

# Nadi Shodhana

**Nadi Shodhana** (नाडी शोधन), often referred to as "Alternate Nostril Breathing," is a yogic pranayama (breathing technique) that is practiced to purify the nadis (subtle energy channels) and balance the flow of prana (life force) in the body. The name "Nadi Shodhana" is derived from two Sanskrit words:

- **Nadi:** Subtle energy channel
- **Shodhana:** Purification

## Steps to Practice Nadi Shodhana

### 1. Preparation:

- Sit in a comfortable position (e.g., Padmasana or Sukhasana) with the spine erect.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax.

### 2. Hand Position (Nasagra Mudra):

- Use your right hand (or left if preferred) and form a "Nasagra Mudra" by folding the index and middle fingers inward towards the palm.
- The thumb is used to close the right nostril, and the ring and little fingers are used to close the left nostril.

### 3. The Technique:

- **Close the right nostril** with the thumb and inhale deeply through the left nostril.
- **Close the left nostril** with the ring finger and little finger, and release the right nostril. Exhale slowly through the right nostril.
- Inhale through the right nostril, then close it with the thumb, and release the left nostril. Exhale through the left nostril.

This completes one cycle of Nadi Shodhana. Continue for 5–10 minutes or as desired, maintaining a slow, steady, and rhythmic breath.

## Key Points:

- Breathe deeply and naturally without force.
- Keep the inhalation and exhalation durations equal for balance.
- Practice on an empty stomach for the best results.
- Maintain focus on the breath to enhance mindfulness and calmness.

## Benefits of Nadi Shodhana

**1. Balances Energy:**

- Harmonises the left (ida) and right (pingala) nadis, balancing the body and mind.

**2. Cleanses the Nadis:**

- Promotes the free flow of prana by purifying energy channels.

**3. Enhances Respiratory Function:**

- Strengthens the lungs and increases oxygen intake.

**4. Improves Mental Clarity:**

- Reduces stress and anxiety, promoting mental calmness and focus.

**5. Supports Meditation:**

- Prepares the mind for meditation by calming fluctuations in thoughts.

**6. Balances Nervous System:**

- Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation.

**Precautions:**

- Avoid if you have severe nasal congestion or breathing difficulties.
- Begin with guidance from an experienced instructor if you're new to pranayama.
- Pregnant women and individuals with certain medical conditions should consult a healthcare professional before practicing.

Nadi Shodhana is an integral part of yoga practice, helping practitioners achieve balance and inner harmony.