



***Breathing Therapy  
alternate nostril technique 2:8:4***

## ***Alternating Nostril Technique Handout***

Clinical studies have proven that an increase of oxygen from correct breathing techniques has a major effect on reducing stress and anxiety and will improve the overall health of the person practicing breathing exercises.

This exercise is known as the “**alternating nostril technique**” and it produces optimum function to both sides of the brain. This allows both sides of the brain to function properly. The left side of the brain is responsible for logical thinking and the right side is responsible for creative thinking. Modern scientists have recently found that we do not breathe equally on both nostrils; that is, one nostril is much easier to breathe through than the other at any particular time. Each nostril alternates every few hours. Scientists also discovered that the nasal cycle corresponds with brain function. The electrical activity of the brain was found to be greater on the side opposite the less congested nostril.

The right side of the brain controls creative activity, while the left side controls logical verbal activity. The research showed that when the left nostril was less obstructed, the right side of the brain was predominant. Test subjects were indeed found to do better on creative tests. Similarly when the right nostril was less obstructed, the left side of the brain was predominant. Test subjects did better on verbal skills. One round of alternating nostril breathing is made up of six steps, as described below. Start by practicing three rounds or cycles. Go to a location away from your work space that is quiet, well-ventilated, clean, smoke-free, dust-free, and odor-free (outside locations work well if the weather permits). Stand or sit where you are most comfortable and begin the exercise. This exercise is easy to learn and it only takes a few minutes to complete and is one of the best ways to lessen stress and anxiety.

## *Alternating Nostril Technique: 2:8:4*



- Inhale through the left nostril, closing the right with the thumb, to the count of two (2).
- Hold the breath, closing both nostrils, to the count of eight (8).
- Exhale through the right nostril, closing the left with the ring and little fingers, to the count of four (4).
- Inhale through the right nostril, keeping the left nostril closed with the ring and little fingers, to the count of two (2).
- Hold the breath, closing both nostrils, to the count of eight (8)
- Exhale through the left nostril, keeping the right closed with the thumb, to the count of four (4)

Start with three rounds of these six steps. If at any time during the breathing exercise you feel dizzy or light-headed, stop the exercise, rest, and try again in a few minutes. After successfully completing two or three weeks of daily practice, change the breathing ratios to 4:16:8.

This is a useful technique for calming the mind. Try this exercise in cases where your mind is buzzing with thoughts and you cannot relax. It is valuable when you are bothered by anxiety and stress. It helps balance your mind and works to get both hemispheres working together.