

Nadi



Nadi in Sanskrit means ‘Channel’ or ‘Tube’. In yoga, it refers to a network of channels from which energy flows in our bodies. Within the human body, there is a network of 72,000 Nadis that distribute Prana effectively throughout the body. There are three major Nadis that pass through the spinal cord and the intense energy chakras present in our spinal column. By doing asanas, pranayamas, chanting, etc. can be performed to help energy flow through these Nadis. Nadis are the pathways through which Prana flows as per Ayurveda. Prana can only flow through these Nadis when they are clear and strong enough to hold the Prana. Hence, it becomes very important to keep the Nadis unblocked so that Prana can flow through them easily. If these Nadis are blocked one can perform Nadi Shodhana Pranayama in order to help unblock the Nadis and resume the flow of Prana through them.

Nadis are similar to the nervous system in our bodies but their significance extends beyond the physical realms into the astral and spiritual planes of our existence. Breath plays a really important role in harmonizing and activating these channels. At certain places on our spinal column these Nadis form a Knot known as ‘granthi’ which is an important point in our spiritual development. When these knots are untied the energy stored in them gives us hidden powers (‘Siddhi’) such as healing

powers, seeing auras, seeing past and future, etc. Hence, Nadis play a very important role in our spiritual existence

The three important Nadis are mentioned below:

Ida Nadi – Ida Nadi is also known as the left channel. It originates in the Muladhara Chakra from which it flows towards the left and weaves through the other chakras, flowing in and out of them until it'd send in our left nostril. Our mental energy is represented by this Nadi. Ida represents the feminine part of the duality. Ida is inward-focused or introverted and is associated with mental work. It is also known as Chandra Nadi. It promotes feelings, love, and attachment.

Pingala Nadi – This Nadi also originates in the root chakra just like the Ida Nadi but it flows towards the right side. After which it weaves in and out through the rest of the chakras and eventually ends in our right nostril. Pingala Nadi is where the Prana originates. Pingala represents the masculine part of the duality. Pingala is outward-focused or extroverted and is associated with physical work. It is also known as Surya Nadi. It promotes perception, discrimination, and reason.

Shushumna Nadi – Also known as the central channel, Shushumna Nadi runs straight up the spine from below the root chakra to the crown chakra. This is the Nadi of spiritual awareness and is the most significant aspect of human physiology. For most people this Nadi remains dormant as they do not seek out their spiritual existence

What is Nadi Shodhan?

Nadis are subtle energy channels in the human body that can get blocked due to various reasons. The *Nadi Shodhan pranayama is a breathing technique* that helps clear these blocked energy channels, thus calming the mind. This technique is also known as *Anulom Vilom pranayama*.

Cause of Obstruction in the Nadis:

- Nadis can get blocked on account of stress
- Toxicity in the physical body also leads to blockage of nadis
- Nadis can get blocked due to physical and mental trauma
- Unhealthy lifestyle

What Happens When these Nadis are Blocked?

Ida, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* are three of the most important nadis in the human body. When the *Ida* nadi is not functioning smoothly or is blocked, one experiences cold, depression, low mental energy and sluggish digestion, blocked left nostril. Whereas when the *Pingala* nadi is not smoothly functioning or is blocked, one will experience heat, quick temper and irritation, itching body, dry skin and throat, excessive appetite, excessive physical or sexual energy, and blocked right nostril.

Reasons to Practice *Nadi Shodhan Pranayama*

-Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps relax the mind and prepares it to enter a meditative state.

-Practicing it for just a few minutes every day helps keep the mind calm, happy and peaceful.

-It helps in releasing accumulated tension and fatigue.

How to Do Nadi Shodhan pranayama?

- Sit comfortably with your spine erect and shoulders relaxed. Keep a gentle smile on your face.
- Place your left hand on the left knee, and palms open to the sky or in Chin Mudra (thumb and index finger gently touching at the tips).
- Place the tip of the index finger and middle finger of the right hand in between the eyebrows, the ring finger and little finger on the left nostril, and the thumb on the right nostril. We will use the ring finger and little finger to open or close the left nostril and thumb for the right nostril.
- Press your thumb down on the right nostril and breathe out gently through the left nostril.
- Now breathe in from the left nostril and then press the left nostril gently with the ring finger and little finger. Removing the right thumb from the right nostril, breathe out from the right.
- Breathe in from the right nostril and exhale from the left. You have now completed one round of Nadi Shodhan pranayama. Continue inhaling and exhaling from alternate nostrils.
- Complete 9 such rounds by alternately breathing through both the nostrils. After every exhalation, remember to breathe in from the same

nostril from which you exhaled. Keep your eyes closed throughout and continue taking long, deep, smooth breaths without any force or effort.

Cautions to be Taken While Practicing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

(Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

- Do not force the breathing, and keep the flow gentle and natural. Do not breathe from the mouth or make any sound while breathing.
- Do not use the Ujjayi breath.
- Place the fingers very lightly on the forehead and nose. There is no need to apply any pressure.
- In case you feel dull and are yawning after *practicing Nadi Shodhan pranayama*, check the time you take to inhale and exhale. Your exhalation should be longer than inhalation.

7 Benefits of Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

- Excellent breathing technique to calm and center the mind.
- Our mind has a tendency to keep regretting or glorifying the past and getting anxious about the future. *Nadi Shodhan pranayama* helps to [bring the mind back](#) to the present moment.
- Works therapeutically for most circulatory and respiratory problems.
- Releases accumulated stress in the mind and body effectively and helps to relax.
- Helps harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which correlates to the logical and emotional sides of our personality.
- Helps purify and balance the nadis - the subtle energy channels, thereby ensuring a smooth flow of prana (life force) through the body.
- Maintains body temperature.

What is the meaning of nadis?

Nadi is Sanskrit word that can be translated as “tube,” “channel” or “flow.” It refers to the network of channels through which energy travels through the body.

How many nadis are in our body?

Our body consists of 72,000 Nadis (or channels). The 72,000 nadis spring from three basic nadis – the left, the right and the central – the Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna. The word “nadi” does not mean nerve. Nadis are pathways or channels of prana in the system.

What are the 3 major nadis?

The three principal nadis run from the base of the spine to the head, and are the ida on the left, the sushumna in the centre, and the pingala on the right.

How are nadis activated?

You can activate the Ida and Pingala Nadis through specific breathing techniques. The Pingala Nadi activates through the right Swara; the breath flow when we inhale and exhale through the right nostril. Similarly, the Ida Nadi activates through the left Swara; when we inhale and exhale through the left nostril.