

Warming up

You may find it beneficial if your body is 'warmed up' before you begin your practice so try to spend a little time with some of these exercises beforehand. They will also help to focus your attention towards your body.

The breathing techniques, and the pelvis movements are also good to use during your practice if you can, to help you direct and change your body state.

BREATH

Bottom Breath

Good for releasing tension, relaxing

- Exhale all air out of lungs
- Inhale, gently push out anal sphincter, and/or move the belly button outward
- Exhale – let go (without contracting the anus)

Circular Breath

Good for circulating energy around the body, and maintaining a plateau

- Breathe through mouth, jaw relaxed, lips slightly parted – (back of throat open and relaxed to create a tube/channel connecting down to anus)
- Inhale should require a little more effort than exhale, but neither should be forced
- No break or pause between the two – continuous flow
- You can use the hands to help visualise the circle – raising them up towards your face on the in-breath, lowering them down on the out-breath, in a circular motion

(variation can be breathing in through nose and out through mouth – figure of 8 rather than circle)

Fire Breath (1 to 2 mins max)

Good for building energy and waking up body/focussing

- Exhale sharply, contracting belly button to spine
- Inhale gently, without effort – release belly button outward
- Begin with 1 breath every 2 seconds – build up to 1 or 2 breaths per second

Stepped Breath (1 to 2 mins max if you're new to this)

Stimulates and arouses the nervous system

- Take two short, sharp in-breaths – it can help to purse the lips (as if sucking gently on a straw) when you do this
- Let the out-breath fall out naturally, without forcing
- Only do this for as long as it feels comfortable – notice what happens in your body
- Experiment with the depth of the in-breaths

For your practice: The Big Draw

A great technique to use to create a peak

- Upregulate (emphasis on inbreath) for about 20 – 30 seconds
- Take 2 deep in- and out- breaths – fully into belly and full exhale with a sigh
- On the 3rd inbreath hold the breath and clench all the muscles in your body
- Hold this for about 10 seconds – or for as long as it feels comfortable
- Release with a big exhale
- Spend a few minutes lying relaxed, without moving.

BODY

Pelvis rocking

- Lie on your back
- Gently arch your back, tilting your pelvis down towards the floor
- Then gently contract your stomach muscles, pulling your pelvis up towards the ceiling
- Continue to rock gently between the two
- Notice how the movement ripples up the spine - allow it to flow outwards into more of your body
- Build it gradually into a wave that reaches right to your fingertips, and down your legs

Bouncing Pelvis

- On carpet or mat
- Lie on back, arms by sides, palms facing down
- Lift hips off ground and bounce buttocks on floor.
- Begin gently and intensify bouncing as you relax into it

Floating Pelvis

- After bouncing lift hips off ground and float them in figure 8
- Alternate bouncing and floating

Hip Circles

- Stand feet hip distance apart
 - Swing hips to right as far as possible without strain
 - Push pelvis forward
 - Swing hips to left
 - Push buttocks back as far as possible
 - Connect 4 points in a circle
- Repeat a few times then in opposite direction

Figure Eights

- Move hips in figure 8 motion (Back/right/front, then Back/left/front)
- Be sexy, not energetic.

Eye Circles

- Left, right, up, down as far as possible
- Then connect into a circle
- Circle 3 times one way, 3 times the other

Jaw Massage

- Breathe
- Massage jaw, including point where it meets head
- Make sounds – any, as silly as you like
- Holding jaw in hand wiggle it from side to side
- Fingers on lips, cheeks and massage teeth and gums

Head Rolls

- Breathe
- Allow head to fall to right as far as it wants to go (don't force)
- Roll head around in circle, down to chest and around to left shoulder
- Let head fall backwards (gently) and then roll back around to right
- Circle in opposite direction

Busy Belly

- On hands and knees
- Inhale, fill belly with breath, make belly as big as possible (Spine will arch slightly – any tension or pain means you're forcing it too much). Focus on belly big not spine arch.
- Exhale – draw belly up to ribs and spine. Spine will bow slightly but this is not the focus
- Repeat