

## Mula Bandha

**Bandhas** are muscular holds or contractions that are used to help hold, and lift, the Prana, or life-currents, in the body. They are often referred to as, **locks**.

There are the three major locks. Here we address the first two.

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### Mula Bandha ~ Root Lock

Mula Bandha is gentle contraction of the Perineum, the area between the anus and the vulva, or scrotum. To learn how to engage Mula Bandha:

- Contract the sphincter muscle as if you were holding in the urge to poop.
- Contract the urethra as if you were trying to stop peeing.
- Now gently pull up and in, or contract, the area between the urethra and the anus.
- Now release the urethra as much as possible while keeping a **gentle** contraction present along the perineum.
- There will still be contraction in the anal sphincter muscle but it should not be an active effort.

This is a gentle, steady contraction. Think of it as being more along the lines of how it feels to pull in your abdomen to stand with good posture rather than how it feels to contract the abdomen to do sit-ups.

#### **PURPOSE**

- Mula Bandha helps to push the life-currents that descend (with the in-breath) and ascend (with the out-breath) along the spinal axis back upwards to support the ascending vital breath.
- In most of us, due to lack of exercise, overweight, and other factors, the descending currents lose their force and dissipate rather than re-ascend.
- The root lock prevents the life-currents from descending and becoming scattered.
- When the life-current in the breath re-ascends it balances our system.

#### **BENEFITS**

- Forcing the life currents back upward lifts them to the heart chakra producing greater love.
- When the currents re-ascend the brain's capacity to think and memorize is increased.
- When the life currents dissipate on the in-breath and accumulate in the lower chakras, heavy emotionalities and craving result. When the energies reascend our system is balanced, and cravings and emotionalities are softened.
- The Hatha Yoga Pradipika states that the root contraction, practiced continually, brings perpetual youth.

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### Uddiyana Bandha ~ Stomach Lock

When performing Mula Bandha there will be a gentle, natural lifting of the stomach muscles — in and up. Consciously engaging this contraction is the Stomach Lock. Uddiyana means, flying up, and this lock allows, and helps, the life-currents to lift to the heart and brain.