

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING



Alternate Nostril Breathing (ANB) is an Ayurvedic technique of re-energizing and rebalancing the central nervous system's sympathetic and parasympathetic responses. The Sympathetic nervous system is responsible for your "fight or flight" adrenaline-induced states; while very helpful and healthy when activated at appropriate times, many of us have this response turned up way too high and way too often! This can lead to panic and anxiety, indigestion, palpitations, and many other stress responses. If activated long-term, it can lead to states of burnout both physically and mentally. In contrast, the Parasympathetic nervous system is responsible for "rest, relaxation and digestion." It stimulates a sense of safety, well-being, and allows for proper blood flow and digestive juice release to digest meals in a healthy and nutritious manner. This is a rejuvenative state which promotes optimal health.

Regular practice of ANB promotes the proper balance between these two states. It is also known to:

- Balance the left and right hemisphere of the mind, promoting sharp and creative focus
- Detoxify the lungs
- Energize and unblock the body's energy channels
- Improve sleep

Next time you feel that sympathetic response jostling your peace, take a minute to sit back, relax, and just A-N-Breathe.

How To Practice Alternate Nostril Breathing

Directions:

1. Sit up straight with your feet either firmly planted on the ground or folded into a lotus position.
2. Become aware of your center; notice how you feel the seat or the ground beneath you. Feel your bottom sinking deep into what's supporting you, feel your feet firmly planted.
3. Your left hand should gently rest on your left thigh. Place your pointer and middle finger of the right hand in-between your eyebrows, or fold them into your palm. Use your thumb to occlude the right nostril.

4. Take a deep, slow breath. You should inhale in a way that causes the air in your throat to make a sound similar to waves of the ocean. Try to let that breath fill your belly and then your chest while keeping the shoulders sunk down, and hold for 3-5 seconds.
5. Release your nostril, and use your ring finger and/or pinky to occlude the left nostril.
6. Slowly and deliberately exhale (making the wave sound), emptying your chest and then your belly, and hold for 3 seconds
7. Do not switch nostrils yet; inhale from the nostril through which you just exhaled, and hold for 3-5 seconds.
8. Switch nostrils, and repeat the process.
9. Start with 2 cycles and work up to your preferred amount. I recommend at least 10 cycles.
10. Rest quietly for a few minutes while breathing regularly before getting up.
11. Use this as a daily rejuvenator, as well as whenever needed for challenging circumstances, or to prepare yourself to meditate.

WARNING: BREATHING EXERCISES ARE INCREDIBLY SAFE AND LOW-RISK ACTIVITIES, HOWEVER LIGHTHEADEDNESS AND FAINTING ARE POSSIBLE. PLEASE USE CAUTION AND MAKE SURE YOU ARE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WHEN PERFORMING ANB.



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