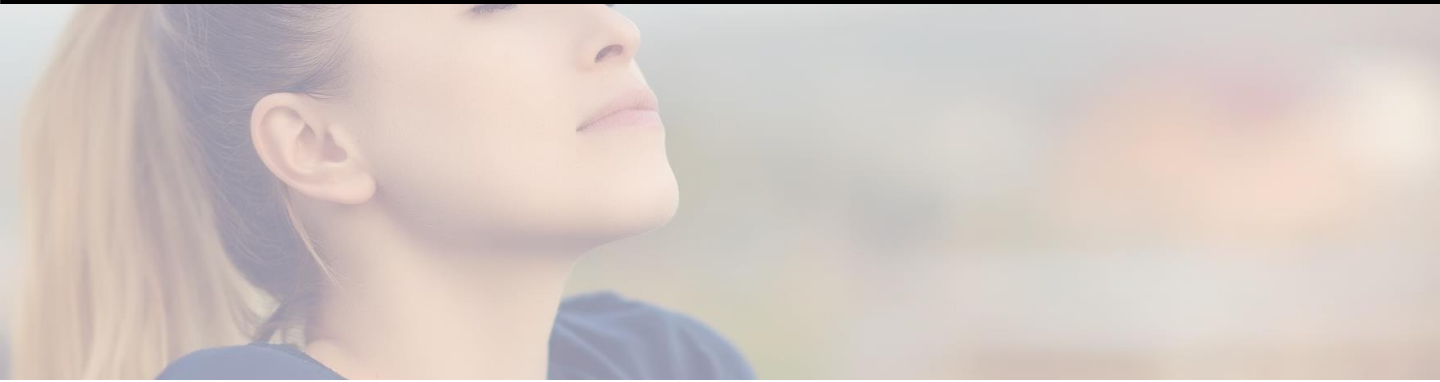


SPOTLIGHT ON ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING

BY: SAMANTHA DORALP, PHD, PT



Breath control or pranayama (breathing methods) have long been used in yoga and can be used to downregulate the nervous system. Abdominal-Diaphragmatic breathing and Alternate Nostril breathing (*Nadi Shodhana*) can both be used to decrease tension in the pelvic floor. The term *Nadi Shodhana* means “clearing the channels of circulation”. In fact, breathing selectively through one nostril has been shown to increase baseline oxygen consumption with a resultant decrease in sympathetic nervous system activity (Telles et al, 1994). Further, alternate nostril breathing has shown a positive effect on reducing blood pressure (Raghuraj & Telles, 2008). Although there is limited research on the direct effects on the pelvic floor, there are demonstrable effects on the cardiovascular and nervous system. Consider adding the technique to your practice.

How to practice alternate nostril breathing (Dullo et al., 2008):

1. While sitting in a comfortable position (ex. Cross-legged), clients are asked to use only their right hand to occlude the nostrils. Placing their right hand up to the nose fold, clients can place the right thumb over the right nostril and the right ring finger over the left nostril.
2. Exhale completely through the left nostril with the right nostril closed by the thumb. The exhale should be comfortable and easy.

3. Upon completion of the exhale, close the left nostril with the ring finger and release the thumb to inhale through the right nostril.
4. Upon completion of the inhalation, exhale through the right nostril with the left nostril still closed.
5. Following the exhalation, close the right nostril with thumb and release the ring finger to inhale through the left nostril. Following the inhalation, continue to exhale through the left nostril and follow from step 2.
6. Note that inhalation and exhalation should be of the same duration. Research suggests that a minimum of 10 minutes of this breathing is necessary to get maximum effects and that clients would get tired after 15 minutes (Dullo et al., 2008).



References

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