

Pranayama

Purification of the Nadis

Nadi Shodhana Pranayama

Nadi Shodhana means purification of the Nadis.

In its classical form, the breath comes in from one nostril, goes out from the other, then it inverts its path, creating one cycle of Nadi Shodhana Pranayama. This forms a base for many Pranayama techniques.

Nadi Shodhana Pranayama creates a progressive purification of the Ida Nadi (connected to the left nostril), and the Pingala Nadi (connected to the right nostril). The balance between these two polarities activates the Sushumna Nadi.

This Pranayama is a basic and fundamental tool which helps the practitioner accomplish a dynamic synthesis of the two polarities on the pranic level.

Starting Position: sit with your back straight. When practiced without retention, this breathing technique can also be performed in supine position with your legs bent.

The Nasagra Mudra is prevalently used for closing the nostrils, because of its simplicity and effectiveness. It also helps in maintaining an open elbow, and a straightened, relaxed wrist. The pressure is delicately applied at the base of the nose bone with the tip of the finger. If one arm gets tired, you can use the other one.



Take a couple of breaths to check the flow of air in your nostrils, and begin the inhalation with the more open nostril.

Phase 1: internalize the flow of your breath: it enters from one nostril and comes out from the other one. It always enters through the one that just exhaled and exits from the opposite.

Phase 2: focus your attention on performing complete inhalations and (especially) complete exhalations.

Phase 3: practice the movement of breath in a slow and uniform manner.

Phase 4: balance the duration of inhalation and exhalation.

Phase 5: pay attention to the pause between inhale and exhale and vice versa.

Purification of the *Nadi* with Full Retention

Nadi Shodhana Antara Kumbhaka Pranayama

Include a retention after inhaling which has the same duration as your inhalation and exhalation. A ratio of 1-1-1.

You can use the Mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya', a chronometer, mental counting or something similar to measure time.

During the retention, Jalandhara Bandha or Jihva Bandha can be performed, emphasizing the pressure of the tongue on the palate.

Purification of the *Nadi* with Empty Retention

Nadi Shodhana Bahya Kumbhaka Pranayama

Include a retention pause after exhaling which has the same duration as inhalation and exhalation. A ratio of 1-1-1.

It is possible to use the Mantra 'Om Namah Shivaya', a chronometer, mental counting or another such device to measure time. During retention, Jalandhara Bandha or Jihva Bandha can be performed, emphasizing the pressure of the tongue on your palate.

Contraindications: when the exercise is performed without any pause or retention, there are no contraindications. If full retention is included, heart troubles and high blood pressure are contraindications. If empty retention is included, low blood pressure is a contraindication.

Benefits: as its name suggests, this breathing favours purification of energy channels in the body (especially Ida and Pingala), and therefore, the energetic rebalancing of your body and psyche. It is from that balance that the functions of Sushumna Nadi are activated and if the internalization is sufficiently intense, it leads to the spontaneous realisation of a highly elevated and blissful state of mind. Moreover, this Pranayama increases body resistance to opposites such as hot and cold, etc., to illnesses and stress; it helps regain ideal weight, and favours mental clarity, higher vitality, and a sense of wellness and relaxation.