

Explore

Bhastrika

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Bhastrika

(pronounced bha-STRI-kaah), is an important breath exercise in yoga and pranayama. It is sometimes treated as a kriya or 'cleansing action' along with kapalabhati to clear the airways in preparation for other pranayama techniques. Bhastrika involves a rapid and forceful inhalation and exhalation powered by the movement of the diaphragm. The movement of air is accompanied by an audible sound. One inhale and exhale equals one round of bhastrika and it may be repeated for many consecutive rounds. B. K. S. Iyengar explains that the similar "process or kriya of kapalabhati is a milder form of Bhastrika Pranayama. Swami Sivananda describes the process: "inhale and exhale quickly ten times like the bellows of the blacksmith. Constantly dilate and contract. When you practise this Pranayama a hissing sound is produced. The practitioner should start with rapid expulsions of breath following one another in rapid succession. When the required number of expulsions, say ten for a round, is finished, the final expulsion is followed by a deepest possible inhalation. The breath is suspended as long as it could be done with comfort. Then deepest possible exhalation is done very slowly. The end of this deep exhalation completes one round of Bhastrika". 🏠

Precaution

This pranayama should not be practiced by people who are pregnant, have high blood pressure, have heart disease, have severely blocked nose, have high fever, have uncontrolled hypertension, epilepsy, seizures, or panic disorder. Avoid in evening in summer for very high temperature. You should also avoid practicing bellows breath on a full stomach; wait at least two hours after eating. Beginners should practice this pranayama slowly at first, allowing their bodies time to adapt to the practice. Bhastrika is essentially a controlled hyperventilation, so the increased levels of oxygen in your bloodstream may make you feel lightheaded or anxious, especially if you are new to the practice. If this happens, take a break and allow your breath to return to normal. 🏠

- The next time you feel sluggish, instead of reaching for a cup of coffee, try an energetic breathing practice, instead.

- Bhastrika, or “bellows breath,” is a traditional breathing exercise in yoga that helps to increase Prana or life force in your being. It’s often used to energize the body and clarify the mind. If you feel hazy, or like you’re moving in slow motion, Bhastrika will help clear the clouds.
- Bellows breathing is also a practice to consider if you’re trying to lose weight. Performing a few rounds throughout the day can help increase your digestive power and boost your metabolism.
- You probably want to avoid practicing bellows breathing close to bedtime, as it may invigorate your mind and make it difficult to fall asleep. But the next time you need an energy boost, give it a try.

When to use

- ✓ First thing in the morning: Since bellows breath is energizing, try it first thing in the morning for a wake-up call that will get your blood pumping and get you in the perfect mode to start your day.
- ✓ During the mid-day slump: For those of you who work in an office, the midday slump is the dreaded time when we crash, usually about an hour after lunchtime. If you feel sluggish after lunch or in the middle of the day, find a quiet corner of your office and practice a few rounds of bellows breathing for a pick-me-up even better than espresso.
- ✓ Before a workout: Getting ready for a run, yoga class, or workout session? Before you lace up your shoes or roll out your mat, sit for a few rounds of bellows breathing to warm you up and get you in the focused and energized mode. 🏠

Procedure

Bhastrika pranayama is all about inhaling and exhaling completely so that your body gets maximum amount of oxygen. Follow the steps given below and learn to do Bhastrika pranayama.

- Be seated in comfortable posture. Padmasana (crossed leg) and Vajrasana are the ideal yoga postures to practice pranayama. Place your hands on your knees. Feel relaxed. Focus on your breathing pattern and be relaxed.
- Breathe in by inhaling forcefully through both the nostrils. Make sure that your lungs are full with air. Once you inhale fully, exhale with great force making hissing sound.
- In Bhastrika pranayama one needs to apply force while breathing in and breathing out. You can determine how much speed to apply while inhaling and exhaling keeping in mind your health and endurance power.
- When you breathe in while performing Bhastrika pranayama, your abdominal should not blow up. Instead your chest area should blow up. Repeat the procedure for 5 to 10 times.
- For your first cycle, move through a round of 10 Bhastrika breaths, then take a break and breathe naturally, observing the sensations in your mind and body. After a 15- to 30-second break, begin the next round with 20 breaths. Finally, after pausing for another 30 seconds, complete a third round of 30 bellows breaths.
- Make sure to listen to your body during the practice. Bellows breathing is a safe practice, but if you feel light-headed in any way, take a pause for a few minutes while breathing naturally. When the discomfort passes, try another round of bellows breathing, slower and with less intensity.
- While doing this Pranayama keep both the eyes closed and mentally chant the mantra “OM” throughout the exercise of Pranayama.

You have successfully completed Bhastrika pranayama. One should perform Bhastrika pranayama for 5 minutes every day. 🏠

Benefits

- Helps to throw out toxins and cures illnesses of respiratory track
- Bhastrika pranayama increases the oxygen content in the blood. Extra oxygen replenishes the entire body.
- Helps to keep negative thoughts away
- Increases warmth in the body and helps to prevent common cold
- Regular practice of Bhastrika pranayama keeps you away from all diseases
- Performing pranayama in the early morning helps to obtain naturally glowing skin. The secret to ageless skin is pranayama.
- It is good for asthma patients and removes inflammation of the throat.
- Bhastrika increases the gastric fire and improves appetite.
- Removes blockages or diseases of the nose and chest and eradicates asthma etc.
- It breaks and dissolve the tumors.
- It enables one to know the Kundalini.
- It removes all diseases which arise from excess of wind, bile and phlegm.
- Purifies the Nadis considerably
- Very much useful in Muscular Dystrophy and Oxygen deficiency disorders.
- This Pranayama brings about a proper balance of the three Doshas i.e. Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, and maintains their balance. Blood is purified and the body gets rid of foreign objects and toxins.
- Stabilizes Prana and calms mind, and helps the upward journey
- Bhastrika when practiced with Kumbhaka can generate heat in the body and keep it warm in cold weather.
- Bhastrika improves general health and activates all the organs.
- Bhastrika purifies the nadis or the energy (pranic) channels in the body, ensuring free flow of prana to all the organs in the body.
- Bhastrika destroys the defects of Vata (wind), Pitta (Bile) and Kapha (Phlegm) and balances these three.

