

## Immunity boosting yoga postures & Pranayama

Seasonal diseases can be kept at bay with strong immunity. Yoga postures help strengthen your immune system by stimulating the thymus gland. This gland, which is located in the chest region is activated by the chest expansion that happens during the following asanas:



### **Setu Bandhasana (Bridge Pose)**

Stretches the chest, neck, and spine.

Opens up the lungs.

Helps alleviate asthma, high blood pressure, and sinusitis.



### **Hastapadasana (Standing forward bend pose)**

Improves the flow of blood to the head.

Clears the sinuses.

Invigorates the nervous system and relieves tension in the body.



### **Matsyasana (Fish Pose)**

Stretches the chest and neck.

Provides relief from respiratory disorders.

Tones the parathyroid, pituitary, and pineal glands.



### **Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)**

Opens up the chest, neck, and shoulders.

Relieves menstrual discomfort and constipation.

Helps people with renal (kidney) disorders.



### **Viparita Karani (Legs-up-the-Wall Pose)**

Improves the flow of blood to the head.

Calms the mind.

Helps in overcoming headache and backache.



### **Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose)**

Expands the chest.

Improves blood circulation.

Reduces fatigue and stress

## Preventive pranayama for cold, cough, and sinus

In addition to yoga postures, pranayama or breathing techniques also help in boosting immunity. Moreover, some of these breathing techniques clear the nasal passage, shielding you from infection.

### **Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing technique)**



### **Ujjayi Pranayama (Victory breath technique)**



- First, sit in the pose of Padmasana or Sukhasana.
- Now while deep inhaling, contract your throat which will produce a sound.
- While inhaling air should not touch inside the nose but it should touch the throat. The friction of air within the throat produces peculiar sound.
- Touch your chin to the upper side of your chest. If possible hold your breath for 10 seconds.
- Now while exhaling close your right nostril with the right thumb of the hand.
- Keep in mind that exhaling should be done by the left nostril only.
- Repeat this process for 3-4 times in the beginning. But after a good practice, you can repeat it for 3-11 times.

### **Ujjayi Pranayama Benefits**

- Helps open up blocked nose. Facilitates better flow of oxygen to the lungs. Can heal respiratory problems. It is effective to help healing thyroid disorders. Can heal snoring problems. Improves concentration. Releases stress and tension. Increases energy in the body. Calms the mind. Reduces the risk of heart disease.

# Clarity of Thought: Expanding the Lung Capacity



This kriya expands and purifies the lungs. The greater the lung capacity, the greater is the intake of oxygen. In turn this allows the blood to be more effectively cleaned, allowing for a greater resistance to disease. Cleaner and more oxygenated blood helps the brain and other organs work better. Practice this kriya on an empty stomach.

## Part 1

**Posture:** Sit straight in Easy Pose with the hands resting on the knees. Pull the lower rib cage forward as far as possible, and keep it forward throughout. Do not lean. Hold the head and neck in chin lock.

**Eyes:** 1/10th open.

**Breath:** Inhale deeply through the nose and hold the breath in. Then exhale completely through the mouth and hold the breath out. Create your own rhythm, timing your breath in equal halves. First inhale-hold, then exhale-hold. Set a consistent maximum length duration based on your lung capacity.

**Time:** Continue for 15 minutes.

**To End:** Inhale deep, then exhale. Again inhale deep, then exhale.

Immediately begin part 2.

## Part 2

Continue holding the posture, ribs forward, eyes 1/10th open, and begin a powerful Breath of Fire.

**Time:** Continue for 3 minutes.

**To End:** Inhale, and relax.

"If you can keep the ribcage forward during both the inhale and exhale, your lungs can have a powerful reaction. You can purify the entire material which is stuck there. Otherwise we don't have any procedure to clean the lungs. Everybody can talk about it, nobody can do it. This is one procedure you can do.

“You have to basically understand, our body is based on prana and prana enters our body through the breath of life. Air is not prana. Air is the medium for prana. Some people think air is the prana. No, air is the medium for prana and because of this graceful medium we live and God has made lungs. If you look at them, they are like two big mangoes hanging with one cord—biggest organ in the body. Their purpose is to clean the air, and take out of it the pranic energy and the oxygen, both. Oxygen purifies the blood, gives back to its red corpuscles. The prana gives the life.

All movements in the body are because of the prana. If only oxygen could do it, then every problem is solved. Then all we have to do is put a cylinder of oxygen at the back of a person, he will live. No. It doesn't work that way...The contact of the cosmic body, which we call the subtle body or auric body, with the physical body is very unique. But if your lung capacity shrinks, the rate of oxygen you can take in will shrink and clean blood will be less. Less clean blood will expose you to infections.”

—Yogi Bhajan

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## Purifying the Lungs



This exercise helps the gallbladder, spleen, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and the entire glandular system. It cleans your respiratory system. The lungs are the biggest organs in the body, but we don't fully use them. If your lung capacity shrinks, the amount of oxygen you can intake will shrink, and your blood will not be cleansed well. This will expose you to infections.

This meditation may only be done with a completely empty stomach.

### Part 1

**Posture:** Sit in Easy Pose with your hands resting on your knees, palms down. Keep your spine straight, lift your ribcage, and expand your ribcage all around, making your chest area as expanded as you comfortably can.

This expansion gives the lungs "room to breathe." With the chest lifted, the chin can automatically rest in the hollow at the base of the neck (chin lock). You will feel that the rib cage and shoulder area have a feeling of separation from the lower body. The posture is very meditative when correctly done.

**Eyes:** The eyes are nine-tenths closed.

**Breath:** Inhale deeply through the nose and hold your breath in as long as you comfortably can. Exhale completely through the mouth, holding the breath out for an equal amount of time. Continue, establishing your own breath rhythm, making sure that you hold your breath in for the same amount of time that you hold your breath out.

Your own lung capacity will guide your rhythm, and once you have established it, you must maintain it. (When this meditation was taught, the inhalation was about 3 seconds, the hold in about 7 seconds, the exhalation about 3 seconds and the hold out about 7 seconds.)

The lift and spread of the rib cage must be maintained, both on the inhalation and on the exhalation. If you use your navel point to guide the exhalation, it will balance the tendency of the chest to collapse as the breath leaves the lungs. Keep the rib cage from falling on the exhalation; this will give the lungs a powerful reaction which can purify material which is stuck. It is a procedure to clean the lungs.

**Time:** Continue for 15 minutes.

## **Part 2**

Hold the position, inhale (2 seconds), exhale (2 seconds), inhale (2 seconds), exhale (2 seconds). Maintain the lifted and expanded position of the ribcage and begin Breath of Fire. Continue Breath of Fire for 3 Minutes. Breath of Fire massages the organs and the glands.

Relax.

## **Comments:**

"This exercise creates the opportunity for good health. It helps the gallbladder, spleen, liver, kidneys, and pancreas. It is very good for the entire glandular system.

It cleans your respiratory system. It is a heavy exercise equivalent to playing a game of basketball. Try to open up the lung capacity. The lungs are the biggest organs in the body, but we don't fully use them. Many problems come from not using the lungs to capacity. The lungs keep the blood clean, and when the blood is clean the brain acts faster.

Our body is based on prana, and prana enters our body through the breath of life. Some people think air is the prana, but air is only the medium for prana, and because of this graceful medium, we live.

God has made these lungs, and, if you look at them, they are like two big mangoes hanging on one stem. Lungs are the biggest organ in the body. Their purpose is to take both the prana and the oxygen out of the air.

Oxygen purifies the blood and puts the red back in the corpuscles. If your lung capacity shrinks, the amount of oxygen you can intake will shrink, and your blood will not be cleansed well. This will expose you to infections. You have to understand that if the physical body has a problem that it can't get rid of, then it will start adjusting around the problem, and it gets more messed up.

The *prana* gives the life. All movements in the body are because of the *prana*. If oxygen alone can do it, then every problem is solved. We just put a cylinder of oxygen on the

back of a person and he will live. No, it doesn't work that way. The contact of the Cosmic Body with the physical body is very unique.

God has given you this life as a gift. According to pranic law, there is 'x' amount of pranic energy which the body has for its use. You can use up this pranic energy in one day and die tomorrow, or you can use it in 50 - 60 years. It depends upon that breath of life. So long as the *pranas* are given to you, live, enjoy, and relax."  
-Yogi Bhajan

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This exercise can be found in *Praana, Praanee, Praanayam*, available from [KRI](#).

Exercise Set for the Lungs and Bloodstream