

## BANDHAS

Bandhas are small but very important group of yogic practices. They are an essential part of Kriya Yoga, where they are combined with various other yogic techniques. It is, therefore, necessary to master each of them before beginning Kriya Yoga.

Bandhas consist in specific part of the body being gently yet powerfully contracted and tightened. This has vast repercussions. The physical contraction or lock has extensive influence on psychic body (pranic body). The flow of Prana that continuously streams through our subtle body is redirected and even stopped. This has direct influences on the mind. The whole body and mind is tranquilized and made receptive to higher states of awareness. Such is the power of bandhas when they are perfected.

Bandhas, like all other yogic practices, act on and influence different levels of individual being. They have profound effects on the physical, pranic and mental levels.

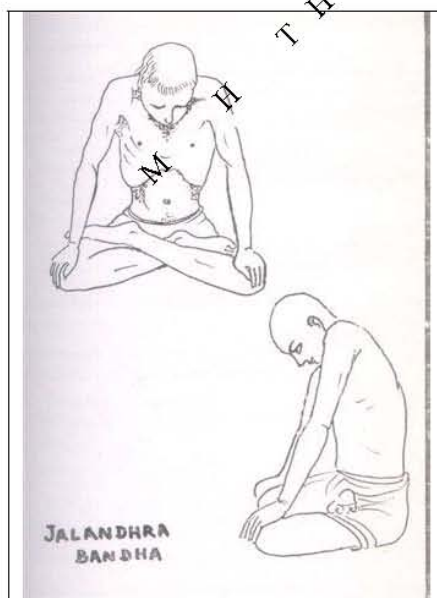
### Jalandhara Bandha

Sit in Padmasana or Siddhasana.

Make sure that the knees are firmly in contact with the ground.

Place the palms of your hands on the knees.

Close the eyes.



Relax the whole body.

Inhale deeply.

Retain the breath inside the lungs.

Then bend the head forwards and press the chin tightly against the chest, in particular against the sternum (breastbone).

Straighten your arms so that they are locked; that is, you have to gently but firmly push your elbows towards each other as though you are trying to bend your arm inward instead of outwards.

Your hands should remain on the knee.

This action will tend to intensify the pressure applied in the region of the neck.

Simultaneously, hunch your shoulders upwards and forwards to ensure that the straight arms are firmly locked.

Stay in the final position for as long as you can comfortably hold your breath.

Then relax the shoulders.

Bend the arms outwards and release the lock.

Slowly raise your head. Then exhale. This is 1 round.

Breathe normally.

When your breathing rate returns to normal you can repeat another round.

Benefits ;

Jalandhara Bandha influences the individual at all levels; physical, psychic and mental. It controls the flow of prana in the body, This induces mental relaxation and can help, to induce meditation.

## **UDDIYANA BANDHA**

Uddiyana Bandha is a very beneficial yogic practice and an integral part of Kriya Yoga. Therefore, it must be perfected before undertaking the more advanced practice of Kriya Yoga.

Sit in any meditation asana with the knees flat on the ground  
( Padmasana or Siddhasana ).

Place the palms of the hands flat on the knees; this is important to allow the arms to apply pressure in the final pose.

Close the eyes.

Relax the whole body.

Exhale as deeply as possible by accentuated contraction of the abdominal muscles and the chest. The lungs should be emptied as much as is possible.

Hold the breath outside.

Do Jalandhara Bandha.

Take a false inhalation i.e. expand the chest as though you are breathing in, but without allowing air to enter the lungs. The abdomen will become concave.

Stay in the final pose for a comfortable length of time while holding the breath.

Then slowly relax the chest. The abdomen will resume its normal position.

Then release Jalandhara Bandha and bend the arms.

Inhale Slowly.

Repeat the process when the breathing has returned to normal.

Don't strain under any circumstances.

### **Points to Remember during the Practice:**

1. Try to initially empty the lungs as much as possible by accentuated contraction of the abdominal muscles and the chest.
2. Make sure that you apply Jalandhara Bandha before doing the final position of Uddiyana. It is Jalandhara that prevents air entering the lungs during the false inhalation.
3. It is the false inhalation that gives the final contraction of the abdomen. The abdominal muscles should remain passive. Many people contract the abdominal muscles in the final position - this is wrong.
4. Don't allow air to enter the lungs when you make the false inhalation.
5. When you release the final pose, firstly relax the chest then release Jalandhara Bandha and finally breathe in. This order is important to prevent injury to the lungs.

### **Benefits:**

The benefits are almost the same as for Jalandhara Bandha. The entire abdomen is squeezed like a sponge. This pushes out all the stagnant blood. All the inner organs are revitalized. It can help to alleviate or prevent a large number of abdominal ailments including indigestion, constipation, diabetes, colitis and so forth if they are not too serious and chronic.

Uddiyana Bandha also has many subtle influences on the pranic body. Uddiyana also redirects prana into the Sushumna nadi. This helps to expand awareness and induces meditation.

## MOOLA BANDHA

Sit in Siddhasana.

Place the palms on the knees.

Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Inhale deeply.

Then hold the breath and practice Jalandhara Bandha.

Contract the muscles at the Mooladhara chakra region.

Draw the muscles upwards as much as you are able without excessive strain.

Keep your attention fixed on the point of contraction, Hold this contraction for as long as possible,  
Then release the contraction.

Release Jalandhara Bandha.

Raise the head and breathe out.

This is 1 round.

If necessary, allow the breathing to return to normal.

Then do some more rounds. Maintain awareness,  
Don't strain.

While taking the final position and doing Jalandhara Bandha, awareness should be directed to the breath. In the final pose, the awareness should be fixed at the place of contraction in the perineum.

The final position can be held for as long as you can hold your breath.

Benefits:

"Moola Bandha brings about the union of prana and apana, and nada and bindu. This will bestow perfection in Yoga. Of this there is no doubt." (Hatha Yoga Pradipika. Ch 4.64)

## MAHA BANDHA

Uddiyana Bandha combined with Jalandhara, as previously described, and Moola bandha is called Maha Bandha.

### Technique :

Practice Uddiyana Bandha combined with Jalandha Bandha.

Then contract the perineum as described in the practice of Moolla Bandha.

This is the final position.

Retain your breath for as long as comfortable.

Then release Moola bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, and finally Jalandhara Bandha.

This is 1 round.

Maha Bandha is directly utilized in Kriya Yoga Practices.

M H T H A K E R