

U

jjayi breathing is used to detoxify and tone the body whilst keeping the mind focused. It creates heat and rhythm throughout the practice. The sound of the ocean is created at the back of the throat which helps practitioners to stay present, self-aware, and grounded in the practice, which lends it a meditative quality.

1. Sit in a comfortable position (eg cross-legged, half lotus or full lotus). Tuck your tailbone under, lift your pelvic floor and draw your navel and solar plexus up and back towards your spine (moolabandha).
2. Feel open through your heart and lifted through your chest. Relax your shoulders. Allow your arms to be lengthened resting the back of your hands on your knees. Bring the tips of your thumbs and index fingers together, pointing the middle, ring and little fingers towards the ground.
3. Close your eyes softly and become aware of your breath entering and leaving your nostrils. See if you can follow your breath into and out of your body.
4. Keep inhaling and exhaling through your nose. Try sucking the air in and out to create a hissing sound (or ocean sound) at the back of your throat. Allow each breath to be even and steady.
5. Keep the stomach and pelvic floor engaged. As you inhale through your nose, feel your chest, the side of your ribs and your back expand. As you exhale, feel it contract. It might help to visualize a balloon inflating and deflating.
6. Slowly come back to normal breathing. Open your eyes and have a big sigh to finish the exercise.

Continue to practice this until you feel comfortable. Although it is a controlled breathing exercise, it is important to remain relaxed and just allow the breath to happen.

Once you have the hang of the Ujjayi breath you can then apply it to your Vinyasa Flow practice.

# Breath Of The Sea

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Charlotte Hunt teaches regular classes, workshops and private lessons in Bristol, UK.