

Balancing our bodies using right and left nostril breathing

(As taught by :

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(I have made a transcript of this to clarify it for non-yoga participants – Peter Smith)

We all bounce between the left and right-hand sides of the brain all the time.

It could be said we are all 'bipolar' or we are all 'on the spectrum of bi-polarity'.

This doesn't mean that we are ill rather that we are in a state of flux all the time.

Let's look at the two sides of the brain separately

THE LEFT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

The LEFT side of the brain is the quantitative and analytical side of the brain.

When we spend most of our time 'in there' we tend to become gradually more and more **ANXIOUS** ... because 'over-thinking', worrying, trying too hard gets us so exhausted. (Perhaps we realise that by 'just thinking incessantly about it all' is not a real answer?)

THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN

The RIGHT side of the brain is where our creativity, the artistic and musical side of us 'is'.

We tend to want to escape and 'let go'... 'escape' a stressful reality and derive some joy from creativity.

When we spend most of the time 'in there' we tend to become gradually more and more **DEPRESSED** ... because after the 'high' of creating there can so often be a 'crash' after all that effort and expenditure of energy. (We perhaps realise that there is no 'real escape'?)

WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

BALANCE is the answer.

Obviously, we need to be in balance and we can simply begin to rebalance ourselves by using either left or right nostril breathing.

DISCLAIMER / WARNING

Before we start by just jumping into this, let us take a moment and work out where we are first ... Look before you leap!

These techniques are powerful and should be used with the guidance of an experienced practitioner of Yoga Breathing.

Of course, on their own, these techniques are no substitute for correct management and support and **NOT** to be used where serious psychiatric issues are being experienced without this adequate guidance and support.

BEFORE WE START

It is important to understand where we are ... Are we tending to be more in a state of ANXIETY or we tending to be more in a state of DEPRESSION?

When we understand which we can use either PLAN A, PLAN B, PLAN C and PLAN D

PLAN A is only to be used at the beginning if we are pretty balanced already between ANXIETY and DEPRESSION.

PLAN D is only to be used when PLAN A is working well ... and balance has been restored.

So, if it is a question of either ANXIETY or DEPRESSION, let's see where it is sensible to start.

LET'S DECIDE: START WITH PLAN B OR PLAN C?

PLAN B is to be used first if **ANXIETY** is the main problem

PLAN C is to be used first if **DEPRESSION** is the main problem.

UNDERSTANDING THE WAY THAT THE NOSTRILS 'WORK' and HOW TO DO IT

Understanding how to use either right nostril breathing or left nostril breathing

Each nostril controls the OPPOSITE side of the brain. There is a 'cross-over'.

To activate the LEFT hand side of the brain (ANXIETY) we need to use only the RIGHT nostril to breathe in and out through (so therefore we block the LEFT nostril).

To activate the RIGHT hand side of the brain (DEPRESSION) we need to use only the LEFT nostril to breathe in and out through (so we therefore close the RIGHT nostril).

DO this by using (for example) by using the right INDEX , MIDDLE FINGER and RING FINGER like this: Rest your right middle finger at the top of the nose – to support your hand - and the resting the other two fingers beside each side of the nose.

Use your INDEX FINGER to block the RIGHT NOSTRIL or the RING FINGER to block the LEFT NOSTRIL. Okay?

(I tend to simply place the pad of my thumb underneath the nostril and rest my middle finger at the top to the nose where it meets the forehead.

PLAN B - Gently calming ANXIETY and moving towards balance

Let us suppose that our problem is predominantly anxiety: we are going to use Plan B.

So, we are going to activate the LEFT brain by closing our mouth and breathing in and out only through the RIGHT nostril. To achieve this, we going to gently block the LEFT nostril and - with our mouth closed - start to breathe in gently and out gently 9 times using the RIGHT nostril.

We can do this 3 or 4 times every day.

As we feel our anxiety reduce and we feel more centred and balanced we can then think about going to PLAN A.

PLAN C – Gently calming DEPRESSION and moving towards balance

Let us suppose that our problem is predominantly depression: we are going to use PLAN C.

So we are going to activate the RIGHT brain by closing our mouth and breathing in and out only through the LEFT nostril. To achieve this, we are going to gently block the RIGHT nostril and - with our mouth closed - start to breathe in gently and out gently 9 times through the LEFT nostril.

We can do this 3 or 4 times every day.

As we feel our DEPRESSION reduce and we feel more centred and balanced we can then think about going to PLAN A.

PLAN A – Balancing the LEFT and RIGHT sides of the brain

We are going to start activating the LEFT brain first by closing our mouth and - by blocking the LEFT nostril - breathing in and out only through the RIGHT nostril.

We are going to do this gently 9 times.

Then - we are going to start activating the RIGHT brain by closing our mouth and - by blocking the RIGHT nostril - breathing in and out only through the LEFT nostril.

We are going to do this gently 9 times.

We are going to do both nostrils 2 or 3 times daily

When we are feeling calm and safely balanced after at least a few days, we are ready to start to move our BALANCED ENERGY up and down the spine through our chakras or energy centres. For these purposes we shall call it PLAN D.

PLAN D – Integrating our energy

We are going to take steady breaths and out to the count of 6 .

As we breathe IN to the count of 6 the energy is going to move UP the spine to the Forehead, passing through our chakras as it does so.

As we breathe OUT to the count of 6 the energy is going to move back down from the forehead to the base of the spine.

We are going to do this in 9 ‘rounds’ of IN and OUT

Immense thanks to my long-time friend and Yoga Teacher Shivani from whom I have learned a great deal and who shared **Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balaygi Bhavanani’s** video with me just when I most needed it!

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From his upcoming book *“Riding the Cosmic Unicycle”*

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