

Fundamental Components of Kundalini Yoga

Kundalini Yoga is an ancient art and science dealing with the alteration and expansion of consciousness, the awakening and raising of Kundalini Energy up the spine through energy centers called Chakras, activating them. This is accomplished by the mixing and uniting of Prana (cosmic energy) with Apana (eliminating energy) which generates pressure to force Kundalini to rise, by means of Pranayama (breathing exercises), Bhandas (body locks), in Kriyas (exercise sets), using Asanas (postures), Mudras (gestures), and Mantras (chanted words). Kundalini Yoga sets and Meditations also use Visualization, Projection and Focused Attention to attain specific effects. Through the practice of Kundalini Yoga, an individual can unite his consciousness with Cosmic Consciousness on a regular basis by carefully performing the exercises and meditations in specific sequence and combination. A student soon becomes adept at perceiving the movement of energy within and outside of his body, and consciously begins to direct its flow to stimulate and awaken the chakras, for healing himself and others, and clearly becomes a co-creator with God. (taken from Transitions to a Heart Centered World - Guru Rattana, Ph.D.)

Kundalini : An incredibly powerful storehouse of psychic energy, sometimes called Shakti, symbolized as a coiled, sleeping serpent at the base of the spine ("Kundal" means 'curl'). Once awakened it uncoils and ascends through the spinal column (in the psychic channel, Sushumana) to the Sahasrara (the masculine Crown Chakra) at the top of the head, and triggers a transcendent spiritual state. Repeated experiences produce enlightenment.

Prana & Apana: Prana is the basic life force of consciousness in the air we breathe and the food we eat, assimilated effortlessly, and Kundalini yoga practice enhances its absorption. Apana is the eliminating energy stored in the lower chakras. When it is raised and united with Prana (by breath retention & body contractions or locks), psychic heat is generated which raises Kundalini through the chakras.

Kriyas : A series of one or more exercises or postures in combination with pranayama, locks, chanting, visualization, projection, etc., in specific sequence designed to produce specific effects. Kundalini Yoga kriyas are centuries old. The total effect of a kriya is greater than the sum of its parts. 'Kriya' literally means 'work' or 'action'.

Asanas : A pose or posture designed to stimulate glands, organs or body awareness, and to quiet the mind for meditation. Asanas often apply pressure on nerves or accupressure points, reflexing to the brain and body for certain effects.

Mudras : A gesture or position, usually of the hands, that locks and guides energy flow and reflexes to the brain. By curling, crossing, stretching and touching the fingers and hands, we can talk to the body and mind, as each area of the hand reflexes to a certain part of the mind or body.

Bhandas : Body locks or muscular contractions applied for the retention and channelling of Prana.

Chakras: In the body, centers of exchange between the psychic and physical dimensions. Like transformers, they change subtle prana into physical energy flowing through a system of 'nadis' (psychic channels like the meridian system of Oriental medicine). Chakras are energy vortexes perceived as spinning discs of light ('chakra' means wheel) situated along the spine.

Mantras: A mantra is a syllable, word or phrase in one of the sacred languages (like Sanskrit & Gurmukhi) or sometimes in English, which elevates or modifies consciousness through its meaning, the sound itself, rhythm, tone, and even the reflexology or the tongue on the palate. Mantra is "The Yoga of the Mind".

Pranayama: Breathing to channel and direct the flow of prana and alter consciousness.

Meditation: The stilling of the rational, reasoning, dualistic egotistical mind to allow the neutral mind to focus awareness on inner reality beyond intellectual concepts, and on outer reality beyond physical, earthly objects. Meditation uses many techniques to achieve this purpose, and produces a calm, sensitiveless emotional, alert, intuitive, effective, efficient and self-controlled personality, and an enhanced sense of being and consciousness. Consistent meditation promotes inner peace, happiness and life in higher consciousness.

Others: Important components in the practice of Kundalini Yoga are Focus (we may be asked to gaze at the nose, focus on the spine, a chakra, the breath, a mantra, physical functions or on something outside of the body), Visualization (of energy movement, magnetic fields, thought forms, astral bodies, ether, light, color, etc.) and Projections of Consciousness out into the Universe. These practices develop awareness of the mobility of consciousness, the ability to hold several things in the mind at once and to direct energy movements empowering our sense of dominion and potential impact on the world.

Pranayam

Long deep breathing

Breath frequencies

8 x minute

4 x minute

1 x minute

Suspending the breath

On Inhale

On exhale

Meditations

Meditation for a calm heart

Caliber of life

Meditation for a stable self

Composite polarity meditation

Breath of fire

Alternate nostril (Nadi Sodhan)

Left : meditative, Right : Action

emphasizing inhaling

Energy

emphasizing exhaling

Relax, letting go

1:4:2 (inhale 1, hold 4, exhale 2)

Cannon breath

Segmented breath

(4:1, 4:4, 8:8, 4:8, 8:4)

Lion breath

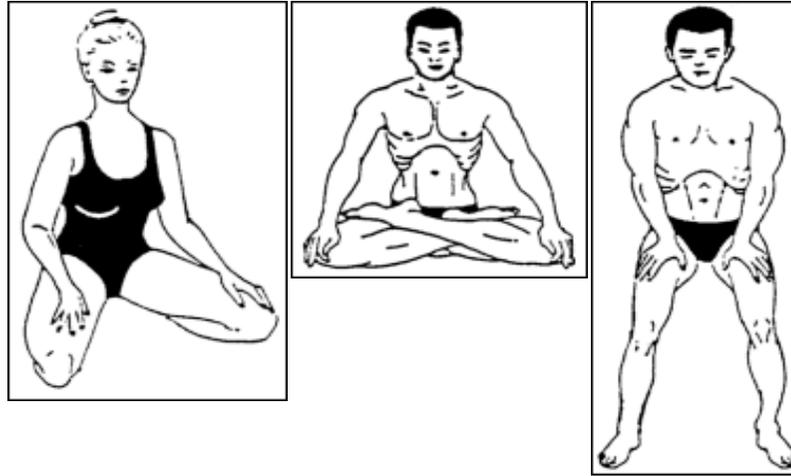
Whistle breath

Sitali pranayam

Siktari pranayam

Bandhas

MULABHANDA
UDDIYANA BHANDA
JALANDHARA BHANDA
MAHABHANDA



MULABHANDA: Mulband or Root Lock is the most frequently applied. It is performed in three steps (quickly & smoothly with practice) by first contracting the anal sphincter, drawing it in and up (as if trying to hold back a bowel movement), 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 (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.

UDDIYANA BHANDA: Diaphragm Lock is applied by lifting the diaphragm high up into the thorax while pulling the upper abdominal muscles back towards the spine, creating a cavity, and giving a gentle massage to the heart muscles. It helps to move and transform pranic energy up to the neck region, stimulates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis in the brain and develops a sense of compassion. Can give new youthfulness to the entire body. It is normally applied with the breath held out. In Laya yoga, the rhythmic application of this lock achieves the highest effects of chanting.

JALANDHARA BHANDA: Neck Lock or Chin Lock is used during all chanting meditations and pranayams (breathing exercises) unless otherwise specified. This is done by lifting the chest and sternum upward and stretching the back of the neck straight by pulling the chin back towards the neck. You should feel some tension in the back and sides of the neck. The chin rests in the notch between the collar bones and the head stays level without tilting forward, straightening the cervical vertebrae, and allowing the free flow of prana to the brain. This lock puts pressure on the thyroid and parathyroid to enable their secretions, and in turn, activate the pituitary. Without this lock pranayama can cause uncomfortable pressure in eyes, ears and heart. It will also prevent dizziness caused by rapid changes in blood pressure which can occur when nadis (channels of pranic flow) are unblocked.

MAHABHANDA: Great Lock - the application of all 3 locks at once. This rejuvenates nerves and glands, regulates blood pressure and produces many other benefits.

BHANDA EXERCISE (To fully understand & experience the Locks or Bhandas).

Sit on heels and spread the knees wide apart, palms on thighs. (A) Apply Root Lock & relax it. (B) Apply Diaphragm Lock & relax it. (C) Apply Neck Lock and relax it. Repeat in rhythmic alteration for 3-11 minutes, pulling locks on the exhale (the breath naturally goes out on the first 2 locks).

Practice on an empty stomach. This will help to distinguish the locks and perceive energy movement along the spine.

CHAKRA

Muladhara,
First or Root Chakra

Swadisthana,
or Sex Chakra

Manipuraka,
or Navel Chakra

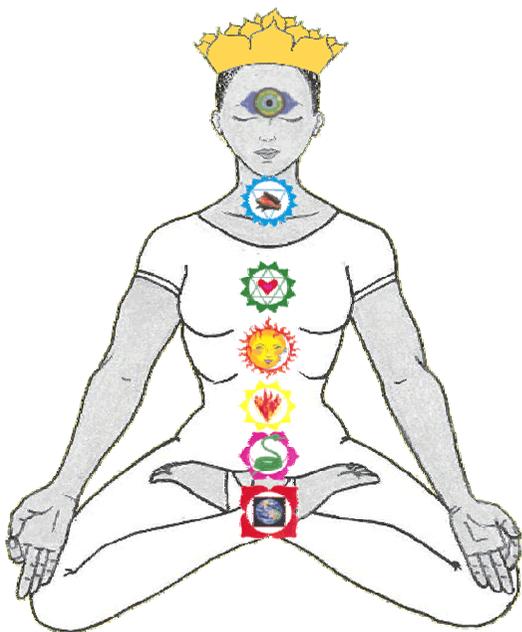
The Anahatha
or Heart Chakra,

The Visudda
or Throat Chakra

Ajana
or Third Eye Chakra

Sahasrara
or Crown Chakra

The Aura
the electromagnetic field



The Muladhara, First or Root Chakra, is located at the base of the spine, at the perineum. The name means support, or foundation. It is associated, in the body with the large intestine, feet and legs, with the element earth, and with the colors red and maroon.

Human Challenge and Gift - to feel safe and secure in the physical plane, to manifest to meet our basic needs. Soul Desire - to feel nurtured and nourished, to experience belonging to the whole. Primal Relationship - with physical reality, the Earth, natural forces, body, feeling sensations.

The Swadisthana, or Sex Chakra, is located at the sacrum - the pelvic area between pubis and navel. Its name means "abode of the vital force" or "dwelling place of the self. It is associated, in the body with the genitals, reproductive organs, and bladder, with the element water, and the color orange. Human Challenge and Gift - to bond and connect with others without losing our identity. Soul Desire - to freely expand - to effortlessly create. Primal Relationship - with other human beings, emotions and emotional body, inner child, wildman or wild woman.

The Manipuraka, or Navel Chakra, is located some 2-3 inches below the navel. Its name means "jewel of the lotus" or "lustrous gem". It is associated, in the body with the small intestine, kidneys, adrenals, pancreas, gallbladder, liver, with the element fire, and the color yellow. Human Challenge and Gift - to connect with our internal source power and energy. Soul Desire - to ignite, connect with and focus physical energy. Primal Relationship - with internal source of power, identity, status

The Anahatha or Heart Chakra, is located at the heart. Its name means unstuck, fresh, clean unhurt. It is associated, in the body with the heart, hands, arms and thymus gland, with the element air and the colors green, pink, and rose. Human Challenge and Gift - to open our hearts to the nonjudgmental, detached vibration of universal love. Soul Desire - to experience unity, devotion, reverence for life, unattached bonding. Primal Relationship - with higher spiritual power, our own heart and the hearts of others, the pulse that unites us with the universe.

The Visudda or Throat Chakra is situated in the throat, at the base of the neck between the collar bone and shoulders, at the site of the reptilian brain or lower brain stem. Its name means pure. It is associated, in the body with the throat, ears, thyroid, parathyroid, with the element ether, and the color royal blue. Human Challenge and Gift - to fearlessly express our truth and hear the sound of the universe.

Soul Desire - to be heard and understood, to transmit and receive the Truth. Primal Relationship - with our vibrational connection with all existence.

The Ajana or Third Eye Chakra, is located between the brows in the inward, center of the forehead. Its name means command, perception, knowledge, authority. It is associated, in the body with the pituitary gland, eyes, brain, with the element light and also beyond the elements, and with the colors purple and indigo. Human Challenge and Gift - to move from dualistic mind to intuitive neutral mind. Soul Desire - to focus the mind, where one-pointed clarity and peace automatically occur. Primal Relationship - with inner and cosmic knowledge.

The Sahasrara or Crown Chakra, is located at the crown or top of the head, baby's soft spot. Its name means "thousand petal lotus". It is associated, in the body with the pineal gland & cerebral cortex, with consciousness and beyond the elements, and with the colors white, silver and the quality of luminosity. Human Challenge and Gift - to tune into and surrender to divine consciousness. Soul Desire - to connect with and utilize infinite energies, to know the unknown, to experience the transcendental meaning to life. Primal Feeling - oneness, bliss.

The Aura is the electromagnetic field, the psychic field of energy surrounding all beings, human or otherwise. Its size can vary from a few inches to many feet in all directions. It is associated with the health of the physical body, and all the organs impact the strength and the size of the aura. It includes and is impacted by all the elements, and its colors vary and change depending upon the mental, emotional and physical states. Human Challenge and Gift - to experience one's energetic self. Soul Desire - human individuation and identification with one's Soul. Primal Relationship - with Self and Soul.

MUDRA

GUYAN MUDRA



ACTIVE GUYAN MUDRA



SHUNI MUDRA



SURYA or RAVI MUDRA



BUDDHI MUDRA



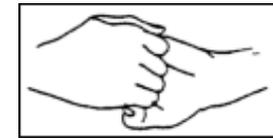
PRAYER MUDRA



JUPITER MUDRA



BEAR GRIP



BUDDHA MUDRA



GUYAN MUDRA: The tip of the thumb touches the tip of the index finger, stimulating knowledge and ability. The index finger is symbolized by Jupiter, and the thumb represents the ego. Gyan Mudra imparts receptivity & calm.

ACTIVE GUYAN MUDRA: The first joint of the index finger is bent under the first joint of the thumb, imparting active knowledge.

SHUNI MUDRA: Tip of middle finger (symbolized by Saturn) touches the tip of the thumb, giving patience.

SURYA or RAVI MUDRA: Tip of the ring finger (symbolized by Uranus or the Sun) touches the tip of the thumb, giving energy, health and intuition.

BUDDHI MUDRA: Tip of little finger (Mercury) touches tip of thumb for clear and intuitive communication.

VENUS LOCK: Interlace fingers with left little finger on the bottom, with the right index finger on top for men and the left for women. The Venus mounds at the base of the thumbs are pressed together channeling sensuality and sexuality, and glandular balance, helping to focus and concentrate.

JUPITER MUDRA: (below right). With the the two index fingers together, the power of Jupiter, or good luck and expansion is activated. Together they focus your energy to break through barriers.

PRAYER MUDRA: Palms are pressed together, neutralizing and balancing yin & yang, for centering.

BEAR GRIP: Left palm faces out from body with thumb down, and right palm faces body, thumb up, and fingers are curled and hooked together to stimulate the heart and intensify concentration.

BUDDHA MUDRA: Right hand rests on left for men, left on right for women, palms up, thumbs tips touching each other in a receptive gesture.

Most common Meditations:

With MANTRA

Inhale and Guru mantra x 8 times **Wahe Guroo Wahe Guroo Wahe Guroo Wahe Jeeo**

Inhale and **Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Sat Nam Wahe Guroo** x 3 times

Inhale and Magic Mantra **EK ONG KAR, SAT GUR PRASAD, SAT GUR PRASAD, EK ONG KAR** x 8 times

WithOut MANTRA

Inhale to the nose exhale to the nose Inhale to the mouth exhale to the mouth Inhale to the nose exhale to the mouth Inhale to the mouth exhale to the nose

Inhale to left exhale to left Inhale to right exhale to right Inhale to left exhale to right Inhale to right exhale to left