

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Pranayama as the Intervention for Managing Self and Career
Lecture - 79
Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

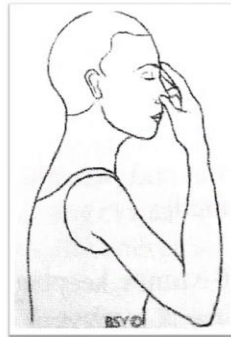
Let us look at the classical pranayama and first and foremost is Nadi Shodhan Pranayama. The word nadi means energy channel and shodhan means to cleanse or to purify. Therefore, nadi shodhan is the practice whereby pranic channels are purified. It is practiced by alternating the inhalation and exhalation between the left and right nostrils. And in this way influencing the ida and pingala nadis.

You might remember ida nadi, pingala nadi left and right nadis in our energy structure, these are also connected to the two brain hemispheres. So, Dattatreya's Yoga Sutra recommends that at the beginning it is practiced 4 times a day for 20 counts with the retention to the best of one's ability.

This should be performed 4 times a day and this is also one pranayam which can be performed just after a half hour of meals, no other pranayama can be performed before at least 2 hours recommended time is 3 hours after a full meal.

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Hand Position: Nasagra/Nasikagra Mudra (Nosetip Postion)



Technique:

1. Raise the hand in front of the face.
2. Place the tips of the index and middle fingers gently on the eyebrow center..
3. Both fingers should be relaxed.
4. Hold the thumb just above the right nostril and ring finger just above the left.
5. These two fingers control the flow of breath in the nostrils by alternately pressing one nostril, blocking the flow of breath, then releasing and pressing the other

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Let us come to the technique, raise the hand in front of the face, place the tip of the index and middle finger gently on the eyebrow center. Both fingers should be relaxed, hold the thumb just above the right nostril and ring finger just above the left. These two fingers control the flow of breath in the nostrils by alternately pressing one nostril, blocking the flow of breath and then releasing and pressing the other nostril.

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Hand position: Nasagra/Nasikagra mudra (nosetip postion) cont..



6. The little finger is placed beside the ring finger.
7. When practicing for long periods, the right elbow may be supported in the palm of the left hand.
8. Care is needed to keep the head, neck and back straight in order to prevent chest restriction.

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Little finger is placed beside the ring finger. When practicing for the long period the right elbow can be supported in the palm of the left hand. Care must be needed to keep the head neck and backbone erect and in the straight in order to prevent the chest restriction.

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Technique: With Alternate Nostril Breathing



STAGE 1

1. Begin with equal inhalation and exhalation, using the ratio 1:1.
2. Close with the right nostril with the thumb and inhale through left nostril.
3. At the same time count mentally, "1, Om; 2, Om; 3, Om", until the inhalation ends comfortably.
4. Close the left nostril with the ring finger and release the pressure of the thumb on the right nostril.
5. While exhaling through the right nostril, simultaneously count, "1, Om; 2, Om; 3, Om".

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Stage 1 of alternate nostril breathing is about begin the equal inhalation and exhalation using the ratio 1 is to 1. As mentioned in the previous slide in the alternate nostril breathing the first thing is exhale fully and inhale from the left nostril exhale from the right nostril. Exhale and inhale in the stage 1 should be of the same proportion.

Close with the right nostril with the thumb and inhale through the left nostril that is the first step. At the same time count mentally 1, 2, 3 until inhalation ends comfortably. Close the left nostril with the ring finger and release the pressure of the thumb on the right nostril. Again, while exhaling count 1, 2, 3 simultaneously.

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Technique: With Alternate Nostril Breathing cont..



Practice Note

1. After one week, if there is no difficulty, increase the length of inhalation/exhalation by one count.
2. Continue to increase the count in this way until the count of 10:10 is reached.
3. Do not force the breath in any way.
4. Be careful not to speed up the counting during exhalation to compensate for shortage of breath.
5. Reduce the count at the slightest sign of discomfort.

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And when you feel comfortably exhale. Few practice notes. After one week, if there is no difficulty, we can increase the length of inhalation and exhalation by one count or very few counts. Continue to increase the count in this way until count of 10 is to 10 is reached.

Do not force the breath in any way that is a basic guideline for all the pranayama practices. Be careful not to speed up the counting during exhalation to compensate for the shortage of breath. Reduce the count at the slightest sign of discomfort.

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Technique: with Alternate Nostril Breathing cont..



Stage 2

1. After perfecting the above , the 1:1 ratio may be changed to 1:2.
2. Initially, halve the length of the inhalation. Inhale for a count of 5 and exhale for count of 10.
3. Repeat on the other side.
5. This is one round, practice 5- 10 rounds.

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Then comes stage 2 after practicing few weeks. After perfecting the first 1 to 1 ratio and then 10 is to 10 ratio we can change is to 1 is to 2. That means, initially half the length of inhalation inhale for the count of 5 and exhale for the count of 10, then we can repeat on the other side. This is one round; we can practice 5 to 10 round like this in the stage 1.

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Technique: With Alternate Nostril Breathing Cont..



Practice Note

1. During the ensuing practice, continue extending the breadth by adding one count to the inhalation and two to the exhalation, up to the count of 10:20.

Contraindication

1. Stage 2 of technique 2 begin the process of introversion, which is not recommended for depressed or withdrawn person.
2. The extension of stage 2, involving longer counts, is not recommended for people with heart problems.

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Again, if you practice notes: during the ensuing practice continue extending the breath by adding one count to the inhalation and two to the exhalation up to the count of 10 is to 20, with one contradiction. That stage 2 of the technique 2 begin the process of introversion. So, we must keep this in mind that it is not recommended for depressed and withdrawn persons.

So, please keep it in mind in stage 2 is not meant for people with the depressed with the depression related symptoms. Extension of stage 2 actually involves longer count. So, it is recommend, it is not recommended for the people with the heart problems as well.


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Benefits of Nadi Shodhana



1. Technique 2 gives more pronounced balancing of the breath and the brain hemispheres.
2. It is calming, relieves anxiety, improves concentration and stimulates ajna chakra.
3. The ratio 1:1 in stage 1 establishes a calming rhythm for the brain and heart, assisting people with cardiovascular and nervous disorders specifically, with cardiovascular and nervous disorders specifically, and stress-related conditions generally.
4. As the count is extended, the breath slows down.

Image source:
<https://www.aarogyava.com/post/2017/11/26/nadi-shodhana-pranayama-alternate-nostril-breathing>

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Benefits of nadi shodhan pranayama are immense and these are very well researched there are hundreds of research papers about the impact, about the positive impacts of nadi shodhan pranayama. Technique 2 certainly gives more pronounced balancing of breath and the brain hemisphere; it is found in many studies.

As such even the simpler the stage 1 nadi shodhan pranayama has a calming effect, it relieves anxiety, it improves concentration and it stimulates ajna chakra our ability to make decision. The ratio of 1 is to 1 in stage one establishes a calming rhythm for brain and heart.

And when brain and heart are on the common rhythm it is very good for the cardiovascular system as well as nervous system. So, people having problems will be benefited, people not having

problem or peoples having problems not yet surfaced at the physiological level will also be benefited. And it is particularly beneficial in the stress related conditions.

Because it has immediate impact and no negative side effect. As the count extends breathe slows down in general and in this way, it helps in keeping the balance of sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Respiration also becomes more efficient with the nadi shodhan pranayam.

Because air flow is smoother and less turbulent in the whole respiratory system. The ratio helps people with the respiratory problems such as asthma, emphysema and bronchitis the ratio 1 is to 1, 1 is to 2 in stage 2 gives very profound relaxation. The heartbeat and pulse rate they slow down with the alternate nostril breathing and blood pressure also drops.