

Alternate Nostril Breathing and Ultradian Rhythm Balancing

Ultradian Rhythms are recurring biological rhythms that regulate various physiological cycles. These include blinking, heart rate, hormonal secretions, appetite, and many other bodily rhythms. ***Nostril dilation*** is one of the ultradian rhythms studied for its effect on our level of consciousness. For example, we alternate brain hemispheric dominance and nostril dominance every 90-120 minutes. *As nostril dominance changes from right to left every 90-120 seconds, hemispheric brain dominance also shifts.*

The yogis discovered this natural cycle long before scientists confirmed it in the laboratories. ***Knowing what hemisphere is more active allows us to shift dominance by breathing. Thus, we develop more control over our consciousness at any time.***

Balancing Ultradian Rhythm Exercise

Part 1. Begin by assessing which nostril is more clogged and which is more open. Do this by alternating closing off each nostril with your *thumb and fourth finger* and seeing where the flow is almost effortless. The more open nostril correlates to the opposite side of the brain hemisphere. ***The left hemisphere is more active if the right nostril is more relaxed and open. The left nostril being more open means your right hemisphere is more active.*** When the ***left hemisphere*** is more active, we tend to be in a more *focused, attentive learning mode*. When the ***right hemisphere*** is more active, we are more *integrative, creative, relaxed, and perhaps even spacey or dreamy*.

Part 2. Now, decide whether you want to stay in your current mode or shift it. ***If you're going to learn something new, then activate your left hemisphere. If you wish to relax and feel creative and dreamy, activate your right hemisphere.***

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Nadi Shodhana means clearing the channels of circulation. This essential alternate nostril breathing exercise brings about ***deep relaxation, alters mood and cognition, and achieves balance.***

1. The Foundational Breath

Become comfortable as you sit straight, relax your breath, feel your heart open, and let your left palm rest in your lap. Bring your right thumb to the right side of your nose and your fourth finger poised on the left. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and out through your nose. ***Close your right nostril*** with your right thumb. Inhale through the left nostril slowly and steadily.

Then ***close the left nostril*** with your index finger and open your right nostril, releasing the breath slowly. Again, pause briefly at the end of the exhale and inhale through the right nostril slowly. ***Close the right nostril*** and exhale through the left nostril.

This completes one cycle. Allow yourself to focus on the sensations of air moving in and out of the nostrils, paying attention to the moment.

Repeat five cycles and slowly build up to 10 cycles every day.

2. Activate the Right Hemisphere

Activate the right hemisphere. Bring your ***right thumb to the right nostril and close it.*** ***Breathe in and out through the left nostril only.*** Take 5 minutes to do the right-hand index finger to the left nostril and close the right thumb.

3. Activate the Left Hemisphere

Bring your ***fourth finger to the left nostril and close it*** off as you ***inhale through the right nostril.*** Continue to breathe in only with the right nostril and out through the right nostril. Take 5 minutes to do the right-hand index finger to the left nostril and close the right thumb.