

## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF NETI WITH RESPECT TO JALNETI

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### ABSTRACT

Neti kriya is an integral part of shatkarmas/the six cleansing techniques that form the most important aspect of hatha yoga. Neti helps in preventing and managing upper respiratory tract diseases. An attempt is being made to know the importance of neti and its mechanism in today's era. So the article is going to highlight the neti with respect to Jalneti. *Jal Neti* Kriya is a special method of *Yoga* to cleanse the nasal passage. This procedure helps to purify the body and the mind. There by following the opening of blocked channels, the passage of energy. The *nadis* as well as the circuits of body and mind opens with this karma.

**KEYWORDS:** Shatkarma, Neti, Jalaneti etc.

### INTRODUCTION

Industrialization of economy and exploitation of natural resources either by ignorance or by choice, we have made the water, air and soil contaminated around us. No matter how much hygiene or cleanliness we practice but the food we eat and the air we breathe is no longer as pure and fresh as used to be ages back. The things have changed so fast that earth, water and air that have been converted to threat to human health. And also due to frequent indulgence in *mithya Aahara*, *Vihara* and *Pragyaparadha* the incidence of various disorders are increasing rapidly. Moreover while persuading the path of *Yoga* we might encounter obstacles due to

impurities present in our body and mind which can stop our progression.

Shatkarmas are the yogic practices for internal cleaning and purification of the body. The word shatkarma is consisting of two words, “shat” meaning six and “karma” meaning action. Thus shatkarmas consist of six different practices that work on removing toxins from our respiratory and digestive system which are main root cause of majority of diseases. Six practices are Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli, Kapalbhata. These techniques are done to clean ingestion, digestion system and excretory system. Just like we take bath, we remove dead skin cells and other pollutants from our skin, shatkarma works on cleaning inside of our body. Among these Neti eradicates kaphaja disorder and improves vision.

Respiratory diseases are leading cause of death and disability in the world. Globally, 4million people die prematurely from chronic respiratory disease.<sup>[1]</sup> The human and economic burden associated with such diseases are severe. There is not much proof to substantiate the benefits of using antibiotics routinely in the treatment of upper respiratory tract infections in children or adults. Also, there is an increase in adverse effects associated with the usage of antibiotics in adult patients. Hence there is a need for a non-pharmacological, low-cost, effective mode of treatment to improve the quality of health. The objective of the review was to summarize the procedure and mechanism of Neti kriya with respect to Jalneti.

### **Review methods**

To acknowledge the importance of Neti and its mechanism, we performed a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles published in PubMed, Scopus and Ayush Portal. We used keywords like jala neti, neti kriya, for the search. In Pubmed on search of neti kriya (Title/Abstract) only 1 result was obtained and of jalaneti 1 result was obtained. In Ayush Portal 2 articles on Neti and 2 articles on Jalaneti were obtained.

Authentic texts of Yoga were also referred for Neti.

### **Shatkarma mentioned in classical texts**

#### **Gheranda Samhita<sup>[2]</sup>**

Maharishi Gheranda has mentioned about Shatkarma as the first limb of Yoga. He mentioned in the samhita that without shatkarma practice, no practitioner can achieve success in Yoga.

षट्कर्मणा शोधनस्य आसनेन भवेत् द्रुढर् ।  
 रुद्रया स्थिरता चैव प्रत्याहारेण धीरता ॥  
 प्राणायार् लाघवर् च ध्यानात्प्रत्यक्षर्ात्मनन ।  
 सर्ानधना नननलमप्तन्च रुस्िरेव न संशयः ॥ घे. सं. 1/10 – 11

धौनतर्मस्िििा नेनतनौनलकी त्राठकं ति ।  
 कपालभानतश्चैतानन षट्कर्ामनण सर्ाचरेत् ॥ घे. सं. 1/12

### Hathyog Pradipika<sup>[3]</sup>

Swami Swatmarama has a different view with regards to Shatkarma. He has recommended these techniques only to those practitioners, who have excess fat and kapha in their body.

धौनतर्मस्िििा नेनतस्त्राटकं नौनलकं ति ।  
 कपालभानतश्चैतानन षट्कर्ामनण प्रचक्षते ॥ ह. यो. प्र. 2/22

### Neti Kriya

Neti is a technique to cleanse the nasal passages. It is a cleansing process related to the upper part of the respiratory system.

### Different varieties of Neti<sup>[4]</sup>

1. Sutraneti
2. Jalaneti
3. Dugdaneti
4. Madhuneti
5. Ghrtaneti
6. Vyutkarma kapalaneti
7. Sitkarma kapalaneti

Although the authentic references are not available for above varieties, only the sutraneti is explained in Yogic text but among all of this Jalaneti is most widely practiced. It is usually practiced with a neti pot filled with lukewarm saline water. The exact amount of salt is not mentioned in any traditional texts. Practically it is about 2.5 g for 500 ml of water.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Jalaneti<sup>[6]</sup>

Jala neti is a process of cleansing the nasal passage with sterile lukewarm saline water and is essential in allowing free breathing as required in many of the practices as well as it helps to

ensure good health.

### **The function of the Nose<sup>[7]</sup>**

The nose is the body's organ for ensuring that the air that enters the lungs is of sufficient purity and warmth not to cause harm. The air that we inhale is rarely suitable for entry into the lungs. It is generally too cold, too dirty and too germ ridden. It is the function of the nose to rectify this situation.

First of all, the air we breathe contains dust and small insects. The larger impurities are initially small insects. These larger impurities are initially screened out by the vibrating hairs vibrates in the opposite direction to the air at the nose and prevent impurities from proceeding further.

In the deeper regions of the nose there are special bony structures which are covered with a thick, spongy, germicidal mucus membrane, through which circulates a large, rich supply of blood. The mucous membrane follows a long winding air passage which ensures that all the inhaled air comes in contact with the membrane. These mucous membranes removes millions of germs that are contained in the air and which could cause the lungs much harm, and in fact do in the case of pulmonary tuberculosis, bronchitis, etc.

**Equiments:** Neti Pot, lukewarm saline water.

**Salt water:** The water used in the practice should be sterile and lukewarm; body temperature is the ideal temperature of water. The water should then be mixed with clean salt in the proportion one teaspoonful per litre of water. Make sure that salt is fully dissolved in the water.

Why salt is used? – Salt water has a much higher osmotic pressure than ordinary water, which means that salt water is not easily absorbed into the delicate blood vessels and membranes in the nose, whereas ordinary water is.<sup>[8]</sup>

**Pradhan Karma:** *Jala Neti.*

**Pashachat Karma:** *Kapalbhati*

### **Posture**

One may either sit in a squatting position known as kagasana, or one may do in a standing position, bending the shoulders and head forward.

**Procedure of Pradhan karma<sup>[9]</sup>**

- 1.) Fill the neti pot with lukewarm saline water.
- 2.) Stand with the legs apart.
- 3.) Hold the neti pot in your right hand.
- 4.) Insert the nozzle of the Neti pot into the right nostril.
- 5.) Keep the mouth open and breathe freely through the mouth.
- 6.) Tilt the head first slightly backwards, then forwards and sideward to the left so that the water from the pot enters the right nostril and comes out through the left by gravity. Allow the flow till the pot is empty.
- 7.) Repeat the same on the left side.
- 8.) To clear the nasal passages of the remaining water, blow out the water by active exhalation through alternate nostrils as in kapalbhathi.

**Pashachat karma:<sup>[10]</sup>**

It is very essential to ensure that after performing Jalaneti Kriya, water does not remain in the nasal cavities as retention of water there may result in aggravating cold, blocking of nostrils, difficulty in breathing, infection and rise in body temperature etc. Hence, after the Jalaneti kriya is over, gently blow one nostril by closing the other alternately. To ensure that water does not remain in the nasal cavities, perform following practices:

- a.) Two or three rounds of Shwasana- Marga Shuddhi of around 10 expulsions each by right, left and both the nostrils.
- b.) Two or three rounds of Kapalbhathi Kriya of around 60 stokes each.

**Benefits**

कपालशोनधनी चैव निव्यदुनिप्रिनयनी ।

जत्रुधर्मजातरोगौधं नेनतराशु ननहंनत च ॥ ह. यो. प्र. 2/30 (11)

- 1.) Cleanses the nasal passage.
- 2.) Refreshes the nerve ends at the mucous membrane of the nose.
- 3.) Increases resistance capacity of mucous membrane of nasal passage.
- 4.) Reduces irritability of nose.
- 5.) Prevents and helps in curing bronchial trouble, chronic functional cold, asthma, short breath, etc.
- 6.) Eye problems such as watering of eyes, burning sensations and inflammation of the eyes are prevented and reduced.

- 7.) Improves overall health of the ears, eyes and throat.
- 8.) Prevents disorders such as polypus, growth of nasal bone and septum deviation.
- 9.) Invigorates nerve ends in the nose and breathing becomes easy, natural and comfortable which in turn, helps in maintaining proper emotional balance.

### **Time<sup>[12]</sup>**

Neti is ideally practiced early in the morning before breakfast. Once a day is sufficient, though if one has nasal catarrh, a cold or any other specific ailment, it may be practiced more times.

### **Limitation**

Neti should be avoided if you have had a recent ear infection or nasal septum operation. Also avoid neti for a few days after a bleeding nose.

### **Precautions**

- 1.) For *Neti Karma* water, *Lavana*, *Neti pot* should be clean.
- 2.) Water should not very hot, very cold or very salty.
- 3.) During *Kapaal Bhati* breath should not expel very forcefully.
- 4.) *Neti Karma* should be done in the presence of expert.
- 5.) If any complications happens then *Neti karma* should be stop & consult with the expert.

### **Importance of Neti in Yogic Physiology<sup>[13]</sup>**

The science of the yoga maintains that the flow of air in each nostril alternately changes. If you test this for yourself, you will find this is to be true. At present one of your nostrils is admitting more air than the other. After some time the other nostril will admit the greater amount of air.

This alternate flow of breath through the two nostrils in turn has a profound influence on the energy cycle of man. It controls our thinking and physical activity, our introversion and extroversion. This cycle has a great bearing on our mental and physical health.

Now if one or both of the nostrils are permanently blocked, then this natural alteration of breath flow cannot occur. Our health can suffer. This is another reason why jala neti is so important; it cleanses both nostrils and allows the breath to alternate freely between the two.

**Probable mechanism of Jalneti<sup>[14]</sup>**

Sutraneti and Jalneti have a deep effect on the physical and mental status of human beings and helps in personality development.

The effects of jala neti can be divided into two groups: Direct and Indirect. Let us discuss these in turn.

Direct effects are those that come directly from the salt water. This brings about stimulation of:

- a.) The olfactory nerves situated at the very top of the nasal cavity. These are concerned with the sense of smell.
- b.) The sensory nerves coming from the nose and face and going directly to the brain. This is called the fifth cranial or trigeminal nerve.
- c.) The mucus membrane (covering) of the nose.
- d.) The blood vessels in the nasal cavity.
- e.) The lymphatics in the nasal region.

Indirect effects include repercussions which occur in the body as a result of cleaning the nose. They include:

- a.) Improved conditioning of the air before entering the respiratory passages and lungs.
- b.) Better overall health as a result of improved lung efficiency.
- c.) A soothing effect on the eye-socket; this is due to the stimulation of the fifth cranial nerve which has branches in the eye and eye muscles.
- d.) Reflex soothing of the whole face as a result of stimulating the sensory cortex (brain) via the fifth cranial nerve; the sensory cortex sends impulses to the facial muscles via the motor nerves.
- e.) Re-balancing of the autonomic nervous system (this is the automatic nervous system, which regulates the different organs of the body according to the needs of the environment: either 'fight or flight' to counteract stress, or relaxation). The olfactory nerves in the nose are connected to a part of the brain called the hippocampus which is associated with deeper structures in the brain, concerned with regulation of the autonomic nerves. Stimulation of the olfactory nerves thus influences the autonomic functions of the body.
- f.) Neti promotes a balance between the left and right nostrils and consequently the right and left hemispheres of the brain. This induces a state of harmony and balance throughout the entire central nervous system and the systems governing respiratory, circulatory, digestive

and excretory functions.

- g.) Soothing of the brain; this helps to reduce stress and tension.
- h.) Opening up and re-balancing of the pranic channels. These pranic channels are in the pranic body (bio-plasmic body) and have been photographed by Kirlian apparatus. They have been proved to be the underlying system that maintains the health of the physical body. Subtle prana is absorbed into the pranic body via the nose. Therefore improved efficiency and cleanliness in the nose leads to better health at a pranic level. Let us discuss these effects in a little more detail.

### **Effects on the Physical Health<sup>[15]</sup>**

- a.) The lining of the nose, the mucus membrane, is very sensitive. It contains myriads of tiny glands which secrete a sticky mucus substance to trap and remove dust and dirt from the inhaled breath. These glands also moisten the air to the correct degree of humidity before entering the lungs. Within the nose there are also multitudes of small, fine hairs which further filter and clean the air. Breathing through the mouth means that all these processes are bypassed. For good health it is essential to breathe through the nose at all times. Neti ensures that the nostrils are kept clean and in good functional condition; this helps to ensure the best possible health.
- b.) The two main nerves in the nose are the olfactory (smell) and the fifth cranial (facial sense perception). These are stimulated by the passage of water during neti and send nerve impulses direct to the brain. This leads to the stimulation of other nerve connections in the brain. Eventually motor and autonomic nerve fibres are fired at the end of the nerve pathways and different parts of the brain are stimulated. The ramifications are widespread throughout the whole body. If you do neti you can almost feel the impulses inside the brain; one feels the effects immediately. One feels light-headed and 'high' - it is a pleasant sensation.
- c.) The olfactory nerve passes into the area of the brain which is the oldest from the evolutionary point of view. It is connected with the autonomic nervous system. Stimulation of this nerve during neti helps to balance the autonomic nervous system. The fifth cranial nerve, on the other hand, passes through the thalamus into the higher brain centres, which are concerned with receiving and interpreting sensory information from the very sensitive areas of the face. As a result of stimulation during neti, the motor cortex sends messages to the muscles of the face and eyes.
- d.) Neti brings about a profound physical stimulation of the whole brain. It helps to bring relief

in cases of facial paralysis and other nervous diseases. Soothing of the brain helps to soothe and relax the rest of the body. Neti helps to remove blocks in the flow of nervous impulses and thereby it brings good health.

- e.) Other ailments, such as colds, sinusitis etc. are also alleviated by the direct cleaning, antiseptic and purifying effect of the salt water.

The effects of neti can be explained at a physical level. The explanation, however, should not be confined to this level since neti also acts on a pranic and mental level.

### **Effects on the Pranic Health<sup>[16]</sup>**

- a.) Prana is the vital energy which underlies the physical body and maintains life. It flows through the human framework in multitudes of channels comprising the pranic body. If there is a block or imbalance in the pranic flow then we get sick. Neti helps to induce and maintain this free flow and balance of prana and thereby brings good health.
- b.) The essence of air is prana. Our body absorbs this subtle prana through the nose during respiration. Therefore thorough cleansing of the nose with neti leads to better health at a pranic level.
- c.) The flow of breath in each nostril has profound implications. The right flow is called the pingala, the sun nostril, and is concerned with the external environment, physical activity and warmth. The left flow is called the ida, the moon flow, and is associated with the internal environment, mental activity and coolness.
- d.) If you examine your nostril flows at different times of the day you will find that one of them predominates. Occasionally the flows are equal; in this case, the breath is said to be flowing in the sushumna. During sushumna flow, both the physical and pranic bodies are in balance.
- e.) These facts have yet to be verified by scientific experiments, but will be in the near future.
- f.) The flow of breath through the nostrils has a direct influence on the flow of prana. Neti helps to balance the two breath flows, and thereby brings balance into the ida and pingala flows of the subtle pranic body, as well as the autonomic nervous system at a physical level. This leads to flow of the sushumna and overall balance of one's whole being. This helps to induce good health and peace of mind. Neti brings benefits which are not easy to explain in terms of modern science.
- g.) Incidentally, the practices of pranayama are concerned with gaining some control over prana via the breathing process. For these practices to be effective, the nose must be clean

to allow free flow of air and efficient absorption of prana through the nose. Neti is therefore essential for serious practice of pranayama.

### Effects on the Mental Health<sup>[17]</sup>

The physical and pranic bodies are intimately related to the mind; they are part of the same instrument. Therefore the beneficial influences that neti has on the physical and pranic bodies has positive repercussions on the mind. This can be tested by personal experience. This alone is a great help in maintaining vibrant health and removing ailments.

### Effect on Spiritual Health

- a.) According to Yogi Swatmarama, perfection of neti leads to divya drishti. Divya means 'divine' and drishti is 'sight' or 'vision'. Divya drishti is the faculty of clairvoyance which manifests with the awakening of ajna chakra. The practice of neti is said to stimulate ajna chakra, removes its blockages and bring it into fuller functioning.<sup>[18]</sup>
- b.) Also practising kapalbhati after neti, stimulates manipura chakra, which is the centre of the element of agni. If agni is activated then the coldness, cough and the lungs become dry and without phlegm.<sup>[19]</sup>

### Different varieties of Neti<sup>[20]</sup>

#### Sutra Neti

सूत्रं नवतस्सुनिग्धं नासानाले प्रवेशयेत् ।

रुखानिगमर्येच्चैषा नेनतः नसध्नेननमगध्यते ॥ ह. यो. प्र. 2/29

In olden days Sutra Neti was performed with soft thread woven into a string. Now a days rubber catheter which is very thin and one foot length is used.

### Procedure

1. Insert the blunt end of a thin soft rubber catheter horizontally into the right nostril.
2. Gently push it along the floor of the nose until the tip is felt in the back of the throat.
3. Insert the right index and the middle finger through the mouth and catch the tip of the catheter at the back of the throat.
4. Pull it out through the mouth and gently massage the nasal passage by catching the two ends of the tube.
5. Remove the catheter through the nose.
6. Repeat on the left side.

Sr.no	Types	Material used	Procedure
1.	Dugdha Neti	pure cow's milk	same as Jalaneti
2.	Madhu Neti	Honey	same as Jalaneti
3.	Ghrta Neti	Ghee	same as Jalaneti
4.	Sitkarma Kapalneti	Lukewarm water	similar to Jalaneti but in this practice, the water will come out of the mouth instead of the other nostril
5.	Vyutkarma Kapalneti	Lukewarm water	In this kriya, water should be drunk from the mouth and it should come out from the nose.

Dugdha Neti, Madhuneti and Ghrtaneti are advanced neti practices. It should be performed only after practicing Jalaneti and Sutraneiti for a sufficient period of time. After the practice of Dugdhaneti, Madhuneti and Ghrtaneti, jalaneti has to be practiced to clean both the nostrils. This should be performed under proper guidance.

## CONCLUSION

According to yogic literature, neti is an important shatkriya which play a pivotal role in managing upper respiratory tract diseases. This review was done to highlight the importance of neti kriya with respect to jala neti. Studies signal that progression and occurrence of upper respiratory tract infections can be greatly reduced by the practice of jala neti. The simple cost- effective, non-pharmacological mode of treatment can reduce the use of antibiotics and other suppressants.

Further studies are needed to prove the efficacy of this therapy and establish the same as a science- based, evidence based practice.

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