

PRACTICAL EXERCISES • NUTRITION • MINDFULNESS • LIFESTYLE & WELLNESS

YOGATM MAGAZINE

www.yogamagazine.com

ISSUE 250/ MARCH 2024

REJOICE, RENEW, GROW

LINEAGE IN
**IYENGAR
YOGA**

pranayama
kosha

HEALING POWER
OF **YOGA**
RETREATS

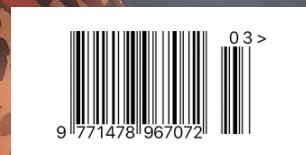
SOUL
EMERGENCE

TRANSFORMATIVE

**KRIYA
JOURNEY**

YOGA FOR:

- ✦ **PREGNANCY**
- ✦ **POSTPARTUM**
- ✦ **MASTECTOMY**



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THE KRIYAS

Yoga's Depth Unveiled

A Journey through Rancho Pescadero's Spiritual Retreat

Words and Photos: Ingrid Yang, M.D., C-IAYT
Location: Rancho Pescadero, Baja California Sur, Mexico
Model: Roberto Reyes





During my first yoga teacher training in the 1990s, we were introduced to the yoga *kriyas* and had the opportunity to explore them briefly. However, given the format of a 200-hour training, we only had limited time to delve into the practices. The fleeting introduction to these *kriyas* hindered my ability to appreciate their transformative potential. Now, over 20 years later, as my students expressed curiosity about these cleansing practices, I decided to embark upon a pilgrimage to better understand these techniques. It was during this journey that I discovered Rancho Pescadero, a nurturing, grounded, and beautiful retreat that provided the ideal environment to immerse oneself in the profound depths of the *kriyas*.

Nestled along the shores of Baja California's picturesque coastline, Rancho Pescadero beckons yoga enthusiasts in search of a transcendent journey. Within its serene environment and breathtaking vistas, this coastal sanctuary offers a profound exploration of yogic *kriyas*. As I immersed myself in the depths of cleansing practices, a world of transformative power unfolded, revealing numerous traditional and alternative approaches to these ancient techniques amidst the tranquil ambiance of Rancho Pescadero. During my stay at this nurturing retreat, I had the privilege of exploring the specific techniques of these yoga *kriyas* in depth. Now, let's embark on a detailed exploration of these practices and uncover the profound possibilities they offer within the sanctuary of Rancho Pescadero.



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What are the Kriyas?

Yoga *kriyas*, also known as yogic cleansing techniques, are practices within the realm of Hatha Yoga that focus on purifying the body and mind. These techniques aim to remove toxins, blockages, and impurities from various systems of the body, allowing for the smooth flow of energy and enhancing overall well-being. *Kriyas* are considered an essential part of yogic practices, preparing the practitioner for deeper spiritual experiences and higher states of consciousness.

Awaken the Fire Within: Kapalabhati as the Sun Rises

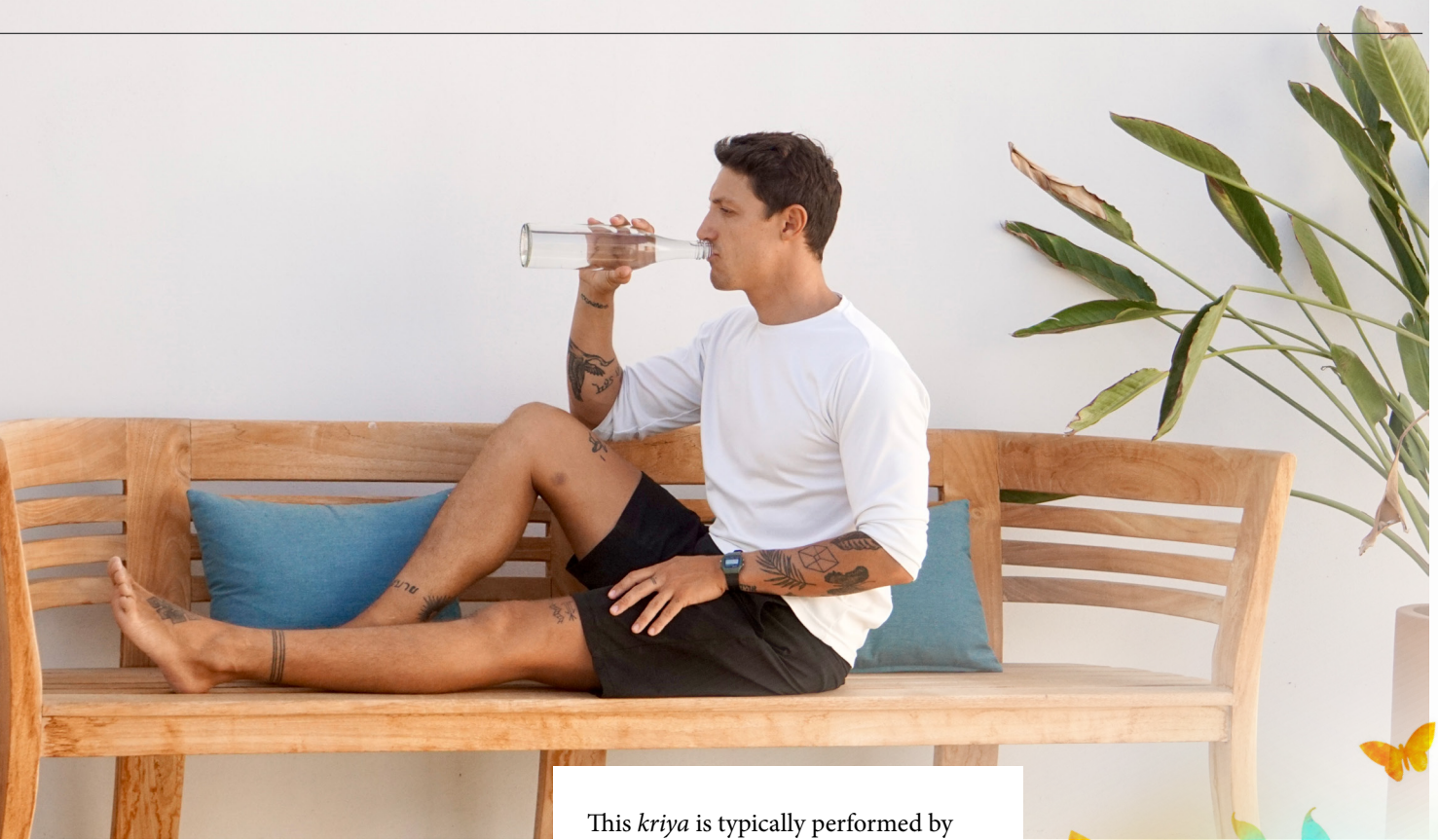
Kapalabhati is a dynamic breathing technique where forceful exhalations are performed through the nostrils while the abdominal muscles are actively engaged. This practice helps to expel stagnant air and toxins from the lungs, invigorates the respiratory system, and increases mental clarity.

Also known as the breath of fire, *kapalabhati* involves rapid, forceful exhalations while actively engaging the abdominal muscles. In the tranquil setting of Rancho Pescadero, the practice of *kapalabhati* takes on a magical quality, especially when performed during the morning hours as the sun rises. As the sun casts its golden glow over the horizon, the vibrant energy of the sun infuses your *kapalabhati* practice, igniting the inner fire within. This dynamic breathwork technique not only cleanses the respiratory system but also invigorates the entire body, awakening your senses and preparing you for a day of self-discovery and inner exploration. Practice three to five rounds of 50 *kapalabhati* breaths every morning to invigorate the spirit.

Harmonising Body and Mind: Shankh Prakshalana in the Peaceful Retreat

The seemingly infinite peaceful retreat areas of Rancho Pescadero offer a serene sanctuary for practising Shankh Prakshalana, a comprehensive digestive cleansing technique. Here, surrounded by tranquil ambiance, you can embark on this rejuvenating *kriya*. *Shankh Prakshalana*, a technique involving the drinking of saltwater to cleanse the entire digestive tract. By drinking saline water, you purify and rejuvenate your digestive system, promoting harmony within your body and mind.





As you engage in *Shankh Prakshalana*, take a moment to connect with the serenity of the retreat. The stillness in the air and the gentle rustling of leaves create an ideal environment for this practice. Feel the natural elements harmonising with your internal processes, guiding you towards a renewed sense of balance and vitality.

This *kriya* is typically performed by drinking two glasses of saline water one after the other, and performing dynamic asana. The saline mixture is typically 2 teaspoon salt per liter, however due to individual differences in salt balance, it is advised to consult with a qualified instructor or healthcare professional to ensure it is suitable for your individual health condition and to receive proper guidance throughout the process.



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Before performing *Shankh Prakshalana*, be sure you prepare and purify the digestive system 3-5 days prior to the saline cleanse. That means eliminating alcohol and animal products such as dairy, eggs and meat, and eating foods from the earth. In Rancho Pescadero's gardens, you can pick your own fruits and vegetables for each meal, and partake in the bounty of produce just minutes after harvesting them yourself. There is truly no cleaner way to purify the digestive system than eating directly from the earth at Rancho.



Reflection and Clarity: Trataka Meditation amidst Tranquil Gardens

The peaceful retreat areas of Rancho Pescadero offer a serene sanctuary for practising *trataka* meditation, a technique that involves focused gazing at a fixed point, often a candle flame or crystal. Here, you can immerse yourself in the stillness and tranquility that surrounds you. As your gaze rests upon the flickering flame, you delve deep into your inner landscape, embracing a state of heightened focus, inner awareness, and profound introspection. The serene environment acts as a catalyst, allowing you to experience moments of clarity and stillness that can guide you in navigating life's challenges with grace and presence.



Sacred Revitalisation: Nauli Kriya's Inner Awakening

Nauli Kriya is a yogic practice that involves isolating and rotating the abdominal muscles. It aims to massage and strengthen the abdominal organs, especially the digestive organs, while also improving the flow of *prana* (vital energy) in the region. *Nauli Kriya* is considered an advanced practice and requires mastery of other yogic techniques before attempting it. Enveloped within the sanctuary of Rancho Pescadero, practising *Nauli Kriya* takes on a heightened significance. As you engage in this profound abdominal exercise, you can tap into the harmonious flow of nature and amplify the transformative effects of the practise. The grounding energy of Rancho Pescadero provides the perfect backdrop to experience a profound connection to your body, mind, and spirit.



To perform *Nauli Kriya*, stand with your feet hip-width apart, slightly bending the knees. With a deep inhalation, you exhale forcefully and then contract and isolate the central abdominal muscles. The contraction creates a rolling or wave-like movement in the abdominal region, where you move the muscles from side to side or in a circular motion. Check out our Instagram for a video of this kriya at IG: @yogamagazineofficial.



The Ocean's Purifying Embrace: Neti Kriya by the Shoreline



"*Neti Kriya*" means "nasal cleansing" in Sanskrit. This practice involves the use of a *neti* pot, which is a small container resembling a teapot, filled with lukewarm saline water. By pouring the saline solution through one nostril and allowing it to flow out through the other, you can effectively flush out mucus, allergens, and impurities, thereby clearing the nasal passages. When practising *Neti Kriya*, it is important to prioritise hygiene by using clean and sterilised equipment. Additionally, ensure the use of filtered or distilled water for the saline solution to avoid nasal irritation caused by impurities.

At Rancho Pescadero, *Neti Kriya* can take on a new dimension when practised in the proximity of the ocean. The rhythmic ebb and flow of the tides become a metaphor for the cleansing process, amplifying the sense of renewal and rejuvenation. And in this extraordinary coastal environment of Baja, the harmonious dance of the waves mirrors the inner flow of purification, igniting a deep sense of inner peace, clarity, and inspiration

Rancho Pescadero offers both a luxurious escape and a profound experience through the practice of yoga. By immersing yourself in the

purifying embrace of the ocean, harnessing the energising power of the rising sun, exploring the serene gardens, and finding solace in the peaceful retreat areas, you can unlock the inspiring potential of these *kriyas*. Allow the essence of Rancho Pescadero to guide you on a remarkable journey of self-discovery, rejuvenation, and a deeper connection to the path of yoga. For more information about your transformative *kriya* journey, visit www.ranhopescadero.com.

Ingrid Yang is an international yoga therapist, meditation teacher, and internal medicine physician. She has been teaching yoga since 1999, founded Blue Point Yoga Center, and is the author of the books *Adaptive Yoga* and the *Zen Mindfulness Workbook*. She leads trainings and retreats all over the world, with a special focus on mindfulness, healing through breathwork, kinesthetic physiology and the mind-body connection. www.ingridyang.com

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