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

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.