

Nadi Shodhanam

The pranayama practice called Nadi Shodhanam, or alternate nostril breathing, is a channel cleansing exercise that unblocks and balances the flow of vital energy. There are a number of patterns for alternating the breath in the nostrils. In the one below, the flow is alternated with each full breath, and so it is easy to remember and monitor.

The Technique:

- Sit with your head, neck and trunk erect so that your spine is balanced and steady, and you can breathe freely. Close your eyes and focus on the breath as it flows in and out of the nose.
- Breathe diaphragmatically. Each inhalation and exhalation is smooth, slow and relaxed.



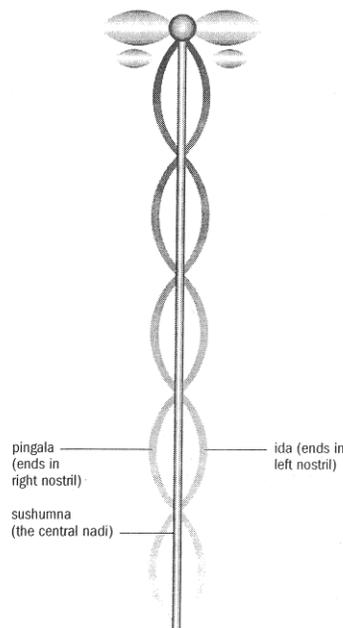
- Form the hand mudra, in which the index and middle fingers of the hand are curled to touch the base of the thumb, opening a space between the thumb and the ring finger. The thumb is used to close one nostril and the ring finger is used to close the other side.

- To begin, close one nostril, exhale completely, and then inhale through the open nostril.
- Now alternate sides by closing the other nostril and taking a complete inhale and exhale on the other side.
- Continue alternating between the nostrils until you have completed three breaths on each side, for a total of six breaths.
- Lower your hand and breathe gently and smoothly through both nostrils.
- Complete two more rounds. Start the second round on the opposite side.
- When completed, breathe through both nostrils.

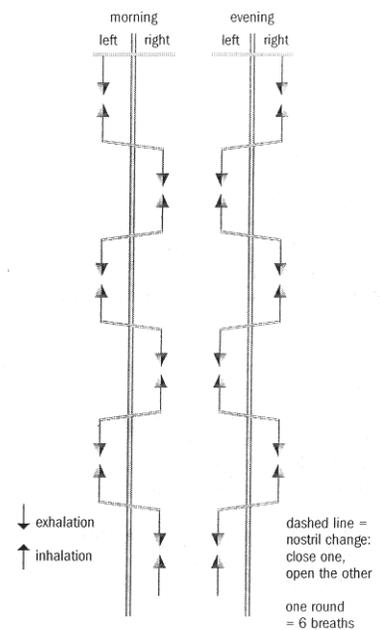
Notice the dominate nostril. Simply attend to the flow of the breath. Next, focus your attention on the passive nostril for a few breaths.

SESSION FOUR (CONTINUED)

Nadis along the Spine



Nadi Shodhanam Breathing Patterns



Hints and Cautions:

Nadi Shodhanam should be done twice a day. As part of your yoga practice, it is performed following postures and relaxation, and before meditation. Do not practice channel purification if you are tired, have a headache, during periods of fever, or if you have a seizure disorder.