

## Nadi sodhana

Alternate nostril breathing. Establish a quiet sitting posture first, and a regular smooth breath with equal length for inhale and exhale. Then place the index and middle fingers of the right hand at the third eye centre between the eyebrows. Use the thumb to close R nostril and the third finger to close L nostril.



*Stage 1* – block R nostril, breathe in and out of L nostril 5 times. Then block L nostril and breathe in and out of R nostril x 5. Finally, breathe in and out of both nostrils x 5. This is one round. Practice up to 5 rounds, depending on the time available.

*Stage 2* – place the fingers as above, but this time begin by breathing in slowly through the L nostril, out through the R, in through R and out through L. This is one complete round. Practice 10 rounds. At the end sit quietly breathing naturally, gazing in to the eyebrow centre for a few moments.

**Cautions:** do not force the breath. The practice of nadi sodhana involves developing breath retentions as you progress, but these are not included as they should be done only under guidance. The above two stages are safe for home practice.

**Benefits:** has both physical and mental health benefits. It induces tranquillity, clarity of thought and concentration, and is recommended for those involved in mental work. It increases vitality and lowers levels of stress and anxiety by harmonizing the pranas. It is said to harmonize the two halves of the brain, and the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, by balancing ida and pingala nadis. 9 rounds of nadi sodhana is an excellent way to prepare (calm) the mind prior to meditation practice.