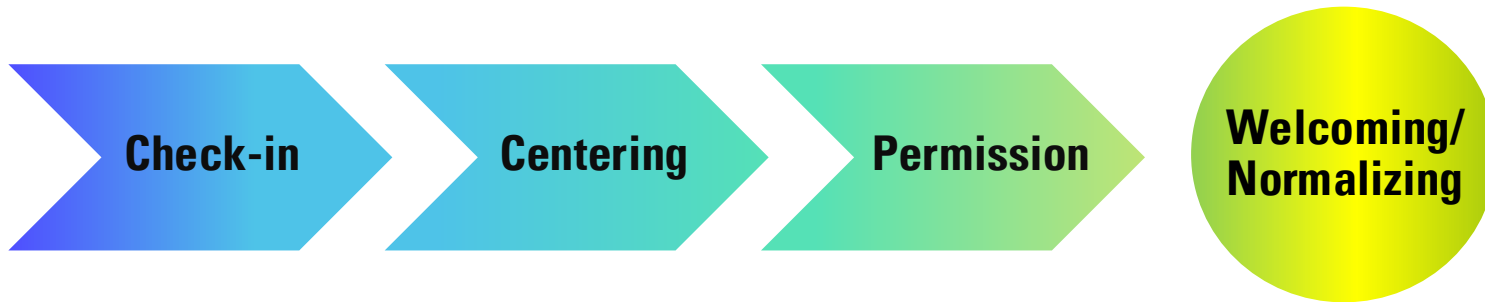


LifeForce Yoga For MOOD Free Gift



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Elements of Safe Container



Permission

From you – for feelings to flow in the room

From the client – ask before introducing

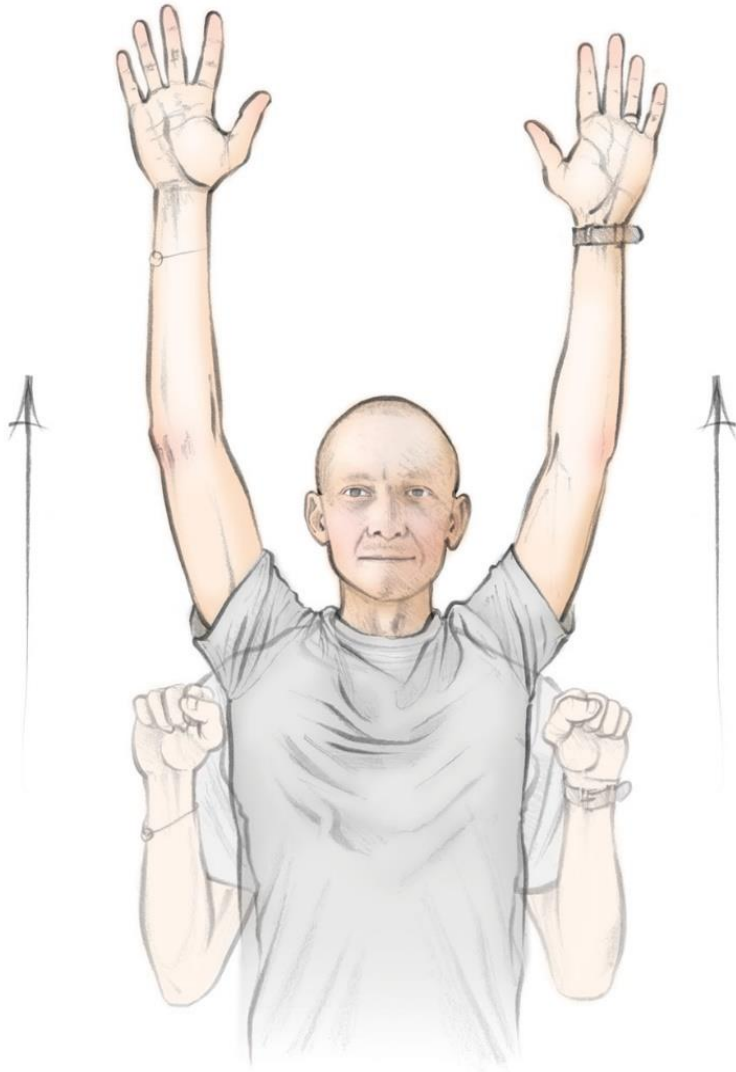
From you – to stop at any time

Directing Awareness ~ Cueing to Sensation

After an invigorating Breathing Practice (Bellows, Skull shining, Pulling Prana, Breath of Joy, Power Hara):

Body scan sensory cues to areas of greatest sensation. This integrates and moves into parasympathetic.

Avoid global cues like “notice how your body is feeling right now,” or “become aware of the sensations in your body.” Global cues risk triggering overwhelm, flooding, fight or flight.



Bellows Breath (Bhastrika)

In a seated position, make fists and bend your elbows at your waist with your upper arms close to your torso. Bring your fists in front of your shoulders with your folded fingers facing out.

Inhale through your nose, reaching your arms up over your head, opening your hands and spreading your fingers wide.

Exhale through your nose back into the starting position. Practice should be steady at one breath per second.

Repeat 5 to 25 times.

Close With:

Directing Awareness: After your breathing, sense into your face, your left arm, the tingling in left palm, then your right arm, the tingling in right palm.

Grounding: Inhale to the crown, "I am." Exhale to the seat, "Here."

4

Bellows Breath

4



Yogic View of Depression

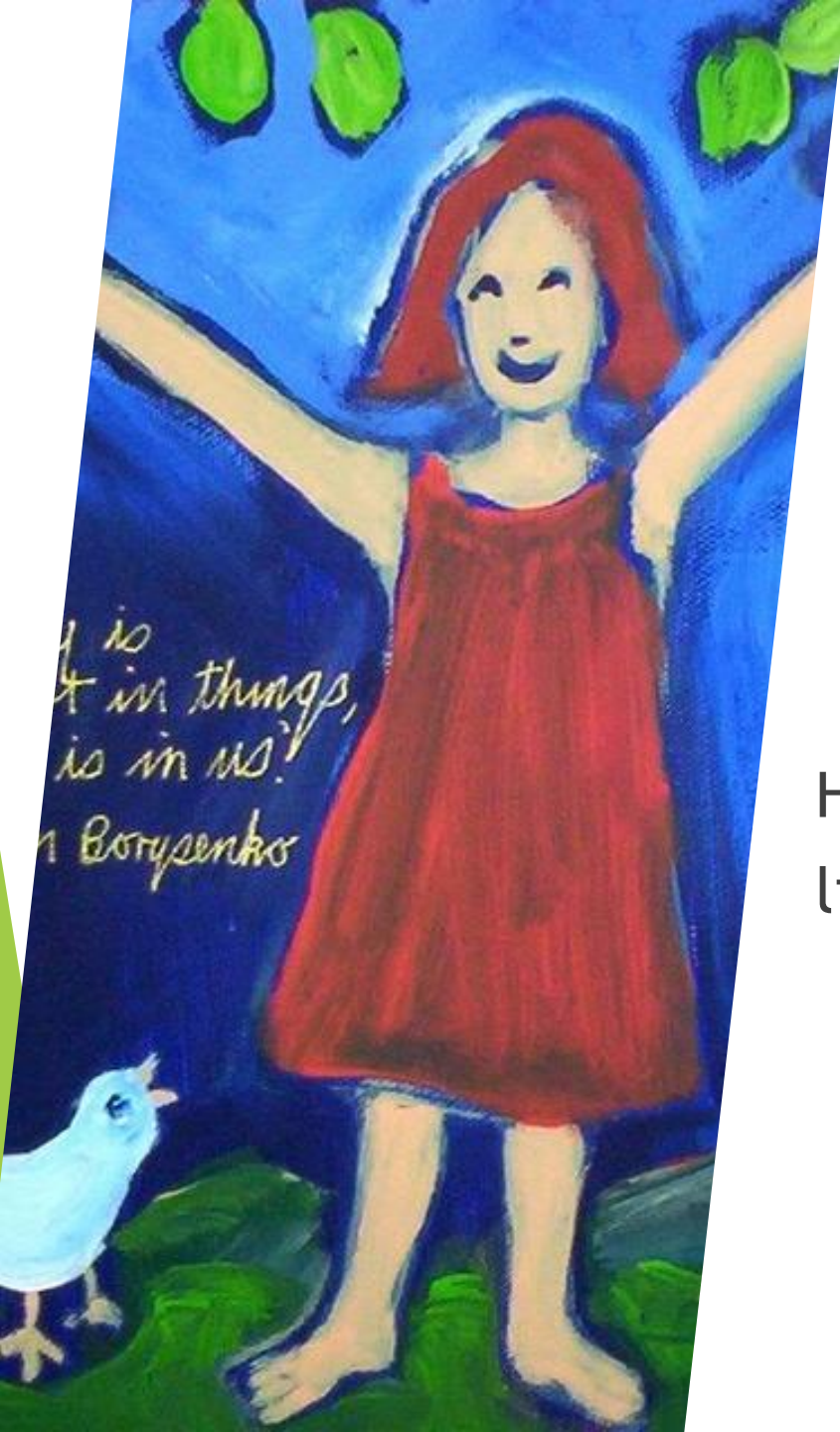
Constricted Prana ~
constrictions in all Koshas
Mistaken belief of
Separation ~ *Avidya* (II:3)



Duhkha -

Suffering ~

literally means
obstructed space



Sukha

Happiness ~
literally means
unobstructed space

Yoga Philosophy: Our True Nature is not Depressed.

Yoga teaches that suffering is based on the false perception of separateness (Avidya).

No matter what yoga lineage or school, there is a shared philosophical foundation that supports optimal mental health: that we are deeply and intimately connected.

The practices of yoga remove the constrictions, physically and emotionally, so that we feel that connection, even if momentarily, to a sense of a whole and undamaged self, to each other, and to something larger than who we are as individuals.

Yogic View of Psycho-Emotional Imbalance: Kosha Model

Constricted Prana: Constrictions in all five Koshas

Anamaya Kosha

• Physical

Pranamaya Kosha

• Energy-Breath

Manomaya Kosha

• Mental-Emotional

Vijnanamaya Kosha

• Wisdom-Intuition

Anandamaya Kosha

• Bliss



Meeting the Mood & Constitution ~ Gunas

Rajasic: In emotional terms, this would be anxiety, anxiety-based depression, mania, hypomania. Meet the rajasic state with vigor, then move to a more calming practice.



Meeting the Mood & Constitution ~ Gunas

Tamasic: In emotional terms, this would be dysthymia (mild, chronic depression), lethargy, major depression. Meet the tamasic state with a slow, restorative practice, then build to a more energizing practice.

Meeting the Mood

- ▶ The order of yoga interventions you choose is important.
 - ▶ Allows the client to feel seen and acknowledged
 - ▶ Offers accessible small moments of accomplishment
 - ▶ Enhances the therapeutic alliance
 - ▶ More likelihood of compliance
- ▶ Co-create with the client/student rather than prescribe.
- ▶ The practices themselves are often the same for different mood disorders, but the sequence is different.
- ▶ Some practices are contra-indicated for bipolar with manic tendencies and psychosis.

Meditation

- ▶ Techniques that “give the mind a bone” to reduce rumination and negative self-talk.
 - ▶ Use of Nada Yoga (mantra)
 - LifeForce Yoga Chakra Clearing Meditations
 - Kirtan Kriya (from the Kundalini tradition)
 - LifeForce Yoga Bliss meditation
 - ▶ Use of Mudras
 - ▶ Use of Breathing practices that withdraw the senses like Bee breath (Brahmari)

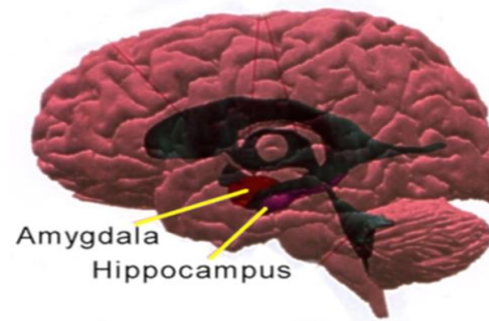
Overview of Biochemical & Physiological Changes

- ▶ Decrease in cortisol levels (stress hormone)
- ▶ Increase in GABA levels (primary inhibitory neurotransmitter)
- ▶ Increase in HRV (heart rate variability)
- ▶ Increase in BDNF (neuroplasticity, genetic expression)
- ▶ Demonstrated improvement in memory, cognitive functioning, perceptual motor skills, visual perception

Overview of Biochemical & Physiological Changes

- ▶ Relaxes chronic muscle tension
- ▶ Restores natural diaphragmatic breathing
- ▶ Improves oxygen absorption and carbon dioxide elimination
- ▶ Increases alpha and theta waves
- ▶ Regulates hypothalamus at an optimum level
- ▶ Certain techniques stimulate vagal nerve activity
- ▶ Bioavailability of oxygen and glucose, building blocks for the production of neurotransmitters
- ▶ Calms sympathetic nervous system while activating parasympathetic system

Amygdala Whisperers



Trauma enlarges Amygdala, shrinks hippocampus.
Yoga practices reverse this.

Evidence shows reduction in **amygdala**.

Evidence shows growth of **hippocampus** and greater cortical thickness in left prefrontal lobe region, including lateral middle frontal gyrus, anterior and dorsal superior frontal.

Brain Plasticity, 2019; 5(1): 105-122. Published online 2019 Dec 26, “Yoga Effects on Brain Health: A Systematic Review of the Current Literature”, Gothe, N.P, et. al.

Brain Imaging Behav. 2018; 12(6): 1631-1639. Published online 2018 Feb 7. doi: [10.1007/s11682-018-9826-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11682-018-9826-z)
Meditation and yoga practice are associated with smaller right amygdala volume: the Rotterdam Study

Yoga Changes Your Brain

- ▶ More grey matter detected in brain regions of yoga practitioners in areas that regulate emotion, self-awareness and directing attention.
 - ▶ More hours of practice per week correlates to enlarged areas of brain.
 - ▶ Positive brain changes were observed in somatosensory cortex, superior parietal cortex, visual cortex and the hippocampus.
-
- ▶ Villemure, C., Bushnell, C. Annual Meeting of Society for Neuroscience, November, 2013
 - ▶ [Villemure C](#)¹, [Ceko M](#), [Cotton VA](#), [Bushnell MC](#), “Insular Cortex Mediates Increased Pain Tolerance in Yoga Practitioners.” [Cerebral Cortex](#). 2013 May 21.

LifeForce Yoga® for Mood Disturbance Study

Between times one (before the LifeForce Yoga® program) and two (two weeks after learning it), participants reported:

- 64% decrease in total mood disturbance (POMS)
- 53% decrease in average depression scores (BDI)
- At two months, overall mood disturbance continued to drop.

Bennett, S., Weintraub, A., Khalsa, S.B., “Initial evaluation of the LifeForce Yoga® program as a therapeutic intervention for depression,” *Intern. Jour Yoga Therapy*, 2008.

<http://www.yogafordepression.com/IJYT-2008-Bennett.pdf>

Yoga Decreases Depression & Increases Neuroplasticity

58 major depressive disorder (MDD) patients were randomized into yoga or control group. The severity of depression was assessed with Beck Depression Inventory-II scale (BDI-II). Blood samples were collected before and after intervention for the measurement of the biomarkers that characterize neuroplasticity, including mind-body communicative and cellular health biomarkers.

Restorative Neurology & Neuroscience. 2018;36(3):423-442. Maduri R, Tolahunase, et al., “Yoga- and meditation-based lifestyle intervention increases neuroplasticity and reduces severity of major depressive disorder: A randomized controlled trial.”

Yoga Decreases Depression & Increases Neuroplasticity - 2

There was a significant decrease and significant increase in BDNF after 12 weeks of Yoga and Meditation compared to control group. increased DHEAS, sirtuin 1, and telomerase activity levels increased and cortisol, IL-6 levels decreased. The yoga and meditation Group showed decreasing DNA damage and balancing oxidative stress

The Authors conclude that a decrease in depression severity after Yoga and Meditation in MDD is associated with improved systemic biomarkers of neuroplasticity. Thus, Yoga and meditation can be considered as a therapeutic intervention in MDD management.

Chanting Om Shown to Deactivate the Limbic System

Researchers compared 15 seconds of “OM” (5 - O; 10 - m) to 15 seconds of the sound “Ssssss...” and to 15 seconds of rest. Significant deactivation in the amygdala as well as other emotional areas only during ‘OM’ chanting

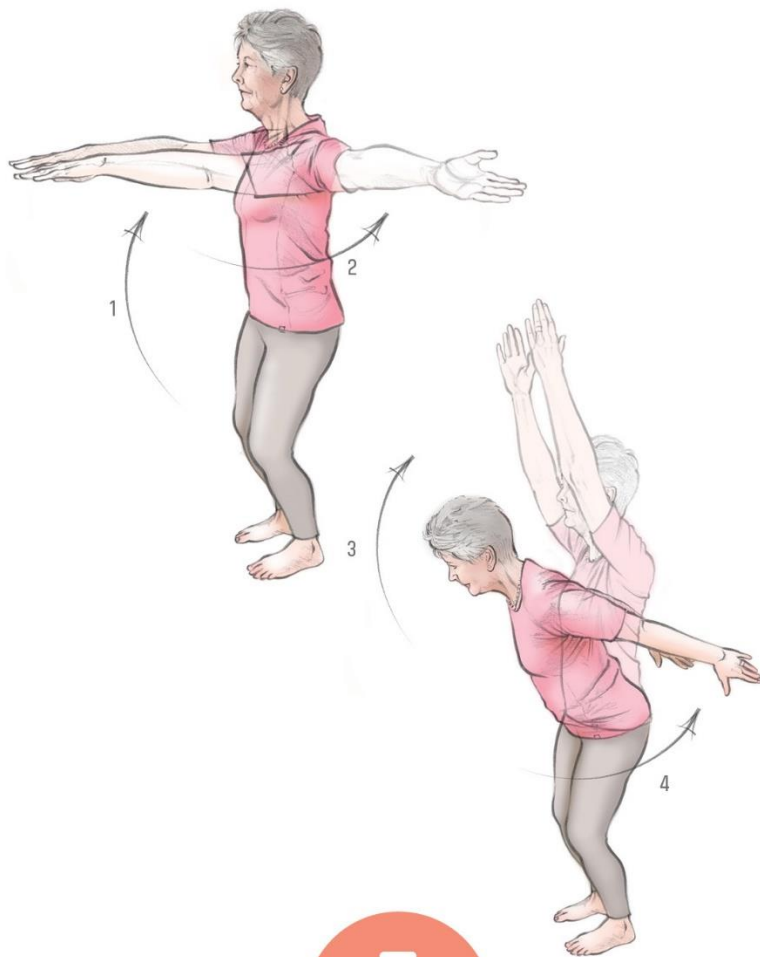
Bangalore G Kalyani, et al., “Neurohemodynamic correlates of ‘OM’ chanting: A pilot functional magnetic resonance imaging study” *International Journal of Yoga*. 2011 Jan-Jun; 4(1): 3-6.

Om Chanting Reduces Depression & Hypertension

40 women (age 50-60 years) with blood pressure values of 120-179. Randomly assigned to chanting group (daily Om, 7:30 AM) or control group. Pre intervention depression, anxiety, stress and MMSE scores (measures cognitive function) and blood pressure and pulse rate were not significant between the groups. Following six months of Om chanting, systolic and diastolic pressure, pulse rate, depression, anxiety, stress decreased significantly. MMSE scores improved significantly. Authors conclude Om chanting can be used as a means in calming the mind and enhancing memory

Beneficial effects of OM chanting on depression, anxiety, stress and cognition in elderly women with hypertension, Arati Amin, Et. Al. Published online, 2016:

www.innovativepublication.com/



5

Breath of Joy with "Lum"

Breath of Joy with "Lum"

Stand comfortably with your feet beneath your knees and your knees slightly bent.

Inhale through the nostrils as you raise your arms in front of your body to chest level, taking one-third of a full breath.

Continue to inhale as you swing your arms out on both sides of your body, filling another third of your lungs.

Inhale the final third as you raise your arms over your head.

Exhale, bending your knees into chair pose as you swing your arms down and behind your body with the mantra "Lum" (luhm).

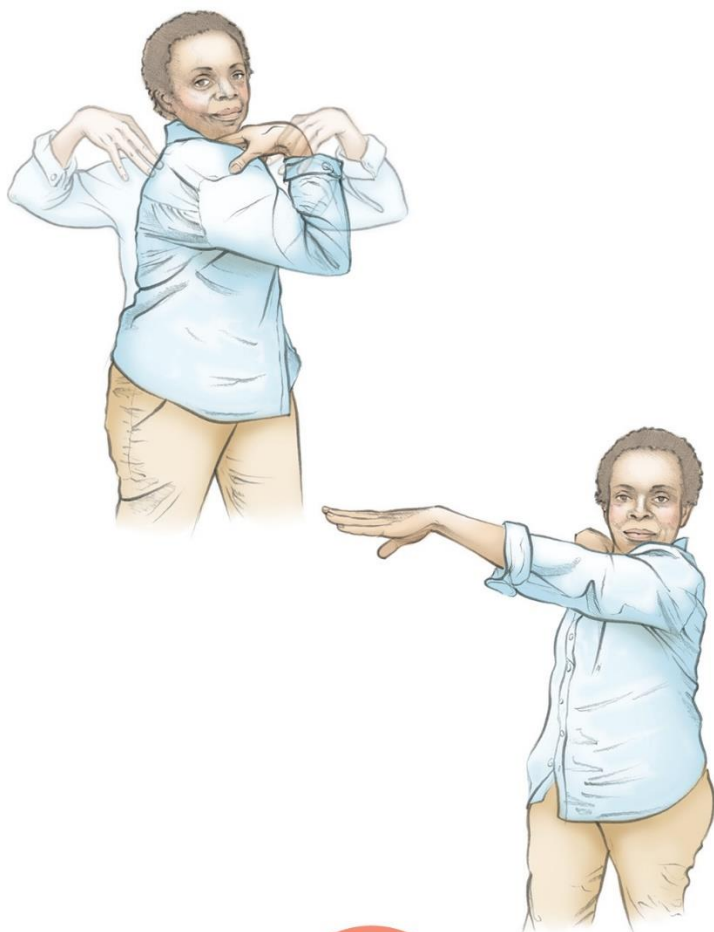
Repeat three to ten times.

Close With:

Directing Awareness: When you have finished, sense into your face, your left arm, the tingling in left palm, your right arm, the tingling in right palm.

Grounding: Inhale from feet to crown, "I am." Exhale to the feet, "Here."

5



7

Power Breath

Power Breath

Stand with legs hip-width apart with hands at shoulders, elbows out at each side. Twist left, and inhale halfway. Twist right and inhale fully. Exhale with “Ha,” twisting left and extend your right arm across your body while your left hand remains at your shoulder. Exhale with “Ha,” twisting right and extend your left arm across your body while your right hand remains at your shoulder. Let your gaze follow your twist.

Repeat three to eight times.

After three rounds, try adding the mantra “Ram” (rahm) as you twist, which activates your power center at the solar plexus.

Close With:

Directing Awareness: Sense into your face, your left arm, the tingling in left palm, your right arm, the tingling in right palm.

Grounding: Inhale from feet to crown, “I am.” Exhale to the feet, “Here.”

7



18

Practice for Empowerment II: Victory Goddess

Practice for Empowerment II: Victory Goddess (Utkata Konasana)

Stand in the **Five-Pointed Star** pose **17**. Exhale with a “ha” breath through the mouth as you drop into **Victory Goddess**, knees bent over ankles, arms up with elbows bent in cactus position. Return to the **Five-Pointed Star**.

Repeat five to ten times.

Enhance this practice by cultivating a personal image for strength.

Close With:

Directing Awareness: Return to a standing position and sense the power in your arms and legs. Breathe your image for strength through the container of this body that you are strengthening.

Grounding: Inhale from feet to crown, “I am.” Exhale to your feet, “Here.”

18



9

Calm Strength

Calm Strength

In a seated position, find an image that represents calm strength, maybe from nature or a time when you've felt calm and strong. You can also use a word like "courage."

Inhale through your nostrils as you extend your arms out in front of your belly. Pause and see that image or the word you have chosen.

Draw your hands to your belly as you chant "Ma-Ha-Ra," which represents "calm strength."

Repeat three to five times.

Pause on completion and know that the image or word is on the altar of your heart, there whenever you need it.

9



25

Left Nostril Breathing

Left Nostril Breathing (Chandra Bhedana)

Sit with the spine erect. Use Balancing Mudra by making a fist of your right hand. Next, release the thumb and the third and fourth fingers, leaving the index and middle finger against your palm.

Place the thumb against your right nostril and slowly inhale through your left for four counts.

Close off the left nostril and release your thumb and slowly exhale through your right for six counts. Then release the left nostril and close off the right to begin the cycle again.

Do five rounds to begin and notice if you are feeling calmer. You can do more rounds if you wish.

If the left nostril is blocked, use the third and fourth fingers of your right hand to press at the bottom of your left cheek bone. When you find the right points, you will feel more breath moving through your left nasal passage.

25



26

Bee Breath with Mudra

Bee Breath with Mudra (Brahmari)

In a seated position, slightly tilt the chin toward your chest. Keep the throat relaxed and the lips closed.

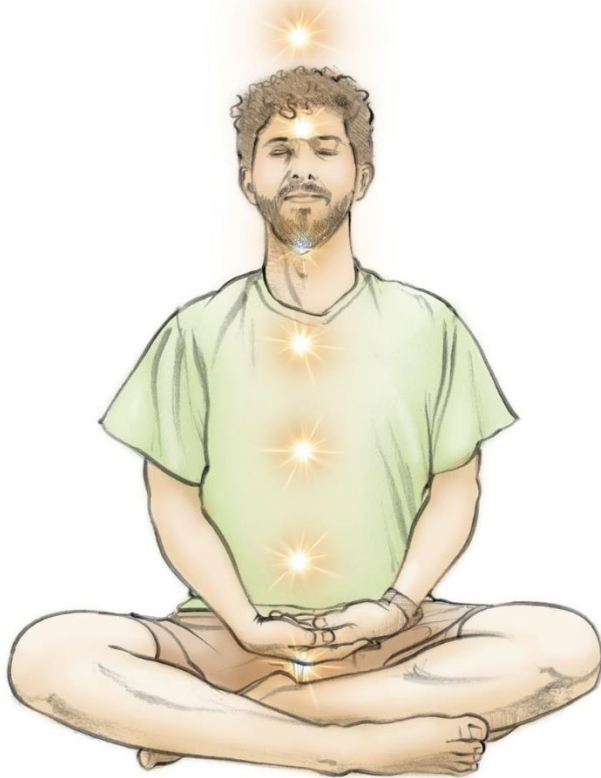
Inhale slowly through the nostrils and draw the back of the tongue to the back of the throat. Release the breath by making a deep buzzing sound in your throat like a bee. You will hear a “swarm” of bees in your throat. Start with three rounds on the exhale only.

To enhance the meditative effect of Bee Breath, try Womb Mudra (Shanmukhi). Index fingers point to the brow; middle fingers seal the lids closed; ring fingers press the indented area beyond the edges of the nostrils; little fingers are at the edge of the lips, and thumbs press the cartilage by the cheekbone into the ear canal.

Close With:

Directing Awareness: This practice directs the awareness deep within, as it withdraws the senses (pratyahara). Bee breath may be your portal into meditation. Sit in the stillness of what remains for 5 to 30 minutes.

26



Use with **52**

51

LifeForce Yoga Bliss Meditation

LifeForce Yoga Bliss Meditation

Sit comfortably with the spine erect or lie down. Imagine that you are inhaling from your feet to the crown of your head and then exhaling down to your feet or to your seat.

1. Inhale to your crown with the words "I am." Exhale to your feet or seat with, "Here." Repeat several times.
2. Inhale to the crown with "I am." Exhale to your pelvic region with "In the flow." Repeat several times.
3. Inhale to the crown with "I am." Exhale to the solar plexus with "Fully present." Repeat several times.
4. Inhale to the crown with "I am." Exhale to the heart with "Love." Repeat several times.
5. Inhale to the crown with "I am." Exhale to the throat with "Truth." Repeat several times.
6. Inhale to the crown with "I am." Exhale to the brow point with "Clarity." Repeat several times.
7. Inhale to the crown of the head with "I am." Exhale through the crown with "Bliss." Repeat several times.
8. Inhale through the crown with "Bliss." Exhale through the heart with "Love." Repeat several times.
9. Inhale to the crown, "I am." Exhale to the seat or the feet with "Here."

Use this practice as a doorway to **Relaxation Pose 52**.

51