

Stress Management Education Series

Alternate Nostril Breathing – INSTRUCTOR SCRIPT

Alternate-nostril breathing is a great way to connect the brain and the body. It triggers the body's "rest and digest" response, effectively relaxing the whole body, even slowing the heart-rate.

Find a comfortable seated position but know that breath awareness can also be practiced while lying down. It is most effective, however, if you find a place that is private or secluded – free from the distractions of the day – a place that you can focus for a few moments without interruption.

Let's begin by getting comfortable. Adjust your position until you feel at ease, without the need to fidget or move around. Make sure that you feel supported in the chair with your back nice and tall – head over heart and heart over hips.

We can take a few moments now to roll the shoulders. Inhaling as you roll the shoulders forward and up, and exhaling as you move them back and down. A few more times. Become aware of any tension in the neck or shoulders.

Placing the shoulders down on the back, notice how open your chest feels. Allow your hands to come to your thighs, palms up, and begin to pay attention to the steadiness of your breath. The rhythm is unhurried and easy.

Now, try inhaling through the nose

And then exhaling through the nose.

You can close your eyes if you wish, allowing yourself to focus fully on the sensation of your breath.

Lift your right hand and then turn the palm toward your face.

To begin alternate nostril breathing, bend your index finger, middle finger and ring finger toward your palm – making sure your palm is facing toward your face.

Take a breath in – then seal your right nostril with your thumb, exhaling through the left nostril and then inhaling through the same side. Switch sides – sealing the left nostril with your pinky finger – exhaling through the right nostril and inhaling through the same side.

Let's continue – sealing the right nostril so we can exhale and inhale on the left.

Then sealing the left nostril – exhaling and inhaling through the right nostril.

Cycle back and forth – always starting with the exhalation, then inhaling before changing to the other side. Stay focused on your breathing, keeping it even and unhurried.

Let's do one more round together.

Bring your palms back to the tops of the thighs. Now - take a breath in through both nostrils, exhaling and blowing out through the mouth.

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Continue to breath evenly as you take a moment to notice how you feel. Keep the face soft, relaxing the jaw as you shrug your shoulders up tightly by your ears, then pressing them down and back. Let's shrug a few more times, squeezing up and then pressing away.

I hope you feel more focused and calm. Remember, if this breathing technique is new to you, this is a mindfulness practice. The more you practice, the more comfortable and relaxed you will feel.