

Bhramari

“By this yogic practice one becomes lord of the yogis and the mind is absorbed in bliss”
Hatha Yoga Pradipika

When practising Bhramari (or Bee Breath) a soft humming sound is created on the exhale. This naturally lengthens the exhalation, which supports the nervous system in creating a calm and relaxed state. The gentle sound is also said to stimulate the vagus nerve, activating the relaxation response within the body (more on the vagus nerve later in the course).

Bhramari also encourages pratyahara, the turning inward of the senses. During the practice, be aware of the subtle vibrations within the body – gradually you may discover that you become completely absorbed in the sound and vibration.

- Calming and soothing
- Relieves stress and anxiety
- Draws attention inwards, freeing the mind from external distractions
- Prepares the mind for meditation
- Can help you to ‘find your voice’ and gain confidence in public speaking
- Helps to relieve sinus headaches and head colds
- May reduce blood pressure *
- May reduce the emotional impacts of tinnitus *
- May support the treatment of chronic sinusitis *
- A helpful way of practicing pranayama if counting techniques don’t resonate with you, particularly those where the focus is on extending the count of the exhale. Bhramari naturally lengthens the exhale without the need to count the breath.

“It will cut through the tangle of distracting thoughts” Amy Weintraub

Technique

- Sit in a comfortable position and lengthen through the natural curves of your spine.
- Connect to your natural flow of breath.
- Soften your face and jaw. Release the shoulders away from the ears.
- Create a little space between the upper and lower teeth. Lips gently touch.
- When you feel ready, inhale and on your exhale make a low to medium toned humming sound.
- Practice for 6 – 10 breaths
- Pause and notice and effects, resting in stillness
- You may wish to then practice for 6 – 10 breaths in each of the following stages:
 - With the ears lightly ‘closed’
 - Silent, inner bhramari

Variations:

- You may wish to incorporate a soft ujjayi breath on the inhale.

Continued overleaf...

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- After 6 rounds of bhramari, alter the pitch and practice with a higher or lower sound. How does this feel? Do you feel the vibrations differently? What is the effect?
 - BKS Iyengar also suggests that bhramari can be practiced lying down.

Considerations & Cautions:

- Do not purposefully extend the exhale – allow the breath to naturally unfurl
- If you feel short of breath at any point then return to your natural breath
- Do not practice if you have an ear infection

*** Links to research articles regarding the benefits of bhramari:**

- * [Effects of Bhramari Pranayama on health – a systematic review](#)
- * [The Efficacy of Yogic Breathing Exercise Bhramari Pranayama in Relieving Symptoms of Chronic Rhinosinitus](#)