

# 7.1 Nadi Sodhana

## Alternate Nostril Breathing

Nadi – energy channel, Sodhana – cleansing

### **Contraindications and Cautions**

- Difficulty breathing, or shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest, or hardness behind the forehead.
- If any of the above are experienced, discontinue the *Pranayama* exercises and allow the breath to return to normal.
- Avoid holding the breath.
- Do not practice **Nadi Sodhana** if you have a blocked nose.

### **Benefits**

- Cleanses the energy channels throughout the body.
- In this breathing exercise the left and right side of the nostrils are used alternatively for both inhalations and exhalations. This activates the left and right sides of the brain and body revitalising and bringing both into harmony with each other.

### **Technique**

- Place the left hand into *Gyan Mudra*.
- Place the tips of the index and middle fingers of the right hand to the eyebrow centre, with the ring finger resting lightly on the left nostril and the thumb resting lightly on the right nostril.
- Gently close the left nostril with your ring finger, exhale and empty the lungs with a long slow exhalation of the tidal breath through the right nostril. Brief pause.
- Then commence *Nadi Sodhana* by inhaling slowly through your right nostril feeling the lungs fill and expand. Brief pause.
- Open the left nostril first, then gently close the right nostril with your thumb, and exhale slowly through your left nostril feeling the lungs empty.
- Gently inhale slowly through your left nostril feeling the lungs fill and expand.
- Open the right nostril then gently close the left nostril with your ring finger and exhale through the right nostril.
- Note: two breaths constitute one cycle.
- Continue as instructed for as many breath cycles you are comfortable with.
- Finish by exhaling through the right nostril then release the right hand into *Gyan Mudra* (the same as the left) and allow the breath to return to normal.
- Lie down for several minutes.

### **Common Mistakes**

- Pressing too hard with fingers.
- Collapsing in sitting position.
- Head turns to right.

**Please Note** - Pranayama should never be forced – it should be relaxed and joyful.

If the nose is blocked, only do the practice by visualization.