

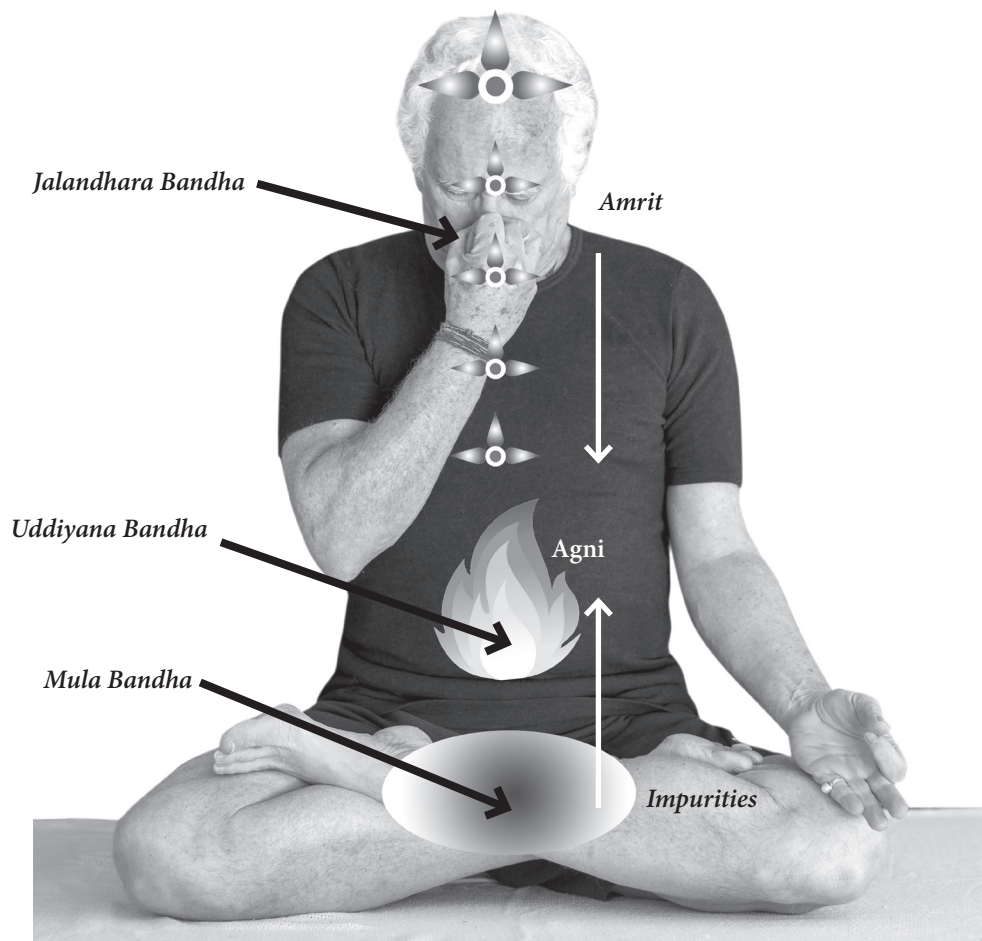
NADI SAMANU

Using alternate nostril breathing with mental repetition of Bija mantras, the vibrational sound energy of the elements, to purify the nadis. Use the ratio of 5 repetitions inhale/20 repetitions retain/10 repetitions exhale. No bandhas. Do 3 rounds at least.

One round is as follows:

1. Inhale left nostril repeating **YAM** (Air) from the Anahata Chakra and visualize it blowing impurities out of the nadis.
2. Retain repeating **YAM** (Air) from the Anahata Chakra and visualize it blowing impurities out of the nadis.
3. Exhale right nostril repeating **YAM** (Air) from the Anahata Chakra and visualize it blowing impurities out of the nadis.
4. Inhale right nostril repeating **RAM** (Fire) from the Manipura Chakra and visualize it burning impurities out of the nadis.
5. Retain repeating **RAM** (Fire) from the Manipura Chakra and visualize it burning impurities out of the nadis.
6. Exhale left nostril repeating **RAM** (Fire) from the Manipura Chakra and visualize it burning impurities out of the nadis.
7. Inhale left nostril repeating **TAM** (Nectar) from the tip of the nose and visualize it washing impurities out of the nadis.
8. Retain repeating **VAM** (Water) from the Svadhisthana Chakra and visualize it washing impurities out of the nadis.
9. Exhale right nostril repeating **LAM** (Earth) from the Muladhara Chakra and visualize the nadis as strong as the earth.

Begin the next round via the left nostril.

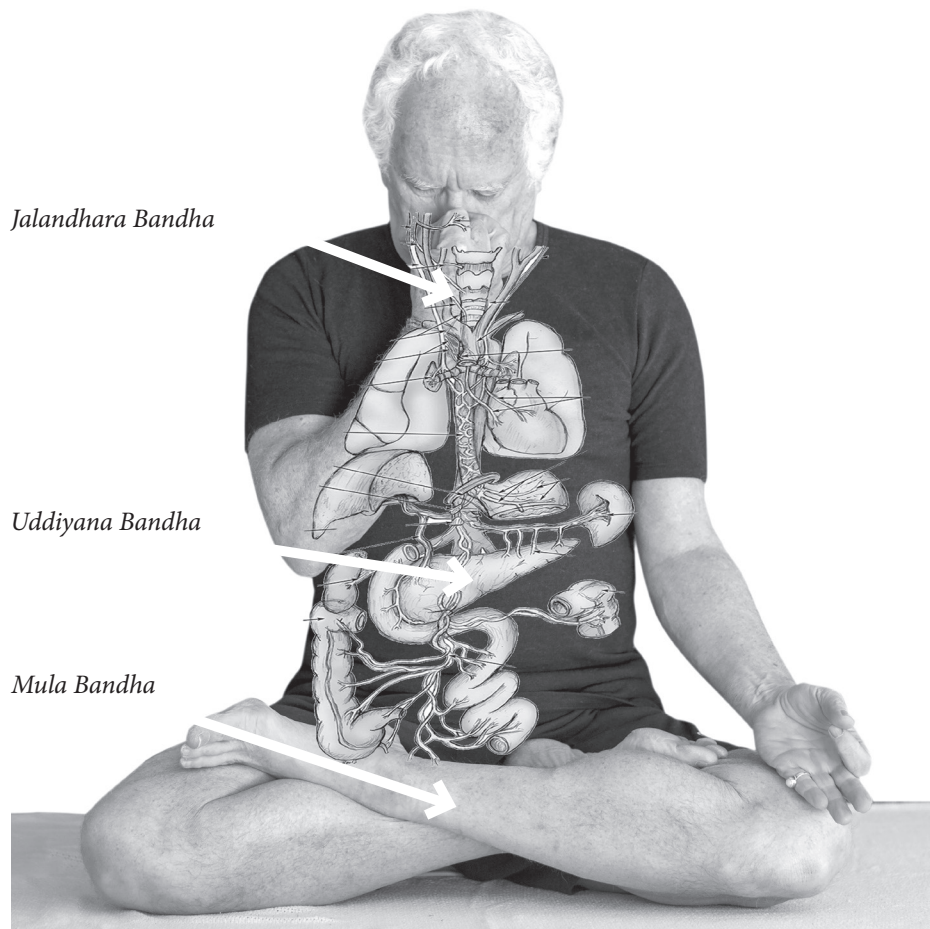


THE THREE BANDHAS & THEIR EFFECTS IN HATHA YOGA

Amrit or the nectar of life (nectar of the moon) is located in the head region. *Agni* or the inner fire is located in the navel region. Below this is where ‘impurities’ collect as we age which cause *granthis* or blockages. No energy can enter the sushumna or central nadi. When we are born there is a large supply of amrit in the head region like a pool of divine nectar. Around the age of puberty a great amount descends. Through our lives it continues to drip slowly downwards and gets consumed by the fire of agni. Mula bandha, the most important of the bandhas, helps to lift the impurities up into the fire of agni. Uddiyana bandha keeps that flame well stoked and keeps the impurities close to the flames of agni. The impurities are burnt to ashes and amrit evaporates and rises up to replenish the pool in the mind. Jalandhara bandha keeps the essence from dripping back down again. Since fire always burns upwards we can also facilitate the above process by inverting our bodies, standing on our heads or doing shoulderstand. When we do this, the impurities drop downwards into agni and are consumed. Also the amrit will stay in the head region.

FROM HATHAYOGAPRADEEPIKA Chapter Three

- 55. This bandha is called Uddiyana by yogis by which the prana is arrested and flies through the sushumna.
- 56. Because through this, the great bird [prana] flies up incessantly [through the sushumna] it is the uddiyana. This bandha is now explained.
- 57. The drawing back of the abdomen above [and below] the navel [so that it is drawn against the back of the body and up towards the thorax] is called uddiyana bandha. It is the lion that kills the elephant death.
- 61. Then mula bandha [is described]: Pressing the perineum with the heel, contract the anus so as to draw the apana upwards.
- 62. By contraction [of the muladhara], the apana, whose course is downwards, is forced to go upwards [through susumna]. Yogins call that mula bandha.
- 70. Then the jalandhara bandha [is described]: Contract the throat and hold the chin firmly against the chest. This is the bandha called jalandhara which destroys old age and death.
- 71. Because it constricts the network of nadis and [arrests] the downward course of the flow of ambrosial water [from the cavity of the palate] this bandha is jalandhara-bandha. It destroys all the maladies of the throat.



THE THREE BANDHAS & THEIR EFFECTS ON VAGAL TONE

VAGAL TONE

The tone of the vagus nerve is key to activating the parasympathetic nervous system. Vagal tone is measured by tracking your heart-rate alongside your breathing rate. Your heart-rate speeds up a little when you breathe in, and slows down a little when you breathe out. The bigger the difference between your inhalation heart-rate and your exhalation heart-rate, the higher your vagal tone. Higher vagal tone means that your body can relax faster after stress.

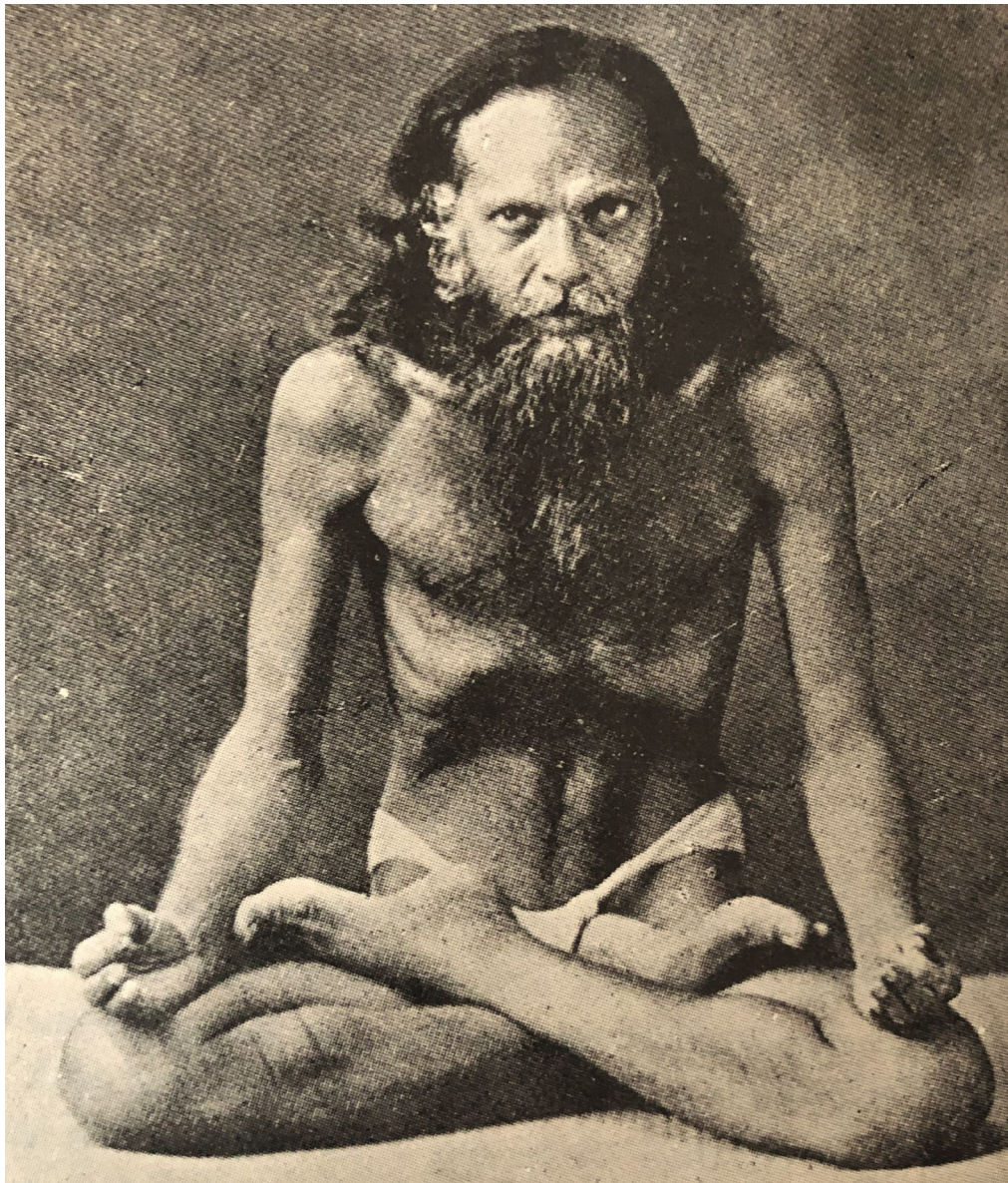
HIGH VAGAL TONE

Research shows that a high vagal tone makes your body better at regulating blood glucose levels, reducing the likelihood of diabetes, stroke, and cardiovascular disease. Higher vagal tone is also associated with better mood, less anxiety, and more stress resilience. Higher vagal tone is associated with greater closeness to others and more altruistic behavior.

LOW VAGAL TONE

Low vagal tone is associated with cardiovascular conditions and strokes, depression, diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, cognitive impairment, and much higher rates of inflammatory conditions. Inflammatory conditions include all autoimmune diseases (rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, endometriosis, autoimmune thyroid conditions, lupus, and more). People with fatigue, food sensitivities, anxiety, gut problems, etc. usually have lower vagal tone, which means a lower ability of the nerve to activate or perform its functions. In other words, low vagal tone = inflammation!

Medical research shows that by stimulating the vagus nerve either through physical means at the throat or anus, or via coherence breathing such as anuloma viloma or even just by very simple but calm, regular, and systematic respiration one can directly influence the activity of the vagus nerve and its effects on the body and mind. This can be easily measured via a heart rate monitor and taking HRV measurements.



Yogi sitting in padmasana, hands on knees in jnana mudra, doing uddiyana bandha and tratak.
Photograph from The Serpent Power by Arthur Avalanon (Sir John Woodroffe), Dover Publications NY, 1974

NADI SAMANU described in **GHERANDA SAMHITA**

38. Sitting on a prescribed seat, the yogi should assume the padmasana posture. Then inviting the deities to the various parts of the body as advised by the guru, the practitioner should begin the purification of the nadis for a faultless performance of pranayama.

39-40. Contemplating on the vayu bija [YAM] which has a smoky color and is lustrous, let him inhale by the left nostril repeating the bijamantra 16 times (then) retaining the air for a period required to repeat the bijamantra 64 times, let him exhale through the right nostril, repeating the bijamantra 32 times.

41-42. Raising the fire from the root of the navel, contemplate on its light associated with the fire element. Then repeating the agni bija [RAM] 16 times inhale through the right nostril and retain the air for the period required for 64 repetitions of the bijamantra and then expel it by the left nostril, repeating the mantra 32 times.

43-44. Contemplating on the luminous orb of the moon at the tip of the nose, inhale through the left nostril, repeating the bijamantra [TAM] 16 times. Retain the air for a period required to repeat the bijamntra [VAM] 64 times, imagining that nectar is oozing and the nadis are being purified, and unwaveringly contemplating, exhale, repeating the bijamantra [LAM] 32 times.

45. Purifying the nadis in this way one should assume asana and practise pranayama with firm determination.