

WHAT TO EXPECT AT A KUNDALINI YOGA CLASS

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Reaching Me In Me - Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan - 2002

WHAT IS KUNDALINI YOGA?

No matter what we achieve, our successes are hollow unless we fulfill the soul's yearning to bring higher consciousness into our daily lives. **Kundalini** Yoga, as taught by Yogi Bhajan, is much more than a system of physical exercise; *it's a dynamic, powerful tool for expanding awareness.* An integrated and authentic system of exercise, breath control, and meditation that has been practiced in India for millennia, it's safe, comprehensive, and simple. It promotes physical health, stimulates the mind's potential, and touches one's innermost being.

Kundalini yoga is based on kriyas, or specially formulated sets of exercises. This allows you to target specific benefits and work on exactly those aspects of yourself that need work at the current time. Any amount of time spent practicing – whether three minutes or an hour a day – produces significant benefits, and in turn, motivates individuals to dedicate more time to its practice.

BENEFITS

Practicing Kundalini Yoga keeps the body in shape and trains the mind to be strong and flexible in the face of stress and change. It increases oxygen capacity, boosts blood flow, balances the glandular system, strengthens the nervous system, and reduces stress-induced toxins such as adrenaline and cortisol. The effect is a heightened self-awareness and vitality that allows you to harness mental and emotional energy. Individuals feel more in control of themselves, with enhanced peace of mind, concentration, and a deep inner calm and self-confidence. No matter what someone's age or physical capacity is, Kundalini yoga and meditation can have immediate benefits.

TUNING IN

Every Kundalini Yoga session begins with changing the Adi Mantra: "**Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō.**" *By chanting it in proper form and consciousness, the student becomes open to the higher self, the source of all guidance, and accesses the protective link between himself or herself and the divine teacher.* As you chant, vibrate the cranium with the sound to create a mild pressure at the third-eye point, which is located between the eyebrows at the root of the nose.

DEFINITION

Ong is the infinite creative energy experienced in manifestation and activity. It is a variation of the cosmic syllable "OM" which denotes God in His absolute or unmanifested state. God as Creator is called Ong.

Namō has the same root as the Sanskrit word Namaste which means reverent greetings. Namaste is a common greeting in India, accompanied by the palms pressed together at the chest or forehead. It implies bowing down. Together Ong Namō means, "I call on the infinite creative consciousness," and opens you to the universal consciousness that guides all action.

Guru is the embodiment of the wisdom that one is seeking. The Guru is the giver of the technology.

Dev means higher, subtle, or divine. It refers to the spiritual realms. **Namo**, in closing the mantra, reaffirms the humble reverence of the student. Taken together, **Guru Dev Namō** means, **“I call on the divine wisdom,”** *whereby you bow before your higher self to guide you in using the knowledge and energy given by the cosmic self.*

MENTAL FOCUS

To fully appreciate and receive the benefits of each Kundalini practice you will need mental focus. Unless you are directed to do otherwise, focus your concentration on the brow point. With your eyes closed, mentally locate this point by turning your eyes gently upwards and inwards. Remain aware of your breath, your body posture, your movements, and any mantra you may be using, even as you center your awareness at the third eye point.

LINKING THE BREATH WITH A MANTRA

A **mantra** is a sequence of sounds designed to direct the mind by their rhythmic repetition. There are 84 meridian points located on the hard palate of the roof of the mouth. The movement of each part of the tongue stimulates these meridian points. This is translated into instructions that regulate chemical messengers that go to all vital areas of the brain and body. **“Simply by chanting a mantra we are setting vibrations into motion that shall have an effect. It doesn’t actually matter if we understand the meaning of the sounds or not.”** To fully utilize the power of the *mantra*, link the *mantra* with your breath cycle. A common *mantra* is “Sat Nam” (rhymes with “But Mom”). Sat Nam means “Truth is my identity.” Mentally repeat, “Sat” as you inhale, and “Nam” as you exhale. In this way you filter your thoughts so that each thought has a positive resolution. ***Mantra makes it easier to keep up during strenuous exercises and adds depth to the performance of even the simplest ones.***

KUNDALINI KRIYA & PACING YOURSELF

The word **kriya** means action – *an action that leads to a complete manifestation; that lets a seed come to bloom, a thought come into actuality, a desire become a commitment.* A *kriya* in yoga is a specific sequence of postures, breath, and sound. ***When you do a kundalini kriya, the result of its repetition is the access to, and mastery of a particular, predictable, and stable state – a facet of your awareness.*** Begin slowly, keeping a steady rhythm. Increase gradually, being careful not to strain. Usually the more you practice an exercise the faster you can go. Just be sure that the spine has become warm and flexible before attempting rapid movements. It is important to be aware of your body and to be responsible for its well-being.

CONCLUDING AN EXERCISE

Unless otherwise stated, an exercise is concluded by inhaling and holding the breath briefly. While the breath is being held, apply the *mul bandha* or root lock, contracting the muscles around the sphincter, the sex organs, and the navel point. Then exhale and relax. This consolidates the effects of any exercise and circulates the energy to your higher centers. **Do not hold the breath to the point of dizziness.** If you start feeling dizzy or faint, immediately exhale and relax.

THE FINGERS – HAND MUDRAS

A **mudra** is a position of the hands that locks or seals and guides energy flow and reflexes to the brain. The hands are an energy map of our consciousness and health. The yogis mapped out the hand areas and their associated reflexes. Each area of the hand connects to a certain part of the body or brain, representing different emotions and behaviors. ***The hands become a keyboard for input to our mind-body energy system.***