



Spiritual Exercise

MULABHANDA

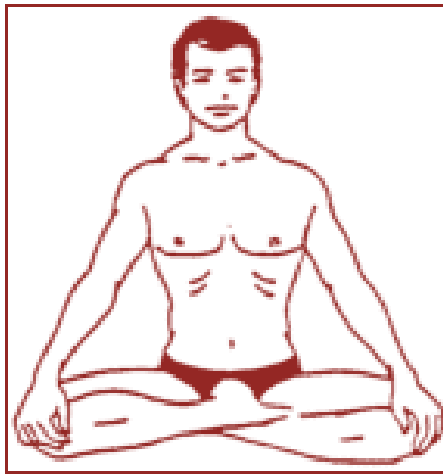
The Root Lock

What are Bandhas

The bandhas are mechanisms by which a yogi or the student of energy can direct the flow of Prana, the universal life-force energy that animates and unites us all. With a few simple adjustments, you can learn to integrate Mula Bandha, one of four bandhas mentioned in Hatha Yoga into your daily asana practice. Mūla

Bandha is a Sanskrit (मूल बंध) compound

term: Mūla denotes "root", "base", "beginning", "foundation", "origin or cause", "basis", "source"; Bandha denotes "bondage", "fetter", "posture", "joining together", "catching hold of". Bandha means "voluntary contraction of a group of muscles."



Iyengar defines Mūla Bandha as:

"A posture where the body from the anus to the navel is contracted and lifted up and towards the spine."

The root referred to here is the root of the spine, the pelvic floor or, more precisely, the center of the pelvic floor, the perineum. The perineum is the muscular body between the anus and the genitals. By slightly contracting the pubo-coccygeal muscle, which goes from the pubic bone to the tail bone, the coccyx, we create an energetic seal that locks Prana into the body and so prevents it from leaking out at the base of the spine. Mula

Bandha is said to move Prana into the Central Channel, or Sushumna, which is the subtle equivalent of the spine.

Mūla Bandha is the principal, key and primary Bandha of the Yogic Traditions. Mūla Bandha is endemic to all safe, grounded workings of body-mind disciplines. This Bandha in and of itself conditions the Muladhara, or Root, Chakra, simultaneously keeping, rooting and engaging the systemic plethora of

processes that constitute body-mind and with diligence resolving them in discipline and accord. Mūla Bandha should be held as a restraint only after kumbhaka, which in this instance is where the breath is expressed in its entirety and held outside the body. It likens the functionality of the Bandha and especially

Mūla Bandha to "safety-valves which should be kept shut during the practice of kumbhakas".

Bandhas thus direct the energy flow, Prana, inside the body so that blockages of dammed up and blocked energy are alleviated, areas starved of Prana are nourished, and Prana which leaks out because of dissipative habits are harmonized, activated, and integrated. Bandhas thus bound/bind back the dissipative energy and as such they are the embodied aspect of pratyahara: restraining the dissipating outward flow of Prana while bringing it back to be

redistributed from the core center in order to achieve union and harmony in the core center. At first bandhas are learned as a coarse physical procedure utilizing muscles and physical movement. Eventually the yogi becomes aware of the underlying neurophysiological, mental, and energetic patterns behind the physical; hence the bandhas are affected by awareness and mental alertness in the intermediate state. Eventually they are affected spontaneously and naturally, sahaj. and continuously: not only in daytime sadhana, but in sleep, in all our energetic relations.

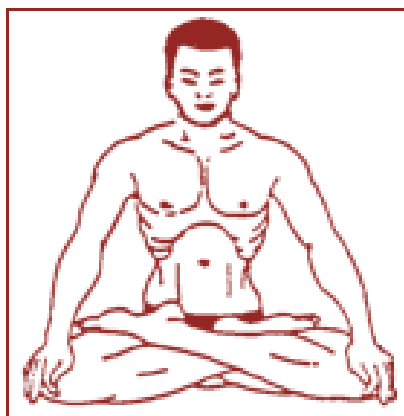
The underlying fifth limb in ashtanga yoga, pratyahara, in turn acts similarly as a powerful vehicle for tapas, or increasing the spiritual fire, and is its energetic counterpart as our energy patterns are no longer dissipated nor distracted into dualistic

externalizations or pursuits, either mentally, physically, or energetically. As such, pratyahara is the general operating principle while the specific bandhas work at specific energy circuits. It is cogent that pratyahara is not merely the withdrawal of the senses from the sense objects, but the withdrawal from dualistic subject/object foolishness. One aspect of pratyahara and bandhas may look like a withdrawal, but the complete bandha and pratyahara manifests as a re-direction from the true nature of mind, the Divine purusa where we become the instruments; hands, feet,

and all the organs, of the infinite fountainhead of love and delight. The activation of the bandhas which will be shown later, not only affect the body and the energy, but thus also the mind and spiritual centers because the mind rides on the horse of Divine Wind, Prana, just as the winds, Prana, are affected by the mind.

In order to exercise the MulaBandha when beginning, it is helpful to be seated or to lie down in a comfortable position. Concentrate your mind in to the anal / Genital / Perineum zone and become aware. The muscles of the Gluteus

Maximus/ Lower buttock muscles are pressed to transfer more pressure towards the anus, as if it was wanted to hold in your waste product.



The Practice - Mulabhandha

Mulbhandha or Root Lock is the most frequently applied. It is performed in three steps by first contracting the anal sphincter, drawing it in and up, as if trying to hold back a bowel movement, and then drawing up the sex organ, so that the urethral tract is contracted. Lastly, pull the navel point by drawing the lower abdomen back towards the spine. This is applied with breath held, either in or out, and helps unite the two major energy flows, Prana and apana, generating psychic heat which triggers the release of Kundalini energy, and often ends an asana or exercise.

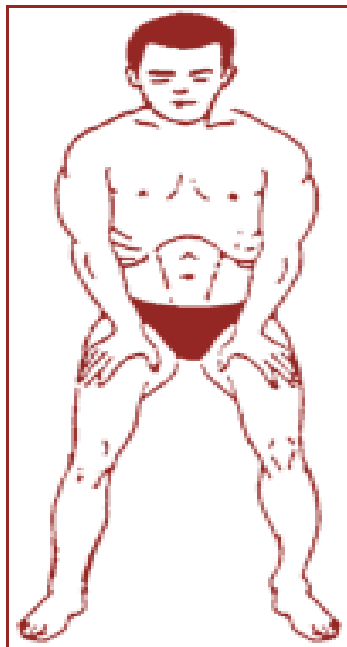
The Root Lock is the first of three interior body “locks” used in asana and Pranayama practice to control the flow of energy.

The contraction of the external anal sphincter, later the contraction of the second muscular ring and last the elevation of the anus. Play with a maximum contraction and hold it, as to really feel what is going on. When you are holding the bandha for extended periods you may be holding it gently at 15 -50 % of your maximum.

A Beginner’s Guide

Air is inhaled until half of capacity of our lungs has been filled and the breathing stays while a greater contraction/ lift of the anus takes place.

- To activate mula bandha, exhale and engage the pelvic floor, drawing it upwards towards your navel.
- You want to isolate and draw up the perineum, which is between the anus and the genitals anus and genitals.
- Maintain this contraction with the breath in for about six seconds, and then out for about six seconds.
- Breathe with calm, slowly and smoothly. Repeat this exercise five times.
- Continue to Increase over time to incorporate it into your practice.



Do not hold your breath.

Engaging mula bandha while doing yoga poses can give the postures an extra lift. This is especially useful when jumping. When you are holding it for extended periods you may be holding it gently at 15 -50 %.

It is the root lock and calls the energy from within a makes everything come alive with energy. Mula bandha increases flexibility and stimulates heat. By contracting the perineum and drawing the energy up from the base of the spine, one can intensify and direct the life energy, cultivating a sense of heightened awareness and increasing vitality.

By bringing awareness to the core of the body, mula bandha helps prevent injury. It guides you to move from your center, rather than your brain which the eyes pull you towards. Once you have a better understanding of it, you will become lighter and flow more with your yoga practice.

Yogic texts tell us that Mula bandha can also be practiced while doing Pranayama. While performing Pranayama, the blood is accumulated around the waist.

Practice of Mula bandha results in better circulation of this accumulated blood.