

When the breath wanders, the mind also is unsteady. But when the breath is calmed the mind too will be still, and the yogi achieves long life. Therefore, one should learn to control the breath."

—Svatmarama, Hatha Yoga Pradipika

3rd block of Pranayama, 7th HYTT weekend:

- ♥ Bandhas,
- ♥ Kumbhaka
- ♥ Agnisara
- ♥ Bhastrika

Theory

Bandhas

The word bandha means 'to bind'.

Bandha is a gateway, portal or valve.

Like using locks on your luggage, we use bandhas to keep the content in, the energy in, prevent it from leaking, getting lost.

These locks create a concentration of energy and eventually helps awareness to rise and expand from 1st to 7th chakra

The 4 important bandhas in pranayama:

1. **Moola bandha**, the root lock, a lift of the pelvic floor:

Lift of perineum, area between anus and genitals.

Applying Mula bandha (root lock):

not loosing /leaking prana, keep the energy in and moves energy back to the navel

Practicing Moola bandha:

Holding up your pee or placing a block high up in between the legs.

Naturally when riding a bike, carrying your shopping bags, climbing stairs

2. **Uddiyana bandha**, the flying up lock: abdominal lock

Lift of the abdomen

Applying Uddiyana Bandha:

Feet hip width, hands on knees.

Exhale, with false inhalation (=action of taking breath in without taking the air in), bring the abdomen and organs in and up to the spine. Now you can feel your lower ribs. Hold breath for a few counts.

Release Uddiyana and inhale

Helps energy to rise up through the center of the core and intensifies the upward energy from the Mula Bandha and downward energy from Jaladhara Bandha.

Helps digestion.

Soft massage for lower back

3. **Jalandhara bandha**, the chin lock.

lengthen the neck, bringing the chin to the chest, closing off the throat.

Making a double chin ☺

Practice: by placing a tennis ball between your chin and neck

Applying Jalandhara bandha protect us from releasing too much energy to the brain.

Calms the mind.

Regulates the thyroid.

Regulates metabolism.

4. **Maha Bandha**: using 3 bandhas together

Practice:

Stand hip width.

Exhale

Apply Mula bandha (gentle lift of the perineum)

Apply Jalandhara bandha

Bend forward, hands on thighs, elbows straight

Apply Uddiyana bandha

Hold the breath for 5-10 counts, release Mula bandha, Jalandhara bandha and Uddiyana bandha

Inhale

Why do we use locks (bandhas) if yoga is all about opening?

- ♥ First they hold the blood flow, when released there is an increased flow of fresh blood.
- ♥ Old, dead cells are flushed away, activating the organs to strengthen and renew as circulation is stimulated.
- ♥ Energetically, Bandhas stimulate the brain-centres, nadis and chakras.
- ♥ They purify and remove blockages and harmonizes and balances the Self.

Kumbhaka: Retention of the breath

Puraka= inhalation

Rechaka= exhalation

Antar Kumbhaka:

breath retention after inhalation done with Moola Bandha and Jalandhara Bandha.

Bahir Kumbhaka:

breath retention after exhalation (*also called Bahya Kumbhaka*)
done with Moola Bhandha, Uddhiyana Bandha and Jalandhara Bandha.

Kevala Kumbhaka:

the natural retention between in -and ex- and ex- and inhalation .

Agnisara pranayama

Fire breath: Agni =fire Sara= energy, essence.

Massaging the abdominal organs.

A heating practice: detoxing , purifying, energizing, stimulating digestion, clear mind.

How to do:

Do 3 rounds of 15 in and out -breaths

1 round:

Sit comfortable

Applying Mula bandha

Applying Jalandhara bandha

Place your hand on your lower belly

Exhale

Inhale pull navel forward

Exhale pull navel back to the spine

Last exhale, exhale completely.

Release Mula bandha, release Jalandhara bandha

Come back to your natural breath

Sit still for a minute or so

Watch the natural breath, body sensation, thoughts and feelings

Continue with 2 more rounds

Sit still or come into Shavasana for 5 min or more

Contra-indications Agnisara

Menstruation, pregnancy, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, glaucoma, heart diseases, hernia, migraine, panic attacks, epilepsy, an unstable mind

Build your practice

You can do more or less rounds.

Do not overdo (rajas) neither give up too fast (tamas).

Through practice you will get the neck of it and the benefits.

Time of practice

In the mornings or when you need to wake up, energizing yourself

Not doing before going to sleep.

Have an empty stomach

Bhastrika pranayama

Bhastrika is a bellows breath.

Forceful in- and exhalations are alternating.

It is a stimulating heating pranayama by rhythmic pumping of the diaphragm and the lungs.

Tones the abdominal region, calms the mind, stimulates the immune system, stimulates digestion.

Specially in cold, winter times to prevent nasal and lung infections.

Removes blockages from nose, throat and chest

How to do?

Do 3 rounds of 15 forceful, continuous diaphragmatic in- and exhalations.

After 1 round: Breath retention after the last exhale (Bahir Kumbhaka)

1st round:

Sit cross-legged on floor with an elongated spine.

Sit comfortable

Palms on knees, so you can pull yourself up.

Engaging Mula bandha and Jalandhara bandha

Inhale lift the whole ribcage (and shoulders) up

Exhale drop all down.

15 times

With your last exhale, exhale completely.

Check whether you still are applying Mula and Jalandhara bandha,

Otherwise apply.

Apply Uddhiyana bandha (fake inhale).

Bahir Kumbhaka: hold the breath up to 10 counts.

Release Release Mula bandha, release Jalandhara bandha, release Uddhiyana bandha

Inhale deeply, exhale fully

Come back to your natural breath

Sit still for a minute or so

Watch the natural breath, body sensation, thoughts and feelings

Continue with 2 more rounds.

After the 3d round:

Come back to your natural breath and stay seated or lay down on your back in Shavasana for 5 min or more

Contra-indications Bhastrika:

Menstruation, pregnancy, high blood pressure, low blood pressure, glaucoma, heart diseases, hernia, migraine, panic attacks, epilepsy, an unstable mind

Build your practice:

You can do more or less rounds.

Do not overdo (rajas) neither give up too fast (tamas).

Through practice you will get the neck of it and the benefits.

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