



# VISHOKA MEDITATION®

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## Refining Breath Awareness into Pranic Sensitivity

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### Refining Breath Awareness

- The breath connects the body and the mind.
- Prana is the subtle aspect of breath and the driving force of life.
- Your breath is an expression of the pranic force.
- Breath training matures into effortless breathing, which matures into sensitivity to prana.
- Focus on effortless breathing:
  - When the breath is effortless, awareness of the physical component of breathing recedes.
  - Allow the mind to become still, but to retain the awareness of the ease of breathing.
- Note that part of this self-training is noticing when your mind moves elsewhere, and/or the body tenses, and the breathing pattern changes (is labored); and then gently and patiently releasing tension, re-establishing effortless breathing, and turning the mind back toward the inner awareness.

- Strengthening this state of awareness requires repeated effort to get to that state, and then effortless stabilizing of that state for longer periods of time. Hence, patience! And daily practice to become more and more familiar with that state, and to be able to reach it more easily and to stay there longer.

### **Cultivating Pranic Sensitivity Through Asana**

The intention in asana practice for Vishoka Meditation is to develop sensitivity to prana. The skills that help us develop sensitivity to prana in asana are:

- Having awareness of core alignment through the body via the spinal column
- Using breath-aligned movement to strengthen the mind-body connection
- Resolving misalignments that may be compromising stability, ease, and comfort
- Cultivating effortless breathing
- Dispelling stagnation, inertia, and dullness
- Developing ease and stability; then effortless and inner awareness can develop
- Remembering the two golden rules of asana: effortless and inner absorption (Yoga Sutra 2:47), from which pranic sensitivity arises

### **Practice tips**

- Establish and practice diaphragmatic breathing; return to effortless breathing when challenged by asana.
- Work with the navel center (pranic hub) for supportive strength and suppleness:
  - An activated pranic hub will energize all the systems of the body and the mind.
  - Strength and suppleness of lower back and abdominal muscles is essential for core alignment, proper breathing, and optimal functioning of the abdominal organs.
- Coordinate movement with the breath.

- Cultivate awareness of core energy through the spine, and work with integration and awareness of the spine and core energy in all asanas.
- Use awareness of the breath to refine alignment and develop sensitivity to the force motivating the breath and movement (prana).
- Explore longer holds in postures which are stable and effortless for you and invite inner awareness.

### **Experiencing Pranic Awareness Through Pranayama**

The goal of Vishoka Meditation is the union of mind and breath to turn the mind inward. Vishoka Meditation can be further empowered by the practice of pranayama, especially meditative pranayamas because they focus on the mind/prana interface and pranic awareness.

- Prana animates and links the physical body and mind.
- Traditional pranayama practices include both meditative and vigorous energizing pranayamas.
- The meditative pranayamas are emphasized in Vishoka Meditation:
  - Meditative pranayamas are broadly accessible.
  - They focus on the mind/prana interface and develop pranic awareness.
  - Pranic awareness allows us to master the roaming tendencies of the inhalation and exhalation, and infuse the breath with conscious awareness.
  - Meditative pranayamas strengthen the mind/prana connection and enable intelligent regulation of pranic functions, including physiology, emotions, and thought processes.
- Vigorous pranayamas focus on the breath/prana interface:
  - They energize and purify the pranic pathways (nadis).
  - They require strong, regular, and skillful asana practice.
- Vigorous pranayamas can be done with asana practice, or right before the meditative pranayamas (nadi shodhana and so hum), but need to be paired with meditative pranayamas to facilitate an inward mind for meditation.