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**Note**

## MUDRA AND BANDHA

In the previous lesson we have learnt about Pranayam and its benefits in detail. Now in this lesson we will learn about Mudra and bandha. Practice of Mudra and Bandha is considered to be more effective than practice of asan and Pranayam. So the persons, who cannot perform or are unable to perform asan and pranayam, can avail the benefits by practising Mudra and Bandha to maintain their health. In yog these are used to regulate pran energy i.e. vital force which you have studied in previous lesson.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of Mudra and its importance;
- explain the methods of various types of Mudra and
- elaborate the meaning of Bandha and its importance.



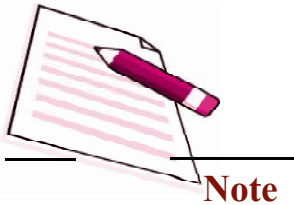
### 22.1 MEANING OF MUDRA

Mudra is a symbolic gesture used in yog. The Sanskrit meaning of the word **Mudra** is- 'gesture', 'mark' or 'seal'. In yog and meditation Mudras are most commonly known as hand positions, which are believed to affect the flow of energy in the body and chakras by clearing the psychic centers and energy channels.

There are various types of mudras and each type has a specific effect on the body and mind. Although hand mudras are most common in yog, there are also face, postural, lock and other mudras. The main texts concerning the use of mudras are the Hatha Yog Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. The Hatha Yog Pradipika describes 10 Mudras whereas the Gheranda Samhita describes 25 Mudras.

*Physical Education and Yog*

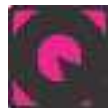




### 22.1.1 Importance of Yog Mudra

Yog in general is considered to be a combination of postures (for stretching) and breathing techniques (for calming and relaxation). Postures (Asan) affect all the body systems while breathing practices (Pranayam) bring awareness of the relationship between the body and mind.

- 1) It helps in flow of prana in the body if it combines with yogic breathing exercises
- 2) It creates a connection with brain.
- 3) It makes change in the sensory organs, glands, veins and tendons.
- 4) The use of mudras adjusts the flow of energy affecting the balance of air, fire, water earth and ether for healing.
- 5) Mudra is a practice of physical, mental and spiritual well-being.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.1

**A) Fill in the blanks the appropriate words:**

- 1) ..... is a symbolic gesture used in yog.
- 2) ..... Mudras are most common in yog.
- 3) Mudras described in the Hatha Yog Pradipika are ..... whereas in the Gheranda Samhita ..... Mudras.

### 22.2 TYPES OF MUDRA

#### Hast Mudra

The well being of our health can be controlled by the fingers of our hand because the fingers are essentially electrical circuits. It can adjust the flow of energy. Touching the fingers of hand in different positions is known as Hast Mudra.

The Hast mudra can be used to balance five vital elements of the body through five fingers of the hand. Each finger represents each element. These are as follows:

- 1) Thumb – Agni/ fire element



Fig.22.1: Fingers Representing Elements



- 2) Index finger – Vayu/air element
- 3) Middle finger – Akash/ space element
- 4) Ring finger– prithvi/ earth element
- 5) Little finger – jal/ water element

Now we will study different types of Mudras-

### Gyan Mudra

It is the most popular mudra among hand mudras. It is used in all types of practices like meditation, worship, healing, dancing etc. The meaning of the Sanskrit word “Gyan” is Supreme Knowledge. Popularly known as the “mudra of knowledge,” The practice of this mudra enhances brain.



Fig.22.2: Gyan Mudra

### Method

- 1) Sit for meditation, relax your body and sit straight.
- 2) Put your hands both in front of your knees and join the tips of your thumb and index finger.
- 3) Touch the tip from skin to skin and not to the nail. Keep the other fingers straight and relaxed.

### Benefits

- 1) This Mudra stimulates the air element of our body and thus empowers mind.
- 2) It helps in increasing concentration and is the best remedy for dullness, inactiveness, and lack of enthusiasm, recklessness, lack of creativity and loss of memory problems.
- 3) People suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and other nervous system disorders will be benefited.
- 4) It helps in decrease of diseases such as Hypothyroidism, Hypoparathyroidism, Hypoadrenalism, and Hypopituitarism.

### Duration

Daily thirty minutes of practice is enough to get best results of Gyan mudra. You can do it at any place or anytime. To get quick results it is preferred in early morning with meditation posture.

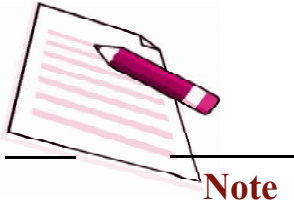
### Precautions:

- 1) Pregnant women should not practise it for long duration without the guidance of a yog teacher.



### Note





- 2) If a person is suffering from severe migraine or headaches it is best to practise with open eyes.

### Vayu Mudra

This mudra is also called as Vayu shaamak mudra because it is useful to decrease air element within the body.

#### Method

- 1) Press the tip of both index fingers into the root of thumbs.
- 2) Now fold your thumb inwards so that it presses the index finger lightly.
- 3) The other fingers should be held straight.
- 4) This can be done in any sitting pose, which are used while doing meditation.



Fig.22.3: Vayu Mudra

#### Benefits

- 1) It helps to balance the air inside the body.
- 2) It solves the problems such as flatulence and joint pain.
- 3) If one feels uneasy after a meal, it should be practised in the Vajra Asana (Diamond Pose).
- 4) It is helpful in reducing Parkinson’s disease.
- 5) It helps in decreasing anxiety and restlessness.
- 6) It is effective in hormonal imbalances.

#### Duration

Daily practice of 30-45 minutes is enough to get best results. To get quick results it is preferred in early morning with meditation posture.

#### Precautions

- 1) After getting relief in pain one should release the mudra. It is not beneficial to continue for longer duration after getting relief in pain.

### Surya Mudra

It is one of the most famous Mudra in hand mudras. The practice of this mudra is useful in reducing earth element within the body.



Fig.22.4: Surya Mudra



**Method**

1. This can be performed in any pose used for doing meditation.
2. Place the tip of the ring finger on the base of the thumb.
3. Bring the gentle pressure of the thumb upon this finger.

**Benefits**

1. It reduces coldness of body.
2. Beneficial in inactivity of thyroid glands.
3. Beneficial in overweight and obesity.
4. Beneficial in loss of appetite.
5. Beneficial in digestion problems like constipation, indigestion etc.
6. Helpful in no sweating or less sweating of body.
7. Cure Vision or eye problems.

**Duration**

Regular practice of 30 minutes is enough to get maximum benefits. To get best results it is preferred in early morning and meditation posture.

**Precautions**

1. Don't do it in high blood pressure.

**Ling Mudra**

Linga mudra is the best mudra to improve fire element in the body.



Fig.22.5: Ling Mudra

**Method**

1. Sit in any meditative pose.
2. Now interlock both palms by keeping the left thumb erect, pointing upwards.

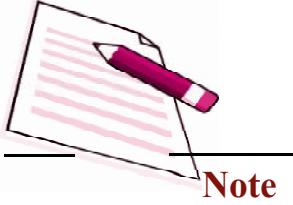
**Benefits**

1. It burns the extra fat in the body that helps in weight loss.
2. This mudra increases hotness in the body that helps to relieve cold and related ailments such as sinusitis, wet cough and sticky stools.
3. Beneficial in asthma and other respiratory disorders.

**Duration**

Regular practice of 30 minutes is enough to get desirable results. This mudra should be practised only when there is a need.

**Note**

**Note****Precautions**

1. Don't do in fever or having pitta Prakriti.
2. Don't do it for long duration as it will affect organs.

**Prithvi Mudra**

Sanskrit term, Prithvi means “the vast one” and is also the name of Earth.

This mudra is useful to increase earth element and decrease fire element in body.

**Fig.22.6: Prithvi Mudra****Method**

1. Sit in any meditative pose.
2. Touch the tips of the ring finger and the thumb with slight pressure.

**Benefits**

1. It increases strength and endurance of the body.
2. In a lean and thin person, this mudra is highly beneficial for overall health.
3. It gives relief from ulcers and burning sensations.
4. Beneficial in jaundice and fever.

**Duration**

Regular practice of 30-45 minutes is enough to get good results. You can do it anytime or in any place but the morning hour or when you are in meditation is the best choice to get best results.

**Precautions**

1. Kapha dosha prakriti person should do it for small duration.

**Pran Mudra**

The word “Pran” means life. The practice of Pran Mudra strengthens all the five pranas in our body.

**Fig.22.7: Pran Mudra****Method**

1. Sit in any meditative pose.
2. Touch the tips of little finger, ring finger and thumb with slight pressure.



**Benefits**

1. It is useful to increase the pranic energy and immunity.
2. It is also useful in intolerance of heat stress, inflammatory disorders, sleeplessness, high blood pressure, burning in the mouth, throat and stomach.

**Duration**

Regular practice of 30-45 minutes is enough to get good result. It can be practised at any time or any position but in the morning hours is the best time and a break can be taken in between the 45 minutes practice.

**Precautions**

1. In cough and cold condition it should be done only for short duration.

**Varun Mudra**

Varun mudra is to increase water element in the body so it is also called as a jal-vardhak mudra.

**Method**

1. Sit in any meditative pose.
2. Touch the tips of the little finger & thumb with slight pressure.



Fig.22.8: Varun Mudra

**Benefits**

1. Dryness of the body.
2. Skin and blood disorders
3. Dehydration

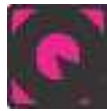
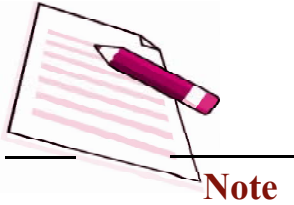
**Duration**

Regular practice of 30 minutes is enough to get good result. It can be practised at any time or any position but morning hours are the best time and a break can be taken in between the 30 minutes practice.

**Precaution**

In obesity and swelling in the body, it should not be practised.

**Note**



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.2**

**A. Match the Following:**

- |                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| 1. Thumb         | a. water |
| 2. Index finger  | b. fire  |
| 3. Middle finger | c. space |
| 4. Ring finger   | d. earth |
| 5. Little finger | e. air   |

**B. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate word:**

- ..... is the most popular Mudra among hand mudras.
- .....helps to balance the air inside the body.
- In Gyan Mudra the tip of ..... and .....finger are joined.
- Joining the tip of the ring finger on the base of the thumb is practiced in.....Mudra.
- ..... and ..... Mudras are used for weight loss and obesity.
- .....Mudra is beneficial for a lean and thin person.
- Varun Mudra is beneficial in ..... and .....
- To get maximum benefits of any Mudra minimum of ..... Minutes practice is necessary.

**22.2.1 Asan Mudra/Postural Mudra**

Mudras which are performed as postures are called Asan mudra.

**Maha Mudra**



**Fig.22.9: Maha Mudra**





**Method**

1. Sit on the floor with legs stretched in front. Fold the left leg and press the perineum with the left heel.
2. The right leg remains stretched in front throughout the practice.
3. Bend forward and hold the big toe of the right leg with the hands. Exhale while bending forward.
4. Raise the head upwards and let both eyes' sight to be on the centre of eyebrows. Inhale slowly and deeply.
5. Hold the breath inside and perform Moola Bandha.
6. Contract the throat so that air does not escape from the lungs.
7. Maintain this position with breath inside (Antar Kumbhaka) as long as you are comfortable.
8. This is one round. One can practice from 3 rounds to 12 rounds.
9. To release the pose, exhale slowly and bring the head to normal position. Stretch out the legs, relax the body and breathe normally.
10. The same method should be followed with other leg.
11. The attention remains at the centre of eye-brows during the practice.

**Benefits**

1. Maha Mudra improves digestion, colic and cures the disorders of the stomach.
2. It helps to cure skin disorders.
3. It can neutralize the effect of toxins in the body.
4. It generates peace and helps in increase in concentration.
5. This practice makes the spine straight and enables the pranic energy to go between Mooladhara and the Vishuddhi chakra.

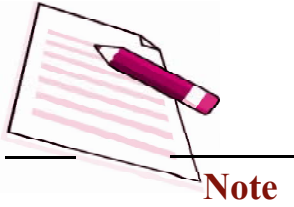
**Precautions**

1. Avoid during pregnancy, high blood pressure, disorders of the eye & heart disease.
2. Avoid in recent surgery.



**Note**



**Note**

## Vipareeta Karani Mudra



**Fig.22.10: Vipareet Karani Mudra**

### Method

1. Start with the supine position, lying on your back in a relaxed manner. Let the hands rest on the floor next to the body and breathe normally.
2. Try to raise the legs slowly to 90 degrees to the floor.
3. Now place the hands under the lower back at the waist level. Use the hands and elbows for support to raise your body up further.
4. Breath should be inside when you are raising the body to the vertical position.
5. Use the support of the hands to raise the body further up, till the whole trunk is about 45 degrees to the ground and the leg are vertical. At this stage the body weight rests on the shoulders. Hands and elbows remain to support and balance the body.
6. In the final pose the legs are 90 degrees to the floor and the trunk is about 45 degrees to the floor.
7. Breathe normally while maintaining the steady raised position.
8. While releasing the position, the breath is held inside and the body is slowly brought down to the supine position.
9. After performing Vipareeta Karani Mudra; counter asanas like Matyasana, Ushtrasana or Supta Vajrasana is performed.



### Benefits

1. It stimulates the thyroid gland.
2. It helps to balance the functions of other endocrine glands.
3. This pose helps in piles, hydrocele and hernia.
4. It enhances the function of digestive system

### Precautions

1. Avoid in menstruation, pregnancy, high blood pressure, heart diseases, eye disorders & constipation.
2. If you feel tingling sensation in feet or legs, immediately come back into the sitting position.

### Ashwini Mudra

Practising of frequent contractions & relaxations of anal muscles is called Ashwini Mudra.

### Method:

1. Sit in padmasana, siddhasana, vajrasana or sukhasana for ashwini mudra.
2. Once you get into the posture, relax for a minute, breathing freely and deeply. Then inhale fully, hold your breath, and contract the anal muscles with a 1-2 seconds interval.
3. Press your chin against the bottom of the neck, touch the palate with the tip of your tongue and start releasing your breath (exhaling), then release the mudra, and after that slowly raise your head.

### Benefits

1. It stimulates the abdomen and pelvic area including reproductive and digestive organs.
2. This simple practice can help you get rid of constipation, deals with the diseases of the rectum and haemorrhoids and can improve sexual health.

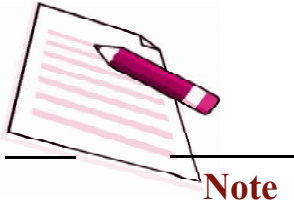
### Precaution

1. Don't do during pregnancy.
2. Don't do it after the surgeries related to anus.



### Note





### INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.3

#### A. Fill in the blanks with appropriate word:

1. Mudras which are performed as postures are called.....
2. In ..... Mudra, the attention remains at the ..... of eye-brows during the practice.
3. In final stage of vipareet karani mudra, the legs are at ....degrees and the trunk is about .... degrees to the floor.

#### B. Mark the following statements as True or False.

1. After performing vipareet karani mudra, counter asanas like matyasana, ushtrasana or supta vajrasana are performed. ( )
2. Practicing of frequent contractions & relaxations of anal muscles is called Ashwini Mudra. ( )
3. Vipareet Karani Mudra improves sexual health. ( )

#### 22.2.2 Mukh Mudra

Mudras which are performed with face are called Mukh mudra. Shambhavi, kaki comes under Mukh Mudra.

#### Shambhavi Mudra (The Eyebrow Center)

Gazing at the eyebrow centre, sitting in any meditative pose with gyan mudra is known as Shambhavi mudra. Shambhavi mudra is considered one of the most important mudras for meditation.



Fig.10.11: Shambhavi Mudra



**Method**

1. Sit in any meditative asana like Padmasana, Siddhasana, Sukhasana or Swastikasana.
2. Keep palms on the knees with Gyan or Chin mudra.
3. Roll both the eyes upwards and try to see at the eyebrow center. It forms a kind of V-shaped line at the center.
4. Concentrate the eyes on center region of the V-shaped line.
5. Maintain this position as long as you can. The eye muscles will start to pain after few seconds or within few minutes. Relax the eyes and bring it back to the normal position. Rest for some time and try again. With regular practice, one can hold this position for longer duration.
6. Breathe normally during the practice. As you proceed, your breath will slow down and become more stable.

**Benefits**

1. It helps in reaching the higher states of consciousness.
2. It stabilizes the mind and increases concentration.
3. It helps to strengthen the eye muscles.
4. It activates the Ajna chakra

**Precaution**

1. Do not practice if there is glaucoma or in any eye problems.

**Kaki Mudra**

In this mudra the face appears like a crow, hence it is known as Kaki mudra.

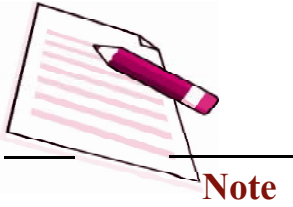


Fig.22.12: Kaki Mudra



**Note**



**Method**

1. Sit in any comfortable meditative pose with erect spine.
2. Close the eyes & relax your body.
3. Keep both hands on knees with gyan mudra.
4. Then open your eyes and focus on tip of the nose.
5. Make a beak of lips by rolling the tongue and inhale slowly with this beak.
6. When lungs are full hold the breath as long as possible (Antar Kumbhak) and close the eyes.
7. Then exhale slowly through the nose.
8. Practice this for at least two to three minutes. Slowly increase the duration.

**Benefits**

1. Strengthen the face
2. Strengthens the nasal passage
3. Strengthens the respiratory system
4. Refreshes the skin
5. Cleans the Chakras

**Precaution**

- Do not practise in polluted environment
- Do not practise in glaucoma, low blood pressure, cough or cold.
- In recent eye operation one should consult an expert before practising.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.4****A. Fill in the Blanks with appropriate words:**

1. Shambhavi and Kaki Mudra comes under ..... Mudra.
2. Gazing at the eyebrow centre, sitting in any meditative pose with gyan mudra is known as.....
3. In ..... Mudra the face appears like a crow.



## 22.3 MEANING OF BANDHA

The bandhas are an important part of asana practice. The Sanskrit word Bandha means to hold, tighten or lock. The bandhas aim to lock the Pranas in particular areas and redirect their flow into *Sushumna Nadi* for the purpose of spiritual awakening. Bandhas are the ‘body locks’ that are held by tightening and lifting of certain muscles of the body.

There are three main bandhas: **Jaladhara bandha** (throat), **Uddiyana bandha** (abdomen) and **Moola bandha** (located in the perineum).

**Maha bandha** is the combination of all three bandhas together.

### Importance

1. These four techniques allow the practitioner to control different nerves and organs of the body.
2. They also affect the chakras and release spiritual power by allowing Kundalini flow up to Sushumna Nadi.

### Jalandhara Bandha – The Chin Lock

Jalandhara bandha is one of the energetic locks used in a Hatha Yog practice. It is also known as ‘chin lock’. The Sanskrit meaning of Jala is ‘web’ or ‘net’ and dhara means ‘holding’. It is performed by extending the neck and elevating the sternum before dropping the head so that the chin may rest on the chest.

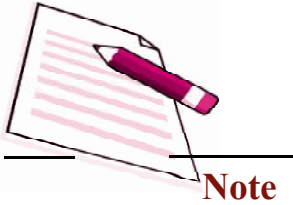


Fig.22.13: Jalandhar Bandha



### Note



**Note****Method**

1. Sit erect in meditative pose like Padmasana or Siddhasana.
2. Place the palms on the knees and make sure that the knees are touching the floor.
3. Close your eyes and relax the body. Breathe normally.
4. Now inhale slowly and deeply and then hold the breath.
5. Bend the head forward so that the chin touches the chest between the two collar bones notch/pit of the sternum.
6. Straighten the arms and press the knees down with the palms to create a kind of locked position. The shoulders are slightly forward to make sure the arms stay locked.
7. Hold this position as long as you are comfortable. Remember that the breath is held inside. Beginners should hold the breath for just a few seconds. Later it can be increased to a minute or more depending on your capacity.
8. To release the lock bend the arms, raise your head and exhale out. Come back to the straight position and take a few normal breaths.
9. Repeat the process as many times as you feel comfortable.

**Benefits**

1. It stimulates the thyroid and the para thyroid glands. Thus regulates the body metabolism.
2. Jalandhara Bandha helps to activate the throat (Vishudhi) chakra.
3. It prevents the Prana Shakti from moving upwards.
4. It increases the blood flow in the brain.
5. Jalandhara Bandha is one of the three yogic locks that have to be mastered before attempting the Maha Bandha or the triple lock.

**Precautions**

1. Avoid in high or low blood pressure, heart diseases.
2. Avoid in stiffness of neck, cervical spondylitis & spondylosis.
3. Never force your chin to touch the notch/pit of sternum.





## Uddiyana Bandha- The Flying Up Lock

The word Uddiyana in Sanskrit means - to fly up, or to rise up. This 'flying up lock' means- flying upwards of one's internal energy i.e. Prana.



Fig.22.14: Uddiyana Bandha

### Method

1. Sit erect in any meditative asan and keep palms on the knees. Relax whole body by closing the eyes.
2. Inhale slowly and gradually then exhale completely so that abdomen moves inwards as much as possible with one breath.
3. Then perform Jalandar bandha.
4. Upper abdomen moves inwards underneath the rib cage with chest moving outwards is called Uddiyana bandha.
5. Hold this position comfortably as long as possible.

### Benefits

1. It stimulates digestive system and helps in constipation.
2. It stimulates the pancreas and is helpful for diabetes.
3. It strengthens the abdominal muscles & immune system.
4. Balances the mind and anger and depressive mood.

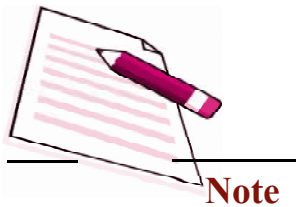
### Precautions

1. Avoid in high blood pressure, heart disease, hernia & glaucoma.
2. Avoid in menstruation, pregnancy, duodenal & peptic ulcers.



### Note





## Moola Bandha- The Root Lock

The Sanskrit word Moola means 'base, root, and bottom'; Bandha means 'restrain, hold, lock or closed'. It is also known as 'root lock'. It is related to the subtle body. Its physical counterpart is the perineum muscle, which is located between the anus and the genitals and moves in an upward direction.

### Method:

1. Sit erect in Siddhasana, pressing the perineum with the left heel.
2. Look straight ahead and take a deep breath.
3. Exhale slowly and as the abdomen contracts, close the anal sphincters tightly & continuously and then draw them upwards.
4. Hold the contraction for five to ten seconds or as long as possible without discomfort.
5. Inhale slowly and relax the anal muscles slowly.

### Benefits

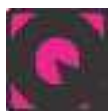
1. It tones the digestive system, reproductive organs, and perineum and can help women with painful periods.
2. Moola bandha essentially prepares for a spiritual awakening by activating root chakra.

### Duration

Perform five turns in the beginning and increase by one turn every week up to a maximum of ten turns for gaining the maximum amount of physical benefit. Relax for about five seconds between the contractions.

### Precautions

1. Avoid in high blood pressure, heart disease or any major diseases.
2. Should not be done in case of bleeding per rectum.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 22.5

### A. Fill in the Blanks with appropriate words:

1. Bandhas are the ..... that are held by tightening and lifting of certain muscles of the body.



2. The three main bandhas are.....and .....
3. Jalandhar Bandh is also known as.....
4. Thyroid and parathyroid glands are stimulated by.....
5. In.....bandha upper abdomen moves inwards underneath the rib cage with chest moving outwards.

### B. Mark the following as True or False

1. Uddiyan bandha can be practised in duodenal and peptic ulcer disease. ( )
2. Moola Bandha is also known as the root lock. ( )
3. Maha bandha is the combination of any two Bandha together. ( )



### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson we have learnt:

- Practice of Mudra and Bandha is considered to be more effective than practice of asana and Pranayam.
- Mudra is a symbolic gesture used in yog. There are various types of mudras and each type has a specific effect on the body and mind.
- Touching the fingers of hand in different positions is known as Hast Mudra. In Hast Mudra each finger of the hand represents each element.
- Mudras which are performed as postures are called Asana mudra. This includes Maha mudra, Vipareet Karani and Ashwani Mudra.
- Mudras which are performed with face are called Mukh mudra. Shambhavi mudra, kaki mudra comes under Mukh Mudra.
- The bandhas are an important part of asana practice. Bandhas are the 'body locks' that are held by tightening and lifting certain muscles. There are three main bandhas: **Jaladhara bandha** (throat), **Uddiyana bandha** (abdomen) and **Moola bandha** (located in the perineum). **Maha bandha** is the combination of all three bandhas together.



### TERMINAL QUESTIONS

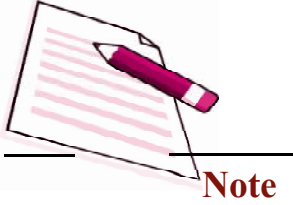
1. Define Mudra.



### Note



## Yogic Practices



2. Which mudra is called King among all the mudras?
3. Write the benefits of Vipareet Karni mudra.
4. Explain the method of Maha mudra.
5. What is meant by Shambhavi mudra?
6. Explain the meaning of Bandha.
7. Describe the benefits of Uddiyana Bandha.
8. How many types of bandhas are included in Mahabandha? Explain.
9. Explain the precautions of Jalandhar Bandha.
10. List the benefits of Moola Bandha.



## ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

## 22.1

## A.

1. Mudra
2. Hand
3. 10 and 25

## 22.2 A.

1.b 2.e 3.c 4.d 5.a

## B.

1. Gyan
2. Vayu Mudra
3. Thumb and index
4. Surya Mudra
5. Surya and Linga
6. Prithvi
7. Dryness, Dehydration of the body
8. 30-45



22.3

A.

1. Asana Mudra
2. Mahamudra, centre
3. 90, 45

B.

1. Right
2. Right
3. Wrong

22.4

A.

1. Mukha
2. Shambhavi
3. Kaki

22.5

A.

1. Body locks
2. Jalandhar, Uddiyan and Moola Bandha
3. Chin Lock
4. Jalandhar Bandha
5. Uddiyan

B.

1. Wrong
2. Right
3. Wrong



Note

