

## Perspective & Emotional Balance

### Alternate Nostril Breathing

Originally taught by Yogi Bhajan in 1969

Sit in an Easy Pose, with a light *jalandhar bandh*.

**EYES:** Eyes are closed, pressed gently up, focusing at the Brow Point.

**MUDRA:** Use the right thumb and right Mercury finger (pinkie) to close off alternate nostrils.

**BREATH PATTERN:** Close off the right nostril with the right thumb. Inhale deeply through the left nostril. When the breath is full, close off the left nostril with the Mercury finger (the little finger), and exhale smoothly through the right nostril. The breath is complete, continuous, and smooth. An alternative method of closing off the nostrils is using the thumb and index finger.

**MANTRA:** Although this can be done without mantra, you can mentally use the Bij Mantra, *Sat Naam*, to help the concentration. Inhale *Sat*, exhale *Naam*.

**TIME:** Continue with long, deep regular breaths for **3-31 minutes**.

**TO END:** Inhale, exhale completely, hold the breath out and apply *mulbandh*. Relax completely.

#### COMMENTS

This is a basic technique in Kundalini Yoga and Hatha Yoga. Every Kundalini Yogi should master this practice. It is excellent to do before bed to let go of the worries of the day. It is a superior technique to establish emotional balance and calmness after emotional shock or a period of intense stress.

Inhale through the left nostril to stimulate the capacity of the brain to reset the frame of thinking and feeling. New perspectives and connections become available. Exhale through the right nostril to relax the constant computations and cautions of the brain, breaking automatic patterns. The two processes together set a new level of functioning.

The times for practice vary with purpose, skill level, and context:

- **3 minutes** is used if this exercise is added to a set.
- **10 minutes** as a start, if practiced alone.
- **15 minutes** will turn this exercise into a deep meditation.
- **22 minutes** trains the mind to use the state created by this breath as a resource.
- **31 minutes** will cleanse the body and restore the nervous system from the effects of current and past shocks.

