

### Explore

Anulom Vilom

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## Anulom Vilom

is one of several Pranayama or breathing exercise used in the practice of Hatha yoga. At first you have to understand the meaning of Anuloma and Viloma .In this the first word Anu roughly translates as with and word Loma means hair implying “with the grain” or “natural”. And meaning of Viloma is “against the grain.” Anuloma is opposite to Viloma. It is very helpful in respiratory related diseases like Asthama. Anulom Vilom Pranayama is the best way to balancing the Tri dosas in our body. Our body get ill when Tri dosas are not in balancing position. Vaat, Pitta, Kaffa are know as Tri dosas, Tri means “three” and the meaning of dosas is impurities. All these are present in body of every people. If one of them is imbalance than we suffer from different diseases. All of three are the cause of all diseases. So it’s important to balance these tri dosas. If you really want to balance these Tri dosas than do Anulom vilom pranayam regularly. It is the simplest and best way for this.

In the practice of pranayama, inhalation (called Puraka), retention (called Kumbhaka) and exhalation (called Rechaka) is used. Anulom Vilom pranayama can be practiced with or without Kumbhaka (holding of breath). Beginners should start the practice without Kumbhaka.

The duration of inhalation and expiration depends entirely on the capacity of the practitioner. Start with whatever you are comfortable with – say 4 seconds inhalation and 4 seconds exhalation. Later it can be increased up to 20 seconds or even more.

In Anulom Vilom pranayama, breathing is done only through one nostril which is alternated. During this process, the other nostril is closed using the fingers. The thumb is used to close the right nostril and the ring finger is used to close the left nostril.

Anulom Vilom Pranayama is an advanced practice (esp. when done with retention of breath). It has to be learned from a yoga expert. Those suffering from heart ailments or blood pressure problems (high as well as low) should avoid retention of breath during the process. They may do the Anulom Vilom pranayama without holding the breath. Also, consult a doctor if you have any medical condition before taking up the practice.

The purpose of Pranayama is to control the breathing mechanism which is an involuntary process. Breathing goes on even in our sleep as it is controlled by the central nervous system. With regular practice of pranayama, this process can be brought into our conscious control to some extent. In the yoga text Hatha Yoga Pradeepika, the breath is compared to a wild animal. Just as elephants, lions and tigers can be controlled with steady and prolonged training, the yogi also brings the breath under his control with constant practice.🏠

### Precaution

- The practice of Pranayama should be taken up with care. Do not overdo the practice. Do not increase the duration of inhalation and exhalation beyond your limit. Also with Kumbhaka (retention), the practitioner should be very careful. It is said in Hatha Yoga Pradeepika that pranayama can cure all diseases. But, if done improperly, it may create diseases, which cannot be cured easily even through medical treatment. Hence one should be very cautious and increase the level of practice over a comfortable period of time. It is advisable to consult an accomplished yogi before taking up higher levels of practice.
- Anulom Vilom pranayama should be done on an empty stomach, preferably in the morning after evacuation. It can also be done in the evening with a gap of 4 hours after the last meal. Also, avoid doing Anulom Vilom pranayama with retention of breath when the temperature is hot. Retention of breath can cause an increase in body temperature and should be done in a cool climate. 🏠

### Procedure

- Sit in a steady asana. Padmasana is most suited for the practice. Siddhasana and Vajrasana may also be used.
- Close the right nostril with your thumb and draw in air from the left nostril. Do this as slowly as you can, till your lungs are full.
- Now release the thumb and close the left nostril with your ring finger. Then breathe out slowly through the right nostril.
- Next take the air in from the right nostril and then release it through the left nostril (after closing the right nostril with the thumb).
- This is one round of Anulom Vilom Pranayama.
- Start with 5 rounds and increase it up to 20 rounds in one sitting.
- Also, the duration of inhalation can start from 2 seconds and go up to 20 seconds or even beyond.
- One can have one sitting in the morning and one in the evening. For advanced practitioners, the yogic texts recommends four sittings – one in the morning, one at noon, one in the evening and one at midnight. But for all practical purposes, two sittings (one in morning and one in evening) are enough.
- After one has reached a certain level of proficiency, one can add Kumbhaka or retention of breath to the practice.
- Ratio of Inhalation, Retention and Exhalation.
- Pranayama practitioners start with the ratio of 1:1 for inhalation and exhalation. For example if you inhale for 4 seconds through one nostril, then the exhalation from the other nostril is also 4 seconds. As you progress, the ratio can be changed to 1:2, which means if inhalation is 4 seconds, then exhalation is 8 seconds.

- Once you add Kumbhaka (retention of breath), the ratio can start with 1:1:1. For example, 4 seconds of inhalation, 4 seconds of retention and 4 seconds of exhalation. With further progress, the ratio can be increased to 1:1:2, 1:2:2, 1:4:2, etc. The ratio of 1:4:2 is mentioned in most classic yoga texts. Those who practice advanced ratios of this pranayama, should eat only Satvic food (pure, nourishing and light). 🏠

## Benefits

- Anulom Vilom Pranayama cleans the pranic channels and makes the prana flow freely in the entire body. The nadis or the pranic energy channels are purified. Hence this pranayama is also called Nadi Shodhana Pranayama.
- Purification of the energy channels ensures proper supply of pranic energy to all the organs enhancing the overall health of the body.
- Anulom Vilom Pranayama balances the two main energy channels – Ida and Pingala. It balances the two hemispheres of the brain, bringing about peace and tranquility.
- When the Ida and Pingala nadis are balanced, it awakens the central channel called Sushumna Nadi.
- It removes toxins from the body.
- Prolonged practice of Anulom Vilom Pranayama leads to next stage of yoga, which is Pratyahara or withdrawal of the senses. This enables the practitioner to progress towards higher practices of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.
- It can reduce weight in some practitioners depending on their body constitution and is a good practice for obesity.
- Helps to cure mental problems like Depression, Anxiety, Tension etc.
- Most beneficial for breathing related problems like (Bronchitis, Asthma) etc.
- Improve the working of lungs. 🏠