

ALTERNATE BREATHING

Find a comfortable chair that allows you to sit upright with your spine straight and both feet on the floor. Close your eyes, let your mind rest, and place your right thumb gently beside your right nostril, your middle finger beside your left nostril. To perform the exercise, gently close one nostril, then the other as you breathe normally. The basic rhythm of alternate breathing is:

- Gently close the right nostril with your thumb and slowly exhale through your left nostril. Inhale easily through your left nostril.
- Close the left nostril with the middle finger and exhale out of the right nostril. Inhale easily through the right nostril.
- Alternate nostrils for about 5 - 10 minutes.

Remember that you begin each breath on the exhale and finish on the inhale. A few pointers before you start:

- Any form of straining must be avoided--if you begin to feel dizzy or start to pant, stop for a moment and sit quietly with your eyes closed until you feel normal again. It is not advised to use antihistamines to open your nose before starting. If allergies or a cold have blocked your sinuses, just skip alternate breathing until they clear up naturally.
- It is normal for mucous membranes to contract when you first learn to do this exercise. Just let them relax. Within a few days, they will adjust normally to alternate breathing if you do it daily.
- Perform alternate breathing in a quiet room without radio, music, or television. Keep your eyes closed. If you feel anxious at any time, stop the exercise for a minute, but do not get up immediately. Sit quietly with your eyes closed until you feel relaxed again. If the uncomfortable sensation persists, lie down for a few minutes until it passes.
- Never hold your breath or count how many seconds you inhale and exhale. Just allow the body to balance the breath itself.



