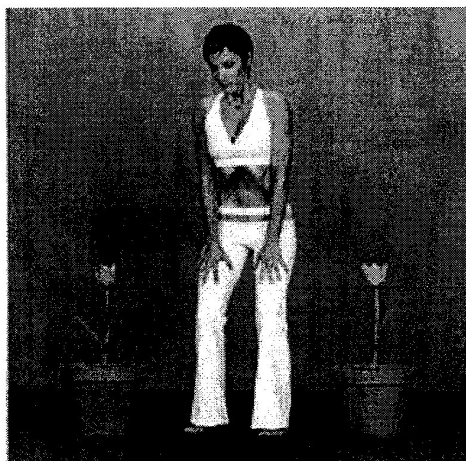


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Uddiyana Bandha



(oo-dee-YAH-nah BAHN-dah)
 uddiyana = upward (cf. ud = "up, upwards")
 bandha = binding, tying a bond, fetter; putting together, uniting, contracting, combining; mundane bondage, attachment to this world (as opposed to emancipation, mukti or moksha).

There are a few important points to remember when beginning the practice of Uddiyana Bandha: perform it only on an empty stomach, and only after an exhalation, never before an inhalation. During the time you hold the bandha, also perform Jalandhara Bandha. Most teachers recommend that you learn this bandha in a standing position, and only move to sitting after you've gained some experience.

Similarly, wait until you've been sitting for a while before using this bandha during pranayama. T.K.V. Desikachar suggests that Uddiyana can also be learned in a supine reclining position (see the Variation section below).

Step by Step

①

Stand with your feet slightly apart, eyes open. Different teachers have different ideas about the proper way to perform this bandha. Here are four possibilities:

- a) Practice with your torso rounded forward, knees bent, hands resting on your knees.
- b) Learn the bandha first with your torso rounded forward and then, after getting some experience, practice the bandha standing upright, hands on hips.
- c) Practice throughout with your torso upright.
- d) Start the practice with your torso rounded forward, perform Uddiyana Bandha, and then stand upright, with your hands on your hips (Iyengar).

②

Inhale deeply through your nose, then exhale quickly and forcibly, also through your nose (or pursed lips). Contract your abdominal muscles fully to push as much air as possible out of your lungs. Then relax your abdominals.

③

Perform what's called a "mock inhalation"; that is, expand your rib cage (thorax) as if you were inhaling, but don't actually inhale. The expansion of the rib cage (without the inhalation) sucks the abdominal muscles and viscera up into the thorax and hollows the belly (some teachers say to actively but slowly lift abdominals, or navel, toward the

- Approach the practice of all bandhas and body mudras cautiously, especially without the direct guidance of an experienced teacher

Beginner's Tip

Variations

Modifications and Props

Preparatory Poses

- Virasana
- Baddha Konasana

Follow-Up Poses

- Bharadvajasana I

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Mula Bandha



(moo-lah bahn-dah)

mula = root (of any tree, but also figuratively the lowest part of anything)

bandha = bond *legane*

Step by Step

①

Students are typically instructed to contract, to a greater or lesser degree, the (perineal) muscles at the base of the pelvis. **THIS SHOULD NOT BE ATTEMPTED WITHOUT THE GUIDANCE OF AN EXPERIENCED TEACHER.** Here we'll simply approximate Mula Bandha.

②

Learn Mula Bandha in Virasana (Hero Pose). Contact the "tripod" at the base of your pelvis which consists of three bones: the tail bone (coccyx) and the two heads of the thigh (femur) bones. Your coccyx should imaginatively lengthen down and through the floor. Your femur heads should similarly sink down and through the floor (if you can't imagine this lay a sand bag across each top thigh). Finally with your hands, press your hip points together, narrowing them toward each other.

③

The combined actions of the bones will firm without hardening your lower belly, and spontaneously dome your perineum up into your torso without any conscious effort on your part. This latter action will in turn charge your spine, which will lift and lengthen your entire torso up through your crown.

④

Apply Mula Bandha as you end your inhale, then hold it during Kumbhaka. Slowly release it as you exhale, and soften it during the pause following the exhale.

Benefits

- Prevents the retained breath from "leaking out" of the torso through the bottom of the pelvis
- Enlivens the entire spine to support the sitting position

Contraindications and Cautions

Contraindications and Cautions

Benefits

Prevents the retained breath from "leaking out" of the torso through the throat

Protects the brain, eyes, and inner ears from the internal pressure of the retained breath

Contraindications and Cautions

Approach the practice of all bandhas and body mudras cautiously, especially without the direct guidance of an experienced teacher.

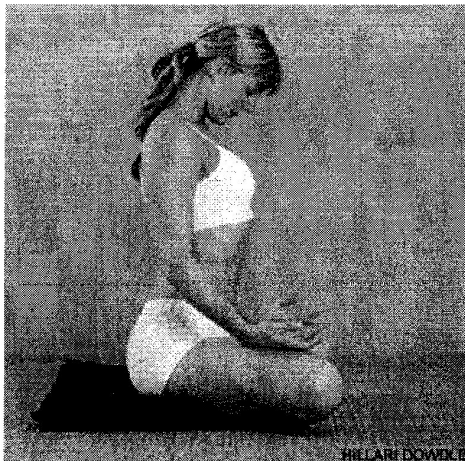
Avoid this bandha if you have a neck injury

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Jalandhara Bandha



(jah-lahn-DHA-rah bahn-dah)
 jala = net (for catching birds or fish)
 dhara = bearing, supporting
 bandha = bond

Step by Step

1

Sit in a comfortable pose.

2

Firm your shoulder blades against your back torso to lift your sternum. Be careful not to push your front ribs forward.

3

Full Jalandhara requires the chin to rest comfortably on the sternum (neck flexion). Many beginners make the mistake of only lowering the chin; in fact your chin should be met half-way by the elevated sternum.

4

The focus of these complementary movements is the "crook" of the throat, where the underside of the chin meets the front of the neck. Draw this crook diagonally up and into your skull (toward the top of your spine). Your head should pivot and your chin should descend over this action, which simultaneously draws the top of the sternum upward.

5

Work on lengthening the back of your neck, releasing your shoulders, and opening your chest in poses like Sarvangasana and Setu Bandha Sarvangasana. **Never** force your chin to your sternum.

6

If you're a beginner, **don't** hold this bandha continuously throughout your practice. Begin your inhalation with your head upright. Apply Jalandhara as you near the end of the inhale, hold during the retention and the exhale, then raise your head to a neutral position for the next inhale.

Hide All View All

Benefits

Technically this position is called Tadagi Mudra, the Tank Seal (*tadagi* = tank), because the hollow belly is reminiscent of a water tank. Lie on your back and stretch your arms overhead, laying the backs of the hands on the floor. Extend through your heels in the opposite direction. The opposing stretch of the arms and legs sucks the belly into the torso, shaping it like a water tank or pool. Don't, however, hold the breath; breathe normally, allowing the upper belly to expand fully on the inhalation, while keeping the lower belly hollow. Gheranda says that this seal "destroys decay and death."

Preparatory Poses

- Adho Mukha Svanasana
- Baddha Konasana
- Dandasana
- Paschimottanasana
- Sarvangasana
- Sirsasana
- Supta Virasana
- Viparita Karani
- Virasana

Follow-Up Poses

Perform Uddiyana Bandha at the beginning of your asana practice to stimulate the energy resident in the belly.

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spine). Because you should always perform Jalandhara Bandha along with Uddiyana Bandha, come into Jalandhara Bandha at this point.

2

Hold the bandhas for five to 15 seconds. Then slowly release the abdominal grip and inhale normally. Perform three to 10 rounds, depending on your capacity, with one or more normal breaths between each round.

5

Anatomical Focus

Abdomen
Thorax

Therapeutic Applications

Constipation
Indigestion

Benefits

- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and diaphragm
- Massages abdominal viscera, the solar plexus, and the heart and lungs
- Increases gastric fire; improves digestion, assimilation, and elimination; and purifies the digestive tract of toxins
- Stimulates blood circulation in the abdomen and blood flow to the brain
- Stimulates and lifts the energy of the lower belly (*apana vayu*), to unite it with the energies localized in the navel (*samana vayu*) and heart (*prana vayu*)

Contraindications and Cautions

- Stomach or intestinal ulcers
- Hernia
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Glaucoma
- Menstruation
- Pregnancy

Beginner's Tip

Instead of simply resting your hands on your knees in the standing position (as described above in Step 1a), firmly press the bases of your palms against the very tops of the thighs (right hand on the right thigh, left hand on the left). This downward pressure on the femur bones will create a slight natural hollowing of your lower belly.

Variations

The hollow belly of Uddiyana Bandha can be approximated in a reclining position.