

# Yoga Spirit Academy E-zine

Healing body, mind and spirit  
with the wisdom of Yoga, meditation and Ayurveda

January / February 2019

Volume 12, Issue 1

## Pranayama: More than Just Breathing

By Janet W. Parachin, PhD

This is the first part of a new series on pranayama. As they are presented each month, these articles can be found at <http://yogaspirtulsa.com/Newsletters>.

If you've been around yoga classes for a while you've heard the term "pranayama" used to refer to the special breathing techniques we use. Some people think pranayama is just breathing, and sometimes even yoga teachers confuse the issue by calling all breathing pranayama. I hope that by the end of this article you'll see that pranayama is unique and will also be inspired to practice it often!

The word pranayama is made up of two Sanskrit words. The first word is *prana* which refers to our life force energy. Prana is interesting because it is something that exists everywhere—color, scent and sound are prana; thought, movement and speech have prana; all the actions and chemical transformations in the body are controlled by prana. Every organic thing in Nature is shaped by prana, but only humans are conscious enough to be aware of it.

The second part of the word pranayama could be one of two different Sanskrit words: *yama* means control or restraint, while *iyama* means to lengthen. My own definition of pranayama is "the lengthening of the breath as a way of channeling, focusing or controlling the energy that constantly flows between our body and mind."

Every living being breathes and has prana, but only human beings have the consciousness to practice pranayama.

Here is a very simple way to practice pranayama and to get in touch with your own life force energy. This practice is called *Sama Vrtti*, or equal breathing. Begin by sitting, standing or lying down with an elongated spine. (A long, neutral spine allows breath to flow most efficiently) Take the first minute to check in with your body, thoughts and emotions. Do you feel calm or agitated? Is it easy or difficult to focus on this exercise?

The purpose of the check-in is to set a baseline, so please observe without judgment. For the next several minutes (maybe you'd like to set a timer for 5 minutes), observe your breath as it moves in and out through your nose.



Allow the breath to go deep so that your belly expands on the inhalation and relaxes on the exhalation. Do not force the breath or the belly to expand; let this practice unfold naturally. Count how long it takes for the breath to come in on the inhalation and adjust your exhalation to the same count. In other words, if your in-breath takes 4 counts to come in, let the out-breath take 4 counts to go out. Continue until your timer tells you the time is up. Finally, return to your normal breathing and take about a minute to observe how you feel in body, thoughts and emotions. Did you experience a shift? Congratulations! You took the first steps to control your prana and strengthen your life force.

Yoga Spirit Academy  
200-hour and 300-hour yoga teacher training  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
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## Workshops for Continuing Education

Join us for a **YIN YOGA workshop** on Saturday, January 19, 4:00-6:00pm. Learn why Yin yoga is so effective in releasing tight back, hips and spine as well as relieving painful lower back and hips. Feel the benefits immediately by including these poses in your own practice and as you teach others.

Invest a few more hours by attending **INTRODUCING AYURVEDA**, a four-session, six-hour course on Friday evenings, February 1, 8, 15 and 22, 6:30-8:00pm. Learn all the basics of Ayurveda, plus receive a free pulse reading!

All yoga teachers receive a continuing education certificate and students in the YSA 200-hour teacher training receive workshop credit.

<http://yogaspiritulsa.com/Training-Workshops/Workshops>

## 200-Hour Yoga Teacher Training

The start of a new year is a great time to begin yoga teacher training. Our classes meet one weekend a month (Saturday and Sunday 1:00-7:00) for one year. This schedule makes it possible to keep your day job, sleep in your own bed, and spend time with family and friends on the weekend. Your two days with us are like a mini-retreat where we explore yoga postures, breathing, meditation, history, philosophy, lifestyle and ethics. You'll receive lots of information and inspiration to take back into your daily life. For more information, look at our website <http://yogaspiritulsa.com/Training-Workshops/Teacher-Training> or contact the Director for a packet of information.



*How will Yoga change your life?*

## Yoga and Ayurveda Diet and Lifestyle course begins in January

This 45-hour course covers diet and lifestyle choices according to the doshas and the seasons, the six tastes of food, cooking for the doshas, basic herbalism to balance the doshas, and understanding the effect of the environment, times of the day and seasons of one's life on overall health. Take one course as enrichment or as part of the seven courses required to complete the 300-hour Ayurvedic Yoga Teacher certification.

**January 26-27, 2019**

**February 23-24**

**March 30-31**

**April 20 (make-up and review)**

For more information visit our website

<http://yogaspiritulsa.com/Training-Workshops/Advanced-Training>



## CALENDAR

January 12-13 Yoga Teacher training weekend

January 19 Yin Yoga workshop

January 26-27 Yoga and Ayurveda Diet and Lifestyle

February 1, 8, 15, 22 Introducing Ayurveda series

February 2-3 Yoga Teacher training weekend

*2019 training dates are now on the website*

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