

SOHUM MANTRA - different way to practice

Five ways to practice:

1. **Diaphragm:** Place your *attention* in the area of the diaphragm, in a palm-sized space, just below the breast bone. Allow the inhalation to flow in unison with the sound *Sooooo...* of the Soham mantra. Allow the exhalation to flow in unison with the sound *Hummm...* of the So Hum mantra. Observe the feel of the motion from the inside, and allow there to be *no pauses* between breaths. Inhalation naturally transitions into exhalation, and exhalation naturally transitions into inhalation. The breath will naturally become smooth and quiet. The sound of the Sohum mantra will gently regulate the speed of the breath.

2. **Spine:** With inhalation, allow your inner *attention* to move upwards with *Sooooo...*, from the base of the spine to the top of the head. With exhalation, allow your inner attention to move down with *Hummm...*, from the top of the head to the base of the spine. You might also look for a thin, milky white stream flowing there with the breath, though that is not necessary if you do not see such an image. Once again, you gently transition between breaths, with no pause between the breaths.

3. **Chakras:** Similar to the breath along the spine, allow your *attention* to flow with So Hum mantra between two chakras, or energy centres that may be needing special attention or balancing. For example, inhale from the navel centre to the heart centre, and exhale from the heart to the navel; or inhale from the heart centre to the eyebrow centre, and exhale from the from the eyebrow centre to the heart. Whichever two chakras are used, the inhalation is upwards, and the exhalation is downwards.

4. **Nostrils:** Place your *attention* at the bridge of the nostrils, feeling the touch of the air moving in and out of your nostrils. Coordinate the inhalation with the sound *Sooooo...* of the So Hum mantra. Coordinate the exhalation with the sound *Hummm...* of the Soham mantra. If one nostril seems to be flowing less freely, it is good to place the attention on that nostril. When both nostrils flow freely, there is a joy that comes, and the mind wants only to do meditation. It is called *sandhya*, the wedding of the sun and the moon (*ha* and *tha* of *hatha*), of *ida* and *pingala*, the left and right energies of the subtle body. This allows energy to flow in the central channel *sushumna*.

All three methods above: Sequentially do each of the three practices above with So Hum mantra, starting with breath awareness at the diaphragm, followed by the breath along the spine, and then breath awareness at the bridge of the nostrils. Divide the time approximately evenly between the three, or however feels comfortable and natural. Remember, the difference between the So Hum mantra methods is the placement of your *attention*, while you continue to breathe smoothly, quietly, and with no pauses between breaths.