



# URBAN YOGA FOUNDATION

## Quick simple tools to aid in your path to prevention and health management:

### GOING INSIDE:

Begin sitting tall at the front edge of your chair feet flat on the floor place one hand on your heart center and one on your stomach. Be still and pay close attention to your breath. As you inhale and exhale feel how your body breathes. Stay in this stillness of going inside to check in to feel how you are breathing, just relax for a few and let it happen.

### 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. It provides your body with a much needed dose of extra energy.
- 2: **Improves brain function:** When your mind is dull – concentration and clarity is poor. 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. 70% of the body's waste products are eliminated via our lungs.
- 4: **Calms an agitated mind:** I'm prone to worrying. A few minutes of focused alternate nostril breathing is helpful (for me) in calming my "over thinking" mind. The ancient yogis believe 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 right "feeling" side of your brain for specific situations. Try it out next time you need to drive your car. Cover your left nostril with your thumb and breathe only through your right nostril for one minute. This should keep you more alert when driving.
- 6: **Encourage a calmer emotional state:** In times 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: **Improves sleep:** If you can't sleep at night lay on your right hand side, gently close your right nostril with your right thumb and breathe through your left nostril. This will activate your parasympathetic nervous system which will calm you down and slow your heart rate.
- 8: **Great preparation for meditation:** Alternate nostril breathing is a simple little trick that can be practiced for a few minutes before you begin your meditation practice. It's a very easy way to help you find your meditation groove.
- 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 relaxation response. Single left nostril breathing (by closing your right nostril) will direct 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. Gosh, your breath and nose is very clever.
- 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. Favouring 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 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 far more efficiently.

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

Step four: Exhale through your right nostril

Step five: Now, inhale through right nostril

Step six: Use thumb to close off right nostril

Step seven: Breathe out through left nostril

Step eight: 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.