UNIT 10 : MUDRA BANDHA–

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10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES TO MUDRA AND BANDHA

The learning objective of mudras and bandhas is to gain conscious control over the flow of energy (Prana) within the body by utilizing specific hand gestures (Mudras) and muscular contractions (Bandhas), ultimately aiming to achieve a state of mental clarity, physical balance, and spiritual awareness through targeted stimulation of different chakras and body systems.

10.2 INTRODUCTION TO MUDRA AND BANDHA

Mudras and bandhas are techniques used in yoga and meditation to control the body's energy flow. They are described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and are believed to have various physical and psychological effects.

Mudras

Thesehand gestures channel energy into chakras, or energy centers, and affect the organs connected to them. For example, the Anjali Mudra is a mudra that symbolizes respect, honor, love, and gratitude. The Jnana Mudra is another mudra that is used during meditation.

Bandhas

These body locks involve contracting muscles and organs to create an energetic seal that locks Prana, or life energy, into the body. The three main bandhas are:

Mula Bandha:

The Sanskrit word Mula means- base, root and bottom. Bandha means- 'restrain' hold, lock or close. It is also known as the Root Lock. It is related to the subtle body. Its physical counterpart is the perineum muscle, which is located between the anus and genitals and moves in and upward direction.

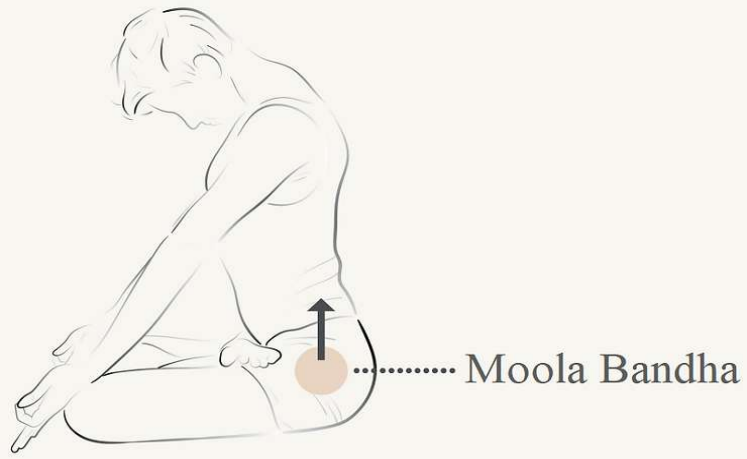


Figure 1: Moola bandha

Mula Bandha Techniques:

- Sit erect in Siddhasana, pressing the perineum with the left heel,
- Look straight ahead and take a deepbreath
- Exhale slowly and as the abdomen contracts, closed the anal sphincters tightly and continuously and then draw them upwards
- Hold the contraction for 5-10 seconds or as long as possible without discomfort.
- Inhale slowly and relax the anal muscles slowly.

Benefits

- It tones the digestive system, reproductive organs and perineum
- Mula bandha especially prepares for spiritual awakening by activatingroot chakra**.**

Uddiyana Bandha- The Flying up Lock

The word Uddiyana in Sanskrit means to fly up, or to rise up.This 'flying up lock' means – flying upwards of one's internal energy i.e. Prana.



Figure 2: Uddiyana Bandha

Uddiyana Bandha Techniques: -

- Sit erect in any meditative asana and keep the palms on the knees. Relax whole body by closing youreyes.
- Inhale slowly and gradually, then exhale completely so that abdomen moves inwards as much as possible with one breath.
- Then perform Jalandhar bandha.
- Upper abdomen moves underneath the rib cage with chest moving outwards, is called Uddiyana bandha.
- Hold this position comfortably as long as possible.

Benefits: -

- It stimulates digestive system

- It stimulates Pancreases and is helpful for diabetes
- It strengthens the abdominal musclesand immune system
- Balances the mind and anger and depressive mood.

Precaution: -Avoid during hypertension, heart diseases, hernia, glaucoma and pregnancy.

Jalandhara Bandha: The Chin Lock

- Jalandhar bandha is one of the energetic locks used in a Hatha Yoga practice**.**
- It is also known as **'**chin lock**'**
- The Sanskrit meaning of Jala is **'**web**'** or **'**net**'** and dhara means **'**holding**'.**
- It is performed by extending the neck and elevating the sternum before dropping the head so that the chin may rest on the chest**.**

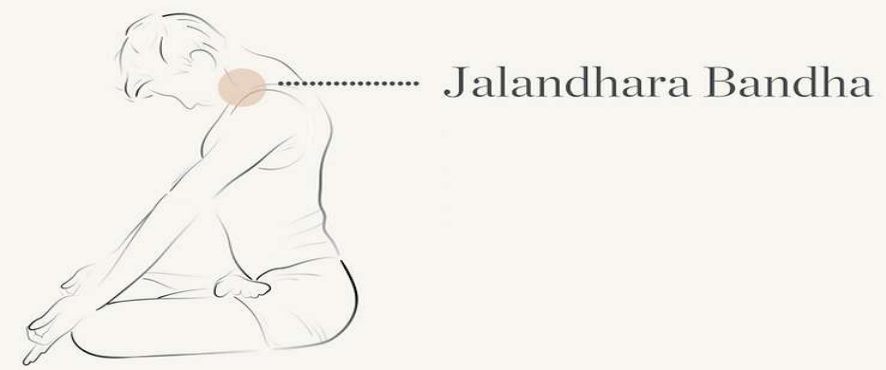


Figure3: Jalandhar Bandha

Jalandhara Bandha Techniques:

- Sit erect in a meditative pose like Padmasana or Siddhasana
- Place the palms on the knees and make sure that the knees are touching the floor.
- Close your eyes and relax the body. Breathe normally
- Now inhale slowly and deeply and then hold your breath.
- Bend the head forward so that the chin touches the chest between the two collar bones notch/pitch of the sternum.

- Straighten the arms and press the knees down with the palms to create a kind of locked position. The shoulders are slightly forward to make sure the arm stays locked.
- Hold this position as long as you are comfortable. Remember that the breath is held inside. Beginners should hold the breath just for few second. Later it can be increased to a minute or more depending on your capacity.
- To release the lock bend the arms, raise your head and exhale out. Come back to the straight position and take a few normal breaths.
- Repeat the process as many times as you feel comfortable.

Benefits:

- It stimulates the Thyroid and parathyroid glands. Thus, regulate the body mechanism.
- Jalandhar bandha helps to activate the throat (Vishuddhi) chakra.
- It prevents the Prana Shakti from moving upwards.
- It increases the blood flow in the brain.

10.3. MEANING AND DEFINITION OFMUDRA AND BANDHA

The word “Mudra” comes from Sanskrit and means “Seal,” “Mark,” or gesture. Mudras are symbolic hand gestures used in meditation, Yoga, and other spiritual practices. A Mudra is a particular posture that channels energy into particular chakras and, in turn, affects the organs to which it is connected. The word “Bandhas” comes from a Sanskrit word that means “to hold,” “tighten,” or “lock”Bandha means Lock. It involves the contraction of the muscles and organs, causing energy to accumulate at a particular plexus.Bandhas are energy locks or binds that are performed by contracting muscles in specific areas of the body.

10.4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MUDRA AND BANDHA

The aims and objectives of mudras and bandhas are to balance energy, improve focus, and heal the body.These techniques are often practiced during

meditation or pranayama and some Asana.In Mudras, the hand gesture channels energy into specific chakras, and it affects the organs connected to the chakras. It can be used to enhance focus, balance energy, and heal the body, and it can also be used to treat various health conditions.Bandhas practices regulate and stabilize energy within the body. It involves contracting muscles and organs to cause energy to accumulate at a particular plexus. And also used to enhance the effectiveness of Pranayama.

10.5. MISCONCEPTION ABOUT MUDRA AND BANDHA

The common misconceptions about mudras and bandhas include: - Believing they only have spiritual benefits with no physical benefits, that forceful muscle contractions are necessary to activate them, that anyone can practice them without proper instruction, and that they can be done without awareness or mindful engagement, potentially leading to incorrect practice and injury. The key is to practice them subtly and with guidance from a qualified teacher.The key points about misconceptions regarding mudras and bandhas are as follows: -

Only spiritual benefits: Many believe mudras are only for spiritual development, ignoring the potential physical and mental health benefits they may offer when practiced correctly.

Excessive force required: A common misconception is that applying bandhas requires strong muscle contractions when in reality, they should be engaged with subtle and mindful control.

No need for guidance: Practicesmudras and bandhas without proper instruction from a qualified teacher can lead to incorrect execution and potential.

Immediate Results: Achieving the full benefits of mudras and bandhas takes time and consistent practice, not instant gratification.

Bandhas are just hand gestures: Mudras are hand gestures, while bandhas are internal “locks” involving specific muscle contractions in the body.

10.6. SHAMBHAVI MUDRA (THE EYEBROW CENTER GAZING)

The word Shambhavi is derived from Lord Shiva, a primary Hindu deity, and is believed to describe the feminine version of him. It is believed that Lord Shiva blesses those who practice Shambhavi Mudra.Shambhavi mudra is a yoga practice that involves eye movements and breathing techniques to enhance perception and reduce stress: The word Shambhavi, meaning 'Eyebrow center gazing' is a Yogic practice involving focused gaze and concentration on the space between the eyebrows, aiming to awaken the third eye chakra and achieve a deeper meditative state, connecting practitioners to higher consciousness.

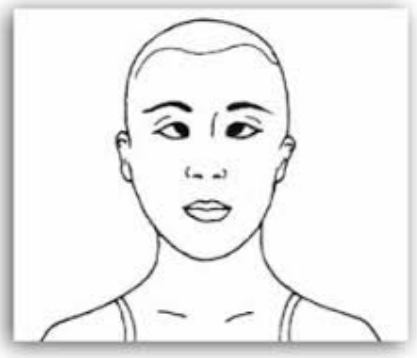


Figure4: Shambhavi mudra

Techniques:

- Sit in a comfortable meditation pose, with a straight spine and head.
- Place your hands on your knees in a gyan mudra, with the upper parts of your thumb and index finger joined to form a circle.
- Close your eyes and relax your face, including your forehead, eyes, and behind your eyes.
- Slowly open your eyes and look forward, keeping your head and body calm.
- Slowly bring your gaze to the center of your eyebrows without moving your head.
- Hold your breath while you continue to do the mudra.

- When you're done, slowly return to the original position and open your eyes.

Eye movements: Involves gazing at the third eye chakra, or the area between the eyebrows. This is also known as the eyebrow center gazing mudra or mukha mudra.

Breathing techniques: A Kriya, or yogic action involvesdeep, controlled breathing and muscular locks in the abdomen and pelvic floor.

Benefits:

It can help strengthen eye muscles, reduce stress and depression, and improve sleep. Some believe it can help discover a new level of consciousness.

Precautions:
Avoid practicing if you feel a headache.
One should not practice in caseof dizziness, hypertension.
One should always practice under thesupervision of Guru or yoga experts.

10.7. SHAKHA MUDRA

Shankha Mudra, or Conch Mudra, is a powerful hand formation that can purify the entire nervous system. Shankha mudra is very commonly used in deity worship and all meditation practices. It is used at the very beginning of all the practices. Shankha means the conch.
The conch is a symbol of purity in the Vedas. The blowing of conch shell is considered to be pure before any worship. When you blow the conch, it iscompletely empty and theair blows well and creates a wonderful sound. Similarly, we need to improve our inner cavity by purifying our nerves for faster communication. The Shankha mudra does just that. In the Shiva Samhita, it is said that the total number of Nadis in the human body is about 72,000. These Nadis are purified by the Shankha mudra.

Technique:

- **Rela**x in any meditative position.
- Place your palms on your chest, with your fingers pointed in front.
- Place your left thumb in your right palm. Wrap your four fingers from your right hand around the left thumb. Your left hand should be kept together.
- Slowly turn your left thumb and fingers towards the sky with the right thumb. Join your left thumb and middle fingers together.
- Your hands will now look like a conch shell. Now, hold this arrangement of fingers.
- Focus on your deep breathing and close your eyes as you chant *OM* in your mind. You can also listen and focus on the echo produced by Om chanting.
- After you have finished with your left thumb enclosed, you can reverse the order of your fingers and continue practicing it for another round.



Figure 5. Shankha Mudra

BENEFITS:

- Shankha Mudra stimulates *Vishuddhi Chakra*, so it overcomes the fear of speaking in front of others.
- Stuttering and stammering are two examples of vocal disorders. It can also help improve the function of the larynx (voice box).
- This *Mudra* improves speech delivery and clarifies voice, increasing confidence.

- Any throat infection, such as tonsillitis, can be treated. It also helps with allergies.
- This *Mudra* also has a rejuvenating effect for 72000 *Nadis* when chanting Om.
- The thyroid gland secretes the hormone thyroxine. It aids in maturation and growth. Thyroxine hormone is also responsible for height increment.
- Shankha Mudra relieves itchy skin and red rashes due to its action on Pitta Dosha.
- This Mudra can be used by people who have lost their appetite. This Mudra increases appetite by bringing the digestive system back on track.

PRECAUTION:

Shankha Mudra can be beneficial for Pitta Dosha. It can cause anxiety, excessive sleep, and migratory pain. However, people with *Vata* or *Kapha Dosha* should use it in moderation.Do not strain your back and neck.

How long to Practice/ Duration

- This *Mudra* is ideal for those who want to improve their vocal cords.
- This *Mudra* is also very beneficial for people who want to inspire others.
- The practice of Shankha *Mudra* has a significant impact on time and duration.
- *Shankha Mudra is* most effective when it's done in the morning. The morning air is purifying and increases the positive feeling.
- This *Mudra* can be done in a single sitting for 15 minutes to an hour. You should do this *Mudra* for 15 minutes at a time and repeat it three times per day. 45 minutes per day.
- A person suffering from allergic symptoms, fever, or digestive problems may be able to do this for longer.

Breathing in Shankha *Mudra*

You can practice various *Pranayamas* along with this. More specifically, start with *Bhramari Pranayama.*

Visualization in Shankha *Mudra*

Let yourself be brought to a state of calm and collected repose by the *Mudra,* followed by the *OM.* Imagine your hands as a seashell with the encircled thumb being the pearl inside. Your left thumb is the symbol of the higher self. This allows you to connect with yourself in love and gives you all the help and security you need.

10.8. SURABHI MUDRA

Surabhi mudra, also known as Kamadhenu mudra, is a yoga mudra that is said to help manifest desires.

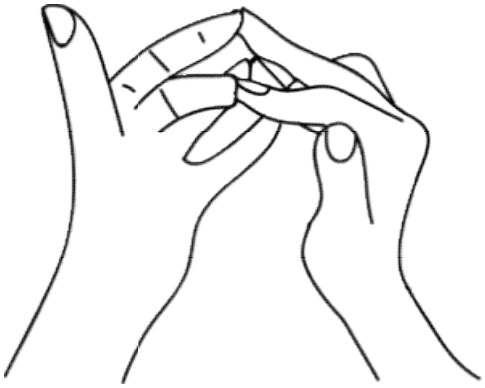


Figure6: Surabhi Mudra

The mudra is formed by:

- Facing your palms towards each other and keeping them parallel
- Extending all fingers and pointing them upwards
- Resting your hands at chest level
- Jointhe tips of the ring finger of your left hand with the little finger of your right hand
- Join the tips of the ring finger of your right hand with the little finger of your left hand
- Jointhe tips of the middle finger of your left hand with the index finger of your right hand

- Joining the tips of the middle finger of your right hand with the index finger of your left hand
- Spreading your thumbs out and pointing them towards your heart
- The name Surabhi Mudra comes from the daughter of Kamadhenu, the sacred cow of the Devas. It is believed that she blessed the Devas with all their desires.
- Mudras are hand gestures, finger positions, or combinations of asanas that are said to rejuvenate the body, heal diseases, and help with spiritual awakening. They are based on the five elements of fire, space, wind, earth, and water, and are said to balance the elements to establish health.

EFFECTS

- Thumbs kept apart help reduce the fire.
- The joining of the tips of the middle and index fingers andjoining of the tips of ring fingers and little fingers removes the problems of bile gout and rheumatism.
- As the eight fingers come together, they activate a number of nervenumber of nerve centers and glands, especially adrenaline, pituitary, and pineal.

BENEFITS

1. All the glands, adrenaline, pituitary, pineal, and thyroid function better.
2. The three doshas- kapha, vata, and pitta get balanced.
3. Acidity is cured immediately.
4. There is a lot of development in creativity. Novelty increases in every endeavor we take up.
5. Desires and dreams are realized.
6. To realize our dreams, one must perform this mudra for 10 minutes every day for at least 15 days.

7. Surabhi mudra has an influence on our minds. It increases our power to think and helps blossoming of creative faculty. This mudra helps us to realize all our dreams.
8. With Gayathri japa, this mudra improves the 'Aura' of the body.

10.9 LET US SUM UP

1. Mudras and bandhas are techniques used in yoga and meditation to control the body's energy flow.
2. They are believed to have various physical and psychological effects. Mudras are specific hand gestures that channel energy into chakras, or energy centers and affect the organs connected to them.
3. Bandhas are body locks that involve contracting muscles and organs to create an energetic seal that locks Prana, or life energy, into the body.
4. Bandhas are body locks that involve contracting muscles and organs to create an energetic seal that locks Prana, or life energy, into the body.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Write the meaning of Mudras and Bandhas

Q2. Write the benefits of Mudras and Bandhas

Q3. Explain the techniques of Shambhavi Mudra the techniques of Shambhavi Mudra.

B. Long Essay (Words Limit 300-500)

Q4. Write the techniques and benefits of Surabhi Mudra.

Q5. Explain the techniques, benefits, and precautions of Shankha Mudra.

10.10 ANDSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer 1. Mudras are specific hand gestures that channel energy into chakras, or energy centers, and affect the organs connected to them. Bandhas are body locks that involve contracting muscles and organs to create an energetic seal that locks Prana, or life energy, into the body.

Answer 2. The practice of mudras and bandhas can help bring stability to the mind, balance the elements, and develop awareness at the level of the organs. It can also help alter the mind, thought process, and emotions.

Answer 3. Shambhavi mudra is a yoga practice that involves eye movements and breathing techniques to enhance perception and reduce stress.

Techniques:

Here are some steps for performing Shambhavi mudra:

- Sit in a comfortable meditation pose, with a straight spine and head.
- Place your hands on your knees in a jnana mudra, with the upper parts of your thumb and index finger joined to form a circle.
- Close your eyes and relax your face, including your forehead, eyes, and behind your eyes.
- Slowly open your eyes and look forward, keeping your head and body calm.
- Slowly bring your gaze to the center of your eyebrows without moving your head.
- Hold your breath while you continue to do the mudra.
- When you're done, slowly return to the original position and open your eyes.

Eye movements: Involves gazing at the third eye chakra, or the area between the eyebrows. This is also known as the eyebrow center gazing mudra or mukha mudra.

Breathing techniques: A kriya, or yogic action involves deep, controlled breathing and muscular locks in the abdomen and pelvic floor.

Answer 4- Surabhi mudra, also known as Kamadhenu mudra, is a yoga mudra that is said to help manifest desires. The mudra is formed by:

- Facing your palms towards each other and keeping them parallel
- Extending all fingers and pointing them upwards
- Resting your hands at chest level
- Joining the tips of the ring finger of your left hand with the little finger of your right hand
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- The name Surabhi Mudra comes from the daughter of Kamadhenu, the sacred cow of the Devas. It is believed that she blessed the Devas with all their desires.

- Mudras are hand gestures, finger positions, or combinations of asanas that are said to rejuvenate the body, heal diseases, and help with spiritual awakening. They are based on the five elements of fire, space, wind, earth, and water, and are said to balance the elements to establish health.

Effects:

Thumbs kept apart help reduce the fire. The joining of the tips of middle and index fingers and joining of the tips of ring fingers and little fingers removes the

problems of bile and gout and rheumatism. As the eight fingers come together, they active some nerve centers and glands especially adrenaline, pituitary and pineal.

Benefits:

- All the glands, adrenaline, pituitary, pineal and thyroid function better.
- The three doshas- Kapha, Vata, and Pitta get balanced.
- Acidity is cured immediately.
- There is a lot of development in creativity. Novelty increases in every endeavor we take up.
- Desires and dreams are realized.
- To realize our dreams, one must perform this mudra for 10 minutes every day for at least 15 days.
- Surabhi mudra has an influence on our minds. It increases our power to think and helps the blossoming of creative faculty. This mudra helps us to realize all our dreams.
- With Gayathri japa, this mudra improves the 'Aura' of the body.
- There are various types of Surabhi mudra performed by placing the thumb at the base of the elements.

Answer 5- **Technique of Shankha Mudra**

- Relax in any meditative position.
- Place your palms on yourchest, with your fingers pointed in front.
- Place your left thumb in your right palm. Wrap your four fingers from your right hand around the left thumb. Your left hand should be kept together.
- Slowly turn your left thumb and fingers towards the sky with the right thumb. Join your left thumb and middle fingers together.
- Your hands will now look like a conch shell. Now, hold this arrangement of fingers.
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- Stuttering and stammering are two examples of vocal disorders. It can also help improve the function of the larynx (voice box).
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- Shankha Mudra relieves itchy skin and red rashes due to its action on Pitta Dosha.
- This Mudra can be used by people who have lost their appetite. This Mudra increases appetite by bringing the digestive system back on track.

Precaution:

Shankha Mudra can be beneficial for Pitta Dosha. It can cause anxiety, excessive sleep, and migratory pain. However, people with *Vata or Kapha Dosha* should use it in moderation.

- Do not strain your back and neck.

10.12 FURTHER READING

- **"**MUDRAS & HEALTH PERSPECTIVES**"** by ***"SUMAN.K.CHIPLUNKAR"*** page no 72
- Acharya Keshav Dev: *Mudras for Healing; Mudra Vigyan: A Way of Life*. Acharya Shri Enterprises, 1995.

- Suman K Chiplunkar: *Mudras & Health Perspectives: An Indian Approach*. Abhijit Prakashana, 2008.

10.11. MODEL QUESTION

A. Objective question

Q1. Write the meaning of Mudras?

Q2. What is the meaning of Shankha Mudra?

Q3. Write downany two benefits of Shambhavi Mudra.

Q4. What are the two main mudras practice during the meditative posture?

Q5. What is the meaning of bandhas?

B.Very short Note (Words Limit 150-200)

Q1. Write the meaning and procedure of Surabhi Mudra?

Q2. Write the meaning and its procedure or Shambhavi Mudra?

Q3. Explain the three types of Bandhas?

C. Long Essay (Words Limit 300-500)

Q1. Elaborate on the meaning of Mudras and bandhas? Explain the three types of bandhas and theirbenefits?

Q2. Explain the meaning and its procedure of Shambhavi Mudra and mention the benefits and its precautions?

Q3. Explain in detail about Shankha Mudra?

Q4. Write the aims and objective and their misconceptionsof mudras and bandhas?

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