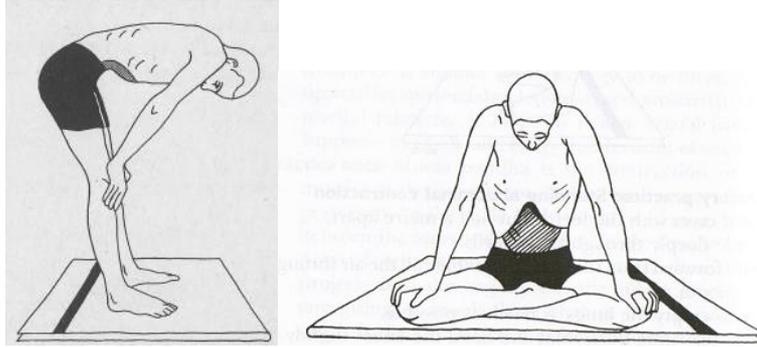


Uddiyana Bandha – abdominal contraction



(oo-dee-YAH-nah BAHN-dah
uddiyana = to rise up, to fly upward

There are a few important points to remember when beginning the practice of Uddiyana Bandha: perform it only on an empty stomach, and only after an exhalation, never before an inhalation. I would recommend that you learn this bandha in a standing position initially as it is much easier to perform, and only move to the sitting version after you've gained some experience.

Step by Step

Stand with your feet slightly apart, eyes open, completely release whole body.

Bring the hands to the thighs (top if can, see Beginners Tip), above the knees, keeping the spine flat as possible, elbows and shoulders releasing.

Breathe in deeply; exhale through the mouth, emptying the lungs as much as possible...

Hold the breath out. Press hands onto thighs and then contract the abdominal muscles inward and upward.

Hold for as long as you can without strain.

When ready to exhale, release the abdominal contract, release the hands and inhale.

When the breath has returned to normal; repeat. Start with 3 rounds and build up to 10 rounds over a few months.

As you practice let the awareness be on the abdomen and on synchronising the breath in coordination with each step.

When you have got used to doing 3 rounds...then start to perform whilst also applying Jalandhara Bandha:

- Hold the breath out. Press hands onto thighs and apply Jalandhara bandha and then contract the abdominal muscles inward and upward.
- Hold for as long as you can without strain.
- When ready to exhale, release the abdominal contract, release the hands, release jalandhara bandha and inhale.

Benefits

- Strengthens the abdominal muscles and diaphragm
- Massages abdominal viscera, the solar plexus, and the heart and lungs
- Increases gastric fire; improves digestion, assimilation, and elimination; and purifies the digestive tract of toxins
- Stimulates blood circulation in the abdomen and blood flow to the brain
- Stimulates and lifts the energy of the lower belly (*apana vayu*), to unite it with the energies localised in the navel (*samana vayu*) and heart (*prana vayu*)
- Adrenal glands balanced so helping relieve lethargy, and helping soothe anxiety and tension.

Contraindications and Cautions

- Stomach or intestinal ulcers
- Hernia
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Glaucoma
- Pregnancy

Beginner's Tip

Instead of simply resting your hands on your knees in the standing position, firmly press the bases of your palms against the very tops of the thighs. This downward pressure on the femur bones will create a slight natural hollowing of your lower belly.

Practice Notes

Practice of Uddiyana bandha should be done once you are proficient in moola bandha and jalandhara bandha. It must always be done when the stomach is empty, and it helps if the bowel is empty too. It is said to be done more easily following an inversion asana. It is always done on holding the exhalation out.

References:

Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha ~ Swami Satyananda
www.yogajournal.com
Images from www.mindbodygreen.com