

Breathwork Meditation: Alternate Nostril Breathing - Nadi Shodhana

The breathwork technique called Nadi Shodhana, or “alternate nostril breathing”, cultivates a state of deep inner balance and contentment. This profound practice is a powerful tool to reduce stress and anxiety. In the physical body, this breath practice supports an optimal immune system as well as creates clarity in the respiratory system. Nadi Shodhana supports the mind and body to come into stillness. For this reason, it is often practiced in preparation for meditation or deep relaxation.

In the ancient language of Sanskrit, Nadi Shodhana translates to mean “subtle energy purifying breathing technique.” The practice balances the flow of vital energy (“prana”) through the subtle energy channels within the body (“nadis”). The two main nadis of our subtle anatomy are the Ida (the right side of the brain/the moon) and the Pingali (the left side of the brain/the sun). By bringing balance to these two main energetic channels ~ we foster balance in the right/left hemispheres of the brain, as well as in the more energetic aspects of our being ~ the masculine/the feminine, the logical/the intuitive, and the solar/the lunar.

Alternate Nostril Breathing is traditionally practiced in the morning on an empty stomach, but can be practiced any time it is needed. Be prepared to be comfortably seated, either on the floor or in a chair with your feet flat on the floor. If you have experienced any recent sinus surgery, the breath technique can be practiced hands-free.

Self-guided practice

* ARRIVE

- ❖ Come to your Meditation Station: sit on cushion or chair; recline; incorporate any props or cushions; or any other posture that best serves you in meditating.
- ❖ Sustain your position while meditating. During meditation, adjust position as needed to prevent stiffness or tension. Make any adjustments slowly, gently, mindfully.

* BREATHE

- ❖ Place attention on breath.
- ❖ Breathe freely in a natural flow, unforced, in an organic cadence of inhale, exhale.

* PRACTICE THE BREATHWORK TECHNIQUE FOR MEDITATION

- ❖ Alternate nostril (nadi shodhana) as instructed in class

* EMERGE

- ❖ To shift from the Breathwork Meditation, release any controlled breath pattern to allow recalibration of natural breath pattern. Open eyes to a diffuse gaze.
- ❖ Gently move or stretch, and allow for a yawn, sigh, or involuntary deep breath.
- ❖ Observe and acknowledge any effects of your meditation. Attune to any sense of being grounded, centered, or calm... any experience that landing in meditation holds for you, bring it with you in your state of mind, body, and energy.