

13 Benefits of Alternate Nostril Breathing:

1: Revitalizes you:

A few rounds of alternate nostril breathing is a quick pick me up if you are feeling flat, tired or even stressed.

2: Improves brain function:

Alternate nostril breathing brings equal amounts of oxygen to both sides of the brain for improved brain function. Five minutes of alternate nostril breathing before an exam or interview is a great way to access your whole brain for improved performance.

3: Cleanses your lungs:

A daily five minute practice morning and night of alternate nostril breathing is a great way to remove stale air and impurities from the bottom of your lungs.

4: Calms an agitated mind:

The ancient yogis believed that if you can regulate your breath, then you can control your mind.

5: Merges the left “thinking” brain and right “feeling” brain:

Alternate nostril breathing optimizes both sides of your brain so you can access your whole brain, and all the benefits that go with it.

The flip side of course is, single nostril breathing can be used to activate just the left “thinking” or just the right “feeling” side of your brain for specific situations.

6: Encourage a calmer emotional state:

In time of emotional distress and upset, a few rounds of mindful nostril breathing will soften the intensity of over reactive emotional states. The longer you practice, the more stable your thinking, and the calmer your emotions will become.

7: Improve sleep:

If you can't sleep at night on your right hand side, gently close your right nostril and breath through your left nostril. This will allow you to access the right hemisphere of your brain, which is calming.

8: Great preparation for meditation:

Alternate breathing is a simple little trick that can be practiced for a few minutes before you begin your meditation practice.

9: Soothes your nervous system:

By focusing on your breath and deepening it your brain will register this message and trigger the parasympathetic nervous system. You have effectively switched your nervous system from a stressed response into a relation response. Single left nostril breathing (by closing your right nostril) directs the flow of oxygen and energy to the right hemisphere

of your brain, allowing once again, for the parasympathetic nervous system to be switched on.

10: Regulates the cooling and warming cycles of the body:

Left nostril is feminine, nurturing, calm and cooling. Right nostril is masculine, heat, competitive and force. Favoring one nostril more than the other can effect the heat or coolness of your body.

11: Clears and boosts your energy channels:

Slightly forced alternate nostril breathing improves and directs the flow of energy throughout your body, preventing sluggishness. It oxygenates your blood and allows the energy (prana) in your body to be strong and flowing.

12: Enhances rest and relaxation:

A restless mind cannot relax. Alternate nostril breathing melts away any imbalances between the right and left hemisphere of your brain and calms your thinking. This is perfect for helping you access rest and relaxation for more efficiently.

13: Exercises the lymphatic system

An Alternate Nostril Breathing Exercise - Purifying Breath:

Step one: Use right thumb to close off right nostril

Step two: Inhale slowly through left nostril

Step three: Pause for a second

Step four: Now close left nostril with ring finger and release thumb off right nostril

Step five: Exhale through your right nostril

Step six: Now, inhale through right nostril

Step seven: Pause

Step eight: Use the thumb to close off right nostril

Step nine: Breath out through the left nostril

Step ten: This is one round. Start slowly with 1 or 2 rounds and gradually increase. Never force. Sit quietly for a few moments after you have finished.

There are many, many different techniques of pranayama such as inhaling for 4, holding for 4, and exhaling for 4.

Caution:

Do not hold your breath if you have high blood pressure. Most advanced methods of pranayama (alternate nostril breathing) need to be practiced with an experienced practitioner. Practicing on an empty stomach is preferred.

Quick Reference Chart - Alternate Nostril Breathing

Right nostril breathing accesses the left hemisphere of the brain.:

- Sympathetic nervous system
- Thinking
- Masculine
- Heat
- Competitive
- Force

Left nostril breathing accesses the right hemisphere of the brain:

- Parasympathetic nervous system
- Feelings
- Feminine
- Nurturing
- Calm
- Cooling