



UJJAYI BREATH: WHERE YOUR PRACTICE TELLS THE TRUTH

As we move towards the end of spring, the days become longer, the weather grows warmer, and life begins to speed up. In cities like London, this shift becomes especially noticeable. The streets become busier, social calendars fill up, and without realising it, many of us carry that same pace onto the mat

It is during times like these that the true value of the Ujjayi breath reveals itself.

Ujjayi, often translated as “victorious breath,” is created through a gentle control of inhalation and exhalation through the nose, with a soft constriction at the back of the throat. The resulting sound is soft and rhythmic, like the movement of the ocean.

It is steady, grounding, and continuous, carrying us through each posture and transition.

Unlike passive breathing, Ujjayi has depth and intention. The inhalation and exhalation remain balanced and even, creating a continuous flow of awareness throughout the practice. As the breath moves through the back of the throat, it naturally draws the attention inward, away from external distractions and into the present moment.

Over the years, I have come to see Ujjayi as one of the most honest reflections within the practice.

The breath reveals what is happening beneath the surface. In practice, this becomes clear before anything else does. It may become shorter as frustration appears, heavier when the body begins to struggle, or irregular when the mind becomes distracted. In these moments, simply noticing creates space to soften, reconnect, and return to awareness before tension takes over the practice.

Staying with the breath requires effort, sometimes even more than the asana practice itself.

The sound of the breath itself becomes a source of comfort. Like the sound of waves returning to the shore, it offers something steady to return to whenever the mind drifts away. It anchors the practice and creates stability, even on the most challenging days.

As the breath deepens, it also generates internal heat. This warmth is not about intensity or performance, but about preparing the body to move with greater ease and freedom. Muscles become more receptive, transitions soften, and movement begins to flow with less resistance.

Each inhale creates space. Each exhale grounds and stabilises. Effort becomes balanced with awareness, and control becomes less about forcing the body and more about listening to it.

And there are days when the breath flows effortlessly. Other days it feels restricted, uneven, or distant. Both experiences are part of the journey. What matters is the willingness to keep listening

The lessons of Ujjayi do not remain on the mat. The ability to return to the breath during a challenging posture is the same ability we carry into everyday life. In moments of stress, uncertainty, or emotional turbulence, the breath remains available to us. It invites us to slow down, to observe, and to respond with awareness rather than reaction.

In Ashtanga yoga, the breath is the meeting point between body and mind, effort and awareness, discipline and presence. And when everything else in practice feels uncertain, the breath remains Steady, honest, and always telling the truth.