

Mindful Breathing Guide to Start Your Day

START HERE

Ujjayi is the most basic deep breathing practice. It means “triumphantly uprising,” which is how you want to start your day. It’s also how you feel when you get the benefit of the practice.

- 1 Set your timer for five, ten, or fifteen minutes, depending on your previous experience.
- 2 Inhale through your nose, then exhale slowly through a wide-open mouth. Direct the outgoing breath slowly across the back of your throat with a drawn-out *ha* sound. Repeat several times.
- 3 Close your mouth.
- 4 Inhale and exhale through your nose, and direct the breath slowly across the back of your throat. You should hear a soft hissing sound, like Darth Vader.
- 5 Make the inhale and exhale match in length, volume, and smoothness.

This Darth Vader sound is the unspoken mantra that

- slows your breath down,
- focuses awareness on the breath instead of your thoughts,
- and regulates your flow of prana.

Set your timer for five minutes. After two weeks, increase your time to ten minutes. After a month, increase your time to fifteen minutes.

After your timer goes off, return to normal breathing for a minute or two, then lie down in corpse pose and absorb the prana for a moment.

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Practice early.

Breathing practices need to be done on an empty stomach. Practice early in the morning, after emptying your bladder (and hopefully bowels) and hydrating. Start your day by clearing the space of your inner body for the flow of consciousness. Your practice in the morning will affect your entire day, and you’ll make better, more conscious choices.

Wear loose clothes & sit.

Your body needs to expand, unrestricted, for the breathing practice. Sit upright, on as much height as needed to easily maintain an upright spine. Sit on the edge of a chair if that is more comfortable than a floor cushion.

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Be gentle.

Use your ambition in pranayama (breathing practice) to get you to the cushion and to stay there for the allotted time. You don't need to use ambition to move your breath. Be gentle with yourself and slowly build your practice.

Link day to day.

My first pranayama teacher described the daily pranayama practice as stringing a pearl on a necklace. She said when you skip a day, you break the chain of momentum. Then you start again, stringing bead by bead, day by day.

Breathe for nourishment.

Prana is inherently nourishing and nutritifying. The subtle channels of your body are nourished and strengthened by prana. The prana carries consciousness into cells and enables cellular intelligence to connect into a network. Allow yourself to perceive the prana as inherently nourishing, and relax into its flow.

Intuition Worksheet for Start Your Day Right

To access your intuition, use stick figures, words, or colors.

What I feel like when I start the day right!

What I feel like when I start the day wrong . . .