

Shatkarman, Bandha and Mudra

# Diaphragm Lock

*Uddiyana Bandha*

*“Uddiyana is so called by the Yogis, because by its practice the Prana (vayu) flies (flows) in the Sushumna. Uddiyana is so called, because the great bird, Prana, tied to it, flies without being fatigued. (...) The belly above the navel is pressed backwards towards the spine. This Uddiyana Bandha is like a lion for the elephant of death. (...) Of all the Bandhas, Uddiyana is the best; for by binding it firmly liberation comes spontaneously.”* Hathayogapradipika III, 54-59

**Starting Position:** standing with the feet apart, knees bent, hands on thighs. The exercise requires holding the breath after exhale. Hyperventilation (through Kapalabhati Pranayama) could be practiced as a preparation to oxygenate the blood. Uddiyana Bandha should be practiced every morning, with empty bowels and bladder and before eating breakfast.

Exhale completely through the mouth, then swallow and bend the head to block the glottis. Whilst holding the breath, perform a mock thoracic inhalation and expand the ribcage. The abdominal muscles are fully relaxed and the pressure of the hands on the thighs helps draw in the area under the ribs. Hold the breath as long as possible, without straining yourself. Lower the ribcage, lift the head and, only then, inhale. Take a few slow and deep breaths. Then repeat for 3-10 times.



**Dynamic variation:** while holding the breath, engage and relax the lock a few times.

**Advanced variation:** while holding the diaphragm lock engaged, introduce slow movements of flexion and extension of the neck. This variation favours lymphatic drainage of the face and neck area, has a balancing effect on the thyroid gland and is beneficial for hypertension.

**Contraindications:** various kinds ulcers, ulcerative colitis, diverticulitis, appendicitis, kidney stones.

**Benefits:** it makes Prana merge in the Sushumna Nadi and makes it move upwards. It creates fluid energetic communication between Manipura and Anahata Chakra. Excellent for all abdominal and pelvic organs; favours lymphatic and venous return and is a specific remedy in the treatment of constipation.