

# Survey Results of Jala Neti on 200 Yoga Students in Western Sydney, 1993 - 1994

## Background to the Survey

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 Om Stainless Steel Neti Pots were accruing research data, by issuing a questionnaire with each of our Neti Pots sold. Students were taught the technique in Week 4 of their 8 Week Beginners Yoga Course and the questionnaires were to be returned at the end of the course. The data is therefore relevant to usage of 4 weeks and in some cases longer, since some people mailed their forms back later. Out of all the students who commenced the courses (n=986), we have recorded that about 50% were interested enough to try the technique and buy a pot for regular home use. We received nearly 200 replies out of the 500 people who tried the technique and bought pots. The lack of response was due to some Neti users not finishing the courses and losing contact with the teacher (n=230) and possibly students ceasing the technique for unknown reasons.

This is not a proper scientific, medical study and the criticism has been levelled at our data that there are factors of bias in that: only yoga students were assessed, their other yoga activities may have equally affected their symptoms and that there was no follow up period longer than 8 weeks (which cancels out the Hawthorn or Placebo Effect). We admit to all such biases and even a few more! But the results of this amateur survey have only equated with the reputation of Jala Neti which has been tested down through the ages. We welcome the opportunity of more rigorous trialing of Jala Neti and other yoga practices which will give students even more confidence in their yoga practices and which might broaden the natural therapeutic options for people with many common ailments.

In all the data following, percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Personal Impressions about Jala Neti before, during, and after the first trial:

	Before	During	After
	%	%	%
<b>Positive</b> thoughts or feelings	28	48	76
<b>Negative</b> thoughts or feelings	48	34	18
<b>Mixed</b> 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  
Like swimming

The outcome after the first trial, was that three quarters of the practitioners found that Neti was good and beneficial.

Not as bad as I had thought  
Clean and fresh feeling  
Much clearer breathing  
Light headed, but pleasantly so  
Could really breath 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:

<b>Less often than alternate days</b>	11 %
<b>From daily to alternate days</b>	15 %
<b>Once daily</b>	60 %
<b>2 - 3 times daily</b>	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 Term Benefits:**

<b>Yes</b>	94 %
<b>No</b>	6 %

**Reported Long Term Benefits:**

<b>Yes</b>	92 %
<b>No</b>	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:**

<b>Positive thoughts or feelings</b>	97 %
<b>Negative thoughts or feelings</b>	0 %
<b>Mixed/unsure thoughts or feelings</b>	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  
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 Neti 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 days; 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 Neti 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 prior to learning Neti, but never the less, they received benefits from the practice and hence realised that they had been ignoring small signs of 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 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