
Ujjayi Pranayama

Ujjayi breathing is a [breath technique](#) employed in a variety of [Hindu](#) and [Taoist Yoga](#) practices. In relation to Hindu Yoga, it is sometimes called "the ocean breath". Unlike some other forms of [pranayama](#), the ujjayi breath is typically done in association with [asana](#) practice.

Ujjayi is a [diaphragmatic breath](#), which first fills the lower belly (activating the first and second [chakras](#)), rises to the lower rib cage (the third and fourth chakras), and finally moves into the upper chest and throat. The technique is very similar to the three-part Tu-Na breathing found in Taoist [Qigong](#) practice.

Inhalation and exhalation are both done through the nose. The "ocean sound" is created by moving the [glottis](#) as air passes in and out. As the throat passage is narrowed so, too, is the airway, the passage of air through which creates a "rushing" sound. The length and speed of the breath is controlled by the diaphragm, the strengthening of which is, in part, the purpose of ujjayi. The inhalations and exhalations are equal in duration, and are controlled in a manner that causes no distress to the practitioner.

Prefix "ud" = upward or expanding. Also conveys the sense of pre-eminence and power.

Suffix "java" = conquest or achievement and, from another point of view, restraint.

Benefits

- Increases the metabolism
- Helps quiet the mind
- Supplies the lungs with air
- Calms and tones the nervous system
- Reduces phlegm
- Warms the body
- Reduces hypertension
- Creates happiness and self-confidence
- Leads to better concentration
- Because of its effect in reducing blood pressure, the simple form of Ujjayi without retention is beneficial for heart disease and hypertension
- Good for those suffering from dizziness, nausea and fatigue

Things to Note

- Low blood pressure: Some say that since Ujjayi lowers blood pressure, it is contra-indicated for this condition. Others say it is beneficial to focus on an extended inhalation.
- High blood pressure: Can benefit from an extended exhalation