

Anuloma Viloma

Breathing Exercise (Pranayama) - Alternate Nostril (Anuloma Viloma)

Anuloma Viloma is also called the Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique. In this Breathing Technique, you inhale through one nostril, retain the breath, and exhale through the other nostril in a ratio of 2:8:4. The left nostril is the path of the Nadi called Ida and the right nostril is the path of the Nadi called Pingala. If you are really healthy, you will breathe predominantly through the Ida nostril about one hour and fifty minutes, then through the Pingala nostril. But in many people, this natural rhythm is disturbed. Anuloma Viloma restores, equalizes and balances the flow of Prana in the body.

One round of Anuloma Viloma is made up of six steps, as shown below. Start by practicing three rounds and build up slowly to twenty rounds, extending the count within the given ratio.

Chin Mudra

The fingers in the Chin Mudra represent the self (index finger) rising above Maya (worldly concerns), Karma (spiritual concerns), and Ego (personal concerns) to meet the higher self. This is a common meditation mudra.

Vishnu Mudra

Fold the index and middle fingers into the palm keeping the ring and little fingers; and the thumb straight. This mudra is used in Anuloma Viloma. In this mudra the right hand is used as it is associated with giving while the left is associated with receiving. However if for whatever reason you need to use your left hand during practice that is fine. Adopting the Vishnu Mudra with your right hand to close your nostrils. Tuck your index and middle finger into your nose. Place the thumb by your right nostril and your ring and little fingers by your left.



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One Round of Anuloma Viloma (Alternate Nostril Breathing)



- Inhale through the left nostril, closing the right with the thumb, to the count of four.



- Hold the breath, closing both nostrils, to the count of sixteen.



- Exhale through the right nostril, closing the left with the ring and little fingers, to the count of eight.



- Inhale through the right nostril, keeping the left nostril closed with the ring and little fingers, to the count of four.



- Hold the breath, closing both nostrils, to the count of sixteen.

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- **Exhale through the left nostril, keeping the right closed with the thumb, to the count of eight.**

Benefits of Anuloma Viloma

The exercise of the Anuloma Viloma produces optimum function to both sides of the brain: that is optimum creativity and optimum logical verbal activity. This will make both sides of the brain, the left side which is responsible for logical thinking and the right side which is responsible for creative thinking to function properly. This will lead to a balance between a person's creative and logical thinking. The Yogis consider this to be the best technique to calm the mind and the Nervous System.

Anuloma Viloma: The Scientific Confirmation

Medical science has recently discovered the nasal cycle, something that was already discovered by the Yogis thousands of years ago. Modern scientists found out that we do not breathe equally on both nostrils, that is one nostril is much easier to breathe through than the other at any particular time. Each nostril alternates about every three hours. The Yogis claim that the natural period is every two hours, but we must remember these studies were done on people who do not have an optimum Health level.

Scientists also discovered that the nasal cycle corresponds with brain function. The electrical activity of the brain was found to be greater on the side opposite the less congested nostril. The right side of the brain controls creative activity, while the left side controls logical verbal activity. The research showed that when the left nostril was less obstructed, the right side of the brain was predominant. Test subjects were indeed found to do better on creative tests. Similarly when the right nostril was less obstructed the left side of the brain was predominant. Test subjects did better on verbal skills.

Medical science has not quite caught up with the ancient Yogis yet. The Ancient Yogis even went one step further. They observed that a lot of diseases were due to disturbances of the nasal cycle or if a person breathe for too long through one nostril. To prevent and correct this condition, they developed the Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique. This clears any blockage the airflow in the nostrils and reestablishes the natural nasal cycle. For example, the Yogis have known for a long time that prolonged breathing through the left nostril only (over a period of years) will cause Asthma. They also know that this so-called incurable disease can be easily treated by teaching the patient to breathe through the right nostril until the Asthma is cured and prevent it from recurring by doing the Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique. The Yogis also believe that Diabetes is caused, to a large extent, by breathing mainly through the right nostril.

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A great obstacle to happiness is to expect too much happiness.

