



Welcome to the Winter 2022 edition of our e-newsletter. www.oriy.org.uk

Dear Members,

I hope you are all keeping well and avoiding the winter bugs.

I was just re-reading some past newsletters (to make sure I don't repeat myself) and noticed in Summer 2019 I had reported on the Pranayama Convention with Navaz – this time I want to look again at the importance of the breath.

Guruji tells us,

'The normal rate of breathing is fifteen times a minute and 21,600 times in every twenty-four hours. However, the number varies according to one's way of life, health and emotional state. Since pranayama lengthens the time taken by each in- and out- breath, thereby slowing down the process of aging, its practice leads to a longer life.' And

'In old age the respiratory function decreases, due to the contraction of the air cells of the lungs, which take in less oxygen. Pranayama will help to normalise their size and make the red corpuscles circulate in all parts of the body, infusing life and vigour throughout. By its practice even old people can delay the aging process.'

(Taken from Light on Pranayama Chapter 10 Hints and Cautions)

So, with these thoughts in mind this newsletter includes some valuable words from Guruji on the importance of pranayama, some interesting research by James Nestor from his best-selling book *Breath*, on the importance of nose breathing which reinforces everything we have been taught by Guruji and a few words from Suza Francina's book, *The New Yoga for People Over 50*. I particularly like Francina's description of a simple breathing practice to calm the mind and reduce stress. (But probably teaching (your) grandmother to suck eggs!)

Also included is information on our next LIVE ORIY workshop in January – be sure to book early to reserve a place.

Finally, I am sorry to say we have had to increase our membership subscription to £20 – we haven't increased the fee since 2017 so we hope this isn't too much of a shock.

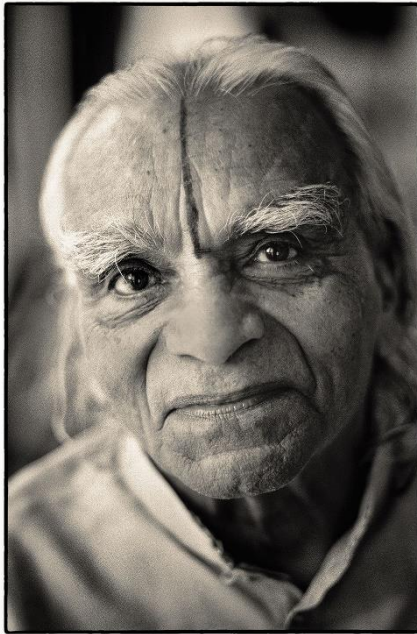
Have a very Happy Christmas and New Year.
Love and best wishes

Mary
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Light on Life - B.K.S. Iyengar

Chapter 3 – VITALITY The Energy Body (Prana) Page 71- 72



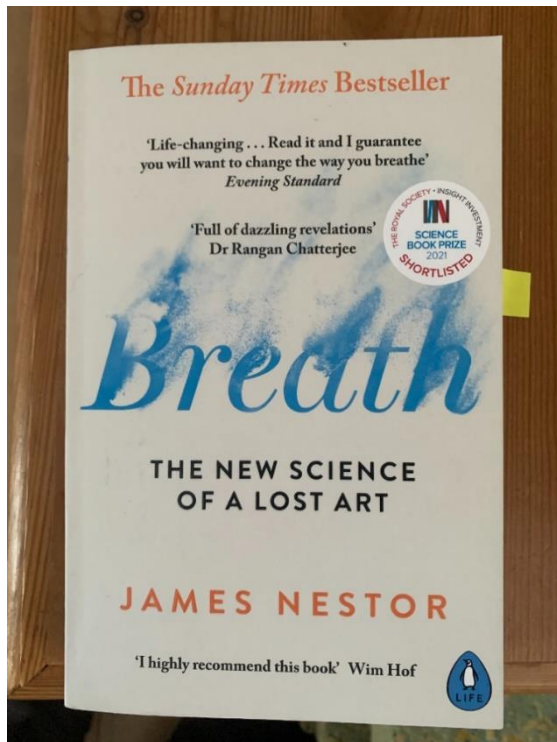
Pranayama is not normal breathing- nor is it just deep breathing. It is the technique of generating cosmic vital energy through the fusion of the antagonistic elements of fire and water. Fire is the quality of mind, and water is the element that corresponds to the physiological body. Water douses fire, and fire evaporates water so they are not easily brought together. Air is the interface whose flow in the lungs provides the dynamic stream that fuses the water and fire and produces an energetic current of prana. This spreads through the nervous system and blood-stream and is distributed around the body, rejuvenating every cell. The earth element in the form of body provides the physical location for the production of energy, and the fifth and most subtle element, space or ether, offers the space required for the energy's distribution. The need for a harmonious and symmetrical

space explains the importance of the spine and its supporting musculature, for the spine is the central column of the nervous system. By lifting and separating the thirty-three articulations of the vertebral column, and by opening the ribs from the spine like a tiger's claws, we deepen and lengthen the breath.

The analogy of the production of energy through hydroelectric power may prove helpful. Stagnant water can create no energy, which means if you are not breathing, you are dead. If you are breathing normally, there is some flow, and you produce just enough energy for the requirements of the moment. But there is no surplus to be invested in other projects. It is only by the techniques of pranayama, which regulate, channel, and (in retention of breath) dam the flow all the better to harness and extract its inherent power, that we produce sufficient energy to vitalize the whole system. We must live fully before we die. We must generate sufficient energy to realize our full potential. The journey to our infinite core of being is arduous. Only pranic energy can take us there.

Watching the flow of the breath also teaches stability of consciousness, which leads to concentration. There is no finer method. The power of concentration allows you to invest your new energy judiciously. In the yogic scheme of things, the highest application of that concentration and power of vision is in meditation. By learning to appreciate breath, we learn to appreciate life itself. The gift of breath is the gift of life. When we receive a gift, we feel gratitude. Through pranayama we learn gratitude for life and gratitude towards the unknown divine source of life.

Review of *Breath* – The New Science of a Lost Art. by James Nestor.



Early in the book Nestor explores how breathing is regarded by medical professionals today. He suggests that during routine check-ups doctors rarely check respiratory rates or the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the bloodstream. How you breathe and the quality of each breath is not on the menu. Pulmonologists work mainly on specific maladies of the lungs – collapse, cancer, emphysema etc.

During the course of his research Nestor discovered that our capacity to breathe has changed through the long processes of human evolution, and the way we breathe has got markedly worse since the dawn of the Industrial Age. No matter what we eat, how much we exercise, how resilient our genes are, how skinny or young or wise we are – none of it will matter unless we are breathing

correctly. The missing pillar in health is breath. Nestor calls this the 'lost art' of breathing because these 'new' discoveries are not new at all they have been around for hundreds and sometimes thousands of years.

The Experiment

Nestor and his co-researcher, Anders Olsson, (a respected Swedish breathing therapist) decided to explore the importance of nasal breathing by blocking their nostrils with silicone plugs for a total of ten days! They did this to see what happens when you breathe only through your mouth.

They found that in just 24 hours, **SNORING increased 1,300 percent, sleep apnea events increased fourfold, and BLOOD PRESSURE rose due to hypertension.** Similarly, exercise undertaken while breathing through the mouth led to the researchers feeling **thoroughly exhausted.** When you consider how much panting is done in sporting and gym activities, then this alone warrants some new approaches. They also found that mouth breathing caused the body to lose more water so they woke in the night feeling parched and dry. If you read the book you will see the horrifying list of other negative effects.

Nose breathing is best

As you may know, many people habitually breathe through their mouth. There are also many who breathe through their mouth when they exercise.

Chapter 3 – Nose, examines nasal breathing in more detail. It quotes a Chinese Taoist text from the eighth century AD which noted that the nose was the “heavenly door” and the breath must be taken in through it. “Never do otherwise,” the text warned, “for breath would be in danger and illness would set in.” And, the 19th century artist and researcher George Catlin found that the Native American tribes were also very strong believers in the importance of nasal breathing. In the 1830s he found that mothers in all the Plains tribes he visited followed the same practices, carefully closing the baby’s lips with their fingers after each feeding.

Mr BKS Iyengar, the founder of **Iyengar yoga**, apparently once quipped: “***The nose is for breathing; the mouth is for chocolates***”.

The Nestor research again proves him right.

The research also confirms what yogis have known for centuries. They incorporated it into the many different types of pranayama practice. For example, the right and left nostril control temperature and blood pressure, as well as activating brain chemicals that alter MOOD, emotions and sleep states.

Breathing through the right nostril, increases circulation, activates the “fight or flight” response, and puts the body into an alert ready state.

Breathing through the left nostril has exactly the opposite effect. It relaxes you, switches on the parasympathetic “rest and digest” response, lowers blood pressure, cools the body, and reduces ANXIETY.

Nestor and Olsson knew in advance of the experiment that the nose is an extraordinary organ. For example, they knew all about how it warms and purifies air so as to guide it into the lungs. They also considered that breathing properly through the nose is the key to health. The book documents the horrifying, rapid decline in health for both researchers during their self-inflicted nasal obstruction.

Benefits of nose breathing

The Nestor book explains that there are numerous health benefits that flow from nasal breathing.

These benefits include increased oxygen intake, reduced snoring, and overcoming breathing problems.

He quotes research, from a study over 70-years. It discovered **the greatest indicator of lifespan was lung capacity**.

There is also a fascinating section documenting the work of Carl Stough, a choir conductor who worked with emphysema patients.

Carl Stough understood what yogis have also understood for centuries.

He found the key to breathing, lung expansion, and the long life that came with it, was the result of **LEARNING THE ART OF EXHALATION**.

Inhalation is the easy part. It is the exhalation that is transformative.

Shallow breathers!

We all breathe every moment of the day. Of course, we don't even think about it.

It turns out most of us are quite shallow breathers and have poor lung capacity. It takes time and conscious effort to become mindful around breathing.

Don't be put off by what is to be learnt, according to the research we all have to start somewhere.



EVENTS

The first ORIY Workshop of 2023 will take place on Sunday 29th January at St Nicolas School, Newbury RG14 7LU (very near to Newbury Railway station)



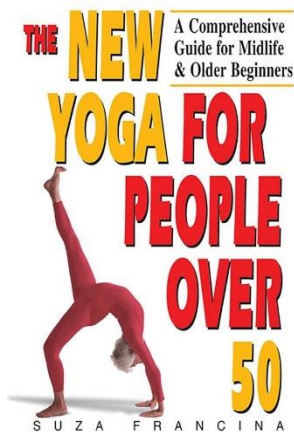
We are delighted to welcome Edgar Stringer and Lydia Holmes two very experienced level 3 Senior Teachers. Both are mentors and assessors for IYUK and continue to train under the guidance of pupils of BKS Iyengar.

Cost:

ORIY Members - Morning Only 10 till 1.00 £25 –

Full Day 10:00am 3:00pm £30

(Non ORIY Members Morning only £35 Full Day £40)



Breathing Freely, Relaxing Deeply Reduces Stress

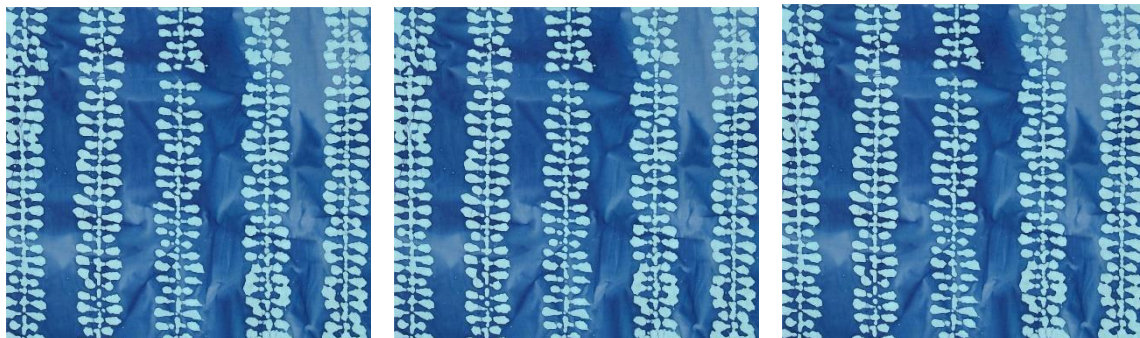
From Chapter 9 – page 197- 8

All body/mind disciplines teach that the breath is a bridge between the body and the mind. Most present-day stress reduction techniques are based on this recognition. Conscious, calm breathing is one of the simplest, yet most elegant and effective ways to combine awareness of our physical body with consciousness of our mental and emotional state. Breathing is also a powerful means of relaxing your sympathetic nervous system, which governs the stress response, and accessing the healing effects of your parasympathetic nervous system, which governs the relaxation response. Being aware of your breath and softly, calmly regulating it in the way that I describe next sends a direct message of relaxation to the mind and the nervous system. The following technique comes from the teachings of B.K.S. Iyengar. It can be practiced either sitting upright or lying down. Even though the four steps look very simple I recommend that you read the instructions all the way through at least twice before you begin. Note that what makes this way of breathing different from our usual, habitual way of breathing is the pause and the end of each exhalation.

Breathing to calm the Mind and Reduce Stress.

1. Inhale slowly, gently, without strain, through your nose.
2. Exhale slowly, gently, without strain through your nose.
3. Pause briefly without straining or attempting to hold your breath.
4. Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3. Continue breathing in this calm, simple way for several minutes.

To review: at the end of every exhalation, pause without straining for a second or two before inhaling again. By pausing briefly after each exhalation, you may notice a spontaneous, natural, unforced continuation of the exhalation. This additional release of the breath completes a true, normal exhalation. In our habitual way of breathing, especially if we are tense, the exhalation is incomplete. We start each exhalation without allowing the previous exhalation to come to its natural conclusion. If you practice this new way of breathing regularly, your breathing will deepen naturally, effortlessly, and you will find yourself calmer and more relaxed, even under what once seemed like stressful circumstances.





Bulgur Falafels – a spicy change after all the rich Christmas fare

Serves 4

Prep time 10- 15 minutes - Cooking time 25 minutes

Ingredients

75 gm bulgur wheat
2 potatoes peeled and chopped
75 gm bread crumbs
1 small bunch of parsley chopped
1 small bunch of mint chopped
4 table spoons of Moroccan paste or harissa
Half tsp ground cumin
Half tsp cayenne pepper
Half tsp smoked paprika
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste.

Method

1. Cook the bulgur wheat according to cooking instructions
2. Boil the potatoes in plenty of salted water for 8 minutes. Drain and then steam dry, then transfer to a large bowl.
3. In a blender or food processor, combine the potatoes, Moroccan spice, bulgur wheat, breadcrumbs, parsley, mint, onion and spices. Pulse to combine - the mixture should be smooth but retain some texture. Season with salt and pepper. Mould the mixture into 16 balls.
4. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan and cook the falafels for 3-4 minutes on each side until golden. Serve immediately in a warm pitta bread with any salad you have around (lettuce, red onion, cucumber, sliced tomatoes) and perhaps a little tzatziki or mayo, or even some chilli sauce .

