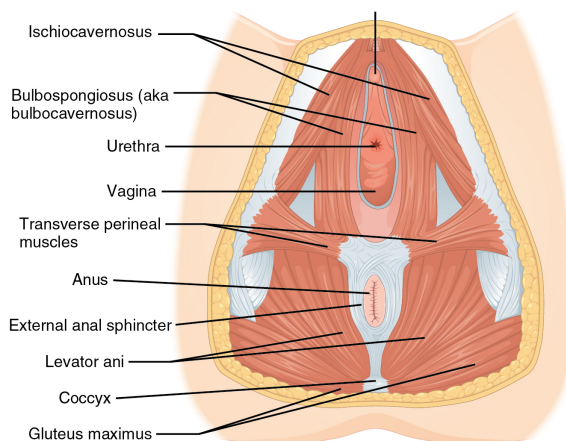


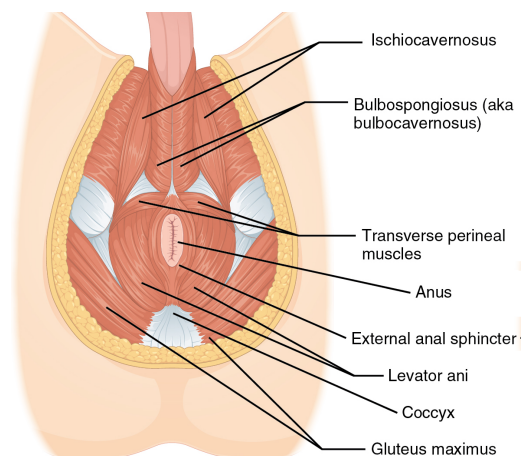
Mula Bandha

Mula bandha is the controlling of the internal anal sphincter muscle

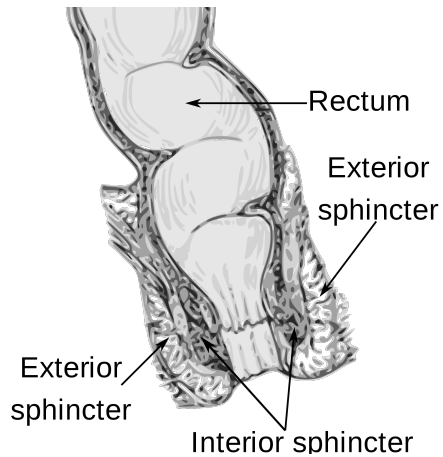
- It is about 1" or 1 1/2" long
- It is always naturally in a state of contraction to ensure that feces does not flow out all the time. It holds stuff in.
- To remain in this state of contraction it has a sympathetic nervous system influence on it.
- When something is done to the internal anal sphincter it will change to parasympathetic dominance. For example when you go to the bathroom the PNS is activated so that feces can flow out.
- When a doctor dilates the internal anal sphincter especially babies or elderly people they must be careful that the heart rate does not drop dangerously low or the person can go into cardiac arrest.
- The manipulation of the internal anal sphincter has a direct effect on the heart rate through the connection of the pubococcygeal nerve to the vagus nerve going to the heart.
- Therefore by control of the internal anal sphincter muscle, contracting what is already a contracted muscle we are over-riding the sympathetic response and slowing the heart down when we do mula bandha. In pranayama we want to slow the heart rate.



Female perineum muscles

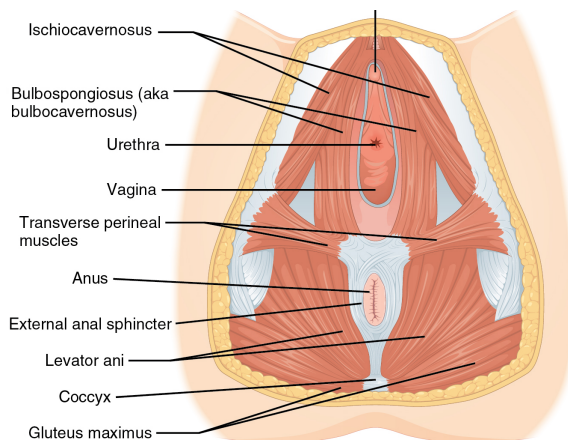


Male perineum muscles

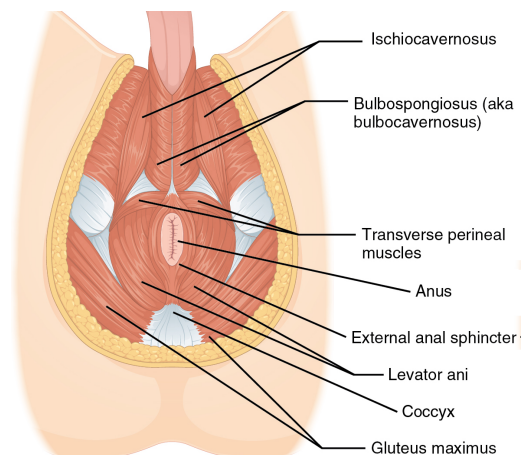


Ashwini Mudra

- **Ashwini Mudra is controlling of the external anal sphincter muscle. It is the opening of the anus**
- **There is not a direct link from the external anal sphincter to the heart as there is from the internal anal sphincter.**
- **It helps us to control the external anal sphincter and pelvic floor muscles and teaches us the location of the internal anal sphincter.**
- **It is easier to squeeze the external anal sphincter than the internal anal sphincter.**
- **So it is preparatory work to learn mula bandha.**
- **Ashwini mudra is held for a short period - a few seconds.**
- **Mula bandha can be held for a longer period during kumbhaka or breath retention.**



Female perineum muscles



Male perineum muscles