



TOPIC OF THE MONTH

February 2016

Connected Breathing

During the third series workshop Nancy was emphasizing a breathing pattern without pause between the inhales and exhales — and also without pause between the exhales and inhales. This pattern of breathing I have heard called circular breathing in Amazonian and Tibetan circles — in the states circular breathing refers to a method of breathing while playing wind instruments and is different than this breath.

I have also heard this breath called connected breathing. So I will choose to use connected breathing since a lot of musician like yoga ;) and may find the same term for a different breath confusing . . .

Connected breathing is a powerful tool to build heat for your practice. It also requires your attention making it harder to slip off into the mind thoughts that lead nowhere . . .

Conscious breath work in general will help you:

- ॐ release stress and anxiety
- ॐ Increase energy
- ॐ increase healing
- ॐ Improve your immune system
- ॐ expand consciousness and insight
- ॐ gain clarity and better understanding

And this does not include a whole list of physiological benefits to being conscious of your breathing patterns, for more on that go to: <http://www.befityoga.com/philosophy-lifestyle/topic-of-the-month/> And click on December 2015 topic.

I have been paying more attention in my practice to keep more of a connected breath, and I like it. I do feel more heat building and of course since it requires a little more attention it keeps me better focused on my breath.



I still prefer to take Surya Namaskar A a little slower, connect first with my breath and bandhas, settle in, see where i am today . . . I start Surya Namaskar A with a slower breath and do allow a little pause between the inhales and exhales as I gather my energy.

As I start Surya Namaskar B I pick up the pace . . . I start my connected breathing. Being mindful of making a connected, continuous breath:

- ॐ Take away any gaps between your inhale and your exhale. **When your lungs are almost full begin to exhale**
- ॐ Now take away any gaps between your exhale and your inhale. **When your lungs are almost empty begin your inhale**

You want to make a pattern of constant breathing In and out. In my mind's eye I see my breath rising up my spine with my inhale and circling around and down my spine on the exhale as I ride my breath.

This might make you breathe slightly faster than you are used to, that is ok. Some of us breathe a bit slow in the asthanga practice so it may help. If you find you are already a quick breather, make sure you are taking full breaths in your connected breathing.

Make sure you do not put tension on your breath and make sure you are still taking deep breaths. Also do not let tension sneak in to your body or jaw or lungs as you work with this style breathing. Work without tension — or as I've heard in the yoga circles; attention without tension . . .

Here is a zen thought for you “connected breathing is both doing and non-doing at the same time”.

You can do this style of breathing throughout your day as well — with or without the “ujjayi” sound. Try it while walking to work or driving your car, doing dishes, chopping vegetables . . . you will find yourself energized and ready for wherever you are going.

As always use common sense . . . be careful with breathing exercises if you have cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, glaucoma, retinal detachment, aneurisms, significant recent physical injuries or surgery. Pregnant women should also work with a gentler breath.