



Teaching and Practicing Mudras and Mantras

**By: Nancy Wile
Yoga Education Institute**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Anjali Mudra.....	3
Dhyana Mudra.....	5
Chin Mudra.....	6
Ganesha Mudra.....	7
Lotus Mudra.....	8
Prana Vayu Mudras (Five Elements).....	9
Abhaya Mudra.....	13
Abhaya Hridaya Mudra.....	14
Adhomukha Mudra.....	15
Ashvaratna Mudra.....	15
Avahana Mudra.....	16
Chakra Mudra.....	16
Gada Mudra.....	17
Garuda Mudra.....	17
Kaleshvara Mudra.....	18
Linga Mudra.....	18
Mushtika Mudra.....	19
Prithri Mudra.....	20
Rudra Mudra.....	21
Surya Mudra.....	22
Vayu Mudra.....	23
Yoni Mudra.....	24
Body Mudras.....	25
Mantras.....	27

Introduction

The sanskrit word “Mudra” is translated as “seal” or “closure” or “gesture.” A mudra is a gesture that may involve the whole body or be a simple hand position. Based on the principles of Ayurveda, mudras are thought to have healing properties and to have an effect on the energy flow of the body. Some Yoga Mudras come natural to us, simply by touching our hands to our fingers we can affect our attitude and our perception and the inherent energetic power can heal the body. Mudras used in combination with breathing exercises enhance the flow of prana in the body by stimulating the different parts of the body involved with breathing. Relating directly to the nerves, mudras create a subtle connection with the instinctual patterns in the brain influencing the unconscious reflexes in these areas. The internal energy is in turn balanced and redirected effecting change in the sensory organs, glands veins and tendons. This adds a whole new dimension to the yoga experience.

Yoga Mudras are typically practiced sitting simply cross legged, in vajrasana, or in lotus posture and even sitting in a chair. However, mudras can also be practiced as part of a specific posture; for example during Warrior 2 or Tree pose. Ideally Ujjai breathing or other pranayama accompany the more simple mudras.

The main texts concerning the use of mudras are the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika describes 10 mudras and the Gheranda Samhita explains 25 different mudras.

In this manual, the we first examine the most common mudras and the prana vayu mudras. After that, you will see an alphabetical listing of many more mudras that are explained and that you are encouraged to try out if they are new to you.

At the end of the mudras, you will find a summary of common mantras that can be practiced with the mudra of your choice, or as part of mantra meditation practice. At the end of each mantra, you’ll find a link to a video of the mantra to help you with pronunciation and pacing of the mantra.

Practicing any mudra or mantra is a personal experience. I encourage you to try each one with an open mind and simply notice your experience and if a particular one might be beneficial to you, or something that you would like to try with your students.

Anjali Mudra



Probably the most common mudra in yoga, Anjali Mudra is the familiar gesture of drawing together of one's palms at the heart. This gesture is common within certain asanas—in Tadasana (Mountain Pose), before you begin Sun Salutations, or in balance poses such as Vrksasana (Tree Pose).

In the West, we translate this gesture as a posture of prayer. Because we have grown up with this gesture as part of our culture, each of us probably has our own personal connection to this mudra—positive or negative. However, the beauty of this gesture, which positions us right at the core of our being, is timeless and universal.

This mudra is often accompanied by the word “namaste.” As the consummate Indian greeting, namaste is often translated as “I bow to the divinity within you from the divinity within me.” This salutation is at the essence of the yogic practice of seeing the Divine within all of creation. Hence, this gesture is offered equally to everyone and everything.

Anjali mudra is used as a posture of composure, of returning to one's heart, whether you are greeting someone or saying goodbye, initiating or completing an action. As you bring your hands together at your center, you are literally connecting the right and left hemispheres of your brain. This is the yogic process of unification.

Steps:

- Begin by coming into a comfortable sitting position
- Lengthen your spine out of your pelvis and extend the back of your neck by dropping your chin slightly in
- Bring your hands out to the sides, then draw your hands together at the center of your chest as if to gather all of your resources into your heart.
- Repeat that movement several times, contemplating your own metaphors for bringing the right and left side of yourself—masculine and feminine, logic and intuition, strength and tenderness—into wholeness.
- Try shifting your hands to one side or the other of your midline and pause there for a moment. Does it feel slightly off kilter? Now shift back to center and notice how powerful the center line is.
- Gently touch your thumbs into your sternum.
- Broaden your shoulder blades to spread your chest open from the inside. Feel space under your armpits as you bring your elbows into alignment with your wrists.
- Stay here for some time and take in your experience. What initial shifts of consciousness do you experience? Is there a change in your mood?

Now imagine that you are beginning your yoga practice—or any activity in which you want to be centered and conscious of how your inner state will affect the outcome of your experience. Take anjali mudra again, but this time slightly part your palms, so that your hands resemble the bud of a lotus flower. Depending on your spiritual orientation, you can metaphorically plant a seed prayer, affirmation, or quality such as “peace,” “clarity,” or “vitality” within your anjali mudra. Drop your chin towards your chest and awaken a sense of humility with which to begin your practice. It is important that this anjali or offering be true to your Self as that will be the most effective and uplifting for you. When you feel your invocation is complete, draw your fingertips to the center of your forehead, ajna chakra, and pause there feeling the calming effect of your touch. Bring your hands back to your center to ground your intention within your heart.

From here you can begin your yoga asanas, meditation, or any activity from a place of connectedness. Notice how much easier it is to be present and with whatever you are doing. Look for other times to integrate anjali mudra into your practice and life. Besides the beginning and end of your yoga sessions, anjali mudra can be used within Sun Salutations many other asanas as a way to come back to and maintain your center. When your hands come together overhead in Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I) or in Tree Pose, this is still anjali mudra. Consciously connecting this upward movement of your hands through an invisible line of energy to your heart will help your posture and your inner attitude. Anjali mudra is an age-old means of helping human beings to remember the gift of life and to use it wisely.

Variation of Anjali Mudra with Arms Overhead



Regardless of the variation you practice, this mudra is said to help balance the right and left sides of the brain, to bring calm and balance to the body, and to increase a sense of awareness for the present moment.

Dhyana Mudra (Bhairavi Mudra)



Steps:

- Place the left hand in the lap, palm up.
- Rest the back of the right hand into the palm of the left.
- Lightly touch the tips of the thumbs together in the shape of a hollow sphere.
- Hold this mudra in front of the navel for 5-10 minutes.

The right hand represents enlightenment, while the left is the illusory nature of existence. Alternatively, this positioning of the hands signifies skilful action (or “method”) as arising from a state of inner calm. Often practiced in Buddhist meditation, dhyana mudra engenders a sense of calm and concentration. It indicates the perfect balance of thought, rest of the senses, and tranquility.

The Dhyana Mudra signifies the gesture of absolute balance. The person meditating is completely unmoved by the surroundings, immersed in infinite space. It is said to promote a heightened state of awareness and insight.

Sometimes, this mudra is displayed with both thumb tips touching each other, forming a triangle. This figure represents the Three Jewels of Buddhism – the Buddha, the Sangha and the Good Law (Dharma). The coming together of the thumb tips also indicates the union of two psychic channels in the body, as represented by the male and female principles that exist in every sentient being.

Chin Mudra (Gyan Mudra)



The word Gyan means wisdom in Sanskrit. Thus, practicing the Gyan Mudra is believed to help instill wisdom and spiritual enlightenment. This is why the Gyan Mudra is widely used in many yogic meditation poses such as Pranayama. The Gyan Mudra is also known as the Chin Mudra.

Steps:

- The Gyan Mudra should ideally be performed along with meditation asanas. Here are the steps of Gyan Mudra:
- Sit down in a meditative pose such as the Sukha Asana (Easy Pose), Vajra Asana (Diamond Pose), or Padma Asana (Lotus Pose). You may even perform the Gyan Mura while standing in the Tada Asana (Mountain Pose) or sitting comfortably on a chair.
- Ensure that your back is held straight and your chest and head held up high.
- Rest your hands on your knees with your palms facing upwards.
- Touch the tip of the index finger to the tip of the thumb. The rest of the finger should be held straight and parallel to each other. This Mudra is performed with both hands.
- Close your eyes and focus on your breath.
- To further enhance the effectiveness of the Gyan Mudra, you may chant the word Om (Aum) in conjunction with every exhale.
- Lightly focus on the subtle sensations of the physical body.

Benefits:

- One of the main benefits of the Gyan Mudra is its ability to relax the body and focus the mind to the task of meditation. It also helps to relieve stress and transcend worldly problems.

Ganesha Mudra



Ganesha, the elephant god, is one of the most popular deities of Hindu mythology. He is supposed to help remove all obstacles from your path. The Ganesh Mudra is named after him because performing this Mudra is said to help lift your spirits and give you the will to persevere when you are feeling down.

Steps:

- Sit down comfortably on a chair or on a yoga mat in the Lotus Pose (Padma Asana).
- Bring both hands in front of your chest with your elbows bent.
- Position the left hand with the palm facing outwards in such a way that your thumb points towards your solar plexus and your little finger points towards your collar bone.
- Form a claw by bending the four fingers of your left hand and clasp them with the four fingers of your right hand. In this position, your right palm should be facing towards your chest.
- Inhale deeply. On the exhale, try to pull both arms apart while keeping all eight fingers locked. Feel the stretch along your shoulders and chest.
- Inhale once more and relax your arms while maintaining the Ganesh Mudra lock.
- Repeat this process six times.
- Interchange your hands, with your right palm facing outwards and the left palm facing inwards and repeat this process.
- Release all tension from the arms and bring them close to your chest so that your hands are touching your sternum. Sit in this position for as long as you like and focus on your breath.

Benefits:

- The benefits of the Ganesha Mudra extend to the cardiac muscles, the muscles of the chest, shoulders, and arms.
- It also helps to release any pent up tension from the shoulders and chest.

Lotus Mudra

Tied to the heart chakra, the Lotus Mudra is a symbol of purity that is said to help open the heart center



Steps:

- Bring your hands together at the heart in anjali mudra
- Keep the thumbs pressing together, and the little fingers pressing together, as you begin to separate the other fingers
- Your hands will now look like a blooming lotus flower
- As you inhale, float your thumbs up to your third eye, keeping your middle three fingers open to catch the energy
- As you exhale, bring your hands back to your heart in anjali mudra
- Repeat this action for a few minutes

Benefits:

- This mudra often helps people feel grounded and helps open the heart to the joys of life
- Releases tension and reminds us of the grace that is within us

Prana Vayu Mudras (Five Elements)

In Ayurveda, the qualities of the “five elements” of earth, water, fire, air, and ether are connected to and represented by prana vayus. These energies are symbolized by the five fingers of the hand. The thumb represents fire, the index finger is air, the middle finger is ether, the ring finger is earth, and the little finger is water.

There is thought to be a direct relationship between the mudras and the five elements of the body. According to Ayurveda, disease is due to an imbalance in the body caused by lack or excess of any of the five elements, our fingers have the characteristics of these elements and each of these five elements serves a specific and important function within the body. The fingers are essentially electrical circuits. The use of mudras adjusts the flow of energy affecting the balance of air, fire, water earth and ether accommodating healing.

The following five mudras are thought to influence the five vital airs in the physical body. With each mudra, the corresponding vayu is believed to be stimulated and bring a unifying effect to the various pranas.

Prana Mudra- Tips of ring and little finger touch the tip of the thumb.

Apana Mudra-Tips of the ring and middle finger touch the tip of the thumb.

Samana Mudra-Tips of the index, middle, ring and little finger touch the tip of the thumb.

Udana Mudra- Tips of the ring, middle, and little finger touch the tip of the thumb.

Vyana Mudra-Tips of index and middle finger touch the tip of the thumb

Any of these mudras can be done during meditation with the mind fixed on the particular area of the body were the corresponding vayu is meant to reside. Bringing our conscious awareness to specific areas of the body helps direct the prana.

Prana Mudra



The concept of Prana or life force is one that is intrinsic to Eastern cultures. It is known by many other names such as Chi or Qui. Mudras are specific hand gestures that help to regulate the passage of Prana through the body. The Prana Mudra is one of the most important mudras because it helps to activate the dormant energy in the body.

Steps:

- The Prana Mudra should ideally be performed while sitting down in meditative posture or while standing up straight in Mountain Pose.
- Keep your eyes closed and focus on your breath.
- Bring your hands up to your sides.
- Touch the tips of your ring finger and little finger to your thumb. The index and middle finger should be pointed straight.
- Feel the life force as it rushes through your body.
- The Prana Mudra should be practiced for 10 to 15 minutes.

Benefits:

- One of the primary benefits of the Prana Mudra is its ability to make you feel energized when you are fatigued or depressed. It also helps to strengthen the immune system and is good for the eyes.

Apana Mudra



The Apana Mudra is also known as the purification mudra. It means “air that moves away.” It focuses on the elimination of waste and toxins.

Steps:

- Stand or sit up straight.
- Bring your hands in front of you and bend the middle and ring finger and thumb so that their tips touch each other.
- Your index and little finger should be pointing straight.
- The Apana Mudra is usually performed with both hands. The Mudra should be held for 10 to 15 minutes, which can be done in increments.

Benefits:

- It is thought to help purify the body.
- This mudra helps the body get rid of unwanted toxins and is also helpful in dealing with constipation and gas.
- It's also thought to be helpful for heartburn

Samana Mudra



Samana means “balancing air.” It moves energy from the periphery to the center through a churning action. It aids in digestion in many levels: the digestion of food, the digestion of air and oxygen in the lungs, and the digestion of thoughts and experiences in the mind.

Steps:

- Stand or sit up straight.
- Join the tips of all the fingers
- This mudra is usually practiced with both hands and most often with palms turned up or hands at the belly
- It complements kapalabhati breath or breath of fire
- It can be practiced for about 10 minutes

Benefits:

- This mudra is said to help with the digestive system and help upset stomach.
- It also helps energize the body, especially the upper body and lungs
- It’s also thought to help clear the mind and see situations more clearly

Udana



Udana means “upward moving air” and governs growth of the body, as well as the energy of enthusiasm.

Steps:

- Begin in a seated position
- Sit up tall
- Bring your elbows into the side of your body with your palms facing up
- Bring the tips of your middle, ring and little finger to your thumb

- Point your index finger straight out in front of you.
- Stay here for a few minutes

Benefits:

- It is said to help balance the chakras of the crown, brow and throat.
- It is said to help develop a positive, optimistic outlook
- It is thought to help encourage growth

Vyana



Vyana mean “outward moving air” and governs circulation on all levels. It keeps food, water, oxygen moving through the body, and keeps emotions and thoughts circulating as well.

Steps:

- Begin in a seated position
- Sit up tall
- Bring the tips of your middle and index finger to your thumb
- Extend your elbow with your arms out in front of you and palms up
- Point your ring finger and little finger straight out in front of you.
- Stay here for a few minutes

Benefits:

- It is said to help balance the entire body
- It is thought to help circulation

More Mudras – In Alphabetical Order

Abhaya Mudra



Steps:

- Raise the right hand in front of your right shoulder, palm facing forward, relaxed, with the fingers extending upward.
- Keep your shoulder relaxed, elbow bent, and hand still.
- Feel the center of your palm warm, as if radiating a soft light.
- Rest the left hand in your lap with the palm up, or let it hang gently at your side during standing or walking practice.
- Imagine anything that is causing you fear is looking into the center of your palm
- Feel the steadiness of your courage
- Hold the mudra for 5-10 minutes

Benefits:

- Calms the mind, reduces anxiety and inner conflict
- Removes attachment and aversion to thoughts, emotions, and sensations
- Serves as a form of protection from negativity.

Abhaya Hridaya Mudra



Steps

- Raise the hands in front of the chest, palms facing center.
- Cross the wrists with the backs of the hands touching, right hand closest to your body, palms facing to the sides.
- Firmly interlock the index, middle, and little fingers, while connecting the tips of the thumb and ring finger on both hands, forming two rings.
- Hold the mudra at your chest for 5-10 minutes

Benefits:

- Nourishes the heart and lungs
- Improves digestion
- Creates a sense of vitality and calm
- Can help reduce nightmares
- Use of this mudra is especially helpful during times of exhaustion, or regaining strength after surgery.
- It is thought to allow heat to descend from the head through the chest down into the belly, thus regulating the healthy function of all the internal organs.

Adhomukha Mudra (Downward facing mudra)



Steps:

- Join the pads of the thumbs together with the palms facing downward.
- Point all the other fingers down while resting the tops of the fingers and first knuckles together.
- Keep all fingers straight and relaxed.
- Hold the mudra with the tips of the thumbs lightly touching the belly near the navel.
- Practice this mudra for 2-5 minutes while focusing on the navel

Benefits:

- Activates Manipura Chakra
- Strengthens digestive system
- Enhances healing
- Reduces toxicity
- Prepares the mind for meditation

Ashvaratna Mudra



Steps:

- Join the palms together with the index and ring fingers interlaced.
- Extend the thumbs, ring fingers, and little fingers.
- Maintain space in the web between the ring and little fingers.
- Imagine you are viewing your life from an outside perspective. In an objective way and without judgment, notice any behaviors you frequently engage in that are not serving you. What behaviors and reactions would be most helpful to you? Concentrate on cultivating those positive behaviors.
- Hold this mudra for 5-10 minutes

Benefits

- Balances digestion, circulation
- Cuts through ego clinging and narrow-mindedness
- Gives new perspective on your choices and life's path

Avahana Mudra



Steps:

- Raise the hands in front of the face, palms facing you, with the sides of the hands touching.
- Place the tips of the thumbs to the base of the ring fingers.
- Keep the outer tips of the little finger pads touching and spread the remaining fingers.
- Hold this mudra for 5-10 minutes

Benefits

- Grounding and centering
- Improves digestion
- Strengthens spiritual connection

This mudra is also often used in conjunction with a mantra such as OM in order to enhance its effects.

Chakra Mudra



Steps:

- Interlace the fingers of both hands. Extend the ring fingers, touching the tips of the two fingers together.
- Hold the mudra in front of the navel.
- Feel the abdomen grow warm, as if the sun is shining inside your belly, as you breathe slowly and deeply.
- Hold for 5 to 10 minutes.

Benefits

- Centering and grounding
- Improves digestion, reduces gas and bloating
- Increases self-confidence.

Gada Mudra



Steps:

- Hold the hands in front of you with the palms up.
- Bend and interlace the little and ring fingers at the second knuckle (tucking the fingers into the palms).
- Touch the tips of the middle fingers and extend them upward.
- Then, form two interlocking rings by touching the tips of the index fingers and thumbs on both hands.
- This mudra is often held in front of the pelvis for about 2-5 minutes

Benefits

- Improves elimination and tones the organs of the pelvis
- Strengthens the Muladhara Chakra, opens the flow of rising energy up the back of the body, evokes feelings of stability and safety.

Note – This mudra is also often practiced in combination with grounding postures, such as warrior 1, warrior 2, tadasana, or chair pose.

Garuda Mudra



Steps

- Raise the hands in front of the chest, palms facing you.
- Cross and bend the thumbs, creating a firm pressure between the pads
- Fan the remaining fingers up and to the sides, in the shape of large wings. Hold your hands in front of your heart in this position with the palms facing out. Imagine your hands shielding you from any danger or from any negative energy, and protecting your positive state of being.
- Hold this mudra for 5-10 minutes

Benefits

- Improves intelligence
- Increases digestive fire, activates Manipura Chakra (navel center)
- It is thought to serve as protection and bring about feelings of confidence.

Kaleshvara Mudra



Steps:

- Join the tips of the middle fingers and extend them forward.
- Fold the index, ring, and little fingers in toward the palms, touching them at the middle joints.
- Touch the tips of the thumbs together and point them toward the heart.
- Hold this mudra at your heart center for 5-10 minutes during meditation

Benefits

- Calms and clears the mind
- Strengthens the heart
- Is thought to help break negative patterns and addictive behaviors

Linga Mudra



Steps:

- Interlock the fingers of both hands with the left index finger on top.
- Extend the right thumb straight up.
- Join the tips of the left thumb and index finger, forming a circle around the extended right thumb.
- Hold this mudra in front of the abdomen for 5-10 minutes

Benefits

- Warms the body
- Relieves cold and flu symptoms
- Reduces lethargy and laziness
- Increases self-confidence and willpower

Mushtika Mudra



Steps:

- With each hand, bring the pads of the fingers toward the heel of the hand.
- Join the hands together with the thumbs side by side.
- In a comfortable seated position, hold the mudra lightly against your chest.
- Relax the shoulders, throat, and neck.
- On an inhale, reach your hands straight up, with your thumbs pointing up to the sky.
- Make an offering from your heart to live your life for the welfare of all beings.
- Then bring your hands back to your heart, bringing that promise into your heart.
- Continue this movement for a few minutes.

Benefits:

- Weakens the ego and reduces self-defeating habits
- Awakens compassion
- Reduces anxiety and self-doubt, and calms the spirit
- Clears the mind
- Benefits the heart and vascular system.

Prithvi Mudra



The Prithvi Mudra is so called because it helps to equalize the element of Prithvi or earth within the body. This Mudra is also said to activate the Root Chakra.

Steps

- The Prithvi Mudra can be performed while sitting or while standing up straight in Tadasana (Mountain Pose).
- Touch the tip off the ring finger of each hand to the tip of the thumb. The rest of the fingers should be pointing straight.
- Hold this position for some time.

Benefits:

- It helps to balance the different elements inside of the body.
- The Prithvi Mudra also helps to strengthen the body and alleviates fatigue.
- Practicing this Mudra also helps to foster self-confidence and belief in the self.

Rudra Mudra



The Rudra Mudra helps to govern and activate the Solar Plexus Chakra.

Steps:

- Here are the steps of the Rudra Mudra that will help you to gain control over the Solar Plexus Chakra and center the body:
- Sit down comfortably with your back straight and chin and chest held high. Postures such as the Padma Asana or Sukha Asana are especially suited for practicing Mudras.
- Breathe in and out through your nose. Calm your mind and imagine that you are at the center of a spinning wheel.
- Raise your hands and press the tips of each index finger, thumb, and ring finger together. The middle finger and little finger should extend straight out.
- Hold this posture for at a few minutes. You can perform the Rudra Mudra up to three to six times in a day.

Benefits:

- There are numerous benefits of practicing the Rudra Mudra.
- This Mudra is thought to help to relive dizziness, regulate breathing and blood pressure, improve concentration and also improve eyesight.

Surya Mudra



Surya is the Sanskrit word for the Sun and the Surya Mudra is so called because it increases the element of fire in the body.

Steps:

- Stand or sit up straight.
- Hold your hands out in front of you.
- Bend the ring finger of each hand so that its tip touches the mound of your thumb.
- Press down on your ring finger with your thumb.
- Ensure that the other fingers are spread out straight.
- The Surya Mudra can be practiced for 15 minutes each day.

Benefits:

- This Mudra helps to heat the body and raises the metabolism.
- Thus, it is an excellent posture for those who want to lose weight.
- It can also be used to treat common colds.

Vayu Mudra



Vayu means air and the Vayu Mudra helps to regulate the element of air inside the body.

Steps

- Press the tip of each index finger onto the mound of your thumb.
- Fold your thumb so that it presses down lightly on the bent index finger.
- The other fingers should be held straight.
- Perform this Mudra for as long as the problem that you are trying to alleviate persists. It can also be practiced for 10-15 minutes every day to prevent problems relating to the imbalance of the air element inside the body from cropping up.

Benefits:

- The Vayu Mudra helps to balance the air inside the body.
- It is thought to help with problems such as flatulence and joint pain related to rheumatism, sciatica, or arthritis.
- This Mudra is also said to help with certain tremors in the body
- If you feel uneasy after a meal, you should practice the Vayu Mudra while seated in the Vajra Asana (Diamond Pose).
- It can also be used for pain management

Yoni Mudra



The Yoni Mudra helps to completely detach from the chaos of the outer world and quiet the mind. Its name is derived from the word Yoni, which means "uterus", because like a baby in the uterus, the practitioner has no external contact with the world and, therefore, no externalization of consciousness. Practicing this, one finds their nervous system calmed and stabilized.

Steps

- Assume a comfortable posture, like seated cross-legged, remembering to always keep your head and back straight and upright.
- Bring palms together with the fingers and thumbs straight and the thumbs pointing towards the sky.
- Then turn the pinky, ring and middle fingers inwards so that the back of the fingers are touching.
- Point the index fingers down and the thumbs up
- Take slow, deep breaths.

After practicing the hand gesture, you can complete the practice doing the following:

- Cover your ears securely with your thumbs
- Place your index fingers on your eyes, covering them
- Use both your middle fingers to pinch your nostrils
- Press your lips together with your ring finger just above the top lip and your pinky below the lower lip
- Hold your breath for a few seconds and then release your nostrils and breathe slowly through your nose. Hold your breath again and repeat.

Benefits

- Relieving stress
- Relaxation and rejuvenation of the mind.
- Stabilizing the nervous system
- Maintaining a state of mental clarity and relaxation
- Attaining spiritual calmness and mental development

Body Mudras

You can also practice hand mudras in connection with certain body postures to enhance an energy shift.

Ganesha Mudra (in Thunderbolt) with Anjali Mudra (in Balasana)

Vajrasana (Thunderbolt/Kneeling) with Ganesha Mudra

- Sit in a kneeling position with your knees spread wide apart and big toes touching. Bring your hands to your heart center and turn your right palm towards you and your left palm out. Bend your fingers and clasp your fingers together with your elbows extending out to the sides (Ganesha Mudra).
- Relax and let your breath become slow.
- Feel your roots connected to the center of the earth as you lengthen through your spine
- Notice how having your hips on the earth awakens your bond with the earth and enhances the energy within you

Anjali Mudra in Balasana (Child's Pose with hands in prayer position overhead)

- From Vajrasana hinge forward from your hips as you exhale, bringing your forehead towards the floor.
- Bring your hands over your head into Pranam Mudra (Anjali Mudra)
- Relax the front of your head onto the earth
- Shift from the thinking brain to the receptive brain

Flow between Vajrasana with Ganesha Mudra and Balasana with Anjali Mudra overhead.

- From child's pose with hands in Anjali mudra overhead, inhale coming back up to sitting/thunderbolt (hands still in Anjali mudra overhead)
- Exhale, bring hands back into Ganesha Mudra
- Inhale, reach hands overhead into Anjali mudra
- Exhale, fold forward into wide leg Child's pose with hands still in Anjali mudra overhead

Moksha Mudra (in Camel) with Anjali Mudra (in Balasana)

Ustrasana (Camel) with Moksha Mudra (one hand on your heart and one arm raised)

- Start standing on your knees
- Keep one hand at your heart and reach your other arm overhead
- Inhale, lift up through your heart
- Exhale, press your hips forward and arch back
- Keep your raised arm next to your ear
- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Slowly come into child's pose
- Repeat this with the other arm raised

Flow between Ustrasana with Moksha Mudra and Balasana with Anjali Mudra

- From child's pose with hands in Anjali mudra overhead, inhale coming all the way back up to kneeling
- Exhale, arching back into Ustrasana with Moksha Mudra (right arm overhead)
- Inhale, come forward into kneeling with both hands overhead in Anjali Mudra
- Exhale, fold forward into wide leg Child's pose with hands still in Anjali Mudra
- Repeat, this time extending the left arm overhead in Moksha Mudra
- Repeat this same sequence 4 times

Mantras

Mantras are words or phrases that are chanted (either vocally or mentally) over and over. Along with the meaning, the sound vibrations created by many Sanskrit mantras are most important. We repeat mantras multiple times because a mantra is said to gain suggestive strength each time it is repeated. With each repetition, the mantra anchors the mind more firmly in the moment, preventing it from wandering to other thoughts.

Below are some frequently chanted mantras, along with their translations and a link to hear the pronunciation of each. These mantras can be chanted as part of a mantra meditation, can be used in conjunction with mudras or as part of a yoga practice.

Try each mantra out by chanting it at least ten times, and notice which mantras you feel more connected to and that you may want to continue practicing in the future.

OM (AUM)

We'll start with the most common mantra "OM."

Chanting the sound AUM (om) is often a good way to end a meditation or yoga practice. However, many times students don't know the reasons for chanting aum (om). Though OM is often considered a spiritual incantation, it doesn't have a specific definition or translation. The purpose of this sound is to increase the vibrations in the body, thereby increasing the energy, as well as to provide a focal point. As you chant this sound, your mouth and throat should move from fully open to fully closed.

To get the full effects of this sound, have your students say the sound by starting with "ahhh" in which the mouth is wide open, then moving to "uhh" in which the mouth and throat are half open, and finishing with "mmmm" in which the mouth and throat are closed. Following this pattern creates a longer and stronger vibration. Note that in Sanskrit, the term "aum" represents the beginning (first letter A), middle (middle letter u in sanskrit alphabet) and end (last letter m).

Many people find that by repeatedly chanting OM, the vibration helps to calm their nervous system.

Lokah Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu

"In the universe, may all beings be happy and free, may it be so"

This mantra focuses on putting our attention on the well-being of others. By shifting our attention from ourselves to others, we are often able to discover more peace and happiness in our own lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fA3ZZOvd7yo>

Om Mani Padme Hum

“Om jewel of the lotus flower that is”

This mantra isn't meant to be taken literally. It uses its six syllables to represent the purification of the six realms of existence, purifying the following negative aspects of ourselves: pride, jealousy, overwhelming desire, ignorance, greed, hatred. This mantra is said to bring joy and peaceful vibrations, invoke wisdom and compassion, and free us from any negative emotions.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG_INuNUVd4

Om Namah Shivaya

“Om may we adore the divine within ourselves and others”

This mantra honors the divine within oneself and others and is thought to help rid us of negativity and replace it with a positive outlook.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05c7SkvFY_o

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

“Om Peace Peace Peace Om”

The focus of this mantra is to bring peace to ourselves and to those around us. The word “Shanti” is repeated three times to symbolize peace in the body, speech, and mind, which brings peace to one's entire being.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BR2ymecu368>

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya

“Om I bow to the divine indweller in all oneness.”

Some people also translate it more simply to mean “thy will be done.” It represents surrender of our individual desires and concerns to a higher power.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_eMB2CNtAE

Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Rama

“Om and victory to the self within, victory, victory to Rama”

This mantra is thought to reduce negative karmic effects and produce an experience of spiritual healing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AY46W6Cw3yQ>

This version from Krishna Das starts out slow then picks up to a quick beat

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4UC3DHOhYE>

Finally, here's one longer mantra to try out:

**Om Apadamapa
Hartaram Dataram Sarva Sampadam
Loka Bhi Ramam Sri Ramam
Bhuyo Bhuyo Namamyaham**

"Om to the compassionate universe, please send your healing energy right here to earth, to earth"

This mantra is considered a powerful healing mantra.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-ugDfGTHhE>

Notes

Please make note of any mudras and/or mantras that you feel a connection with.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

After one week of practicing those mudras and/or mantras, make note of any positive effects you have experienced from their practice.