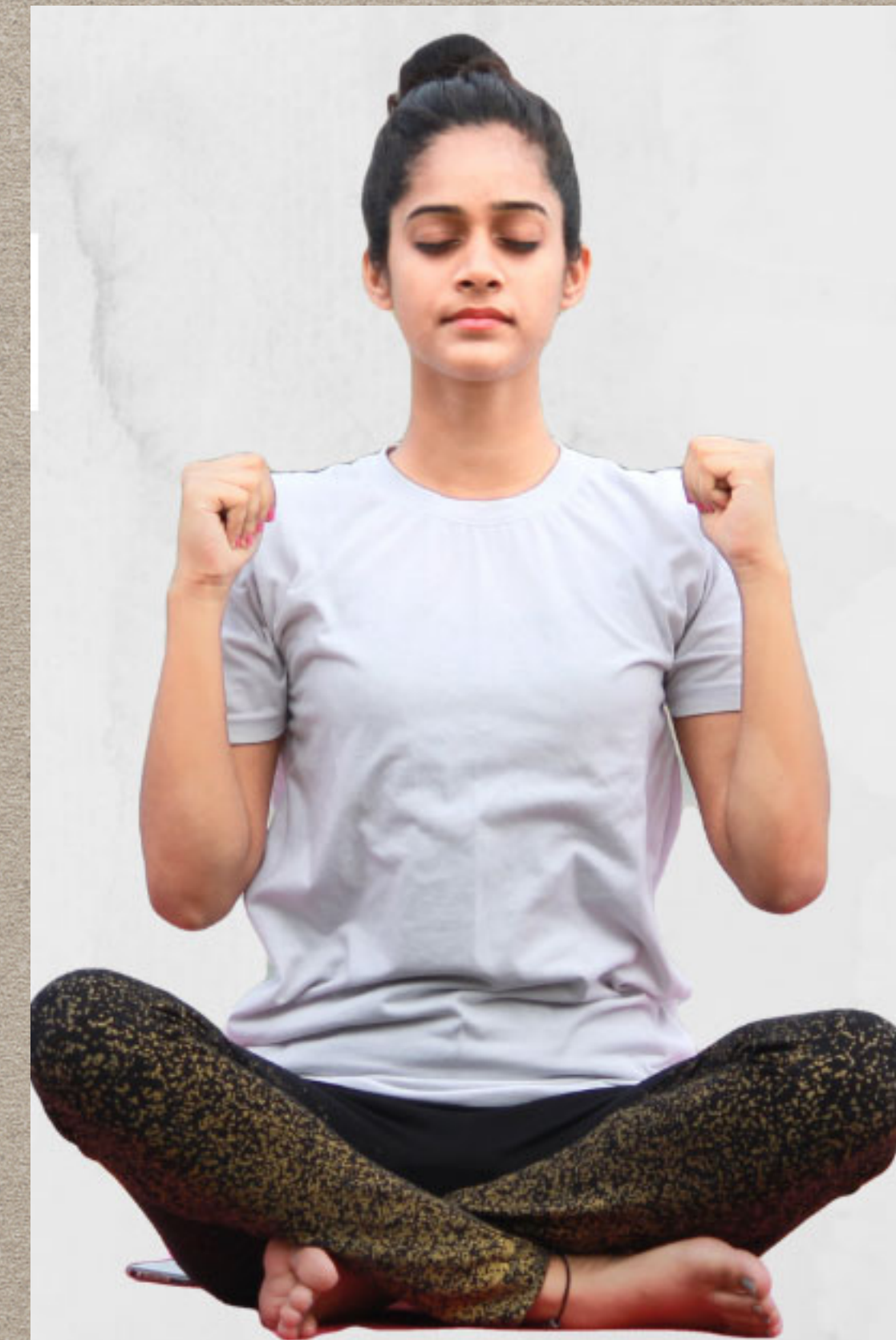
- The three parts of the body are utilised for the full yogic breath as in previous slides. The abdomen, chest and collarbones.
- Rest palms on knees facing towards sky.
- Sequence of Breath - Inhale from the abdomen, then in the same breath inhale from the chest and lastly inhale from the clavicle. Exhale in the reverse direction - first from the clavicle, then the chest and lastly from the abdomen.
- Does require a bit of practise.
- Can be done for 15 minutes 3 x a day.



BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA

BELLOWS BREATH OR THE BREATH OF FIRE

- **Contraindications** - heart diseases, fever, stomach ulcer, high blood pressure, pregnancy.
- **Benefits** - one the best to detoxify the body and balance your three doshas. The diaphragm also gets strengthened.
- Sit in sukhasana or vajrasana. Can take wall support.
- Loose fists in front of the shoulders. Elbows tucked in close to the sides of the body. As you inhale, lift the arms up normally, open your fists, and as you exhale drop your arms forcefully and again make a fist.
- The exhalation has to be a bit stronger than the inhalation.
- 20 x 3 sets with a pause of 10 seconds in-between. Morning is the best time to practise.



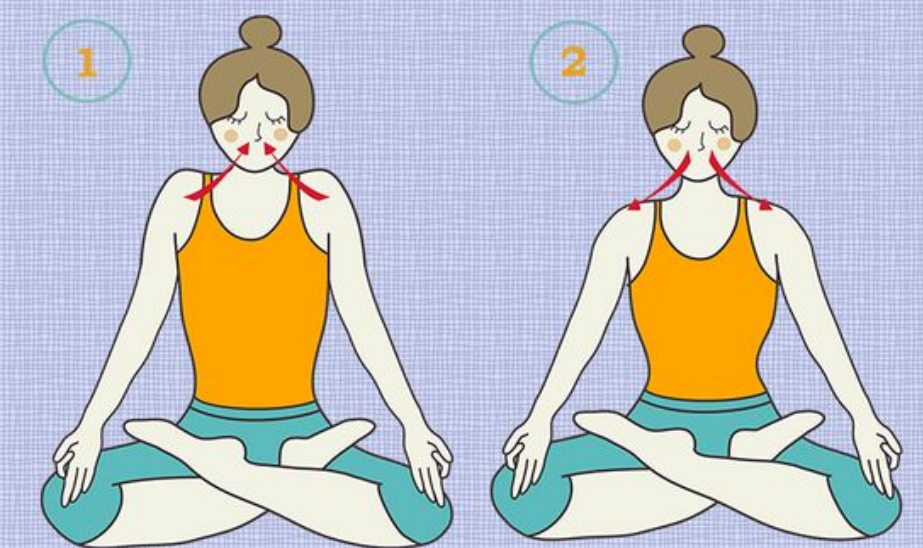
BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA VARIATIONS

BELLOWS BREATH OR THE BREATH OF FIRE

- There are variations we can do as we advance in this pranayama.
- There are different intensities and speeds. You can keep your palms in Chin Mudra instead once you are used to the arm movement.
 - **Samanya Gati** - slow-paced. 1 breath/2 seconds. Recommended for beginners.
 - **Madhyam Gati** - medium-paced. 1 breath/1 second. Recommended for intermediate and advanced.
 - **Teevre Gati** - fast-paced. 2 breaths/1 second. Recommend for intermediate and advanced.
- Listen to your body to see which pace works for you. It is very dynamic and involves full and rapid respiratory cycles. Inhalation and exhalation are both forceful.
- We must take long deep breaths during the pauses.



BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA



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Bhastrika Pranayama consists basically of forced, rapid, deep breathing.

We use our chest like that of the bellows, to get active inhalations and exhalations, in a very dynamic synchronised way.

BHRAMARI PRANAYAMA

Named after the Black Bee

HUMMING BEE BREATH

- **Contraindications** - Migraine - must keep eyes open. Heart condition, surgery.
- **Benefits** - Will help you release anxiety and fear within you. The humming sound you make has a soothing effect on the body to relax and calm us. It also improves the brain function. Will reduce stress.
- There are different ways to execute, can continuously press the tragus using the index fingers and then make the sound. Or you can place palms over the eyes or the ears.
- Can do shanmukhi mudra - *closing the six gates of perception (1 mouth, 1 nose, 2 eyes, 2 ears)*. Thumb on the tragus, place your index finger on the eyes, your middle finger above the nose, the ring finger on the upper lip and the little finger on the lower lip. This is *pratyahara* - withdrawal of the senses.
- Inhale from both the nostrils. Make the humming sound during the exhalation. Please don't end the humming sound abruptly, make it gentle, soothing and long. Higher pitch has a stronger impact on body. 10-15 seconds maximum for humming sound.
- 10-15 sounds, 3-5 times a day.



KAPALBHATI PRANAYAMA

skull, frontal head/to shine

SKULL SHINING BREATHING TECHNIQUE

- **Contraindications** - pregnancy, ulcer, abdominal surgeries. High/low blood pressure, heart disease.
- **Benefits** - will help sharpen your intellect. Increase memory and concentration power. Massages abdominal organs. Will help improve metabolism. Improves blood circulation as toxins are getting released.
- Active exhalation - stomach in. Passive inhalation - stomach out.
- Palms rested on thighs with spine straight. Can rest one palm on stomach for first time.
- As you exhale, pull your stomach in. Pull your navel in back towards the spine. Inhalation will happen automatically. The exhalations will be quick and forceful.
- 30 repetitions x 3 sets.

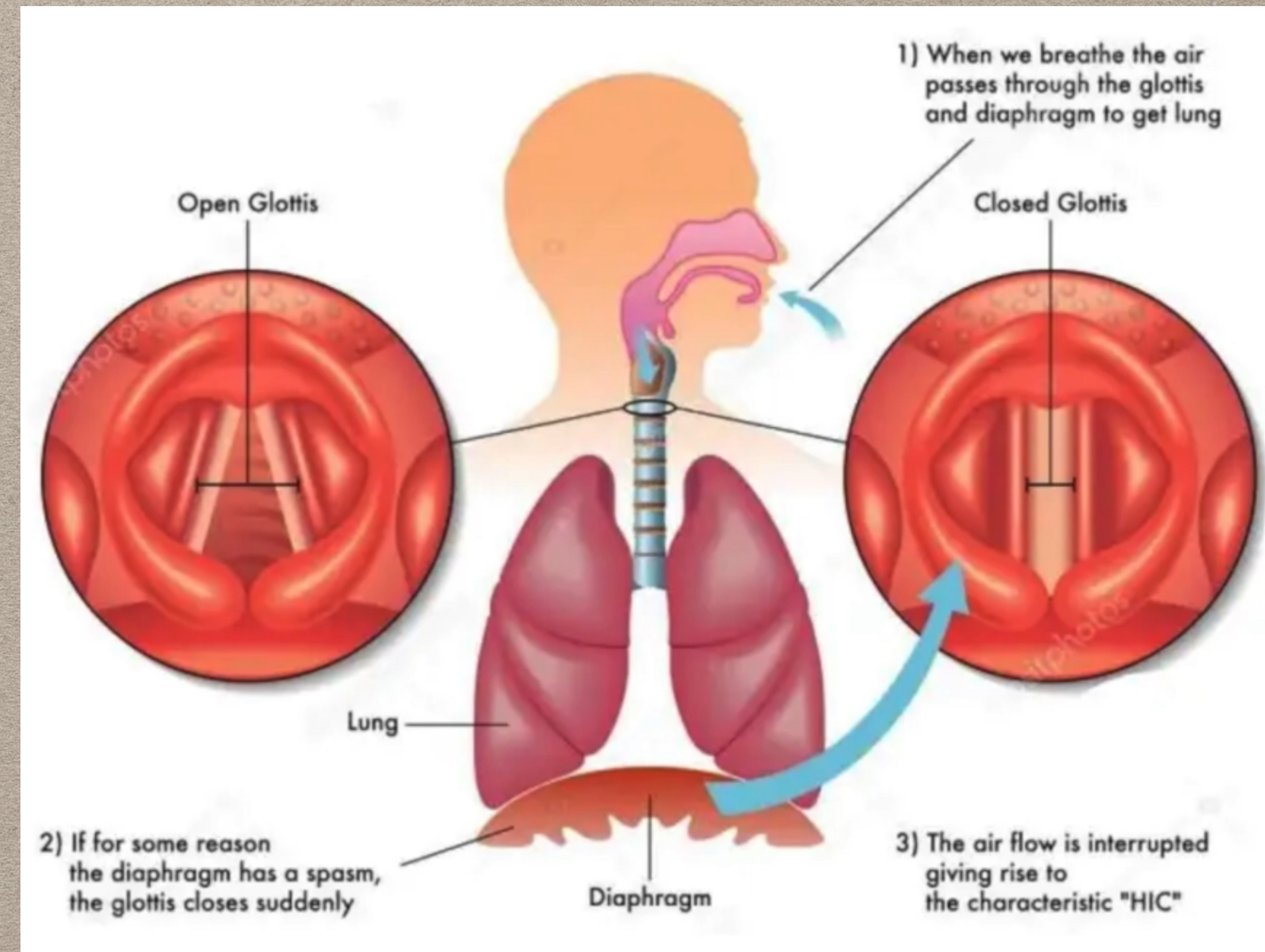


UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

one who is victorious

THE OCEAN'S BREATH/THE VICTORIOUS BREATH

- Sense of power and being uplifted. The sound created during Ujjayi Pranayama instills more confidence with the body and mind, it sounds very similar to ocean waves.
- You can integrate yoga asanas with ocean's breath. It brings centred-ness and stability and also generates heat.
- Inhalation and exhalation is through the nostrils. Left and right palm in chin mudra, or open palm position. One has to constrict the back of the throat, similar to the constriction made when speaking in a whisper. Slow and steady breath.
- Can integrate with breath retention ratio 1:1:1 to increase breath awareness.
- Can start with 3-5 minutes and progress.



KAKI PRANAYAMA

CROW'S PEAK BREATH

- **Contraindications** - Glaucoma, contact lenses, cataract surgery. Low Blood Pressure, chronic constipation.
- **Benefits** - Cooling impact on the body and mind. Reduced fatigue and restlessness within ourselves. Improves concentration power.
- Kaki is so called because during inhalation the pursed lips form the shape of a crow's peak.
- If you are using the Nasikagra Drishti (nose tip gazing) you must become proficient in this first before integrating with Kaki Pranayama. You can keep your eyes closed or open with gaze in front instead. In case you get eye strain, you can relax the eyes during exhalation.
- Can be in cross-legged position or lotus pose. Can also take wall support. Both palms will be in chin mudra. Focus on the nose tip, purse the lips by making the letter O. Inhale through the mouth. At the end of the inhalation, close the lips and exhale through the nostrils.
- Can practise for 3-5 minutes a day.



PLAVINI PRANAYAMA

to float

THE FLOATING/GULPING BREATH

- **Contraindications** - Pregnancy, hypertension, heart disease, high blood pressure, abdominal, stomach issues.
- **Benefits** - Very effective for swimmers. Improves lung capacity and will help you feel lighter from within.
- Different texts of Hatha Yoga talk about this. In 17th Century text of Hatha Ratnavali, Plavini Pranayama is known as Bhujangini Mudra.
- With internal breath retention and optional jalandhara bandha (chin lock).
- Can be done in easy pose, lotus pose or thunderbolt pose. Can also take wall support. Palms will remain on thighs, close to knees in Chin Mudra. Inhale deeply and apply the internal breath retention for a few seconds. The inhaled air should fill up your stomach during the breath retention. Exhale through both the nostrils.
- With chin lock, palms are on knees. Inhale, fill up stomach with air, then apply chin lock and hold the breath. To exit, lift the chin and then exhale.
- Can be practised for up to 5 rounds.



**Chin to Chest Lock
(Jalandhar Bandha)**

**PLAVINI
PRANAYAMA**

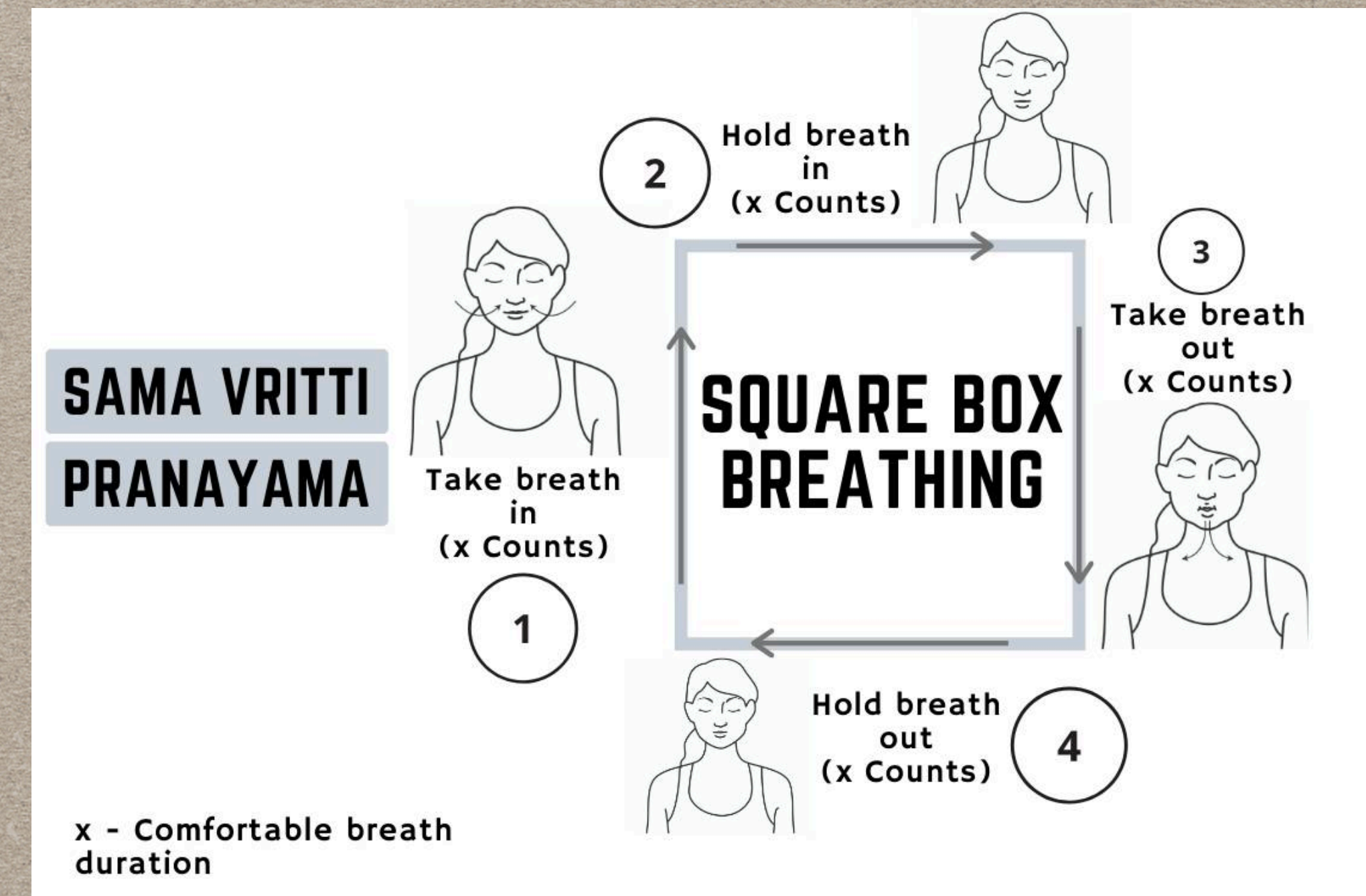


SAMAVRITTI PRANAYAMA

equal, even, perfect/movement, action, fluctuations, waves

THE EQUALISING BREATH/BOX BREATH

- **Contraindications** - Pregnancy, blood pressure issues, dizziness, heart disease.
- **Benefits** - Will activate parasympathetic nervous system. Improves lung capacity Increases oxygen to the brain and cells. Will improve immunity.
- Inhalation. Internal breath retention. Exhalation. External breath retention.
- Ratio is 1:1:1:1. Initially, we can start with 4-5 counts for the four components. But the counts will differ from person to person.
- You can integrate this with the full yogic breath as you are utilising the full lung capacity.
- To advance you can go for 10:10:10:10.



VILOMA PRANAYAMA

Y.O.G.A
with
Kathryn Holloway

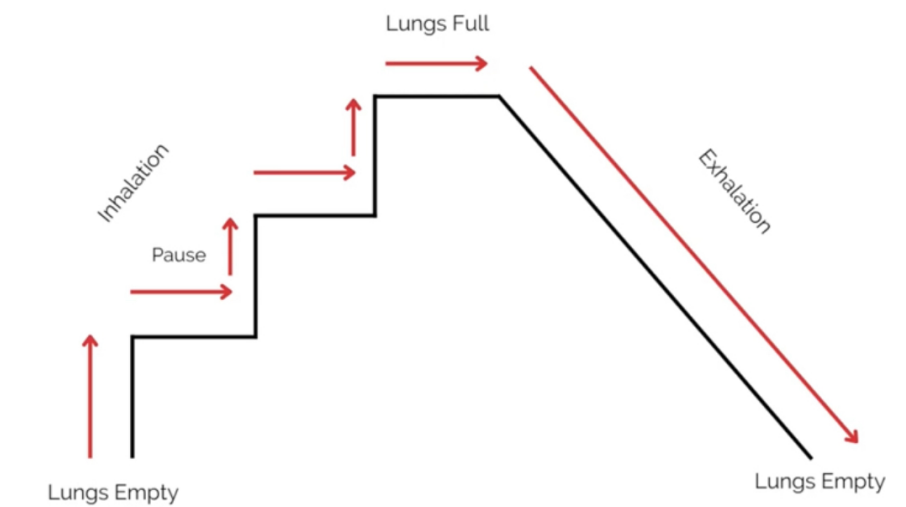
opposite, against/hair, flow

REVERSE/INTERRUPTED BREATH

- **Contraindications** - heart disease, blood pressure issues.
- **Benefits** - Will improve lung capacity, extend duration of inhalation and exhalation. Can be used to prepare for other pranayama.
- We interrupt the natural flow of breath in Viloma Pranayama. Interruption means there will be pauses.
- There are three ways to execute this. Inhale and exhale through the nostrils. The number of pauses will differ from person to person.
- Technique 1: Interruption of inhalation.
- Technique 2: Interruption of exhalation.
- Technique 3: Interruption of inhalation and exhalation. (Practise the previous two techniques first)

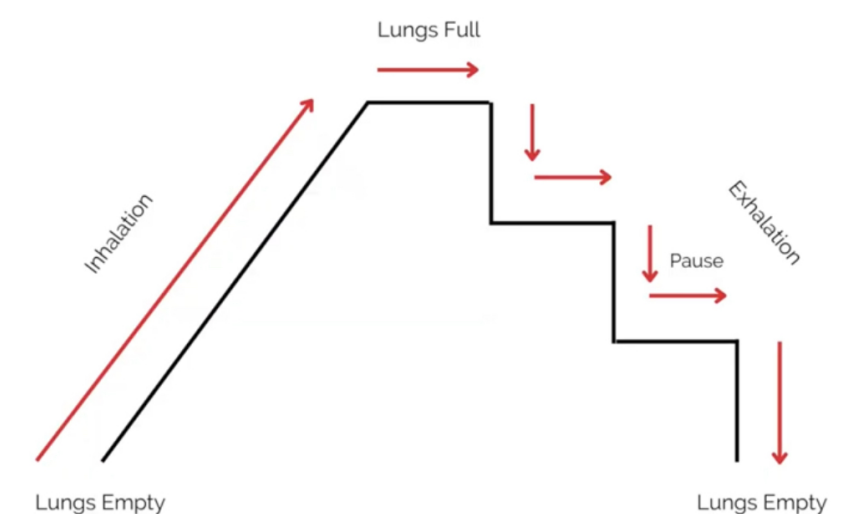
TECHNIQUE 1 OF VILOMA PRANAYAMA

(INTERRUPTION OF INHALATION)



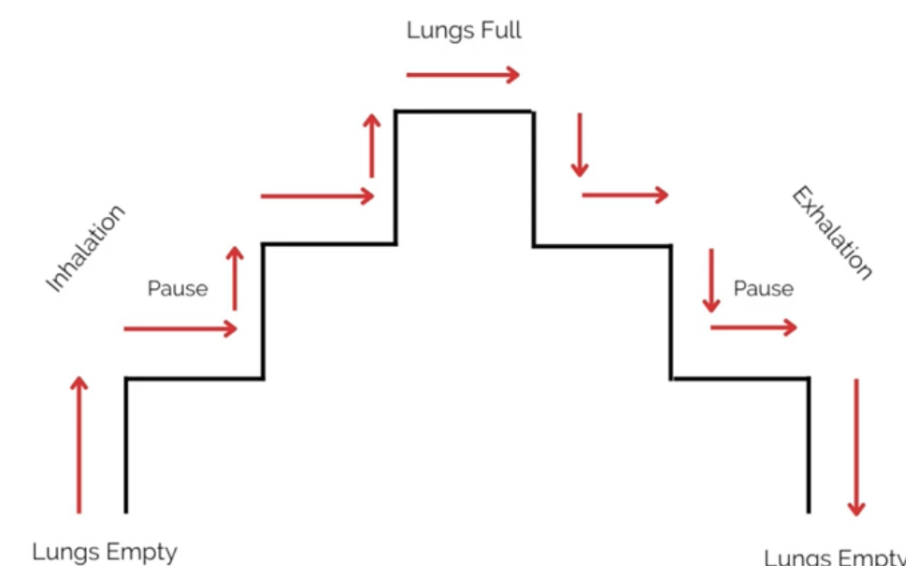
TECHNIQUE 2 OF VILOMA PRANAYAMA

(INTERRUPTION OF EXHALATION)



TECHNIQUE 3 OF VILOMA PRANAYAMA

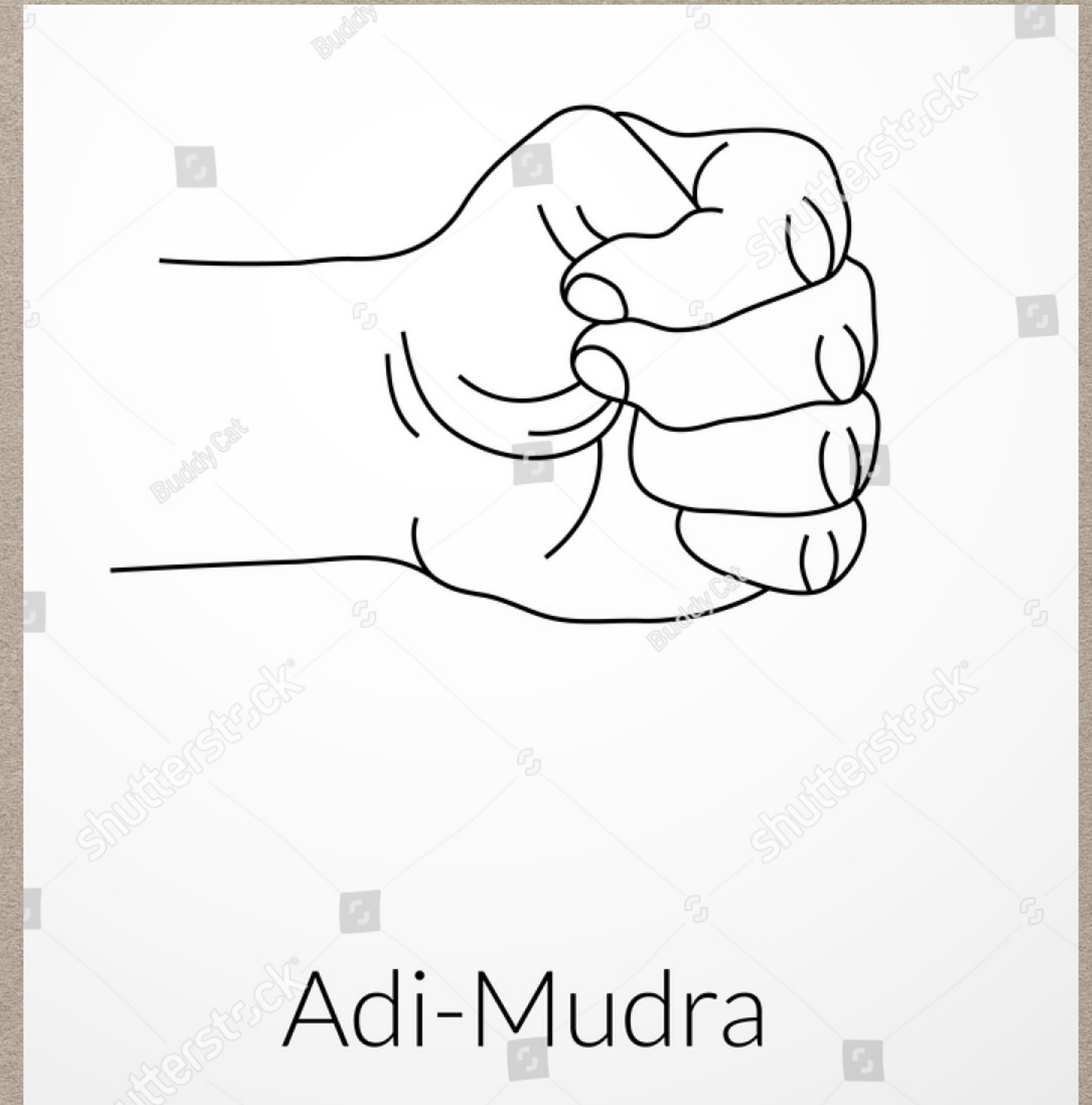
(INTERRUPTION OF INHALATION & EXHALATION)



ADI MUDRA PRANAYAMA

PRIMAL GESTURE BREATH

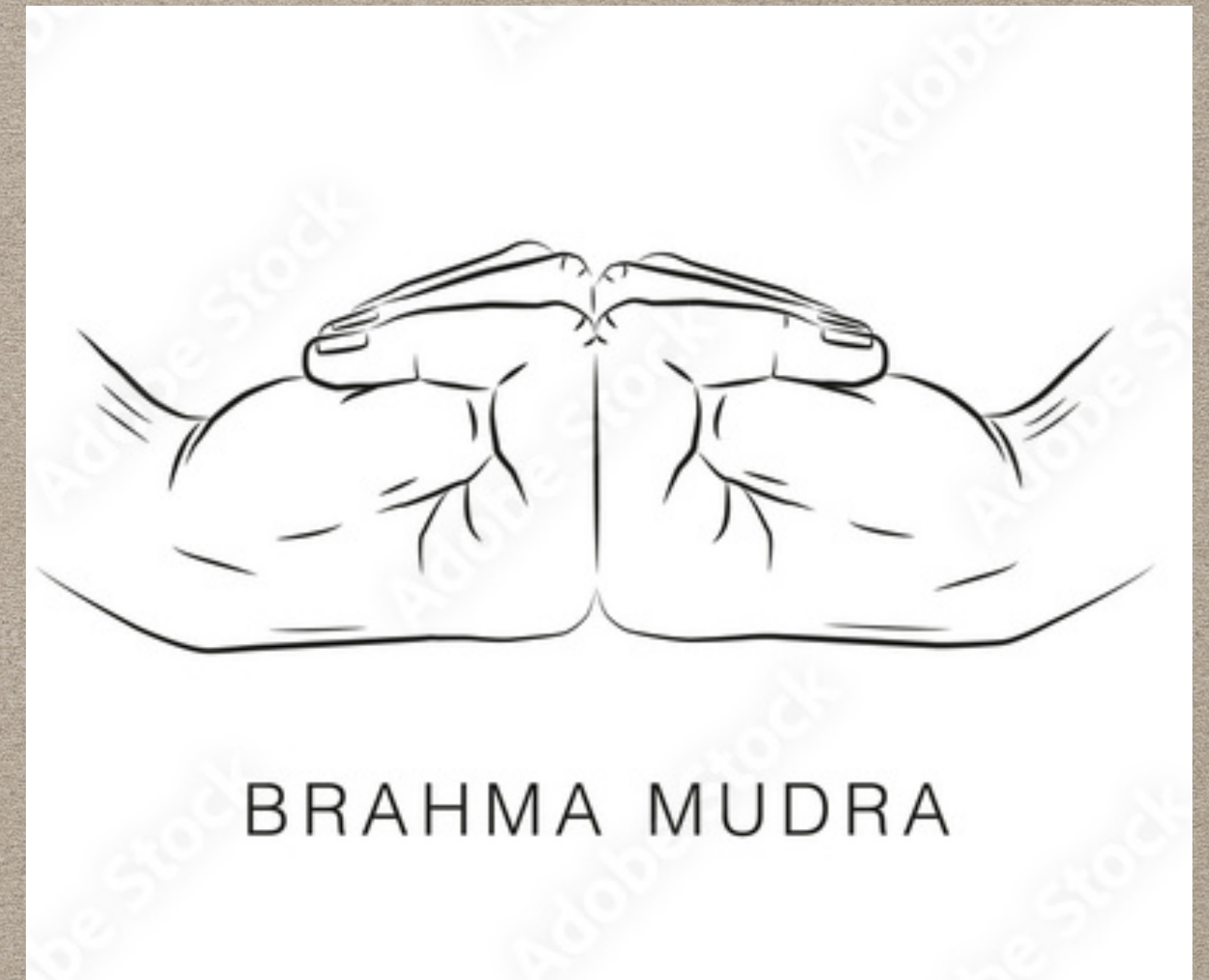
- Adi Mudra Pranayama can be integrated either with Ujjayi Breath or normal breathing cycles.
- Thumb and little finger touch. Remain three fingers fold over.
- Can be done in easy pose, thunderbolt or lotus.
- Ratio of 1:1.
- Can also be done with the ration 1:1:1:1, using the same length and count for inhalation, internal breath retention, exhalation and external breath retention.
- Can do around 25-30 Rounds.
- See Mudras Presentation.



BRAHMA MUDRA PRANAYAMA

GESTURE OF ALL PERVADING CONSCIOUSNESS BREATH

- Can be integrated with either Ujjayi Breath or normal breathing cycles.
- Make the Adi Mudra with both hands then keep this position of the hands close to the navel. Apply light gentle pressure against the navel, close to the abdomen.
- Can be done in easy pose, thunderbolt or lotus.
- Ratio of 1:1.
- Can also be done with the ratio of 1:1:1:1, using the same length and count for inhalation, internal breath retention, exhalation and external breath retention.
- Can be done for around 25-30 Rounds.
- See Mudras Presentation.



CHINMAYA MUDRA PRANAYAMA

GESTURE OF THE MANIFESTED CONSCIOUSNESS BREATH

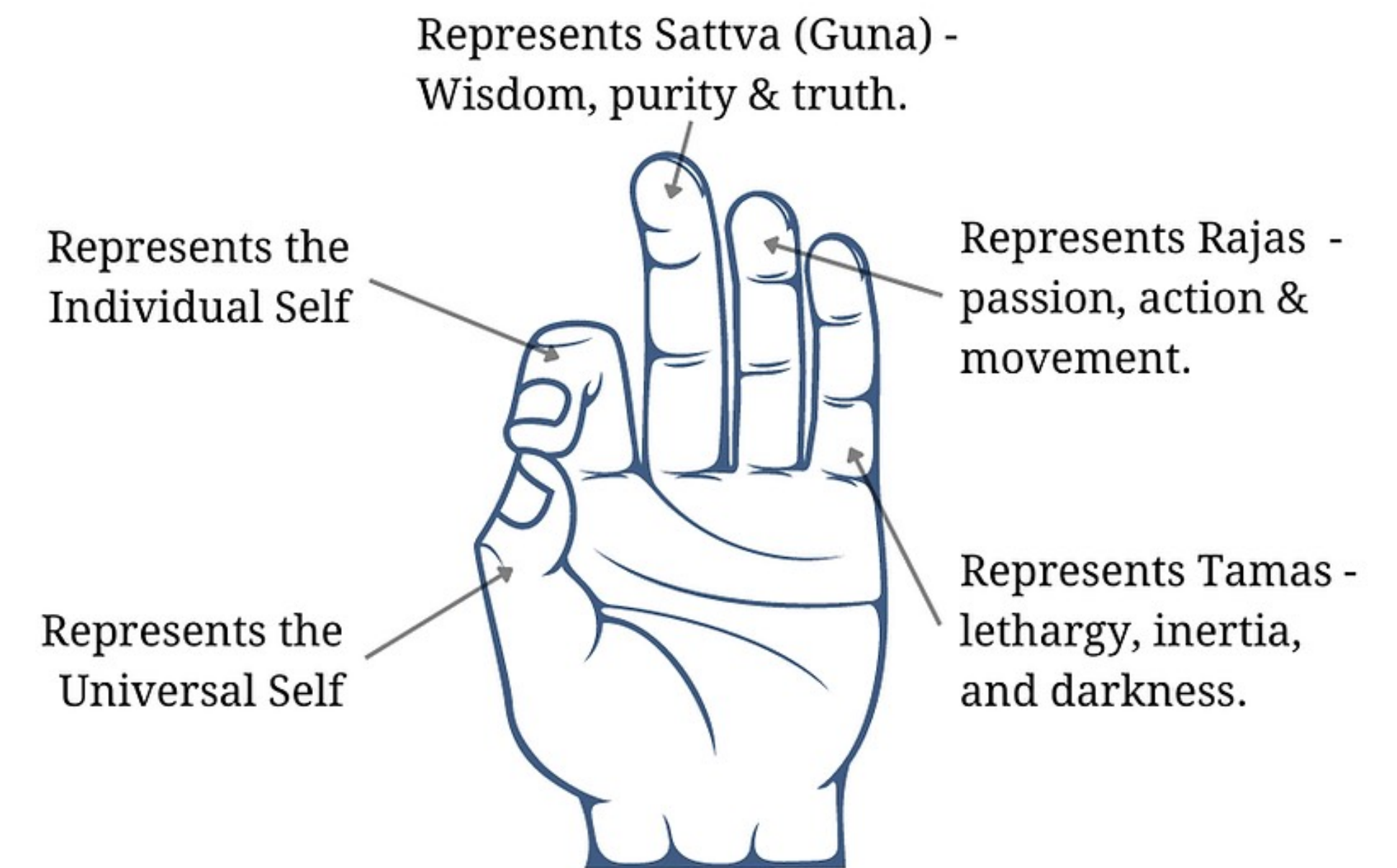
- Chinmaya Mudra Pranayama can be integrated either with Ujjayi Breath or normal breathing cycles.
- Touch the tip of your thumb with the tip of your index finger. Keep the other fingers bent and curled in.
- Can be done in easy pose, thunderbolt or lotus.
- Ratio of 1:1.
- Can also be done with the ratio of 1:1:1:1, using the same length and count for inhalation, internal breath retention, exhalation and external breath retention.
- Can do around 25-30 Rounds.



CHIN MUDRA PRANAYAMA

GESTURE OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS BREATH

- Chin Mudra Pranayama can be integrated either with Ujjayi Breath or normal breathing cycles.
- Touch the tip of your thumb with the tip of your index finger. Let the middle, ring and little finger be extended.
- Place your hands on your thighs, close to your knees, with your palms facing upwards.
- Can be done in easy pose, thunderbolt or lotus.
- Ratio of 1:1.
- Can also be done with the ratio of 1:1:1:1, using the same length and count for inhalation, internal breath retention, exhalation and external breath retention.
- Can do around 25-30 Rounds.



Symbolically, the Individual Self receives knowledge from the Universal and transcends the 3 Gunas and surrenders the ego.



Pranayama teaches the aspirant to
regulate his breathing and thereby
control the mind.

— B.K.S. Iyengar —