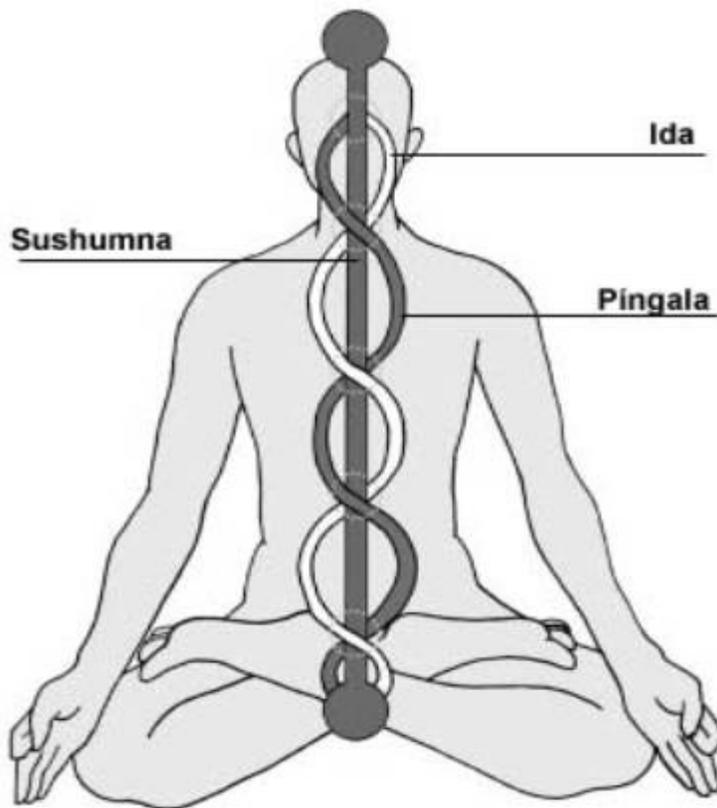


## Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana)

(recommended for all doshas, particularly Vata)

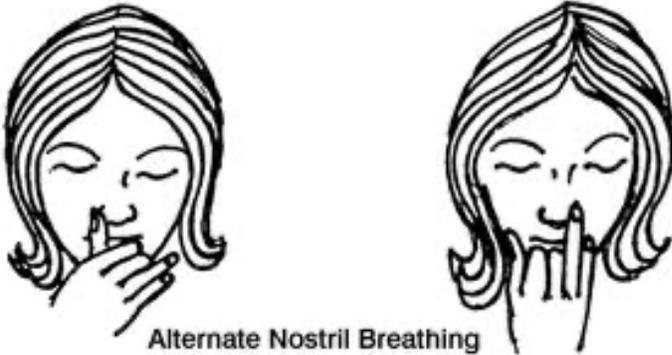
Throughout the body, there are energy channels, or nadis (meridians in Chinese Medicine) through which Prana (life-force energy) travels. These mirror in some ways the veins and arteries of the physical body but exist only at the level of the subtle body. There are two main nadis, called the Ida (left side) and Pingala (right side). These two nadis begin at the base of the spine on the side indicated. They then travel up the spine in a cross-over pattern until they reach the left nostril (ida) and right nostril (pingala). Where these two nadis intersect are the 7 Main Chakras.



Ideally, these nadis, along with all the other nadis of the body, are flowing smoothly and evenly. The flow between them is balanced and in harmony, representing a balance and harmony in our body/mind. When they become blocked, or when flow is greater through one nadi than another, balance is disrupted. This breathing practice balances the flow of Prana through the Ida and Pingala and ultimately allowing the flow to move through the central channel, the Sushumna, providing the practitioner with a calming, balancing effect.

**Directions:**

Sit with your spine tall and your eyes closed. Take several deep breaths in and out through the nose. Feel yourself calm and settle. Bring your right hand to your face (even if you are left-handed!) and curl in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> fingers to your palm. Cross the ring finger over the pinky finger. This is the Mudra, or hand position, for the breathing technique.



Inhale through both nostrils, then close the right nostril gently with your thumb, exhale just through the left side. Then inhale just through the left side. Switch at the end of the inhale, closing your left nostril with your ring finger. Exhale out the right side. Inhale through the right side. Switch back to closing the right nostril and repeat for 3-5 minutes. The pattern again is as follows:

Close - Right nostril Exhale/Inhale Left Close - Left nostril Exhale/Inhale Right Repeat.

Do not hold your breath or strain in any way. Find a gentle, comfortable rhythm and allow the body/mind to benefit from this simple practice.