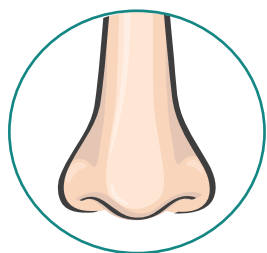


THE NASAL CYCLE AND HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR FUNCTION



At any given moment one of your nostrils is more congested and another one is more open; and it switches back and forth in the course of the day (and night). This is called “the nasal cycle”. This pattern of congestion and decongestion alternates between the nostrils about every 2 hours (the length varies from individual to individual) and continues in a rhythmic fashion. The cycle is usually longer at night. This rhythm changes over time for most people and seems to be affected by age, lifestyle, health and other factors. It seems to be controlled by the central nervous system. Swelling and shrinking seems to be related to sympathetic (SNS) and parasympathetic (PNS) nerves.

The nasal cycle appears to be a reflection of another rhythmic pattern that occurs within the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Two branches of the ANS, sympathetic (“fight-or-flight”) and parasympathetic (“rest-and-digest”) systems seem to change their dominance from one side of the body to another with the same frequency (every couple of hours). The way the body functions is quite different based on which side of the body has sympathetic dominance. In the course of the day you alternate between more active and more restful states.

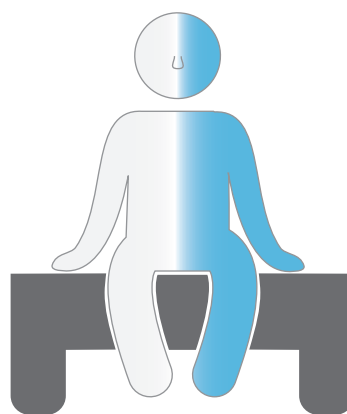
Right sympathetic dominance

- Right nostril dominance
- Right lung dominant
- Generally more active state
- Locomotor activity increased
- Heart rate increased
- Blood pressure increased
- Respiration rate increased
- Body temperature increased
- Cortisol increased
- Prolactin secretion reduces
- Testosterone increased
- Endorphins increased



Left sympathetic dominance

- Left nostril dominance
- Left lung dominant
- Generally more resting state
- Locomotor activity decreased
- Heart rate reduced
- Blood pressure reduced
- Respiration rate reduced
- Body temperature reduced
- Cortisol reduced
- Prolactin secretion increased
- Testosterone reduced
- Endorphins reduced



YOGIC VIEW

Yogis say that our energy balance is affected by the flow of energy along three major channels: ida, pingala and sushumna nadis.

Pingala (solar channel) is heating and has an overall masculine quality; it terminates at the right nostril.

Ida (lunar channel) is cooling and has overall feminine quality; it terminates at the left nostril.

When two sides are balanced, prana can enter the central channel - sushumna nadi - and travel upwards to the top of the head.

Then eternal bliss (samadhi) is achieved. This model is used widely in a therapeutic context.

Inhale right
Exhale left

When there is not enough heat in the system, we practice **Suryabhedana**.

Seal the left nostril completely and the right one partially (by pressing slightly just below the cartilage) and breathe in through the right nostril. Then seal the right nostril, valve the left one and breathe out through the left nostril. Repeat for at least 12 breaths.



When there is too much heat in the system, we practice **Chandrabhedana**.

Seal the right nostril completely and the left one partially (by pressing slightly just below the cartilage) and breathe in through the left nostril. Then seal the left nostril, valve the right one and breathe out through the right nostril. Repeat for at least 12 breaths.

Inhale left
Exhale right