



Review Article

## THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF *NETI KRIYA*: A REVIEW WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON *JALA NETI*

Sonal Sharma<sup>1\*</sup>, Asmita Mahajan<sup>1</sup>, Dheeraj Kumar Tyagi<sup>2</sup>

\*1PG Scholar, <sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvigyan Evam Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India.

### Article info

#### Article History:

Received: 10-02-2026

Accepted: 13-03-2026

Published: 06-05-2026

#### KEYWORDS:

*Neti kriya, Jal Neti, Neti Kriya, Shatkarma, Hatha Yoga.*

### ABSTRACT

*Neti Kriya*, one of the *Shatkarma* (six purification techniques), constitutes a fundamental component of *Hatha Yoga* and plays a significant role in maintaining respiratory and psychosomatic health. This review aims to compile and critically analyse the available scientific and traditional literature, highlighting the therapeutic effects of *Neti Kriya*, particularly *Jala Neti*. *Jala-neti* is an integral part of the six cleansing techniques of *Yogic kriyas* practised in India for thousands of years. *Jala-neti* can clean the upper airways, prevent colonisation by infectious agents, remove foreign bodies, prevent mucus stasis, and, by enhancing drainage of the paranasal sinuses, thereby maintain health. Regular practice of *Jala neti* improves nasal symptoms and the overall health status of patients with sinusitis. A systematic search was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and the AYUSH Portal. Due to the limited number of direct studies on *Neti Kriya*, relevant research on saline nasal irrigation was also reviewed to supplement the evidence base. Findings from this review indicate that *Neti Kriya* offers multiple therapeutic benefits and may reduce dependency on antibiotics in certain upper respiratory conditions. The majority of studies support its effectiveness in managing sinusitis, rhinosinusitis, allergic rhinitis, and nasal congestion, as well as in improving visual clarity and ocular comfort. Additionally, *Jala Neti* has been associated with enhanced mental alertness, presence of mind, and cognitive function. *Jala neti* has a significant role in improving the presence of mind and intelligence. Preliminary evidence also suggests its potential role in alleviating post-irradiation rhinosinusitis in patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma. *Jala Neti* holds considerable potential as an integrative approach in preventive and therapeutic healthcare.

### INTRODUCTION

Hatha Yoga is widely regarded as one of the most important practices for addressing various physical and psychological ailments. Classical yogic texts such as *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (H.P)<sup>[1]</sup> and *Gheranda Samhita*<sup>[2]</sup> describe the concept of *Shatkarmas*. The term '*Shat*' means six, and '*Karma*' refers to action; thus, *Shatkarma* comprises six cleansing and purificatory techniques.

These practices are recommended particularly when there is an excess of *Meda* (fat) and *Kapha* in the body.

The six cleansing processes include *Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli, and Kapalabhati* <sup>[3]</sup>. Among these, *Neti* is known to eliminate *Kaphaja* disorders and enhance visual clarity<sup>[4]</sup>. These *Yogic kriyas* are reported to boost the immune system, improve respiratory capacity/lung function, relieve stress, improve physical and mental strength and improve overall health <sup>[5]</sup>. *Jala-neti* is an integral part of the six cleansing techniques, forming an important aspect of "*Hatha-yoga*" the main aim being clearing the upper respiratory tract.<sup>[6]</sup>

Inadequate management of sinusitis and its associated symptoms can contribute to the development of asthma. In India, approximately 15–20 million individuals are estimated to be affected by asthma <sup>[7]</sup>, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that about 235 million people worldwide currently suffer from this condition <sup>[8]</sup>. The overall

#### Access this article online

Quick Response Code



<https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdharma.v13i2.2574>

Published by Mahadev Publications (Regd.)  
publication licensed under a Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0  
International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

human and economic burden of such respiratory diseases is substantial. There is limited evidence supporting the routine use of antibiotics for treating upper respiratory tract infections in both children and adults. Moreover, the increasing incidence of adverse effects associated with antibiotic use in adults raises further concerns [9]. Therefore, there is a growing need for a non-pharmacological, cost-effective, and efficient therapeutic approach to enhance health and well-being. This review aimed to compile and analyse existing scientific evidence from credible studies on the therapeutic effects of *Neti Kriya*, particularly focusing on *Jala Neti*. In the ancient Indian *Yogic* system, various *Kriyas* are mentioned. These *Kriyas* were an integral part of the day-to-day life of *Yogis* (saints).

#### AIM

1. To detail the conceptual understanding of *Neti Kriya* as described in classical *Yogic* texts with special reference to *Jala Neti*.
2. To examine the role of *Jala Neti* in improving vision, mental health, and overall quality of life based on available clinical and experimental studies.

#### Shatkarmas

According to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the six purification practices known as *Shatkarmas* include *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli*, and *Kapalabhati*. These cleansing techniques are designed to purify the body and are associated with numerous health benefits. They were diligently practised by accomplished *Yogis* as mentioned in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (Verse 23). In addition to enhancing vital capacity, *Shatkarmas* facilitate the smooth and efficient functioning of various physiological systems, thereby preparing the practitioner for advanced yogic practices such as *Pranayama*.

#### Neti

*Neti* is a yogic cleansing technique primarily intended for the purification of the nasal passages and the upper respiratory tract. It is broadly classified into two types: *Jala Neti* and *Sutra Neti*. Although classical *yogic* texts do not provide explicit references to *Jala Neti*, it is the most commonly practised form today. Presumed benefits of *Jalaneti* includes removal of mucous and pollutants from the nasal cavity, allowing unobstructed flow of air. It may help in the prevention and management of upper respiratory tract diseases and relieve allergies, colds and acute as well as chronic sinusitis<sup>[10]</sup>. It is usually performed using a neti pot filled with lukewarm saline water. Traditional scriptures do not specify an exact quantity of salt; however, in practice, approximately 2.5 grams of salt per 500ml of water is commonly used.<sup>[11]</sup>

Contemporary clinical studies recommend a saline concentration of 2–3.5% for effective nasal irrigation<sup>[12]</sup>. Some scholars also suggest the use of *Ksheera* (milk) or *Madhu* (honey) instead of plain saline water in certain conditions. *Neti* is ideally performed in the early morning before practising *Asanas* and *Pranayama*.<sup>[13]</sup>

According to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, in *Sutra Neti*, a lubricated thread is gently inserted through one nostril until it emerges from the mouth, a technique recognised by *Siddha yogis*. In modern practice, a sterilised size-4 rubber catheter is often used instead of a traditional thread. Individuals suffering from chronic nasal bleeding, recurrent ear infections, or a deviated nasal septum should perform *Neti* only under proper guidance and supervision.

#### Therapeutic effects

*Neti* cleanses the cranium, gives clear sight and alleviates diseases which manifest above the root of the neck (H.P verse 30). *Neti* removes foreign bodies like allergens, dust and enhances the drainage of sinuses by preventing stasis of mucus. It also increases blood circulation and functional efficiency of the nasal mucosa. *Neti* provides a relaxing and irrigating effect upon the eyes by stimulating the tear ducts and glands. It has a positive effect on cognitive faculties like memory, concentration and is beneficial in reducing anxiety and depression. By the systematic practice of *Neti*, secretory and drainage mechanisms of the entire ear, nose and throat area are well maintained. This helps to keep at bay conditions like sinusitis, cold, cough, allergic rhinitis and insensitivity to smell<sup>[14]</sup>.

From our review, we have found that *Neti* can effectively be applied in conditions like sinusitis, rhinitis, rhinosinusitis and allergic rhinitis, which are *Kapha* predominant.

#### Role of Neti in Sinusitis

In the management of chronic rhinosinusitis, saline nasal irrigation is considered one of the fundamental therapeutic approaches. Studies have shown that patients who practised daily nasal irrigation experienced up to 70% improvement in symptoms of chronic sinusitis within two weeks, along with a significant reduction in the need for medication<sup>[15]</sup>. Further evidence indicates that patients with sinonasal disease who performed nasal irrigation twice daily for six weeks demonstrated marked improvement in nasal symptoms and overall health status.<sup>[16]</sup>

A one-month clinical study conducted among children aged 3–16 years suffering from chronic sinusitis revealed that the use of hypertonic saline significantly reduced cough and nasal discharge<sup>[17]</sup>. The primary clinical manifestations of chronic sinusitis

include purulent nasal discharge, foul odour, localised facial pain, headache, nasal congestion, and loss of smell (anosmia) [18]. These symptoms can be correlated with *Dusta Pratisyaya* described in Ayurveda, which is characterised by *Sleshma sruti* (purulent nasal discharge), *Mukha dourghandhya* (foul smell in the mouth), *Ura-parswa vedana* (pain in chest and flanks), *nasa rodham* (nasal obstruction) [19], and *Gandha na vethi* (loss of smell) [20]. Based on this comparison, it is reasonable to recommend *Neti* as a beneficial practice in *Dusta Pratisyaya*.

Most scientific studies support the effectiveness of saline nasal irrigation in managing sinusitis. Therefore, *Neti* may be considered as a potential first-line therapeutic intervention. However, further clinical research is required to specifically evaluate the efficacy of *Jala Neti* in sinusitis management. Additionally, a standardized protocol for the practice of *Jala Neti* needs to be developed to ensure uniformity and safety.

### Role of *Neti* in vision

A comparative study evaluating the effects of *Saptamrita Lauha* and yoga therapy in myopia demonstrated that *yoga* therapy- including *Jala Neti*, *Nadi Shodhana Pranayama*, *Shitali Pranayama*, and point *Trataka*- produced greater improvement in the associated symptoms of myopia than *Saptamrita Lauha* alone. Regular practice of *Jala Neti* and other yogic procedures was particularly effective in alleviating symptoms such as ocular pain, eye strain, watering, and heaviness in the eyes. The interventions were administered for a duration of three months, followed by a one-month follow-up period [21].

These findings support the therapeutic potential of *Neti* in enhancing visual function. However, the range of ophthalmic conditions in which *Neti* can be safely and effectively applied remains to be fully explored. Existing evidence suggests that *Jala Neti*, when used as part of a combined therapeutic regimen, results in significant improvement in myopia. Consistent practice appears to reduce eye strain and produce subjective enhancement in vision. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of *Neti* as a standalone therapy requires further systematic investigation.

### Application of *Neti* in Snoring

Ramalingam et al. observed that the practice of *Sutra Neti* enabled a patient to gain control over severe snoring associated with obstructive sleep apnea, with beneficial effects persisting for several months [22]. Considering that surgical management of snoring often involves uncertainty and possible recurrence, the therapeutic potential of *Sutra Neti* as a non-invasive alternative deserves further scientific evaluation. Such

an approach, if validated, may offer a safer modality with minimal risk of relapse.

### Mitigating post-irradiation rhinosinusitis in nasopharyngeal carcinoma

Nasal sinusitis is commonly observed following radiotherapy and significantly impairs the quality of life (QOL) in patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma. A study by Luo et al. reported that long-term nasal irrigation led to notable improvements in QOL, with relief in nasal symptoms observed within the first year; the study followed patients over a period of five years [23]. Similarly, another one-year study found that patients who performed daily saline nasal irrigation for six months after radiotherapy experienced better QOL compared to those who did not practice irrigation [24]. These findings suggest that *Neti* may be a safe, feasible, and beneficial practice for managing this condition.

### Role of *Neti* in Mental Health

Uma et al. introduced an integrated yogic program that included *Jala Neti* as a therapeutic component for children with intellectual disability. Over a one-year controlled study, participants showed marked improvements in mental performance, psychomotor coordination, intelligence, and social interaction [25]. The results highlight the possible role of *Jala Neti* in enhancing cognitive alertness, improving emotional balance, and reducing stress. Nevertheless, further research is required to establish its effectiveness in broader psychological and psychiatric conditions.

### *Neti* as a Preventive Approach

Rabago et al. demonstrated that daily nasal irrigation using a hypertonic saline solution reduced symptom severity in sinusitis, decreased the frequency of acute episodes, and lowered the need for antibiotic use over six months [26]. In another study by Tano et al. involving healthy adults, participants experienced fewer upper respiratory tract infections during ten weeks of daily saline irrigation compared to a prior ten-week observation phase without irrigation [27]. Although antibiotics are commonly prescribed despite their known adverse effects and limited role in preventing recurrence, regular practice of *Jala Neti* helps maintain nasal mucosal health, facilitates the removal of mucus and particulate matter, and lowers susceptibility to respiratory infections.

### Precautions and Adverse Effects

While practising *Neti*, the flow of water should be confined to the nasal passages. Occasionally, water may reach the throat or mouth, but this is generally harmless. The salt concentration of the solution is important: insufficient salt may cause discomfort or pain, whereas excessive salt can produce a burning

sensation. After completing *Neti*, it is advisable to perform *Kapalabhati* to expel residual water and dry the nasal passages<sup>[28]</sup>. *Kapalabhati* involves rapid, forceful exhalations with passive inhalations; after about ten quick breaths, one should inhale and exhale deeply to complete one round. Up to three rounds may be practised.

Individuals with chronic nasal bleeding or structural abnormalities of the nose should perform *Neti* only under expert supervision. Those with a tendency toward ear infections, or with existing ear pathology, are generally advised to avoid the practice<sup>[29]</sup>. In addition to the contraindications mentioned in classical texts, some mild adverse effects have been reported in clinical observations, particularly among children, including ear discomfort, coughing, and nausea; however, these effects did not necessitate discontinuation of saline nasal irrigation. Research also indicates that solutions that are too dilute (hypotonic) or excessively concentrated (strongly hypertonic) may impair mucociliary function and cause marked irritation<sup>[30]</sup>. Baraniuk et al. reported symptoms such as nasal discharge, pain, and obstruction associated with the use of hypertonic saline solutions.<sup>[31]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In yogic tradition, *Neti* is regarded as a significant *Shatkriya* with an important role in maintaining the health of the upper respiratory tract. This review aimed to highlight the therapeutic value of *Neti Kriya*, particularly *Jala Neti*. A survey of the literature revealed that only a limited number of studies are available in indexed databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and the AYUSH Portal, indicating a need for more rigorous research in this field. The scarcity of accessible classical references and modern scientific investigations remains a major limitation.

Evidence from both yogic texts and contemporary studies on saline nasal irrigation suggests that regular practice of *Jala Neti* may reduce the frequency and severity of upper respiratory tract infections. Research findings support its usefulness in conditions such as sinusitis, allergic disorders, and even visual disturbances, with benefits observed across different age groups. Some studies also indicate that adjunctive agents like *Manuka* honey may be beneficial in chronic rhinosinusitis, pointing to the potential value of practices such as *Madhu Neti*, which warrants further exploration. Additionally, preliminary evidence suggesting improvements in cognitive and behavioural functioning among intellectually disabled children following *Jala Neti* practice deserves deeper investigation.

As a simple, low-cost, and non-pharmacological intervention, *Neti* may help decrease reliance on antibiotics and symptomatic medications. However, well-designed clinical trials are necessary to firmly establish its safety, efficacy, and mechanisms of action, thereby enabling its recognition as an evidence-based therapeutic practice.

## REFERENCES

1. Muktibodhananda S. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yoga Publications Trust; Bihar: 2014. Hatha yoga pradipika.
2. Bahadur R., Chandra Vasu S. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan; Varanasi: 2003. The gheranda samhita.
3. Muktibodhananda S. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yoga Publications Trust; Bihar: 2014. Hatha yoga pradipika. Shatkarma and pranayama: chapter 2, verse 22; p. 186.
4. Bahadur R., Chandra Vasu S. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratishthan; Varanasi: 2003. The gheranda samhita. The training of the physical body: chapter 1, verse 51; p. 18.
5. Woodyard C. Exploring the therapeutic effects of yoga and its ability to increase quality of life. *Int J Yoga*. 2011; 4: 49–54. doi: 10.4103/0973-6131.85485.
6. Bhattacharyya A, Kumar S, Sarma P, Kaur H, Prajapat M, Shekhar N, et al. Safety and efficacy of lopinavir/ritonavir combination in COVID-19: A systematic review, meta-analysis, and meta-regression analysis. *Indian J Pharmacol*. 2020; 52: 313–323. doi: 10.4103/ijp.IJP\_627\_20. [DOI] [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
7. World Health Organization. Bronchial asthma n.d. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs206/en/>.
8. World Health Organization. Chronic respiratory diseases Available from: <http://www.who.int/respiratory/asthma/en>
9. Arroll B., Kenealy T. Antibiotics for the common cold and acute purulent rhinitis. In: Arroll B., editor. *The Cochrane database of systematic reviews*. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.; Chichester, UK: 2005. p. CD000247. [DOI] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
10. Shrimatiseemasagar (editor), Commentary: Swami Anant Bharti Yogendr swami swatmaramakrut Hathyoga Pradipika alokvyakhyasahit, Chapter2 verse no. 30, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi.
11. Shrimatiseemasagar(editor), Commentary: Swami Anant Bharti Yogendrswami swatmaramakrut Hathyoga Pra dipikaalokvyakhyasahit, Chapter2 verse no. 21, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Chaukhamba Orientalia Varanasi.
12. Achilles N., Mösges R. Nasal saline irrigations for the symptoms of acute and chronic rhinosinusitis. *Curr Allergy Asthma Rep*. 2013; 13: 229–235. doi: 10.1007/s11882-013-0339-y.

13. Muktibodhananda S. Yoga Publications trust; Munger: 1999. Hatha yoga Pradipika. [Google Scholar]
14. Muktibodhananda S. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yoga Publications Trust; Bihar: 2014. Shatkarma and pranayama. Hatha yoga pradipika; p. 206. [Google Scholar]
15. Heatley D.G., McConnell K.E., Kille T.L., Levenson G.E. Nasal irrigation for the alleviation of sinonasal symptoms. Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. 2001; 125: 44-48. doi: 10.1067/mhn.2001.115909.
16. Tomooka L.T., Murphy C., Davidson T.M. Clinical study and literature review of nasal irrigation. Laryngoscope. 2000; 110: 1189-1193. doi: 10.1097/00005537-200007000-00023.
17. Shoseyov D., Bibi H., Shai P., Shoseyov N., Shazberg G., Hurvitz H. Treatment with hypertonic saline versus normal saline nasal wash of pediatric chronic sinusitis. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 1998; 101: 602-605. doi: 10.1016/S0091-6749(98)70166-6.
18. Dhingra P.L., Dhingra S. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Elsevier, a division of Reed Elsevier India Private Limited; New Delhi: 2011. Chronic sinusitis. Dis. Ear, nose throat; p. 208. [Google Scholar]
19. Srikantha Murthy K.R., editor. Vagbhat's Astanga Hrdaya, Uttarasthana; Nasa roga vijnaniya: Chapter 19, verse 9-12. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy; Varanasi: 2009. p. 174.
20. Sharma P.V., editor. Susruta samhita, uttara sthana; pratisyaya pratishedham: chapter 24, verse 14-15. Chaukhambha Orientalia; Varanasi: 2005. p. 258.
21. Bansal C. Comparative study on the effect of Saptamrita Lauha and Yoga therapy in myopia. Ayu. 2014; 35: 22-27. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.141904.
22. Ramalingam K.K., Smith M.C. Simple treatment for snoring also a means of prediction of uvulopalatopharyngoplasty success? J Laryngol Otol. 1990; 104: 428-429. doi: 10.1017/s002221510158633.
23. Luo H.-H., Fu Z.-C., Cheng H.-H., Liao S.-G., Li D.-S., Cheng L.-P. Clinical observation and quality of life in terms of nasal sinusitis after radiotherapy for nasopharyngeal carcinoma: long-term results from different nasal irrigation techniques. Br J Radiol. 2014; 87: 20140043. doi: 10.1259/bjr.20140043.
24. Liang K.-L., Kao T.-C., Lin J.-C., Tseng H.-C., Su M.-C., Hsin C.-H. Nasal irrigation reduces postirradiation rhinosinusitis in patients with nasopharyngeal carcinoma. Am J Rhinol. 2008; 22: 258-262. doi: 10.2500/ajr.2008.22.3166. [DOI] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
25. Uma K., Nagendra H.R., Nagarathna R., Vaidehi S., Seethalakshmi R. The integrated approach of yoga: a therapeutic tool for mentally retarded children: a one-year controlled study. J Ment Defic Res. 1989; 33(Pt 5):415-421. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2788.1989.tb01496.x. [DOI] [PubMed] [Google Scholar]
26. Rabago D., Zgierska A., Mundt M., Barrett B., Bobula J., Maberry R. Efficacy of daily hypertonic saline nasal irrigation among patients with sinusitis: a randomized controlled trial. J Fam Pract. 2002; 51: 1049-1055.
27. Tano L., Tano K. A daily nasal spray with saline prevents symptoms of rhinitis. Acta Otolaryngol. 2004; 124: 1059-1062. doi: 10.1080/00016480410017657.
28. Satyananda Saraswati S. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yoga Publications Trust; Bihar: 2014. Shatkarma. Asana pranayama mudra bandha; p. 490. [Google Scholar]
29. Satyananda Saraswati S. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Yoga Publications Trust; Bihar: 2014. Shatkarma. Asana pranayama mudra bandha; p. 491.
30. Kim C.-H., Hyun Song M., Eun Ahn Y., Lee J.-G., Yoon J.-H. Effect of hypo-, iso- and hypertonic saline irrigation on secretory mucins and morphology of cultured human nasal epithelial cells. Acta Otolaryngol. 2005; 125: 1296-1300. doi: 10.1080/00016480510012381.
31. Baraniuk J.N., Ali M., Yuta A., Fang S.-Y., Naranch K. Hypertonic saline nasal provocation stimulates nociceptive nerves, substance P release, and glandular mucous exocytosis in normal humans. Am J Respir Crit Care Med. 1999; 160: 655-662. doi: 10.1164/ajrccm.160.2.9805081.

**Cite this article as:**

Sonal Sharma, Asmita Mahajan, Dheeraj Kumar Tyagi. Therapeutic Potential of Neti Kriya: A Review with Special Emphasis on Jala Neti. AYUSHDHARA, 2026;13(2):318-322.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i2.2574>

**Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared**

**\*Address for correspondence**

**Dr. Sonal Sharma**

PG Scholar,

Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga

Patanjali Bhartiya Ayurvigyan Evam

Anusandhan Sansthan, Haridwar, India.

Email: [sonalsharma0799@gmail.com](mailto:sonalsharma0799@gmail.com)

Disclaimer: AYUSHDHARA is solely owned by Mahadev Publications - A non-profit publications, dedicated to publish quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. AYUSHDHARA cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the articles content which are published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of AYUSHDHARA editor or editorial board members.