

The
JALA
NETI
Booklet

Instruction Manual and General
Information on the Yogic Saline
Nasal Cleansing Technique

The Author may be contacted at:
swami@shoal.net.au

CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION TO HATHA YOGA | 3 |
| INTRODUCTION TO JALA NETI | 5 |
| RESEARCH RESULTS | 14 |
| COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JALA NETI..... | 19 |
| THE EFFECTS OF JALA NETI UPON SMOKING..... | 25 |
| TEACHING JALA NETI TO OTHERS | 30 |
| COMMON PROBLEMS WHEN FIRST LEARNING JALA NETI..... | 35 |
| IN CONCLUSION | 39 |

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The aim of this booklet is to inform people of the enormous potential of yogic cleansing methods, and to outline the one technique which we believe is the single most important and readily accessible one relevant for modern people, namely Jala Neti. Please always remember the difference between reading some information; receiving personalised instruction; and everyday personal practise. Although the methodology and details about Jala Neti and other techniques are described following, we have found that in most cases, personal instruction needs to be given to prevent complications.

This book is not intended to be used by beginners as a “teach yourself” or a “how to teach others manual”. It is usually issued only to experienced yoga practitioners and teachers of Jala Neti or to other persons involved in the medical or healing professions who have an interest in the details of yoga cleansing practices. No responsibility is accepted by the publishers for those who disregard this advice and endeavour to perform any yoga cleansing techniques unassisted.

No copyright is placed on any material in this booklet. The information may be freely distributed without permission. All we ask is that it is reproduced in context, and along with a precaution against self-teaching Jala Neti

INTRODUCTION TO HATHA YOGA

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 practise. 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. The Sanscrit word Hatha, is composed of two syllables. Ha - is the Solar Force, also called Prana Shakti. It is the dynamic, physical, life giving, outward expression of human energy. Tha - is the Lunar Force, also known as Manas Shakti. It is the passive, mental, reflective, inward expression of energy. Yoga philosophy in general, and more specifically the principles of Hatha Yoga, teach that these two aspects of our make up must be balanced for a healthy and spiritually attuned existence. The techniques of Hatha Yoga work on cleansing and purifying all the organs of sensory reception as well as the organs of action. In both the physical and the psychic realms, they create an harmonious flow of energy within the Solar (Ha) and the Lunar (Tha) parts of the human framework.

Sometimes the term Hatha Yoga is misunderstood to mean solely the postures and exercise techniques of Yoga. Some yoga teachers refer to their classes as being Hatha Yoga when they include a range of postures, some breathing exercises, relaxation and a bit of meditation. However, neither of these uses of the term Hatha is strictly correct. According to the classical yoga texts, Hatha Yoga includes only 6 Shatkarmas or groups of cleansing techniques:

Neti - Dhauti - Nauli - Basti - Kapalbhathi - Trataka.

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. These amazing ways of external and internal cleansing were not just for health, but in preparation for the higher states of meditation so as to be able to attain enlightenment, self transcendence and immortality. These days, with our unhealthy environment, impure food stuffs, ailing bodies and disturbed minds, these same techniques can be used just as effectively to improve the quality of our own, somewhat less than enlightened, lives.

At first reading, some of the following techniques may seem rather gross or disgusting to Westerners, but after some explanation and practise the simplicity and efficacy of them becomes evident, and their adaptation into everyday life can become effortless and highly beneficial.

Neti - Nasal cleansing

- Jala Neti Stages 1, 2, 3 (using water)
- Dugdha Neti (using milk)
- Ghrita Neti (using ghee)
- Swamootra Neti (using ones own urine)
- Sutra Neti (using a cord or catheter)

Dhauti - Cleansing the Alimentary Canal & Sense Organs of the Head

- Danta Moola Dhauti (teeth and gums cleansing)
- Chaksua Dhauti (eye cleansing)
- Kama Dhauti (ear cleansing)
- Jihwa Dhauti (tongue cleansing)
- Kapal Randhra Dhauti (scalp cleansing)
- Danda Dhauti (cleaning the oesophagus)
- Vyaghra Dhauti or Kriya (emptying the stomach of food)
- Vaman Dhauti or Kunjal Kriya (stomach cleansing with water)
- Vastra Dhauti (stomach cleansing with cloth)
- Vahnisar Dhauti or Agnisar Kriya (stomach cleansing by panting air)
- Vatsara Dhauti or Bhujangi Mudra (stomach cleansing by burping air)
- Moola Danti or Mool Shodhan (anus cleansing with tumeric root or finger)
- Varisara or Shankaprakshalana (flushing the whole GIT)

Nauli - Abdominal Purification Through Self Massage and Churning

- Madhyama Nauli (isolation of the central abdominal muscles)
- Vama Nauli (isolation of the left abdominal muscles)
- Dakshina Nauli (isolation of the right abdominal muscles)
- Rotational Nauli (rotation of left & right abdominal muscles)

Basti - Colon Cleansing

- Sthal Basti (using air)
- Jala Basti (using water)

Kapalbhati - Frontal Brain Purification

- Vatkrama Kapalbhati (using air, same as Kapalbhati Pranayama)
- Vyutkrama Kapalbhati (using water, same as Jala Neti stage 2)
- Sheetkrama Kapalbhati (using water, same as Jala Neti stage 3)

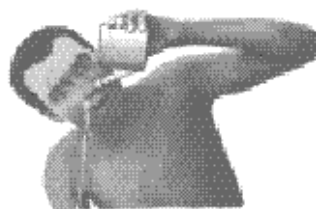
Trataka - Concentrated Gazing to Purify the Optic and Psychic Faculties

This is done as a meditation practice upon a Yantra or Mandala such as a candle flame, star, photo, statue, gemstone or any other symbol or object.

INTRODUCTION TO JALA NETI

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. There are more than 7 different methods and stages of doing Neti, however we will only be describing the essential beginners ones here, which may easily be learned from any yoga teacher experienced in them.

Summary of the Technique



A special Neti Pot is filled with warm, slightly salted water. The nose cone is inserted into one nostril and the position of the head and pot is adjusted to allow the water to flow out of the other nostril.

One must breathe through the mouth whilst the water is flowing through the nasal passages. After half a pot has flowed in one direction, the water flow is reversed. When the water in the pot is finished, the nose must be dried well.

The technique is not as hard or uncomfortable as one may at first think. Most people are pleasantly surprised after even their first attempt, at just how simple and effective this method of health maintenance is. Once learned, the practice can be done in about 3 minutes, and like showering and cleaning the teeth, Neti is easily integrated into ones daily routine of body cleansing.

Summary of the Benefits of Jala Neti

- Neti removes all the dirt and bacteria filled mucus from within the nose.
- It also helps to drain the sinus cavities. This in turn, will help to reprogramme the body's natural mechanisms against 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.

- 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, temper tantrums, 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.
- It can be beneficial for certain types of ear disorders such as middle ear infections, glue ear, tinitis.
- 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 has subtle effects on the pineal and pituitary glands which control the hormonal system. This has a harmonising effect on emotional behaviour.
- Neti affects the psychic centre known as Ajna Chakra which helps in awakening higher states of meditation.
- It helps to stimulate better powers of visualisation and concentration and gives a feeling of lightness and clarity to the mind.
- Neti is excellent for those trying to give up smoking. Since it reduces the tendency for mouth breathing, Neti re-sensitises the nose to the actual pollution of ingesting smoke, thereby de-programming the brain of the physical and psychological addiction.

Anatomy of the Neti Practice



For those who may not have much idea of the internal workings of the nasal cavities, it may seem like a stupid or even dangerous thing to pour warm salty water through ones nose. But when examined with an open mind and a simple picture of the physiological structures involved, fears and misunderstandings can be cleared up. In the diagrams above, the major areas affected by nasal cleansing are shown.

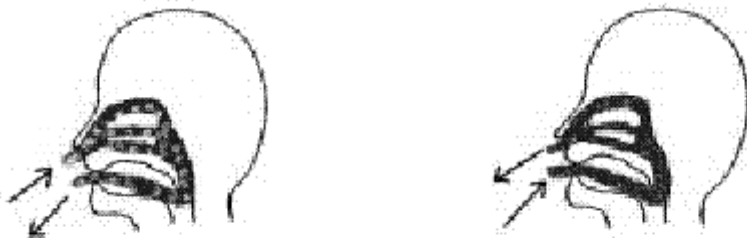
The first line of nasal defence are the tiny hairs called “cilia” which should trap larger particles entering the nose. These cilia are usually cleansed by the act of normal breathing and by blowing the nose, but sometimes, due to a gradual build up of dirt, they can become clogged and may require washing out. The whole of the nasal passages from nose tip to throat (and beyond) are covered with a layer of mucus. This mucus is secreted from within the mucous

lining, and its function is to trap smaller foreign particles and bacteria. The dirty mucus is normally blown out, snorted and coughed out or swallowed. The sinus passages are an even finer mechanism of filtering which, if infected, secrete a runny mucus to evict the germs. This is generally called sinusitis and can be a short term symptom or a chronic condition.



Water Flow - Stage 1

In Stage 1, the water simply flows up one nostril to just above the bridge of the nose where the usual air flows meet, backwards into the middle cavity and then the water flows down and out the other side of the nose. In this route, it passes by the frontal and mid nasal sinuses. In Stage 1 there should be no flow of water back towards the throat or into the mouth. When done correctly, there is usually very little sensation as the water will be the same temperature as the blood, and the salinity will be the same salinity as the blood. As a result, the nose hardly notices the flow through.



Water Flow – Stage 2

Water Flow – Stage 3

In the more advanced of Stages 2 and 3, only attempted after mastery of Stage 1, the water flows fully through the whole nasal cavity, down the back of the nasopharynx and comes out through the mouth. In this route, it passes by the post nasal sinuses, cleansing all the nasal passages more strongly. In neither version is there any discomfort or damage to the nasal functions.

Ideally, at no stage, should any water actually go up into the sinus passages or the eustachian tubes. However, this may happen if the practitioner breathes incorrectly or blows too strongly when drying. In such an event, a few minutes of air drying will usually clear out any stray water droplets. This only causes momentary discomfort and is not dangerous unless an infection is spread where none was before. However, the rules and

procedures of the yogic method of Jala Neti make this very unlikely. The way in which Jala Neti rinses out the dirt and bacteria filled mucous lining would be obvious to most people as the warm water loosens and dissolves any internal build ups, and takes them outwards. But what may not be so obvious is that, due to gravity and a venturi effect, the sinus passages are also drained by the vacuum pressure flow of the water. Whereas it would normally be impossible to drain a “dead end” passage like the sinuses, Jala Neti achieves this ingeniously and simply.

For those with thick mucus conditions as well as those with running sinuses, the relief of sinus pressure can be felt within seconds. As well, the eustachian tubes (which are also dead end passages) receive exactly the same effects as the sinuses, that being - a drawing outwards of dirt and mucus. Hence Jala Neti is of great benefit for blockages and infections of the middle ear, by draining the tubes to relieve the pressure build up as well as removing germs. In a more detailed examination, it would also be seen that through the effect of osmosis and capillary action, the blood vessels of the nose are stimulated to cleanse as well.

The eyes are also beneficially affected by Neti. The tear ducts, which connect from the eyes into the nasal passages, get the same drawing out effect as the sinuses, and this results in a brighter, clearer sense of vision.

The nose is the “air conditioner” of the body. One of the many functions of the nose is to regulate the temperature and humidity of the incoming air. This is necessary so that the breath does not strike the throat and enter the lungs too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet. Upon exhalation, the nose also helps to draw out excessive heat from the frontal portion of the brain, which is the part where the heavy thinking is done, and where the greatest heat builds up when under stress. People with chronic nasal blockages who end up being habitual mouth breathers, therefore have a cooled throat, which imbalances the thyroid function. They also have cooler lungs, which creates excessive moisture and mucus secretion in that area. Mouth breathers also fail to get enough of the cooling effect from exhalation at the front of the brain, and can therefore be described as “hot heads”. Some people have “dry noses” and suffer dry, crusty, nose bleed type problems. Others are “wets”, with the constantly running sinuses and the tissues always up their sleeve! Others have perpetual stuffy and blocked nostrils. 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 re-establishing the correct environment in the nose.

Another aspect of physiology which Jala Neti affects, is the relationship between olfactory function, and the body’s nervous systems. 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. This dualistic

“push/pull” conflict correlates exactly with what the yoga masters say about the forces of Pingala and Ida, or Ha and Tha.

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. Hence it is one of the known effects of Jala Neti that mental tension and headaches can be relieved, as well as such severe nervous system disorders as epilepsy, and psycho-emotional imbalances like temper tantrums.

Method (Stage 1)

1. Nasal cleansing can be performed over a sink, a bowl on a table, in the shower or outside. First fill the Neti Pot with warm water of a temperature suitable for pouring in the nose. Neither too hot or cold. Just like testing a baby’s bottle, pour a bit on your arm or taste and spit to check the temperature. A little hotter than warm is better than colder. Pure water is best if available. Mix in salt to the proportion of **one teaspoon for half a litre of water**. This equates to 0.9% and is called isotonic solution – the same as human blood. Sea salt is best if available. (See section following - “Recommended Salts for Use in Jala Neti”). Mix the salt thoroughly. Taste the water and spit, to be sure of the correct mix and temperature. It will not be as salty as sea water. Adjust if not correct. After several attempts you will be able to recognise the exact correct mixture by taste.
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.
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 while 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. If this still fails to clear

the nose, it is recommended that you visit a doctor to ascertain if there is some structural blockage in the nose.

Drying The Nose

Drying the nose properly is a very important part of the practice. Never neglect to do this part properly. People with high blood pressure should be careful of this part. If dizziness results when draining the nose, drying should only be done standing upright.

1. 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.
2. 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.

This should clear and dry the nose. If it feels as if there is still some water in there, repeat the whole drying process again. Failure to dry the nose properly may manifest the symptoms of a cold for several hours, or leaving dirty water in the sinus passages or eustachian tubes may result in infection.

Difficulties Sometimes Experienced

- Water passing down the throat can be caused by:
 - the angle of the head and/or pot is incorrect,
 - breathing in through the nose whilst the water was passing through,
 - one blocked nostril causing a “damming up effect.”
- Stinging in the nose may be due to:
 - too little salt and/or the water being too hot,
 - newness of the practice which will pass after several attempts,
 - pollutants in your water or contaminants entering the pot.
- If water will not flow freely:
 - the end of the nozzle may be blocked against the inside of the nose,.
 - relax the nose, don't tense up,
 - it may be a temporary mucus blockage which will clear after several attempts,
 - the water could be too cold which causes the nose to close up,
 - if it is a permanent blockage, consult a medical practitioner.
- Nose Bleeds can happen initially to those with high blood pressure, or those with extremely sensitive, raw or irritated nasal lining. In such an event, one should desist from the practice and seek guidance before continuing.

For greater details on troubleshooting see “Common Problems Encountered When First Learning Jala Neti” on pages 35.

Recommended Frequency of Neti Practise

For general nasal cleanliness, once or twice a day is usually sufficient. Jala Neti is best practised first thing in the morning to clear out the night's grogginess and prepare the body and mind for the day's breathing activities. However, if you live or work in a dusty or polluted environment where the nostrils have an increased load of filtering, a good second occasion is upon returning from such work. Neti should always be done before rather than after meals. It can be done up to a maximum of 4 times a day for therapeutic applications, but only upon qualified advice. The following are the possible best times: (i) upon waking before breakfast, (ii) mid morning before lunch, (iii) evening before dinner, (iv) just before bed. In the case of a cold, 3 - 4 times a day will give great relief, providing the nose is well dried each time and this frequency does not induce nose bleeds.

Limitations

- Those who suffer chronic nose bleeds should seek qualified guidance.
- 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.
- Children between ages of 2 and 7 usually need assistance.
- Do not recommend others try out the practice unassisted, or attempt to teach anyone yourself unless fully competent and confident with the technique.
- Nothing other than warm, salty water should be used by the novice.

Recommended Salts for Use in Jala Neti

Doubt sometimes arises as to which type of salt is best for use in Jala Neti. Ideally, pure Sea Salt should be used. Below are some of the different types of salt available on the market today and their suitability for use in Jala Neti.

Cooking or Pickling Salt. This is generally nothing other than pure sea salt, but check on the packet. It can vary in coarseness. The finer the better for quick and even dissolving. If you can't get it fine, grind your own from whatever you can buy. Store airtight to avoid lumping up. Found in supermarkets and health shops.

Table Salt. This is just finely ground cooking salt with a free flowing agent in it to stop it lumping up in your salt shaker. Who needs aluminium, silicone or iodine up their nose? Can be used for Jala Neti without any harm when cooking salt is not available, but try to avoid it if possible.

Vegetable Salt. This is a compound mixture of salts, herbs and spices, and will do your nose and olfactory senses NO GOOD AT ALL!

Rock Salt. Depending on origin, rock salts have other minerals in them and are therefore not recommended for Neti. They are usually very big, hard crystals requiring a salt cellar. Nice for cooking with, but not for up your nose.

Macrobiotic Salt. Often greyish in colour. Usually just sea salt from Japan and therefore more expensive than local salt. May be used for Neti with no harm.

Other Forms Of Neti

Jala Neti Stage 2 (Brief description only)

The second stage of Jala Neti is actually called Vyutkrama Kapalbhati, or sinus bellowing. It's a more advanced and powerful practice, hence one should first master the simpler version of Stage 1. This stage of Neti should be supervised by a teacher on your first few attempts.

Whilst the water is running through from one nostril to the other, it is gently sniffed backwards and spat out of the mouth. Although not dangerous, one should not swallow any water when sniffing backwards. When doing Vyutkrama Kapalbhati, first one potful of water is done as per the Stage 1 version, and then a second potful is done in this more advanced way. In this case, it is not necessary to dry the nose fully between Stages 1 and 2. Extra care must be taken to dry the nose properly after Stage 2, as more water floods the nasal passages and may cause irritation for some time if not completely dried out. Vyutkrama Kapalbhati Neti works more on clearing out the posterior sinus passages which Stage 1 does not reach and is even more effective than Stage 1 for post nasal drip, sinusitis, snoring, chronic catarrh, thyroid imbalances, coughs and throat problems.

Stage 3 (Brief description only)

The third stage or method is a little more difficult and advanced again. This is called Sheetkrama Kapalbhati. Here the warm salty water is taken in through the mouth and snorted out the nose. This is quite tricky at first and may be a little uncomfortable in the beginning. The benefits are similar yet stronger than the other forms of Neti. It is done after a potful of Stages 1 & 2. Again care must be taken to dry the nasal passages properly, and again, this stage of Neti should be supervised by a teacher on the first few attempts.

Dugdha Neti - Neti with Milk

Using milk in the Neti pot, pre-warmed to body temperature, is suitable for those who may suffer chronic nose bleeds or those who initially find intense irritation from the use of salty water. Milk Neti can be done in instances where airborne chemicals or particles have already stripped and/or irritated the nasal lining, for example after sanding plaster or fibreglass. It is best done after a normal pot of warm salty water of Stages 1 and 2. The milk does not need to flow through from one side to the other for half a pot as in the water methods. It only fills the ingoing nostril and is then withdrawn. Once from each side is sufficient. Milk Neti should not be done without qualified advice for your specific problem, and even then, it should not be done excessively.

Sutra Neti - Nasal Cleansing Using a Cord

This is a very effective method of keeping the nasal passages open to their fullest capacity. Sutra Neti is performed by passing a cord made of cotton threads or a rubber catheter into the nose through one nostril and then out via the mouth. The cord is gently pulled to and fro for some time, removed and then threaded through the other nostril and out the mouth again. With practise,

the cord can be passed in one nostril and out the other nostril. Sutra Neti can be of great benefit, and is highly recommended, for those who may have been trying Jala Neti for a while and who find that most times the same one nostril is more blocked than the other. They may have some kind of fleshy obstruction such as cartilage obstructing the nasal passages. Short of a medical operation, Sutra Neti is a viable alternative for removing such blockages. Firstly one should try to succeed with the 3 forms of Jala Neti using water, and if this fails to clear blockages, a proper medical examination should be made of the nose, and the cause of structural blockage ascertained. Sutra Neti should then be learned under the guidance of an experienced teacher.

Swamootra Neti - Using Ones Own Urine

The idea of pouring urine through your nose would be, for nearly everybody, a very strange concept! Here we will not be dealing with the subject in any detail, as this is a whole branch of yogic science, about which there are more complete texts. The principle of Swamootra Neti functions in the same way as that of Homoeopathy, where “the ingestion of like cures like”. The daily by-products of body metabolism such as urine, have within them tiny amounts of tell tale substances which indicate the condition of the body’s internal health. The smell and taste of urine, when used in Swamootra Neti, is a method of bio-feedback to the brain, which stimulates it to gradually reprogramme the body’s metabolism towards a better function with lesser toxic waste products. This has a very potent healing effect on many illnesses. When learning Swamootra Neti, there are certain dietary guidelines which must be followed. To overcome any aversion to urine, one is eased into acceptance of the practice, by beginning with weak solutions and eventually moving towards full strength urine.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Some yoga teachers here in Australia have been teaching the Jala Neti technique and providing Neti Pots to our yoga students for over 20 years. For a period of some 18 months, the teachers involved with production of this booklet have been accruing research data, by issuing a questionnaire with each of our Neti Pots sold. Of over 500 issued in the last year, we have received nearly 200 replies. The responses have now been recorded and collated as below. As well as the written replies, many yoga teachers who teach Jala Neti have reported lots of anecdotal evidence supporting our survey data on the benefits of Neti. In all the data following, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Personal Impressions About Neti Before, During, and After First Trial

| | Before | During | After |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | % | % | % |
| Positive thoughts or feelings | 28 | 48 | 76 |
| Negative thoughts or feelings | 48 | 34 | 18 |
| Mixed thoughts or feelings | 24 | 18 | 6 |

Analysis

The above table shows the fact that about half the students had negative impressions before first trying Neti. This is to be expected in cultures such as ours. Comments such as the following were abundant.

| |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| Yuk, no way! |
| Thought I might drown or choke |
| Sceptical that I could do it |
| Absolute fear |
| Gross, not socially acceptable |
| A good party trick - but you're not really serious |
| Weird and scary |
| Disgusting |

However, during their first trial, more than half the respondents found the experience of water passing through their nose was not that bad. There were many comments such as:

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| A bit tingly |
| Quite pleasant |
| Not as uncomfortable as I'd imagined |
| Warm and relaxing |
| Surprisingly easy |
| Painless and trouble free |
| It went through easily |
| No different to swimming. |

The outcome after the first trial, was that three quarters of the practitioners found that Neti was good and beneficial. Afterwards, these were the typical comments:

| |
|------------------------------------|
| Not as bad as I had thought |
| Clean and fresh feeling |
| Much clearer breathing |
| Light headed, but pleasantly so |
| Could really breathe at last |
| Smelled things I'd never noticed |
| Incredible relief from congestion |
| Great, really alive |
| Like after a good swim in the surf |

Frequency Practised

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Less often than alternate days | 11 % |
| From daily to alternate days | 15 % |
| Once daily | 60 % |
| 2 - 3 times daily | 14 % |

Analysis

After some time of regular practise, and by the time they were requested to return their questionnaire 5 weeks later, most students had settled into a routine of every day practise. As expected, it was these students who reported a gradual improvement in their nasal problems. Even beyond the initial health benefits, these people will most probably continue to use Neti just as a daily ablution of habit and illness prevention. The 14% using Neti more than once daily, were advised to do so by their yoga teacher for specific therapeutic reasons. Such students needed a big boost to overcome chronic nasal problems, and their questionnaire responses indicated drastic initial changes and then a tapering off of the effects. The 15% who did Neti on average between daily and alternate days, found moderate gains, and most admitted to wanting to do it everyday "but I'm a bit slack". The 11% who only did Neti less than alternate days, were either dreadfully forgetful, not really interested, or only did it "when I felt a need to - such as being very blocked up". These were the respondents who had ambivalent or mixed impressions about its healing efficacy.

Reported Short and Long Term Benefits

| Short Term | |
|------------|------|
| Yes | 94 % |
| No | 6 % |

| Long Term | |
|------------|------|
| Yes | 92 % |
| No | 8% |

Analysis

We defined “short term” as the first 2 weeks, and “long term” as beyond that. Nearly everyone reported some kind of immediate benefit from the use of Neti. The benefits of Neti, whether they were further improvement in the initial, known problems, or whether they were unexpected extra benefits, continued to accrue for some months. A tapering off over time is to be expected due to the drop off rate of “great hopes and new regimes”. Also, the effects of Neti become more subtle over time, and once over their present health crisis, most people are not interested in continuing preventative health maintenance.

Overall Impression of Neti after 1 – 2 Months Of Practise

| | |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Positive thoughts or feelings | 97 % |
| Negative thoughts or feelings | 0 % |
| Mixed/unsure thoughts or feelings | 3% |

Analysis

Pretty well speaks for itself. An abundance of comments like:

| |
|---------------------------------------------------|
| Wish I'd discovered it 50 years ago |
| Essential to daily health care |
| Great! I'll be a lifelong user of Neti |
| I love it - I'm hooked! |
| Thank You. Neti has changed my life |
| Even more useful than I imagined |
| An excellent cleansing method |
| I can't understand why doctors don't recommend it |
| Should be more widely known |
| Fantastic way of clearing congestion |
| Simple, painless, beneficial |
| Safe and effective cleansing ritual |
| I can't imagine not doing it forever |
| Easy, gives a sense of well being |
| Great for clearer thinking, easier breathing |
| Would recommend it to anyone who breathes |
| Better than sinus medications. |

Symptoms and Results

The following information was gathered from the questionnaires of students who reported the effects of Jala Neti upon different specific and general health ailments they had been suffering prior to learning saline cleansing. Although only a few samples in some cases, this still gives a representative idea of what many yoga teachers have reported from years of verbal responses.

A lot of people tried Neti “just because the teacher said it was a good thing to do”. Some tried it for the “adventure” or “just because it was part of the yoga course”. They thought they would just do it once and never again because they didn’t have any major respiratory health problems, but after actually experiencing it, “they were sold!”

Many people do not recognise many of their day to day discomforts as medically defined illnesses. They just think such things are the usual ups and downs of daily life. Statements such as – “I’m always a bit blocked up, I get fuzzy in the head for day, I’ve been continually dull and listless lately, I always carry a tissue because I sneeze a lot/my nose runs a lot, I get pretty regular headaches, I’ve been nursing a sore throat for years, I cough a bit most mornings”, are hard to categorise and quantify for data collation.

Such respondents did not name these conditions as illnesses or as being reasons for taking up Net in the first place, but they did mention later on that such things had now ceased. They would probably have considered that they were in good health, but never the less, they received benefits from the practice and hence realised that they had been ignoring ill-health. This would explain the large numbers of what we have called “unexpected benefits”.

The number of respondents who were smokers was not accurately documented as there was no specific question requesting that information. Only a few smokers mentioned it in their questionnaire. We know the proportion of yoga students who smoke is probably much higher than 2 out of 200! Continuation of smoking whilst being a user of Neti, would greatly reduce the beneficial effects of the practice. Also, it is interesting to note, that when introducing Neti to a class, it is often the smokers who are the least interested in embracing such a concept.

In the table following, our criteria were defined as follows:

Symptoms Mentioned (Total). Each time a symptom or ailment was mentioned on a questionnaire, either as desiring benefit or as an unexpected benefit of some sort, it was recorded. Many respondents had multiple ailments, both known and unaware. Some categorisation of non-specific disorders was made.

Symptoms, No Change. A percentage count of where there was mention of no improvement + where there was no mention of improvement in an ailment where there was initial mention of desire for improvement.

Symptoms, Improved. A percentage count of where improvement was noticed in an ailment where there was initial mention of desire for improvement.

Unexpected Benefits. A percentage count of where improvement was noticed in ailments where there was no initial mention of desire for improvement of that ailment.

Overall Benefits. The sum of Symptoms Improved + Unexpected Benefits as a percentage of Symptoms Mentioned.

| Symptom, Ailment or Benefit Gained | Symptoms Mentioned (Total No.) | Symptoms No change % | Symptoms Improved % | Unexpected Benefits % | Overall Benefits % |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Allergies | 8 | 37 | 25 | 38 | 63 |
| Asthma/Bronchitis | 8 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 50 |
| Chronic Mucus & Catarrh | 7 | 42 | 29 | 29 | 58 |
| Colds | 14 | 21 | 29 | 50 | 79 |
| Ear Problems | 12 | 17 | 17 | 67 | 84 |
| Eye Problems | 8 | 0 | 13 | 88 | 100 |
| General Breathing Difficulties | 103 | 1 | 33 | 66 | 99 |
| Hayfever | 27 | 15 | 70 | 15 | 85 |
| Headaches (incl. Migraine) | 50 | 8 | 6 | 86 | 92 |
| Nasal Blockages | 55 | 14 | 33 | 53 | 86 |
| Poor Smelling Function | 19 | 5 | 11 | 84 | 95 |
| Post Nasal Drip | 8 | 12 | 75 | 13 | 88 |
| Psychological Imbalances eg anxiety, low self confidence, general malaise | 17 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| Sinusitis | 49 | 16 | 69 | 15 | 84 |
| Sleep Problems | 7 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| Smoking Habit | 2 | 0 | 0 | 100 | 100 |
| Spiritual/Meditative Benefits | 15 | 13 | 40 | 47 | 87 |

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JALA NETI

Q. *To me it seems so unnatural to put water up your nose, or to wash out your stomach and bowels.*

A. Unusual yes, unnatural no. From the yogi's point of view, smoking cigarettes, eating junk food, late nights of mind numbingly bad television, modern cities and their pollution, sleeping on thick spring mattresses, sitting in chairs at computers all day, working in chemical factories and getting stuck in traffic jams, are all pretty unnatural activities for the human body. What's natural and what's unnatural all depends on where you are at. Yoga says, that like medicine which may be a bit distasteful or which may at first seem unnatural, when you are sick, unusual methods may be necessary to heal oneself.

The Hatha Yoga cleansing techniques are all just non-medicinal ways of maintaining the body and overcoming illness. The ancient yogic methods are really the most natural ways to help the bodily systems heal themselves. All you need is some water and some salt! They cleanse all the orifices and improve the function of the 6 senses. Note that we include 6 senses. Yoga cleansing is not just for flesh and blood but also for the mind, the sixth sense. These cleansing techniques are really very simple and commonsense ways of keeping every organ and function of the body working to its best possible potential.

We do service our cars by washing and polishing the outside to keep the paintwork in good condition so that the bodywork does not rust and so that they look good. We might get the radiator flushed of rust, or the engine scraped out of carbon deposits. We do wipe down the kitchen benches daily and clean out the cupboards when they get a build up of dirt inside. What's the difference with our bodies? We do wash the outside of our bodies regularly for both hygiene and appearance, well why not the inside? Just like servicing the car's air filter, we should clean our nose filters. Just as decarbonising the engine helps it to work more efficiently, we should keep our digestive system in peak condition so that it helps the fuel (that is food) burn better and the wastes to be eliminated more quickly. Even more important than our cars and our kitchens, are the vehicles we spend our whole day in – that is our human bodies.

These yoga cleansing methods may seem weird or funny to many people, but this is only because in modern Western culture, most people have been conditioned to think that anything inside the body is odd and distasteful. Most people are fairly ignorant of their own body's functions. These days, when it comes to medical repairs after years of personal neglect, people prefer to have an anaesthetic and have someone else do the "dirty work".

One mechanism of the mucous lining is to cleanse itself through swallowing the build up, but what sort of germs were your throat and stomach designed to cope with? Modern 20th century living has all manner of germs

and pollutants which we really shouldn't be breathing in and trapping internally in the first place. Some of the smog chemicals city people inhale all day are plainly cancerous and some are renowned killers in only just tiny quantities. Our environment nowadays is far from what the "respiratory designer" had in mind. It is certainly no crime against nature to help the body's cleansing processes along a bit. In addition to the body, what about that vehicle of thought and feeling, that is, the mind? What sort of methods can be employed for brain washing? (Meaning brain cleansing rather than mental indoctrination). And this is where the processes of meditation come into it. For millennia, the Yogis have thought nothing of using self induced methods to fix up their own body and mind. They had a great understanding of the internal functions well before the X-Ray machine and the scalpel were invented. They knew about anatomy and physiology by doing these and other certain practices upon themselves. They learnt through experimentation and through meditative insight (in-sight, that is, looking within). And over the centuries they have preserved this knowledge, these clever ways of preventing physical and mental breakdown, even up until today, so that it can be passed on to us and our descendants.

Q. *I think that actually doing Neti sounds disgusting but I would like to do it for the benefits. How can I get over my mental resistance?*

A. This is a common conflict. The intellect says "Yeah, that's a great idea" but the feelings in the stomach are disgusted at the thought of it. The best way is to read all the literature about it so as to strengthen your rational argument for doing it, and then be carefully guided by a qualified person who will take into account your fears and nervousness and prove to you in about 3 minutes just how simple and easy it really is. Your irrational feelings will then be won over by a truly positive experience.

Q. *I enjoy doing the simple Neti but what's the point, really, of doing all those weird advanced methods like Urine Neti, or Sutra Neti?*

A. The more advanced forms of Neti are both specific therapeutic practices in a physical sense, as well as being advanced spiritual techniques, the primary purpose of which was to help awaken the higher mental faculties. Such practices have been preserved by the yogic masters and passed on to their disciples for thousands of years. Remember too, that for many centuries, they were kept secret. It is only in the last 100 years or so that these things have become known around the Western world. These rarer techniques supersensitise the sinus passages, and stimulate higher sensory functions in the brain and the mind. That's really why all yoga practices exist, for higher productivity in the art and disciplines of meditation. They are not really for sinusitis, hayfever, allergies or asthma! The yogis didn't have those things thousands of years ago. They used these methods to purify themselves to the ultimate degree, so that their body and mind were more highly developed instruments for investigation of consciousness and perception of knowledge. That's how they gained their wisdom. This is also what all the scriptures say:

that Yoga is to purify the body, to purify the mind, to evolve the nervous system, to enter into deeper meditation, so as to evolve the consciousness. But along the way there are all sorts of amazing health benefits. But if you're not drawn to that at this stage, don't worry, don't do them. Maybe one day your spirit will wish to soar beyond your present human limits into the super-human realms of urine up your nose!

Q. Isn't running water through your nose dangerous, after all, the nose wasn't designed to take in water?

A. Jala Neti is in no way a dangerous practice. When properly instructed and done according to tradition, it will bestow only benefits. However, if misused or abused, at best, it will not work in the reputed way, or at worst, it can lead to minor side effects such as headaches, colds, nasal infections, earaches. Of all the people we have taught properly, and from all the research we have conducted, we have never seen any harmful side effects. But proper instruction is the key. All the reports about problems with Jala Neti have come from those who self-teach or those who try to improvise beyond the traditional methods. This is why it is best to receive instructions personally from a qualified teacher.

But water in the nose is not unusual. Remember the way you feel after a good swim in the surf? A good flushing of the nose with salt water is a good thing. Stage 1 of Jala Neti is no more than that – a flush out of the frontal nose passages, except that the water is warm, 4 times less salty and you are in control – not like when you get dumped in the surf and come up spluttering half drowned! That's what people are afraid of when they first hear about saline nasal cleansing – their memories of nearly drowning at the beach. But its nothing like that. Admittedly there are certain internal nasal orifices in which the salty water should not go. It may take a few attempts to get the head angle correct so that this does not happen, but the results of a few bad attempts are not serious.

Q. How does Jala Neti actually work? How does running warm, salty water through your nose fix up so many problems?

A. Without being too anatomical or medical about it, the basic elements involved with Jala Neti, and all saline cleansing techniques for that matter, is that the warmth and salinity of the water is the same as the body's own metabolism so that there is no tendency for rejection. You can use warm isotonic saline in any part of the body for health benefits. The exact proportion of salt used is very important for this reason. Some people are worried about the salt. They think it might clog up their arteries! They ask, "Can it be done without the salt?" The answer is no. Salty water is a great body cleanser. It is used to flush out old mucus secretions which have trapped dirt and germs from the activities of everyday life. The normal function of the body's mucous lining within the upper respiratory tract is to do that very thing, to trap dirt and germs. Normally sniffing, blowing, coughing, sneezing and swallowing can clear out gross particles which become trapped in the mucous lining, but by

washing the nasal passages with saline water, a complete clean out is done more effectively and is better at preventing the rubbish passing further into the system if the "first stage filters" get blocked and overloaded. In a healthy person who eats well, breathes well and lives in a clean environment, the mucous lining should be able to cope alone and cleanse itself on a regular basis. But for a mouth breather, or one who eats bad food, or one who works in a dirty city or factory, the dirt and germs build up causing all manner of malfunctions in the nose, sinus passages, eyes, ears, throat, chest. Also, unconsciously they swallow this dirt-laden mucus and then have stomach problems, and on it goes, right through the system.

There's a yoga aphorism which says, "Breathing through your mouth is as natural as eating through your nose". Many people under-estimate the importance of proper nose breathing and these are the people who wonder why they are sick so often. Once the associated functions of the nose become healthy through regular practise of Jala Neti, many ailments can clear up. In this author's opinion, mouth breathing would have to be the single most health-destructive habit existing in the world today.

Let's just look at that. We breathe about 12 - 16 times per minute. That's a lot of breaths per day, and a lot of breaths per year. If that most basic function is out of kilter with what nature has designed for our bodies, and we continue to do that year after year, then we have surely created an ever-present potent force for destruction of our natural well being.

In addition to the physical effects of Jala Neti, the mental or psychological benefits of the practice can be attributed to the more subtle effects which Neti has upon the brain, coming from the balancing of the nostril breath. Within the olfactory regions, there are very fine sensors which detect the ionic conditions of incoming and outgoing air. The ionic state is closely related to the pranic effect and also to the triggers of sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Just like when a hot and dry wind blows for several days, your mind can go a bit crazy because of the predominance of positive ions. Conversely, a cool sea breeze, which is higher in negative ions, can counteract this and set you normal again. Jala Neti is often described like a refreshing swim in the surf.

A lot more research needs to be done by science to fully understand these effects upon the human mind. Whether you study it and can prove such claims is not important – it never the less works, just as the yogis have described.

Here is a true story which demonstrates just how important the relationship between nose breathing, physical ailments, lifestyle habits and mental states really is. A new student in one of my yoga classes had been working away at the back of the room for several weeks. During the Pranayamas (breath techniques), she had obviously been battling with a blocked nose. I left her unattended for a few weeks to see if it would pass, but it didn't. So, after class one week, I inquired what the problem was. She told me that she had one permanently blocked nostril due to an injury during childhood. Her nose was noticeably bent from what appeared to be a deviated

septum (nose bone). She told me of her many ailments and why she had taken up yoga. She listed asthma, hayfever and sinusitis as the main ones she wanted to overcome, and she also confided that she wanted to give up smoking, coffee, chocolate addiction and to relax more because she had trouble sleeping without pills. She also mentioned that her biggest concern at present was that she and her husband really wanted to have a baby but that she had been unable to conceive due to her own infertility. They were so desperate that they were considering going on the IVF programme.

This woman was very skinny, very nervous, very talkative before and after class and often rushed in late and hassled. She was what some people would call a nervous wreck, but what I call "a classic left nostril case". Her life was propped up by the whole range of artificial stimulants and sedatives. The predominantly left nostril personality runs on nervous energy, on the mental or lunar force, without there being any real solar life force. They are often "in their heads", and not very "grounded". I asked her which nostril was blocked. Sure enough, it was the right one. I explained to her, from yoga's point of view, the importance of balanced nose breathing, and how many of her problems could be symptomatic of an imbalance in her breathing and pranic systems. I suggested she have her nose checked out by a specialist and that it could be very beneficial to actually have it straightened to allow full nose breathing. I didn't really think that she would take my advice.

Well, that student did not return to the yoga class the next week (and I wondered if I had scared her off Yoga for good!) but some months later, she did return, with a tiny piece of sticking plaster over the bridge of her nose. I asked her what had happened, and she told me that her doctor had also advised her to have an operation to properly restore her nasal function. She then went on to tell me that since that operation, her whole life had turned around. She had given up cigarettes, an act she considered impossible before. She had given up coffee because she didn't have such a need for caffeine stimulation. She had cut down on chocolate, her appetite had increased, she had put on weight, was more relaxed, sleeping without pills, said she felt stronger and healthier than ever before, AND she had become pregnant!!! Now I'm not suggesting that nose straightening is a definite cure for female infertility !!!!! but all those problems (both physical and psychological) could possibly have been factors in the inability of her reproductive system to create a fertile environment in which to conceive. No doubt there was also an element of her mind that was blocking many things changing in her life, and that the new balance of breathing and relaxation had helped her to see things anew.

Q. *Can Neti be done too often?*

A. Yes. The correct frequency is determined by a person's particular problems and particular needs, but for most people, in most situations, once or twice a day, first thing in the morning and/or in the evening is sufficient on a regular basis. In some therapeutic situations, three or four times a day may be recommended, but this would not be continued indefinitely. This is why one should be advised in the beginning, and checked up on occasionally.

Q. *I have done a similar thing for many years. I take water from a bowl in my hand and sniff it up my nose. Is it like that?*

A. No, not at all. We know that many people have tried this. Some say their grandmothers or grandfathers used to do it. Some use cold water and some use warm. Some use salt and some do not. But those methods can't possibly work as well as Jala Neti. It also runs the risk of leaving water up the sinus passages which will be irritated for some time afterwards. They do say it works in clearing the nose and helps prevent colds, and it may somewhat, but after these people have tried Jala Neti, they are always impressed at how much easier, safer and more effective it is.

Q. *Should the amount of salt ever be changed, for instance if you get a cold?*

A. Not generally. The proportion of salt the yogis have been recommending for thousands of years is called normal saline – the same ratio as human blood. Too little salt will actually sting the nose, as will too much. There is a mixture which ENT surgeons prescribe called buffered hypertonic saline which is much saltier but this is a horrible thing to run up your nose and should only be used for severe nasal conditions. For the general user, and for preventative nasal health, always use: One level teaspoon of salt per half a litre of water or 0.9%.

Q. *Can anything other than a proper Neti Pot be used?*

A. Well, we have heard of other devices being tried – such as tea pots, invalid feeders, modified baby bottles, modified tomato sauce bottles, cooking funnels, the bowl and sniffing method, someone even improvised with a length of garden hose?!?!? But quite frankly, why bother? You could get a tea leaf stuck up your nose! Also all these other things may have odd smells or tastes which will spoil the experience. There is no simpler method than a well designed Neti Pot. If you're so desperate and so poor or stingy that you can't afford to buy the proper device, we'll send you one of our Neti Pots for free.

THE EFFECTS OF JALA NETI UPON SMOKING

This section was written by an ex-smoker of 40 a day for 15 years who, through yoga, came to understand the real reasons for smoking and the intricate personal web which causes both the initial as well as the continuing adoption of such a habit.

It is well accepted by most people, that the smoking habit is both a strong physiological as well as psychological addiction. It is now accepted that the physical addiction to nicotine may even be stronger than heroin and other illegal narcotics. The life-threatening effects of smoking are well documented and the myriad non-specific ailments that smokers suffer are also well known. There are many “quit smoking” campaigns and methods which have had varying degrees of success with different people. These methods, which depend mainly on the attitude and willpower of the person performing them, along with a few lifestyle “tricks”, all focus on “giving up smoking”. They focus on the cigarettes, the act of smoking and the substance of nicotine and tar as the baddies. But the cigarettes and nicotine are not the problem, nor is the smoking itself. They are only symptoms of the true problem. In reality, it is the smoker who is the problem, since all of those things are wrapped up within the organism of the person’s body, lifestyle and their unique personality. But as well as neglecting this whole area of the personality of the smoker, what is rarely addressed in this whole issue is - the interconnection between: (i) the biological addiction to a known toxin, (ii) the psychological addiction to a social habit, and (iii) the spiritual malaise which causes a continuity of actions towards a slow and premature death by self administered poison.

To date, such a complex personal equation has never been satisfactorily addressed by either the doctors, the psychiatrists or the religious teachers. The science of yoga has methods which address each and all of these factors in an integrated way. When recommending the use of Jala Neti and other yoga techniques to help with giving up smoking, it is not intended that smoking be given up straightaway. The symptom (ie smoking) is not the focus of the “treatment” or work to be done. It may take some weeks, months or even years as the habit tapers off, to get to the bottom of the real problem and really cure the smoker.

Most smokers would each have differing degrees of difficulty conquering and understanding each of those areas listed above, and therefore any programme of giving up must cater for the individual personality and the deep down motives of the smoker. For example, some people may well be able to exercise an immensely strong willpower and stop the cigarettes on one day, but even this is not enough to stop physical symptoms of withdrawal. The cigarettes may have stopped but other negative habits may be taken up to cope with the abstinence resulting in manifestations of alternate neuroses. The withdrawal feelings and recurring cravings may still last for years. The tension, irritability and frustration may never leave them.

Others take longer to cut down and eventually give up smoking by stopping (and re-starting) many times over many years. This approach can help to lessen withdrawal discomforts but, over that time, they will still have to undergo the same processes of resolution in their body and mind that the immediate stopping method would have caused.

Admittedly, some people never want to get to understand “why” they smoke. All self understanding causes self confrontation and this might explain the refusal of many to even try giving up. But with yogic methods, it does not have to result in any discomfort – physical or mental. According to yoga principles, smoking, like any addiction, habit or personality flaw, is not to be fought against. Rather, it is to be understood as both a physical and mental cause and result of ones own personality. This is why it is so hard to break such cycles. A case of which comes first - the neurosis or the habit???

Given that there are always unconscious motivations for doing such a self destructive thing, ones self awareness must be increased along the way to the point of not wanting to be self destructive anymore. This is a much wider issue than just the smoking aspect. Removing the cigarettes, or stopping the act of smoking can still leave remnant self destructiveness which will, sooner or later, just re-manifest in other forms or most usually as smoking again. Ones perception and understanding about living, breathing, thinking, feeling and acting must change. Changing from cigarettes to nicotine chewing gum will not help in this area, neither will sticking little nicotine patches on your arm help in increasing ones awareness of thoughts, feelings and actions associated with the causes of self destruction. Such methods can only ever be an incomplete solution to a far more complex problem. In giving up any complex addiction, each of these 3 interconnected areas need to be addressed.

The Physical Addiction

A smoker's body needs its daily hits. The whole biology has been modified over time to revolve around the regular intake of the cigarette's chemicals. Therefore as the habit is reduced, the body has to be re-educated to what is normal and what is healthy. This cannot happen over night. So that the body can begin to experience its natural state again, one needs to detoxify the blood stream of nicotine gradually, so as to avoid the strong side effects of going “cold turkey”. Of course, cutting down the input of the addictive substances and gradual modification of lifestyle factors will accelerate this process. Therefore the teacher or therapist must regularly assess the balance between the body's addictive needs and the desired cleansing regime. Too much too fast will possibly cause regression. Everyone knows that there is residual nicotine build up in the bloodstream, the muscle structure and the brain which keeps maintaining the addiction. But who would think that re-programming the nostrils and using saline cleansing techniques would be an effective way to start breaking such physical addictions? Jala Neti is only one of the many yoga cleansing techniques which are of assistance in respiratory remediation and circulatory detoxification. On a retreat or in a consultative therapeutic situation, the student would also be taught all the other techniques

for body detoxification. These involve specific yoga postures, exercises, breathing regimes and cleansing kriyas.

This whole area of blood cleansing is also tied in with diet, the digestive system and the bowels. One cannot hope to clean out years of airborne toxins (much of which is swallowed and absorbed into the digestive tract via the nasal mucus) without addressing the matter of food and diet. Nicotine is well known as an appetite suppressant and therefore as this crutch is removed, all sorts of digestive difficulties and food trips are sure to manifest. After many years, a smoker would have little or no sense of smell, little or no true palate appreciation. Giving up smoking is the ideal opportunity to re-educate the palate and set up a better eating regime. All these things are part and parcel of yoga's broad approach to physical therapy and healing.

In assisting the breaking of the smoking habit, Jala Neti is the first and foremost technique to be employed. If you just think of Jala Neti as a pretty neat way to flush out a bit of old mucus from the nose, then you have missed many of the deeper elements which are at work in the realm of yoga's psychic methodologies. There exist subtle connections between the olfactory nerves, the brain's electrical impulses, the hormonal system and the patterns of mind which cause ingrained habits and actions. Without even knowing it, whilst clearing out mucus, you are "massaging" the nature of the mind and creating better function of each of these, as well as better harmony between them.

As well as re-sensitising the mechanism of smell and sinus function, Jala Neti helps to purify the nasal capillaries which carry the gases in the blood which the brain analyses with each breath. Whereas odours can be detected some distance away from the body by a healthy sense of smell, and their meaning transmitted to the brain, a much stronger message is carried to the brain by the gases actually inspired through the nose.

But - look what a smoker is doing! They are not inspiring through the nose. They are drawing that toxic smoke in through the mouth. As a result, the brain does not actually know that the body is ingesting that smoke, nicotine and all the other chemicals of treated tobacco. The whole filtering, sensing and protection mechanism is being by-passed by mouth breathing the smoke. What chance does the brain or mind have of preventing or breaking such an addiction under those circumstances? The only time when the olfactory senses get any indication of smoking, is if the smoker exhales through the nose, in which case, the spent smoke is much less potent since the lungs have absorbed the desired chemicals. This exhalation through the nose actually traps even more of the smoke particles in the mucous lining on the way out, which then run backwards and are swallowed. The result is a mixture of cigarette by-products in the stomach. If you wanted to let the brain know that you were in fact smoking, put the cigarette filter up your nose and draw it in! Then you'll see what the body's natural reaction would be! You would either have a massive head spin, vomit or faint. Such is the true response of the nasal mechanisms and the brain to cigarette smoke entering the body.

So for a smoker, wherever there is cigarette smoke in the air, the brain adjusts the psyche and the physiology to what it is normally accustomed to,

and the addiction is maintained. But if the nasal passages have been re-programmed by Jala Neti on a regular basis to smell properly so that they can identify good clean air, the brain thinks - "Hey, what's this rubbish coming in, I don't like that" and sends a message of revulsion to the mind. Due to this, the smoker will be less interested in the cigarette at an unconscious biological level and can sometimes even feel nauseous in the presence of cigarette smoke. That makes it much easier to give up if you are automatically turned off the smell and taste of unnatural substances by the body's own protection requirements. These mechanisms of nature's design are there to ensure that all gases should enter the body through the nose, and that only liquids and solids should enter via the mouth. That is the greatest trick of smoking and the single strongest reason why it is so hard to give up. The brain has no defence against it. If you give the brain back its defence mechanisms by cleansing the nostrils and lessening mouth breathing the body will naturally start to reject consuming the poison.

The Psychological Addiction

As well as the obvious physical factors which sustain smoking, there are the psychological areas which also need to be addressed. To satisfactorily resolve the emotional aspects of addiction, one must strengthen the personality of the smoker who does so for reasons such as peer pressure, image, rebellion, etc, and which is due to association with certain places, people, events, etc. To take away or transfer such habits is no solution to the inner weakness of a smoker. It can actually make them feel less powerful, less capable, less in control of their own life. Therefore, some other form of self image needs to be established, a new form which is built on ones true worth, not one reflected by others.

All yoga practices in general, and specifically Jala Neti, help in making one more of an individual, and therefore responsible for ones own actions, even under great emotional or mental pressure. Relaxation and meditative techniques help a person to confront their insecurities and neuroses safely and gradually. Meta-physical tools such as resolutions, visualisations, thought analysis, witnessing, concentration, all help a person to come to terms with both their problems and the solutions arising from them.

Neti of all kinds affects the function of the pituitary and pineal glands. To the yogis, a clear state of mental perception is dependent on the workings of these two small, but important glands. By practising Jala Neti on a daily basis, one is removing the dross of the mind as surely as one is removing dirt from the airways. The mental effects of Jala Neti are frequently commented upon by practitioners, although they often find it hard to articulate exactly what the psychological changes are. They say things like "I just feel better in my mind", "I can understand better where I was before". Such comments allude to awakening of intuition. Such realisations help greatly in breaking the ignorance of unconscious habits. Another effect of Neti is to help ones strength of mind. Improving faculties such as discrimination, decision making, resoluteness and intuition are useful in breaking the physical, social and innate personal habits

of any addiction. Detachment, such as being able to be in a room with all of your smoking friends without either having to resort to a cigarette or run out of the room screaming, is developed. In a spiritual sense, Neti helps to create a vision of positivity, both of oneself and of others.

The Spiritual Issue

And last, but most importantly, one must resolve the deep spiritual malaise inherent in a smoker, which causes them to even consider consuming such a cocktail of unnecessary and poisonous substances. Why is their life not satisfying enough to just get on with it without trying out a dumb thing like smoking in the first place? What, deep down, is so wrong with their life and their view of life that they would want to make it even worse in the long run by smoking? Is the oral fixation of sucking on a small paper cylinder the only way they know to create a feeling of peace and relaxation? Insecurity, fear, boredom, anger, anxiety, low self esteem, self destruction, etc, are all transference reasons for smoking. Yoga, meditation and neti cleansing all work on resolving such unconscious conflicts within the psyche by expanding self awareness and increasing relaxation at the physical, mental, emotional and psychic levels of the personality. Giving up smoking then can be seen as a trigger to discover more about ones make up and discover a better spiritual self perception. This being the case, the real question is – “What is their addiction to spiritual malaise?”

There are so many other areas of life which smoking interferes with, such as digestion, vitality, sleep, thinking, nervous temperament, hormonal function, motivation. Many of these things can be improved through all the yoga practices as it works holistically on all areas. To get back to a healthier and more balanced situation in which addiction to any substance has no place, all these areas need to be addressed. In no small way the practice of Jala Neti can touch all of these areas, both physically and mentally and can be a way of making the first steps back to health and a normality which finds smoking a very strange thing to contemplate – let alone do.

TEACHING JALA NETI TO OTHERS

Over the years that yoga has been taught in the West, people have tried to learn it in many different ways. Some have come across books and tried to follow written instructions, some have been taught by friends and amateur teachers with a little experience, and these ways may have brought varying degrees of success. Others, who may have already tried the two ways above and not gained the satisfaction they desired, have searched out experts, masters, guides, gurus. Nowadays, millions more people are sharing yoga information and experience with complete strangers across the Internet, where the barriers of time and space have become irrelevant.

In previous eras, before popular books, cassette tapes, videos, international travel, advertising, cyberspace, etc, the way that yoga was taught was known as “direct teaching”. It involved initiation by the “master” (be it male or female), and was a handing down of technique and knowledge given only to those deemed worthy of it and ready for it. This method of teaching, which involves transmission of knowledge rather than just the passing on of information, has a much higher rate of success and benefits.

As regards the technique of Jala Neti, it has been our experience over many years, that greater success is assured when direct teaching has occurred. On a purely physical level, for many Westerners, the practice of pouring warm salty water through the nasal passages is an alien concept. Even when mentioning it for the first time, often people’s fear and disgust is raised. The concept simply does not appeal to them, and even less so the actions. But after a brief explanation and a short demonstration by a qualified instructor, these doubts and fears can usually be allayed.

As explained previously, the technique of Jala Neti is one of the group of Shatkarmas or Hatha Yoga cleansing kriyas (practices). Prior to this century, such techniques were not taught to novices. Would-be yoga aspirants had to go through much preparation and only then would the techniques be revealed to those ready for the higher practices of physical and mental purification in preparation for prolonged meditation. However, we don’t adhere to historical precedence so strongly to believe that a good balance between accurate teaching and practical modern necessity cannot be reached. It is therefore our credo that only by way of direct teaching can both the true purpose as well as the success of the technique be maintained.

Who to Teach?

Many people today are on a “body beautiful” trip. They want to be slim, attractive, fit, athletic, dynamic, competitive. They try yoga in the hope that it will maintain their outer body without actually having to delve into the nature of their own mind or their inner self. Such people “do yoga” for the exercise but are not interested in deep relaxation, pranayamas, meditation or any of that so called “spiritual stuff”. They don’t see a need for any kind of inner cleansing because their focus is external. Jala Neti is not for these people. Most often,

such people would not ask about such a thing and would recoil from the practice were it offered to them.

Then there are those people who come to yoga because they have illnesses and ailments, and who are interested in creating a more balanced life. They may have come to try the therapeutic yoga methods only after years of failure with the orthodox methods. They are searching for real solutions to their problems and may actually be “desperate enough to try anything” – “even pouring water through my nose”. In these people, their mind is open, and with perseverance, they will have success because they know they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Consciously, they may only want the benefits at a physical level, but deep down they are also looking for a more - a greater balance and harmony in themselves. Yoga usually works well for such people.

A third type of student wants to try Jala Neti simply because they can immediately see a deeper significance in the yoga practices. They just know intuitively that it will be good for them, even if they don't have any external ailments or nasal problems. Such students already have experienced the energy, the prana, the bliss of yoga and meditation and are keen to go deeper into it. They are drawn to Neti as their dharma (spiritual duty). Here we have the class of aspirant who are easy to teach because they are able to absorb through transmission, the knowledge which yoga has been offering as a way of enlightenment indirectly through its techniques and philosophy.

Over the years we have been teaching Neti, and have come across these different types of students, we have found that out of all the Neti pots sold, both the frequency of usage and benefits gained are greatest with the last group, and least with the first group. Beginner students of yoga will either grow further into yoga practise or after a while they will grow out of it. Years later they will either still be doing Neti on a daily basis or their pot will just be collecting dust in the cupboard. In a nutshell, the practice of Jala Neti is really for those who wish to grow: that is, grow cleaner, grow healthier, grow wiser.

Awakening of Ajna Chakra

When you are teaching someone Neti, you are not just running salt water through their nose. As stated before, the benefits of Neti are not purely physical. There are very definite meta-physical effects which come from stimulation and balance of the two pranic flows, Ha and Tha.

In the psychic physiology of yoga, this prana (or energy) flows in energy channels within the framework of the spine. The true point of confluence of these two energy meridians is called Ajna Chakra, a point directly in line with the mid-eyebrow centre and directly below the crown of the head. It is also known as the Third Eye, or the Eye of Intuition. It has a subtle connection with the functions of the pineal and pituitary glands.

When the flow of the physical breath at the nostrils is balanced through practices such as Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (alternate nostril breathing) and Jala Neti, the pranic energy in Ida Nadi (parasympathetic nervous system) and Pingala Nadi (sympathetic nervous system) is thereby balanced, and

increased energy begins to flow in Sushumna Nadi (central nervous system). When this occurs, activation^(***) of Ajna Chakra takes place.

^(***)The relative term “activation” is used rather than the more absolute term of “awakening”. The phrase “awakening by degrees” would also correctly convey this experience.

The effects of stimulating Ajna Chakra on a daily basis are both specific and general. Many practitioners report clearer thinking, better powers of concentration, greater sense of well being, less mental stress, better communication, lightness in the mind. People of an artistic/visual nature gain better powers of visualisation, more lucid dreaming, increased creativity and artistic inspiration. On the psychic planes, the mystics have experiences of light, visions of the deities, perception of the astral body. Those of a religious/devotional nature experience greater revelations and communion with their Ishta (symbol of God/Guru). All of the above effects lead to a more meditative expression in life. Of course not all practitioners experience all of the above, or in such strong ways. It depends upon ones make up, ones readiness to perceive beyond the normal realms of flesh and blood.

As one progresses along the yogic path, and delves deeper into the mysteries of life, it is the supra-mental faculties of intuition and spiritual perception, as associated with Ajna Chakra, which need to be developed for that deeper knowledge to unfold. For those disinterested in, or afraid of such outcomes, there is no problem, because they will most likely lose interest in continuing Jala Neti for more gross reasons. “Lack of time, my family are funny about me doing it, I don’t really need it, I keep forgetting, my pot is lost, I got a nose bleed and haven’t done it since”, are all common excuses for not continuing the practice.

The Direct Method

Since we recommend the passing on of Jala Neti via the direct method of teaching, we shall now outline the way that we have found works best. In a weekly yoga class situation, where you have a group “captive audience”, it is good to set aside one weekly class each couple of months (spring and autumn are best) in which some time of the usual practices will be sacrificed for the topic of yoga cleansing. Notify your students of this occasion well in advance so that those who really want to come will make arrangements to be there on that day, and so that those who really don’t want to know about it, can stay away. There’s nothing worse than disinterested people restlessly fidgeting or distracting others by making childish jokes at the back of the room because they are annoyed at not getting their “usual weekly exercise class” while you try to inspire the rest of the class about the deeper aspects of yoga.

First talk briefly about the general concept of yogic cleansing and then outline the theory and importance of Jala Neti. Leave all questions until later. Have a big diagram of the anatomy of the practice and explain, as learnedly as you know how, all the ins and outs of the technique.

Then demonstrate the practice from the front of the class using a dish or bowl spread out on a towel. This is a lot more convenient than asking

everyone to leave their places and cram into a tiny side room kitchen. Ask for complete silence during your demonstration so that the clowns don't distract and spoil it for the others! We always find the ones who ask the most silly questions at the end were the ones not listening during the demonstration. Show them the mixing process, the taste and spit test, the positioning of the head and pot, the breathing through the mouth, the flow through, the change over, and always show the full and proper way to dry the nose.

After your demonstration, inform your students, that should they be interested to try the technique themselves sometime, they should make arrangements for a personal and private trial with you. Meeting before or after the weekly class is best, rather than going to one or another's house. Inform them that you do not just sell pots for them to take home and try unassisted. As some people are funny about their nose, and about their mucus being seen by others, you will have numerous pleas and excuses for exemption from this rule. But don't give in! Then after you have given your presentation, finally invite any questions about the technique.

If you aren't a yoga teacher with a weekly class and are just showing friends or family, the advice following is most appropriate for your situation.

The First Trial

When teaching people on their first attempt, to lessen distraction as well as considering the privacy and embarrassment factor, exclude all onlookers. Their turn will come later. Have plenty of tissues on hand for wiping and blowing and drying of noses. When students come to you for a first attempt, demonstrate it for them again should they be unsure of the method, or are very worried about it, or have missed your class performance. Show them how to mix the water, how to add the salt, to taste and spit every time (to check temperature and salinity), how to angle the head and pot, how to breathe through the mouth, change sides, finish off and dry the nose. Ask them every step of the way - "Is that clear?" Then get them to do it. You may need to help angle their head and pot from behind to first show the right angle. If everything doesn't go perfectly well on the first attempt, refer to the following section on "Common Problems" and then get them to repeat the technique as many times as it takes until successful. If there are any unresolved difficulties, don't just send them home with a pot to try and work it out for themselves. They should come again at another time for assisted instruction with you.

When sending them off with their new pot and their nice clean nostrils, remind them to read the instructions supplied in the Neti box once again, just before their first attempt at home, because it may be days before they get around to doing it alone. Remind them to ring you up if they have any problems. Remind them not to teach others straightaway or even to "let them have a go at it".

Teaching Jala Neti to Children

Teaching Jala Neti to children is not difficult and will equally have the same benefits as for adults, but care must be taken so as not to accidentally

give them bad impressions or a bad experience of the practice. Depending on the age and breath control of the child, Neti must be done “to them” until they are skillful enough to hold their own pot. Up to about age 8, their little nostrils don’t need quite so much water as an adult.

The major problem with children, is that element of fear. If you have a trusting child it is easy. But if, for example, they have had a bad swimming experience, it can be nearly impossible to get them started. They can also have a revulsive attitude to such things if their parents/grandparents, teachers/peers or society have given them a puritanical attitude to body fluids. So we have found the best method is as follows.

Before asking them if they might like to try it, let them see you doing it on a regular basis. Mention all the nice things it does and how good it feels. Just wait until they show a positive attitude of inquiry. The worst thing a zealous yogic parent can do is to force a child to do something prematurely, which may be “good for them”, but from which they will just grow up resenting “that weird thing my parents made me do as a child”.

If one day they become positive, offer them a go. On this first occasion, do not try to get a full and proper performance or flow through. Show them the mixing method – they may like to do it for themselves; let them taste and spit; put the nose cone into one nostril and seal it well; check that they have their mouth open for breathing and that they understand not to breathe through the nose or to sniff through the nose once the nozzle has been placed in the nostril. Then just tilt their body, their head and the pot enough to fill their nose with water. Make sure their nose is lower than their chin so that the water cannot run towards the throat. After a few seconds, withdraw the pot – you don’t need to wait for a proper flow through. Say “good, well done”. Before changing sides they should gently blow out the water. Do the same brief attempt on the other side. After that, teach them the drying method as per normal and tell them “that was a good effort for today”. Ask them if they would like to try it again tomorrow. Whatever they decide, let it be honoured and not force fed to them.

Do this “false Neti” for the first few attempts checking that they are always happy and comfortable to go this far, and that they will be able to mouth breathe correctly when water flows all the way through. Even this simple “nose washing” can help with clearing mucus and give children freer nose breathing. Eventually you will have their confidence enough to let the water flow through fully, and they will actually look forward to the benefits of the technique.

Note: Kids can get a bit spaced out or “stoned” from Neti. They may go very quiet for some time. If this happens don’t worry. They will just be enjoying the increased visual stimulation it gives. Some children with a history of bad diet, mouth breathing or chronic mucus congestion (just as with some adults) may take months to get full flow-through. Sometimes, even after months of daily Neti, dark, thick mucus is expelled. This is just “historical cleaning”. Don’t worry, just keep going.

COMMON PROBLEMS WHEN FIRST LEARNING JALA NETI

Nervousness

99% of people are a bit nervous on their first attempt whether they admit to it or not. Some very much so. Their nervousness impedes their sense of hearing and understanding, as if they go into a trance, and afterwards can't remember anything you said or did. Such people, along with those who just don't listen because they are too busy talking to disguise their nervousness or embarrassment, often have problems performing the technique unassisted when they get home. For these reasons, ask people not to talk and chatter when you are demonstrating or instructing them. Don't encourage them to talk by even asking "how's that"? Remind them not to talk whilst the water is flowing through. Obviously, encouragement such as, "you're doing well", is good to help them relax and gain confidence. If, after the first successful attempt, they are still very nervous about it all, going through it all a second time will leave them with more confidence to attempt it alone at home.

Blockages

If water does not flow out of the outgoing nostril (after giving it about 10 seconds to do so), before concluding there is a nasal blockage, check the following:

- Check that the end of the nose cone is not pushed against the inside of the nose thereby blocking water coming out of the pot. Align the spout in a straight line with the nostril passage, and don't push it in too hard.
- Check that the pot is tilted enough for the water to flow down towards the nose
- Check that they are not sniffing the water backwards towards the throat
- Check that the water is not leaking out of the ingoing nostril
- Check that the water is not too cold as cold water contracts the nasal passages.

Situation #1. For some people, the water does not flow equally in both directions. This is not a problem so long as there is some water coming out. Most people have some minor nasal passage imbalance and it may take months for the two sides to flow equally. In any case, never do an uneven quantity of water in just one direction. Do half a pot right to left, then half a pot left to right. Repeating this sequence is better than doing one whole pot right to left, then taking a break to refill, and then changing sides to do a whole pot left to right.

Situation #2. For those with a complete blockage where the water will not come out of either nostril in either direction - don't worry. It's not because they don't have a connecting hole or the water is going up into their brain! Most often it is just thick mucus which takes time for the warm salty water to dissolve. This is often the case with a cold. Don't let such a situation

discourage you from proceeding to try to clear such a blockage, because the benefits of persevering in such circumstances are well worth it. The best trick is this: after mixing the pot, place the nose cone into one side, breathe through the mouth, tilt the head, and wait. Wait, wait, wait. After about 20 seconds, remove the pot, straighten the head and whilst facing into the sink, blow gently out of both nostrils, flushing water and mucus out. Change sides with the pot, insert it to fill the nose with water from the other side and wait 20 seconds. Remove the pot and blow out through both nostrils. Repeat again on the first side, then repeat again on the second side. Keep changing sides, filling each side with water and blowing out until you get the first few drips coming through. When this happens, stay on that side for half a pot (it takes patience), letting the water dissolve the blockage and gradually increasing the flow. Then do half a pot from the other side. After all this, it is a good idea to do another half pot from each side to really be sure you've got it clear and flowing.

Situation #3. If, after a few attempts of #2 as above, still no water will flow through at all, there may be a blockage on that day caused by a nasal problem such as inflammation or swelling. Suggest that the person comes again at a different time. In the interim, get them to watch their nostril air flow from time to time to observe whether they ever have 1 or 2 clear nostrils. If they do, it can be concluded that the blockage is not permanent. If their nasal airflow imbalance never seems to change, and if after their next attempt at neti there is still no success at getting water to flow, they must have a structural blockage (bone or cartilage obstruction). Advise them to see an ENT (ear, nose & throat) specialist for an examination to investigate the cause of the obstruction.

Nose Bleeds

It is always advisable to enquire beforehand from each new practitioner of Neti whether they have a history of nose bleeds. Often those with chronic sinus problems, who have been on cortisone medications for years, have such a history. Those who work in chemically polluted environments may have them too, as can “stress heads” and “worry warts” or those with high blood pressure. In these cases, proceed as per usual, but taking extra care that the student does not blow the nose too hard when changing sides or when drying the nose. All going well the first time, advise such people, that when at home:

- Always use the purest water and the purest salt
- Never have the water too hot nor too salty
- Never blow the nose hard when changing sides or drying
- Not to hang upside down for too long when drying
- Not to do neti more than once daily without advice
- In case of a nose bleed during or after neti, one should cut back to alternate days or stop doing neti until qualified advice has been sought. Milk Neti is a good treatment for chronic nose bleeders, but advice should be sought from a qualified person before doing it.

Water Going To The Back Of The Throat

This is fairly common on the first few attempts. In Jala Neti stage 1, the idea is not to get water to the back of the nasal passages. But in stage 2, the technique is to actually sniff the water to the back of the throat on the inhalation willfully and spit it out the mouth on exhalation. In both cases, there is no harm or danger if that happens accidentally. It is just a matter of spitting it out. If this occurs unintentionally, it can be caused by:

- Rushing, due to nervousness
- Incorrect angle of the head and/or pot
- Nose breathing whilst the water is flowing through
- Talking whilst water is flowing through
- Swallowing whilst the water is flowing through
- Sniffing backwards instead of blowing outwards when changing sides
- A heavy mucus blockage in the outgoing side causing a “damming up” effect where the water goes up and back towards the throat instead of flowing down the outgoing nostril.

To avoid any of the above, go slowly, helping with your hands to get the student’s head into the correct position before the water starts to flow out of the pot. Remind them to open their mouth and get a nice relaxed mouth breath happening before they tilt the pot for the water to come out.

Water Running Onto The Face

This is caused by either rushing or else by badly designed pots. Go slowly, step by step, to find the right angle for the pot and the head.

Headache

If this occurs during the water flow, it is most often caused by worry, tension or fear about the practice. It will go away with practise. See also “Pressure Build Up” following. If it occurs sometime after the first trial, it can be caused by not drying well enough and salty water being left to dry in the sinus passages or else blowing too hard when changing sides and drying the nose.

Ears Popping

It can happen that the ears will pop when doing Jala Neti. Some people get a fright, and are concerned that it may be something serious. It may happen when the water is flowing through and pressure in the eustachian tubes is released, or it can happen when blowing out and drying the nose. This is nothing to be concerned about.

Pressure Build Up In the Sinuses and Ears

This often occurs during the first few attempts for those people with very blocked sinuses or ear passages. They should just bear with it until the warm water dissolves and removes the excess mucus. Greater relief comes in the end. One or two pots usually clears it completely. Since Jala Neti stimulates the sinuses, an unusual sensation may be experienced in this area. This is nothing to worry about and it will pass.

Stinging In The Nose

- Water too fresh, that is - not enough salt in the mixture or else the mixture is not stirred well enough and the first few seconds of water coming out the spout is in fact unsalted water. Use correct measure, in a full pot. Always taste and spit before using and stir well before irrigating.
- Water too hot. Always taste and spit first to check the temperature.
- Water too salty. Use correct measure, in a full pot. Taste and spit before using.
- Pollutants in the water. Town water, bore water, tank water can all have various smells and tastes, some of which may sting if strong enough. Whilst recommending clean fresh water, it should not be necessary to have to boil or filter purify your Neti water every time, but if you suspect town water is polluted use a bottled or filtered supply.
- Contamination in pot. Always store your neti pot upside down to avoid dust, insects, etc, getting inside. Otherwise, rinse before use. Never use toxic or aromatic solvents to clean or repair a Neti Pot.

Unusual Mental/Psychic Effects

As stated previously, the side effects of jala neti upon the pineal and pituitary glands are subtle yet none the less noticeable to most people. Some students may experience certain sensations in that area of the brain the first few times they do Jala Neti, which seem unusual. They may describe them as being like some kind of headache, pressure, tingling sensation, ringing in the head, humming sound, light headedness, dizziness, pulsing beat, inner vision, apparition, voices calling, temporary detachment from the body. None of these experiences are in any way dangerous or serious to the point of requiring cessation of Neti nor a teacher's assistance. Most of the subtle sensations related to Ajna Chakra will pass in a short time as one becomes involved in the more gross activities of life. To further explore the stimulatory effects of Ajna Chakra, the best activities to do straight after Jala Neti are some yoga practices such as asana, pranayama and meditation. And this is what the yoga masters say, that the true purpose of cleansing techniques is really for purification of the senses and the mind for deeper meditative experience.

IN CONCLUSION

As can be seen from all of the preceding information and details about Jala Neti, this technique is particularly relevant for these times we live in. Our modern mixed up and “abnormal” world, with all its air pollution, water and food pollution, body pollution, stress, despondency, poverty, suffering, political conflicts, etc, etc, could very much be helped by the spreading of such a technique. Neti works on helping to normalise the individual and from that individual endeavour can flow smarter and more sensitive social solutions to the world's problems.

Easy, Natural, Enjoyable, Cheap, Effective, Drug Free

Jala Neti is so simple. Some water, some salt and a Neti Pot is all you need. Three minutes is all the time it takes, and the effects last for hours. Some people have described it as the best legal high available! The effects accrue in a positive way, unlike bad habits. It's a natural, drug free way to rid the body of toxins, starting with the brain. It only has good side effects and is something which, once started, becomes a life long relationship with yourself.

Better Body Awareness

Through each and every yoga practice, especially the yogasanas, pranayamas and cleansing techniques such as Jala Neti, the practitioner gains greater self awareness. This self awareness leads to a better knowledge of their own body's functions. Just as the ancient yogis discovered these clever ways of self healing, modern people too, can also learn through their own experimentation. From greater self awareness and self knowledge comes greater self responsibility, thereby empowering people to take care of their own health agenda. You become more your own doctor, not just for cure, but also in prevention of illness. Anyone who has been practising yoga for some time can attest to the lessening of trips to the doctor and dependence on pharmaceutical drugs. Jala Neti saves you money and may even help to lower the national health bill!

Scientific and Medical Research

As yoga and its methods become more widely known and accepted, we would hope that the scientific and medical communities may further investigate the claims and practices of this great and ancient science. Jala Neti would make an excellent subject. The interrelationship between physical practices such as Jala Neti and the psychology of the human mind, could be better understood through proper clinical investigations.

Public Health

Over the years, many of our students have said to us – “I don't understand why more people don't know about Neti” and “Why don't doctors teach Neti to their patients?” and “How come it isn't taught in the medical colleges?” We agree exactly! Possibly in the future, Neti could become part of

the curriculum for medical schools, nursing colleges, community health centres and alternative health practitioners, where, in just a few minutes, people with a need for such relief could be taught the practice. Hospitals would be an ideal place to educate people about post-operative body cleansing and health maintenance techniques such as Neti. Nursing staff could easily administer and/or teach Jala Neti to patients, thereby helping to cut down on the possibility of cross-infections.

The Workplace

In factories and workshops, or in dusty outside jobs, where workers continually breathe within an environment of toxic airborne substances, Jala Neti could easily be done in the washroom before lunch, or at the change of shifts. For workers in offices, with their stuffy recycled air full of other people's germs and smoke, Neti could reduce the incidence of dull headedness and cross-infection. Staff would be more positive and need less sick days off work.

Around the Home

Gardening, cleaning, sweeping, building. How many simple daily activities around the home create dust which the nose has to filter out? A few minutes to flush it all out, and then you can continue the day with a clear nose, a proper sense of smell, and a clear head.

Educational Enhancement

From primary school age up, through secondary school to university, Jala Neti has the potential to increase learning ability by sharpening the senses, increasing concentration and relieving mental tiredness. Neti also helps to increase creativity.

An Early Start to Respiratory Health

Neti can be done by children from even as early as 2 years old, (with help of course). The earlier in life a child learns to appreciate the healthy feeling of nose breathing, the less tendency towards mouth breathing they will develop in later life, and the greater protection they will have from respiratory ailments such as asthma. For those children who are already showing signs of mouth breathing and wheezing, or who may have reactions to certain foods or airborne allergens, Neti can help strengthen the body's own resistance against "growing into" such habits and illnesses.

Relaxation & Stress Management

Today many people are suffering ailments coming from the wide range of stresses in daily life. Whether they be environmental, inter-personal, psychological or intellectual, stress takes its toll on the immune system, the cardio-vascular system, the nervous system and many other areas of our health. It is now recognised that some form of stress release should be a part of everyone's day to help cut the accumulation of its effects. As we have previously written, and as many students can testify, Jala Neti (along with

many other yoga methods) is very beneficial for mental and emotional stress. Relaxation is one of the primary tenets of yoga and meditation. A tense body or mind is a useless thing. Jala Neti should be considered very much as “First Aid” in the stress management protocols.

Increasing Spiritual Consciousness

For those who are already interested in meditation and personal spiritual growth, Jala Neti should become a part of their own inner awakening. For those people who want to help raise the consciousness of humanity, and those who want to help “save the planet”, Jala Neti is a natural adjunct to their work and service within society. Helping the planet is indeed a noble cause, but firstly one must make oneself a clear and useful tool. Inner cleansing, by way of looking after the internal environment, is equally as important.

A Network of Instructors

To further spread the practice of Jala Neti, a network of qualified instructors needs to be assembled, so that anyone, anywhere, wouldn't have to travel far to learn the technique. Should there ever be any difficulties encountered by the practitioner, help would always be near at hand. Such teachers could lecture, demonstrate and teach the practice within their local community.

Further Research

We would like to extend an invitation to any person or group, who may have greater experience than us, in setting up a research survey on the claims and effects of Jala Neti. Such data, could then be used to further show the community that yoga techniques such as Jala Neti – really do work.

*The Author may be contacted at:
swami@shoal.net.au*