

ROSE WOMB CYCLES

PRACTISING KRIYA DURING WOMB CYCLES

The following is a guide for your reference so that you can take self responsibility and support your rose cycles. Please know that by continuing with a class with me you agree to take self responsibility for your wellbeing. As part of my responsibility to hold space and teach the techniques, I do like to encourage participants to ride through any resistances. If I notice you are not doing so I may check in with you confidentially from time to time to check all is well, but mostly I will assume that you have read this and that you are following your rose cycles and know what to do.

If you have any concerns or questions, email me anytime.
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This is Rose Kriya, and that means that we are practising Himalayan Kriya and Pranayam as a part of the path of the Rose which is also about the feminine and her cycles, and also brings practices and a goddess-honouring way of life such as ceremony, the oracle, healing, journeying, reiki and so forth in the intuitive feminine ways of self listening as well as journeying, and so much more.

When practising the kriya part, we may often do stomach pumps, pulling locks and breath retentions, and we also bring the breath up the spine in the Rose Fountain as part of transcending the flow of apana up towards prana, and bringing prana down to apana.

Apana is the lower regions that governs elimination and downward flow, while prana is the higher regions of intake and upward flow. Reversing (or rather transcending) is a special yogic technique for higher practices for unification and balance, and brings tremendous physical, emotional and mental benefits. It is at times seeming simple, but actually a very advanced yogic practice.

For a long time and still today, many women all over the world did these kriya practices without any adaptation for their cycles. However today more women are becoming aware of the importance of honouring cycles in yogic practices. The following excerpt below has been prepared by Uma Dinsmore-Tuli.

As a summary, if you are menstruating or pregnant you do not want to reverse the flow and pull root locks, so you will choose to instead ignore that instruction and keep the flow so it comes down on inhale and up on exhale (not reversed) and not pull any locks.

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Rose Kriya Fountain Breath is an enormous philosophical topic and very ancient and sacred practise which is very often secret and considered a great pearl to be given. It has many names, for example it is also known as pranic tube, spinal breathing, kriya pranayam. It may seem simple but can get advanced pretty quickly, and has powerful affect on the internal energy system. Many spiritual organisations have been built around this practise, and many books written which is not often out on market place and tucked away as secret knowledge, not to reserve for chosen few but more to keep it for those who are truly ready to find it - because it is very sacred and can bring strong affects. You are after all raising the kundalini fast.

Examples of benefits of kriya fountain breath which brings a reversal of breath include - *increased vitality and prolonged youth, balancing energy, supporting physical release whilst bringing nourishment, bringing strength to the feminine and softness to the masculine, balancing the channels (nadis) within, clearing stagnation and strengthening the body's natural rhythms, rapid clearing of the nadis (and karma), grounding and transcending at the same time so building the bridge of heaven and earth, anchoring higher realms into physical and taking karma up to be cleansed, stabilising of the nervous system, as well as of course spiritual advancement of and raising of kundalini and chakra activations including main petals of pineal, heart, womb plus timeline leaps.*

In summary, the benefits include -

PHYSICAL

- Enhanced Vitality: Reversing the flow can invigorate the body, increasing energy levels and reducing fatigue.
- Improved Digestion: This practice can support digestive health by promoting better elimination and reducing issues like constipation.
- Detoxification: By facilitating the release of physical toxins, it helps cleanse the body, leading to improved health.

EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL

- Stress Reduction: Balancing the energies can alleviate stress and anxiety, promoting a sense of calm and relaxation.
- Mental Clarity: This practice can clear mental fog, enhancing focus and cognitive function.
- Emotional Release: It aids in letting go of negative emotions and thoughts, contributing to emotional well-being.

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ENERGETIC

- Harmonised Energy Flow: Reversing the flows helps clear stagnation, ensuring a smooth and balanced flow of life force throughout the body.
- Strengthened Rhythms: This practice supports the body's natural rhythms, enhancing overall health and vitality.

This is Kriya for the roses and first and foremost we always listen to our bodies, our cycles and our intuition. Every single body is different. Whilst we have respect to follow the clear precise instructions and ensure things are practised properly, we balance this with adapting to our own flow in that moment.

The practices and the sacred space is all about 'hand heart' and 'hand womb' to self listen and to keep on self listening and checking in, and never with any comparison. An advanced spiritual master may not be able to do certain exercises, this is not about being good at something!! Your body will need different things at different times and it is not about making rational sense, this is not competitive, we do not mind impose on the body and nor do we compare.

KRIYA AND PRANAYAM IS WONDERFUL PRACTISE FOR THE SACRED WOMB AT ANY POINT IN HER CYCLE, and Rose Kriya is indeed all about bringing kriya back into being the chalice (womb) practise that it is, connecting the womb of creation to heart and pineal. However in some parts of the yoni shakti womb cycle we go a little slower and gentler and do not do the root locks or reversal kriya rose fountain breath.

MENSTRUATION

Menstruation is one of the times that, whilst I encourage you to join the classes, to be aware it is a time to go slower and more gentle. This is a time we go into the earth and bleed into her soils, and it is a beautiful time of released so when practising you want to be aware that *during menstruation the flow is going downwards in order to release the blood* and you want to support that process and nourish that, so you do not want to reverse the direction.

Despite many yogis teaching women reversal kriyas and locks during this time, it is now today being encouraged that if you are menstruating, that you avoid abdominal pumps, root locks, breath retentions or raising energy up the spine on the inhale (such as kapalbhati, bhasrika)

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Here is what to do instead

I will not be asking if people are pregnant or menstruating and assume that you have read this and are taking self responsibility. So you don't need to tell anyone you are menstruating (unless you want to or have a question).

Generally, you follow practices but simply omit reversal, pumping or locks. Practising the following adaptations will also bring you immense benefits, not to mention also the benefits from the light transmission by just being in the space and also by practising other pranayams and journeying.

ADAPTATIONS

1. If I am directing a reversal breath you can just ignore the instructions at that point and simply just be in the silence and receive the high frequency of the sacred space
2. OR you can do fountain breath but just ignore root lock or reverse direction and instead imagine that the energy is moving in the direction of coming *down the spine on inhale and back up on exhale* (regardless of the others doing the reverse).
3. OR sit with gentle relaxed normal breaths on breathing in with the So and out with the Hum (or any other mantra)
4. OR focus on 3rd eye, heart and womb portals being lit with light and a beautiful rose in each.

You can participate in any calming, gentle, cooling practices, for example -

1. Any other practices such as Nadi Shodhana alternate nostril breathing using both nostrils for balancing the nadis (but avoid solely right nostril as that is yang activating).
2. Slow deep belly breathing is very good
3. humming breath is wonderful at all times
4. ocean (Ujjayi) breath is very good

In this pdf article we are concerned only with the topic of practise of Kriya during the womb cycle. Yet of course, menstruation in the ways of the rose is a wonderful sacred time for womb medicine and you can go very very deep at this time into the journeys and alchemising work. You may work with your blood as medicine by collecting it and giving it to the earth or taking drops as medicine and so forth.

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PREGNANCY

If you may be pregnant you can follow the same instructions given above for menstruation as well as the guide below prepared by Mollie Busby.

Kriya and Pranayam can be very beneficial for you but if you have concerns then you may decide it may be better to come to a Rose Kriya class at another time and for now focus on the nourishment and enjoyment of a specialised pregnancy yoga practise or other more gentle rose practises (such as womb ceremony, journeying, rose reiki) at this most sacred time for you and your baby. Please see my huge book Sacred Birth Power Mantras (previously known as Manifest Sacred Birth) for sacred birth practices and inspirations.

- **#1 Rule of Thumb:** If you're unsure, avoid anything that doesn't create MORE space for baby. And modify modify modify!
- **#2 Rule of Thumb:** Every single pregnant yogi is different! What works for one mama isn't what works for another — so listen to your body, more than you ever have before.
- **Never** do navel pumping (breath of fire) — ever. Stick with 4-part breath or Nadi Shodhana, whichever you like more.
- **Never** hold your breath, either on your own or if I'm asking you to hold your breath.
- Avoid mulabandha / root lock — although your doc can prob give you more targeted advice on your pelvic floor strengthening etc.
- Avoid laying on your belly (if at all)
- Rolling onto your right side for savasana or using bolsters to prop up (I show this modification in the video below)
- You can also avoid inversions all together (3rd tri. is especially important to keep baby pointed in the right direction)
- Twists will become more and more challenging, and you'll want to ease up on those as they don't create "more space"
- Take a wider stance, all the time.
- If you ever feel dizzy, keep your eyes open. Biggest risk as time goes on is balance, as your belly grows. Support yourself with a wall nearby and use as needed!
- Last thing I'll say is that your body will become more and more flexible as the pregnancy progresses. Hip stretches can feel SO GOOD, BUT... it is possible to stretch too far — as you'll be able to do more than you used to! Proceed with caution, and reverence.
- Please please reach out with any questions!

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE A WOMB-FRIENDLY YOGA MANIFESTO

EXCERPT FROM YONI SHAKTI 2020

FOUNDATION

Above and beyond all else, to practise womb-friendly yoga is to support and encourage women in their experience of appropriate yoga practice.

To that end, it is crucial not to support financially, or in any other manner, any organisation or individual known to exploit or manipulate women under the guise of teaching yoga.

PART 1/THE NEED FOR WOMB-FRIENDLINESS IN THE YOGA WORLD

- ◇ Most of the people on this planet who practise and teach yoga are women.
- ◇ Most of these women have wombs.
- ◇ And many of these women have little clear understanding about the effects of yoga practice upon their wombs.
- ◇ This is because yoga was originally developed by men for men's bodies, and has been, until only very recently, transmitted through exclusively male lineages.
- ◇ Traditional forms of teaching yoga are thus likely to have zero womb awareness, so there is much ignorance and confusion in the yoga world about what happens to our wombs when we practise yoga.





- ◇ The aim of the Womb-friendly yoga manifesto is to ensure that every woman who practises and teaches yoga is fully informed about the key techniques to avoid at certain times, so that she may fully respect and honour the health of her womb throughout her life.
- ◇ When a woman has correct and complete information then she has the power to make appropriate yoga choices for herself.
- ◇ The information provided overleaf sets out the aims and effects of certain yoga techniques and outlines the effects of these practices on the womb.
- ◇ Why bother?
- ◇ The healthful energies of a woman's womb are key to her lifelong wellbeing and vitality.
- ◇ In the yogic anatomy of the energy body, the womb is the seat of creativity, fertility and capacity to nurture and grow new life, new ideas—to manifest.
- ◇ It is literally the cosmic gateway for Ādakti (power) within.
- ◇ Yoga is all about refining awareness, of body, mind, breath, emotions and energies: it is about 'union' or re-connection with the source of all life.
- ◇ To pay no attention to the changing needs of womb cycles is to neglect the very place within that is the source of vitality and well being.
- ◇ Respect for womb cycles is the foundation of a refined and sensitive yoga practice for women.

I encourage you to make the inner harmony and health of your womb your first priority. I encourage you to practise womb-friendly yoga!

Uma Dinsmore-Tuli / www.yonishaktithemovement.com



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WOMB-FRIENDLY YOGA MANIFESTO PART 2 / THE INFORMATION

'CAUTION PLEASE—WOMBS PRESENT'

The following practices need to be handled with caution for female yoga practitioners at many times in their lives

INVERSIONS

One of the key purposes of inversions in *haṭha* yoga is to reverse the flow of *apāna*. Reversed *apāna* does not effectively release menstrual flow, so practising inversions during bleeding can lengthen the length of time that you bleed. Practising inversions during pregnancy has an unquantifiable effect on the blood flow to the womb. Since rectus abdominal muscles in pregnancy are necessarily stretched, they are unable to contract to provide the usual source of lower back support during inversions. Postnatal women rarely have the necessary abdominals strength to provide adequate lower back support for accurate practice of inversions

BANDHAS

The purpose of *bandhas* (locks) in yoga is to alter and contain the flow of energies in the body. *Mūlabandha* (root lock) when practised in the classical fashion with a lift on exhalation, is intended to reverse *apāna*, and this is the energy responsible for the release of menstrual blood flow and also the flow of blood during healing after birth. (There are alternative breath patterns which can be used to support this flow). Practising a strong or continuous *mūlabandha* during pregnancy can create a thickening of the pelvic muscles that may obstruct the passage of the baby in second stage labour.

Uḍḍīyāna bandha (abdominal lift) brings a powerful physical uplift to all the abdominal and pelvic organs, with the intention of reversing the flow of *apāna* and with the same effects on the release of blood from the womb as described above. This *bandha*, like *Jālandhara bandha* (chin lock) works synergistically with the pelvic muscles so that when *Uḍḍīyāna* and *Jālandhara* are practised correctly they tend to involve a simultaneous *mūlabandha*, which will lift the vulva and vagina and reverse the flow of *apāna* within.

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Mahābandha is a combination of all three previous locks practised at once or in close connection to each other. The effects of all three locks when practised together are more intense than when they are practised singly.

PUMPING BREATHS (KAPALBHATI, BHASTRIKA, 'BREATH OF FIRE')

All these breaths use rhythmic abdominal and pelvic muscle contractions to facilitate forced exhalations (*kapālabhāti*) or forced inhalations and exhalations (*bhastrika*). They often activate rhythmic lifting and lowering of the pelvic muscles and are frequently followed in yoga practice by application of the *bandhas* described above to maintain a longer pause after exhalation (*bahir kumbhaka*). The accurate practice of these breaths both builds upon and requires abdominal strength, and so it can be impossible to practise them correctly during pregnancy. The action of these breaths directly and rhythmically compresses, lifts and releases the womb. This has an unquantifiable effect on the baby inside the womb, and upon the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in the blood circulated to the placenta and the baby. It also has the effect of reversing *apāna*, so the same comments about menstrual flow made in relation to the *bandhas* apply to these breaths.

HOT AND/OR FAST YOGA

The practice of yoga *āsana* sequences which build heat, or which are done in a greatly heated environment are intended to promote greater flexibility and range of motion in the joints during *āsana* practice. This can be problematic pre-menstrually, during pregnancy or postnatally, especially when lactating, when hormonal changes promote softness in ligaments. Pregnant women tend to be several degrees hotter than usual anyway, and their resting heart rate is much higher than normal, so speed and heat are not particularly nurturing or comfortable at this time. Some perimenopausal women find hot yoga practice helpful in 'burning off' excessive heat, and others find it profoundly enervating and depleting. For women who are seeking to conceive but experiencing difficulties, then intense heat and speed in *āsana* may have a 'drying effect', depleting their vital energies and compromising fertility. Hot fast yoga during lactation can impact adversely on breast milk production and postnatal recovery.



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YOGA AND WOMB LIFE: SPECIAL TIMES

At these special times the practices described above can be especially inappropriate.

1 When menstruating

During menstruation the womb is under the influence of a special *prāṇa* (or energy flow) called *apāna* that, amongst other things, controls the downward release of menstrual blood. The practice of vigorous pumping breaths and *bandhas* which reverse *apāna* can lengthen the time it takes to release the blood. Menstruation is a time when *prāṇa* naturally gravitates to the uterus to effect the shedding and renewal of the womb lining, so often before and during menstruation are times when there is simply less available *prāṇa* to put into a more externalised yoga practice such as *āsana*.

2 When your menstrual cycle is very erratic, or absent, and you are seeking to re-establish a more regular rhythm

At these times it can be wise to avoid the fast and hot yoga, and to focus the energies towards nourishing the body. This will encourage the menstrual cycle to return or to become more regular.

3 When using an IUD (intra-uterine device)

The correct positioning of an intra-uterine device is not only essential for its effective functioning, but also for comfort. Pumping breaths and *Uḍḍīyāna bandha* can sometimes dislodge IUDs from their correct position, causing pain, bleeding or losing 'the string'.

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4 When seeking to conceive, or during early pregnancy

A woman who is seeking to conceive requires all of her energies to be available to nourish her womb and maintain her health. Very hot and fast yoga practices can compromise the rhythms of the cycle and use up the *prāṇas* needed for conception. Strong practice of *Uḍḍīyāna bandha* can also be disruptive of these energies.

At the time of conception and during the first three months of pregnancy, all of a woman's *prāṇas* are mobilised in the astonishing job of creating new life. It is a delicate time. Great powers are at work within the womb, and so very little *prāṇa* is available for anything else.

5 During pregnancy (after 14 weeks)

As the pregnancy becomes securely established, many physiological adaptations are made by the mother's body to accommodate the growing baby. They effect every system of the body, and most significantly in terms of yoga practice, the cardiovascular system and the musculo-skeletal system. This means that specially modified yoga practices are best, either in yoga for pregnancy classes, or with a skilled and experienced teacher who has respect for the massive changes that occur in the mother's body, breath, mind and heart during pregnancy in preparation for birth and motherhood.



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6 During the postnatal period

However her baby/ies arrived, a woman who has just given birth is in a vulnerable state, physically, emotionally and physiologically. Her joints may be unstable, her abdominal and pelvic muscles very weak, her emotional state very sensitive and her vitality low. Sleep deprivation and the displacement and malfunction of pelvic organs are also widespread experiences at this time. Yoga practice during this period can bring many healing benefits, but it needs to be handled very carefully by knowledgeable teachers who are aware that standard approaches to *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, including most of the practices on the 'Caution please—wombs present' list, can often do more harm than good. The same sensitive awareness should also be held during periods following miscarriage or stillbirth.

7 During lactation

In relation to yoga practice, it is important to know that hormones which control milk production and letdown can make ligaments very lax. Fast and heating practices can adversely effect milk production.

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8 Perimenopause

In this time of uncertainty when menstrual cycles may be very erratic, very heavy, or sometimes continuous, yoga practice needs to be responsive to changing, sometimes rapidly changing, needs. Although some of the practices on the 'Caution please—wombs present' list, for example inversions and some pumping breaths, can certainly be beneficial outside of bleeding times, it is important to understand that responses to menopause are highly individualised. For example fast and heating practices may be superbly helpful for some women but deeply depleting for others.

9 Post-menopause

Yoga *āsana* (done slowly and steadily) is of proven benefit in the prevention and management of osteoporosis, and many of the pumping breaths and *bandhas* are of value in optimising vitality. Practice of inversions and fast or hot yoga needs to be cautiously evaluated according to the capacity of the student and her previous experience and encounters with the preceding 'special times' (in particular her experiences with pregnancy/ies, the quality of her postnatal recovery/ies and the nature of her menopause) which all influence the choice of appropriate yoga after menopause.



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AT-A-GLANCE TABLE FOR WOMB-FRIENDLY YOGA PRACTICE (For more subtlety and discussion see Part Three of Yoni Shakti)

Times of a woman's life / times in the menstrual cycle	Types of yoga practice (Key: ✓ = ok; X = avoid; ! = with care; ? with extreme caution)					
	<i>Pumping breaths</i>	<i>Mūlabandha</i>	<i>Uḍḍīyāna bandha</i>	<i>Jālandhara bandha</i>	Inversions	Hot or fast <i>āsana</i>
During menstruation	X	X only menstrual variation	X	X	X	X
When menstrual cycle erratic / absent and you are seeking to restore balance	X	✓	?	?	!	X
When you are seeking to conceive (including during IVF)	X	!	X	!	X	X
During first trimester of pregnancy	X	!	X	!	X	X
During second trimester of pregnancy	X	!	X	!	?	X
During third trimester of pregnancy	X	!	X	X	X	X
During immediate postnatal recovery period (first twelve weeks)	X	?	X	X	X	X
During extended postnatal recovery period (up to 2 years)	!	!	!	!	!	?
During lactation	!	!	?	!	!	?
With an IUD in place	X	!	X	!	!	!
Following miscarriage	X	!	X	!	X	X
With prolapsed pelvic organs	?	!	!	!	✓	!
During perimenopause	!	!	!	!	!	?
Post menopause, Age, desire and agility permitting!	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

