

**JALA-NETI (A WAY TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Yoga is an ancient science. It is a spiritual science of personal exploration with universal application. Like many of the modern sciences, it has many branches of study and practice. The word Yoga means oneness, union or bringing together, and the many different branches of Yoga are all aiming to achieve this oneness through the transcendence of dualistic conflict. That particular branch of yogic sciences called Hatha Yoga, is concerned with the harmonisation of forces within the body and the mind, through various methods of physical and mental cleansing. According to the classical yoga texts, Hatha Yoga includes only 6 Shatkarmas or groups of cleansing techniques or shuddhikriyas: Neti - Dhauti - Nauli - Basti – Kapalbhati – Trataka. Out of the six shuddhikriyas, the shuddhikriya for the cleaning of the nasal path is known as neti. The aim of the process is to purify the breathing path right from the nostrils to the throat.

**KEYWORDS:** Yoga, Hath Yoga, Shatkarmas, Shuddhikriyas.

**INTRODUCTION**

The ancient Yogis developed a wide range of methods for body and mind cleansing. In performing such things, it was only ever their aim to purify and balance the elements of
human structure to the highest level for the highest purposes. Jala Neti, or nasal cleansing using warm salty water, is a very ancient technique which has been passed on for thousands of years by the Yogis for both physical as well as deeper spiritual benefits. Now is possibly a time of the greatest need for such a practice by modern people. With the ever increasing incidence of respiratory illnesses such as asthma, allergies, hayfever, sinusitis, colds, influenzas, etc, as well as the rapid degeneration of spiritual consciousness in some sections of society, the practice of Jala Neti could serve as a panacea for helping to improve the lives of many people. Neti is a practice which is very beneficial to the cleanliness of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, lungs, as well as the thinking processes. A simple yet effective technique is to pour salt water solution into one nostril and let it run out through the other while the mouth is kept open to breathe, using gravity as an aid. Jala-neti, which means to cleanse the nose with water, is an old yogic technique from India. The container used to administer the saline is called a "neti pot". Neti pots are typically made of metal, glass, ceramic or plastic. They rely on gravity, along with head positioning and repeated practice in order to rinse the outer sinus cavities. Typically they have a spout attached near the bottom, sometimes with a handle on the opposite side.

**Solutions Or Salts That can be used in Jala Neti**

- Ordinary tap water- this is not safe and additionally can be uncomfortable because it irritates the mucous membranes.
- Isotonic or Hypertonic Solution- It is normally used, i.e. water with enough salt to match the tonicity of the body cells and blood. For the same reason, lukewarm water is preferred over cold water, which in addition to irritating nasal membranes can also exaggerate the gag reflex during irrigation.
- Use of distilled, sterile or previously boiled and cooled water over ordinary tap water is advised.
- Cooking or Pickling Salt, Table Salt, Vegetable Salt, Macrobiotic Salt can be used for Neti.

**HOW TO PERFORM NETI**

1. First fill the Neti Pot with warm water of a temperature suitable for pouring in the nose. Neither too hot or cold. Just like. A little hotter than warm is better than colder. Pure water is best if available.
2. Place the nose cone into the right nostril, sealing it inside the nostril with a few twists and slight pressure. Try to point the spout straight up in line with the nasal passage so as not to block off the tip of the nozzle on the inside of the nose. Open your mouth and breathe gently through the mouth. Try not to sniff, swallow, laugh, talk or have any movement of air through the nose whilst the water is flowing through to the proportion of one teaspoon for half a litre of water.

3. Now slowly bend forward from the waist so that the tip of the nose is the lowest point of the head; and then tilt/roll the head to the right, so that the left nostril is now the lowest point of the nose. Tilt slowly so that water doesn’t run out the top of the pot onto your face. Keep the nose cone fully sealed into the right nostril so that it doesn’t leak. Keep on mouth breathing whiles the water comes through. Just wait a few seconds and the water should run out the left nostril. Keep breathing slowly and gently through the mouth. After the water begins to run, wait about 30 seconds for about half a pot to flow right to left, and then remove the pot and stand up.

4. Before changing sides, blow out gently through both nostrils to clear water and mucus from the nose.

5. Repeat steps 2 & 3 as above, but with the nose cone entering the left nostril and the flow of water going left to right. After the pot runs dry, stand up, blow out gently through both nostrils and then prepare to dry out the nose.

6. If after doing the above steps, there is still a mucus blockage, the whole process may be repeated several times until it clears.

7. Drying the nose properly is a very important part of the practice. Never neglect to do this part properly. First bend forwards from the waist and hang the head upside down with the nose pointing towards the floor, letting any residual water drain from the nose. Then point the nose towards the knees. In each position, gently breathe in the mouth and out the nose about 10 times. A few droplets of water may run down. Then stand up to do some rapid breathing through the nostrils. First, do 10 breaths through both nostrils together, sniffing in and out moderately with a bit more emphasis on the exhalation. Then close off the right nostril with one finger and do 10 rapid sniffing breaths through the left nostril only. Then do 10 sniffing
breaths through the right nostril only. Finally, do 10 breaths again through both nostrils together.

**Time and Frequency for Neti Practise**
- For general nasal cleanliness, once or twice a day is usually sufficient
- Neti should always be done before rather than after meals.
- Morning before breakfast
- Mid morning before lunch
- Evening before dinner
- Just before bed

**OTHER FORMS OF JALA NETI**
- Dugdha Neti (using milk)
- Ghrita Neti (using ghee)
- Swamoomtra Neti (using one's own urine)
- Sutra Neti (using a cord or catheter)

**Benefits of Jala Neti**
- Neti removes all the dirt and bacteria filled mucus from within the nose.
- It is beneficial for illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis as it reduces the tendency for mouth breathing by freeing the nostrils of mucus.
- It has a cooling and soothing effect on the brain by drawing out excessive heat, and is therefore beneficial for headaches, migraine, epilepsy, hysteria, depression and general mental tension.
- Neti is of great benefit for problems associated with the eyes. It helps flush the tear ducts, encouraging clearer vision and gives a sparkle to the eyes.
- Neti improves sensitivity of the olfactory nerves, helping to restore lost sense of smell, and thereby benefits the relationship with taste and the digestive processes.
- It helps to stimulate better powers of visualisation and concentration and gives a feeling of lightness and clarity to the mind.
- Useful in some nasal infections such as hayfever, allergies, sinusitis and other upper respiratory complaints like sore throats and coughs, post nasal drip, inflammation of tonsils and adenoids.
Limitations/Precautions

- Those who suffer chronic nose bleeds should seek qualified guidance.
- Do not recommend others try out the practice unassisted, or attempt to teach anyone yourself unless fully competent and confident with the technique.
- Children between ages of 2 and 7 usually need assistance.
- Jala Neti is not contra-indicated for any particular illnesses or ailments per se, but guidance should be sought by those with high blood pressure, migraines, raised intracranial pressure or any acute inflammatory condition of nasal tract.

CONCLUSION

By regular practise of Jala Neti helps to establish the correct working environment of temperature and humidity regulation in the nose. Depending on ones living conditions, ones diet, ones personality dispositions, etc, many common ailments can be relieved by simply reestablishing the correct environment in the nose. According to medical science, there are two branches of the Autonomic Nervous System called sympathetic and the parasympathetic, which are constantly working to try to keep a balance of human function. Each of these systems affect different organs and functions of the body. Basically, one controls the functions of stimulation and the other controls the functions of sedation. According to yoga science, by balancing nasal breathing function, better balance of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems is gained, and hence better balance of the whole body’s nervous function is achieved. So by cleansing, balancing and manipulating these two complimentary opposite forces, better physical and mental health is maintained.

REFERENCES

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