



Bandhas



What are Bandhas?

- Bandhas are most commonly referred to as “**energetic locks.**” You can activate them to strengthen your practice through mind and body. They create more strength and stability in certain poses and are often used in tandem with specific pranayama, or “breath control,” practices.

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- There are **four principle Bandhas** and each helps deepen your internal energetic flow and connection.
 - **Mula Bandha** - Root Lock
 - **Uddiyana Bandha** – Flying Upward Lock
 - **Jalandhara Bandha** – Throat Lock
 - **Maha Bandha** – Great Lock



Mula bandha

To lift the impurities (mala) up to the fire.



Uddiyana bandha

To hold the impurities close to the fire to burn them, and evaporate amrita to replenish the “lake of the mind”.



Jalandhara bandha

To prevent amrita from falling into the fire.



Mula Bandha – Root Lock

- Contracts the muscles of the pelvic floor while simultaneously redirecting energy up the spine – and towards higher stages of consciousness.

While energetic results are not immediate and require continual practice, the physical activation of the root lock helps protect you during your yoga practice.



How to Practice Mula Bandha

1. Focus on contracting the anus and the pelvic floor (similar to Kegel exercises)
 2. Keep the contraction and continue to lengthen the spine and draw the pubic bone inward and upward
 3. Continue to breathe normally as you practice Mula Bandha (i.e. practicing this bandha should not hinder your breathing or pranayama practice)
 4. When you are ready to release the lock, do so on your exhale
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Yoga Poses to Practice Mula Bandha

► **Utkatasana** – Chair Pose

1. Stand with the feet together or hip-width distance apart if you feel pressure in your low back. Bend the knees and lower the hips like you're sitting in a chair
2. Reach the arms overhead and keep your chest lifted
3. Squeeze the legs together and engage the pelvic floor
4. Take at least 5 deep breaths and concentrate on activating your Mula Bandha

► **Navasana** – Boat Pose

1. Begin in a seated position with your knees bent and feet on the floor
2. Lift the pelvic floor as you lean back. Keep the chest lifted and your spine long
3. Lift the legs to about a 45 degree angle. Keep your knees bent to alleviate low back pain and/or tight hip flexors
4. Bring the arms parallel to the floor. You may also reach for your hamstrings or shins
5. Hold Boat Pose and contract Mula Bandha for 10 deep breaths

Uddiyana Bandha – Flying Upward Lock

- ▶ Located between the navel and spine where the diaphragm forms an energetic and physical funnel. Known as the “flying upward lock,” Uddiyana Bandha brings fire to the digestive system and lightness to your yoga poses.

Energetically, this bandha is a powerhouse that moves our energy and awareness to the higher realms of the heart chakra. This movement of energy brings less stress and more love into your everyday life.

How to Practice Uddiyana Bandha

- Inhale into the body and fully exhale
- Hold the out breath
- Then with a straight spine, pull the belly in toward the spinal column but do not release the breath
- Hold this bandha for 10-15 seconds
- Release slowly by softening the abdomen and taking an inhalation

When you practice Uddiyana Bandha, don't get caught up in overthinking it or trying to make it perfect. Uddiyana Bandha is mostly used when moving between poses to help stabilize the body. Practice Uddiyana Bandha during your practice and soon it will become second nature.



When to Practice Uddiyana Bandha

► *The Jump Back to Chaturanga*

1. Stand at the top your mat in Forward Fold with the feet together and place your hands on the mat
2. Then lift the pelvic floor (Mula Bandha) and pull the navel toward the spine (Uddiyana Bandha)
3. Hold the exhale and transfer the weight into the hands and hop the feet back to Chaturanga
4. Practice this often to become more aware of Uddiyana Bandha



Jalandhara Bandha – Throat Lock

- Mostly used in pranayama and meditation. During meditation, Jalandhara Bandha moves and holds energy in the upper chakras. It increases the potency of meditation and concentration.



Maha Bandha – The Great Lock

- Simply described as “the great lock,” the Maha Bandha is a combination of all the bandhas or locks at the same time. One of the ultimate benefits of this pose is the way it quiets the mind. Since Maha Bandha can only be practiced in a limited number of yoga poses, Maha Bandha is mostly used in meditation and pranayama practices.

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- Maha Bandha should only be performed after you are extremely comfortable with practicing Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha and Jalandhara Bandha separately.

Note which bandhas cause unease: this may signify a need to soften your practice or address energetic or emotional obstacles. With time, repetition, and patience, practicing these internal locks will become second nature and quickly become wonderful tools for your life and your yoga practice.



How to practice Jalandhara Bandha

- Find a comfortable seated position, sit up tall and place your hands on your knees
- Lengthen the back of the neck
- Slightly tuck chin to chest
- Close the eyes and keep them relaxed while continuing to breath normally
- Hold for as long as you are comfortable

Keep the energy contained within the base of the spine and throat during Jalandhara Bandha. This lock can help keep the energy from being expended from the five senses and even the hands and feet while practicing.



How to Practice Maha Bandha

- Sit in a comfortable meditative position
- Take a few slow and deep breaths through the nose
- Take a final inhalation, and then slowly and completely exhale the air
- At the bottom of the exhalation, lift Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha and finally Jalandhara Bandha
- Remain there for a few short moments (longer over time) and then release the locks and take an inhalation



Bibliography

- ▶ <https://www.yogiapproved.com/yoga/what-are-bandhas/>
- ▶ <https://www.equencewiz.com>