

## A Mindful Minute: A Funny-Looking, But Powerful, Breathing Exercise for Kids

by GoZen! on FEBRUARY 10, 2015 in DEEP BREATHING



“Wait...what are you... are you doing what I think... ew, are you scratching... OH NO... Are you picking your nose? AAAAAAH!”

This might be the reaction you get along with fits of giggles from kids learning a powerful, albeit funny-looking, ancient yogic breathing exercise. It’s a great thing that kids find this technique fun(ny) as it encourages them to engage in mindful breathing.

### What is it?

In Sanskrit, this technique is called Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (*nadi* = energy channel; *shodhan* = purification; *pranayama* = breathing technique). The goal of this exercise is to purify the energy

channels in your body or purify the nervous system by balancing breath between the right and left nostrils. In the West, we call this alternate nostril breathing because it literally calls for a focus on breathing through one nostril and then switching over to the other.

### Why is it good?

At any time of the day we predominantly breathe through one nostril only. Every 90-120 minutes, a switch occurs. Sometimes, however, our breath becomes imbalanced. Stopping to consciously control the frequency, rhythm, and duration of breath through each nostril helps bring equal amounts of oxygen to both sides of the brain for improved brain function. Here’s a short list of the researched benefits of alternate nostril breathing:

- [Research](#) shows alternate nostril breathing facilitates performance on verbal and spatial cognitive tasks.
- [Research](#) shows alternate nostril breathing improves attention.
- [Research](#) shows long-term alternate nostril breathing boosts “autonomic control of the heart by increasing parasympathetic modulation.” In other words, it can help reduce stress and anxiety.
- [Research](#) shows alternate nostril breathing can reduce high blood pressure.

### How do you do it?

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# Alternate Nostril Breathing

Sit comfortably with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.

Placement: You will use your right hand.

Gently place your right thumb over your right nostril.

Rest the tip of your right index finger and middle finger between your eyebrows.

Gently place your right ring finger and pinky over your left nostril.

Start: Gently press down on your right nostril with your thumb.

Gently breathe out from your left nostril.  
Gently breathe in from the left nostril.

Switch! Open up the right nostril by releasing your right thumb. Press the left nostril down with your ring finger and pinky.

Gently breathe out from your right nostril.  
Gently breathe in from your right nostril.

That is one round.  
Try repeating 9 rounds!



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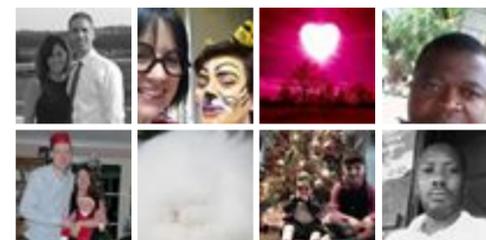
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Check out our guest post on site of Kim West, a baby sleep expert otherwise known as "The Sleep Lady".



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