

“Pranayama begins with observing the movements of normal breathing and letting them become quiet and soft in such a way that there is no load on the cells of the brain. To accomplish this you have to learn to release the diaphragm.”
Light on Life, Shri B.K.S Iyengar

Begin in Savasana. Watch the natural breath. Feel the out-going breath. Let go and relax.



We use a block beneath the shoulder blades to help prop up the back body and spread the front body. With this support, the chest is passively opened and the lungs are free to expand. The lift under the head should be higher than the chest. Supports under the arms help to minimize any excessive stretch on the shoulders or neck. The block under the buttocks acts as a step ladder so that the release in the lower back and abdominal wall is gradual and progressive.

Placement of the blocks is important. If the block is too high toward the neck, the shoulders will lift up and the chest will fall. The diaphragm should be able to soften and release toward the abdominal wall. Here I am pointing to where the top block should be, beneath the scapulae.



Once the back and chest muscles have adjusted to this shape and can release into the lift, you change the position of the block so that it runs along the spine. Here I am using a sock to better lift the thoracic spine toward the sternum (an eye wrap is perfect).

The head should be higher than the chest and the chest elevated by the block. An optional roll behind the heart helps give a little more lift. The arms release away from the chest, but not so strongly as to create any big stretch across the chest, shoulders or neck. The abdomen softens and releases toward the pelvis. Support the buttocks on a flat block to create a step ladder lift. The legs release to the earth. Soft.



Always begin with the exhalation, soft, quiet, smooth. Then, let the inhalation gently spread the bottom ribs to the side. The abdominal wall should release toward the floor with the in breath as the side ribs gently expand. Between breaths take several natural breaths.

“It is as difficult to explain prana as it is to explain God. Prana is the energy permeating the universe at all levels. It is physical, mental, intellectual, sexual, spiritual and cosmic energy. All vibrating energies are prana. It is the hidden potential energy in all beings. It is energy which creates, protects and destroys. Vigor, power, vitality, life and spirit are all forms of prana.” Light on Pranayama, B.K.S. Iyengar

