



Video Transcript

Learn Breath Mastery: Harness Prana With Bandhas

Hi, everyone. I'm Amanda. Welcome to this breathing exercise where we will be mastering the mind. I want to go a little bit through some of the components that will need to get through this breathing exercise. That includes some of the bondas. We use the bondas during our asana practice on the yoga mat a lot of times. You might have heard of Mula Banda, your root Banda, or Udiana Banda, the Solar Plexus Banda. This is used during movement, but when we practice Pranayama where we're holding the breaths, we need to incorporate those bondas. There's another Banda that we don't use during our Asna practice, and it's called Jalindara Dharabanda. It's located at the throat area. So a little bit more about the bondas. In yoga, we have a life force, well, really in our bodies, we have a life force. And with the practice of yoga and the breath and these breathing exercises, what we're really trying to do is help retain that prana so that it doesn't leave our body or where it's not pushed out by something from within that shouldn't be there, like disease of the mind and the body, something that's forcing the prana out, which may leave us feeling really, you know, unwell or feeling that there's dis-ease somewhere in the mind and the body. So the practices of pranayama is about restraining and holding the breath in, and that's what the banda's help us to do. At the root, at our mula banda, we want to engage the perineum and the muscles around the anus to help hold everything in so that the prana doesn't release the body from below. At the throat at Jalindarabanda, we want to gently draw the chin back and down so that the prana doesn't leave the body by going too far up. This is also really important because as we start moving the prana in your life force around and really getting it to move through the noughties, the passageways, where energy travels in the body, We

don't want it to shoot up towards the head too quickly. We want to be able to maintain and harness that prana from within, especially around the most vital organs in the body. So during the practice of this pranayama exercise with breath retentions, we seal the bottom and we seal the top so that we can hold the prana within. We do this at the top of an inhale and at the bottom of an exhale. We'll be doing this very gently today. And as a beginner, you want to start very easily. Throughout some of the other breathing exercises that we've covered like some of Riti breathing or equal parts breathing, we've started to prepare the body for deep breathing and really expanding to the top of the breath, the top of the inhalation, and the bottom of the breath, the bottom of the exhalation. What we'll be doing today is including these internal and external retentions, known as kumbakas. So we'll be breathing in, fully, fully, holding that breath in, and then we'll be breathing out completely and holding with no breath. This is a challenge physically if we're not used to breathing fully, but it can also be a challenge mentally. So it really takes your attention inward. Remain calm and if you start to feel uncomfortable in any way, just return back to breathing in and out, letting the breath flow. This is a great way to prepare yourself for your yoga practice but it's also a great way to aid in the cleansing practices that are associated with movement and your asana practice like on the yoga mat so let's begin we're going to start very easily by breathing in and out no holds when we hold we seal the muleabanda you do that by gently squeezing it's gentle but firm and imagine that you're squeezing in and lifting, almost like a little heimlich, in and up. The muscles are very specific and a little different for men and women, but generally it's between the pubic bone and the coxix bone. I'm sitting on a block, so I'm really erect over the base of my spine, which has me to draw it together and lift up. So, you might want to choose this position or in a chair. Something allows you to stay nice and tall in your spine. So that's how you find mula banda, your root lock. And then for Jalindarabanda, it's just a simple little seal and closing off of the throat. Not completely where you're constricting, but a gentle drawing into the jaw line and down. you'll notice that when you close that throat it's a little harder to breathe and that's all we're doing it's an energetic seal as well as a slight physical engagement so just keep it light and easy today and you'll be able to increase these sensations in these practices refining them over time so let's start with easy breathing an equal parts breath some of ritty breathing equal in the inhale equal in the exhale our holds today are going to be slightly shorter in time than the full inhale and exhale just so you get the feeling of it okay so come into your easy seated position a comfortable position where the spine can be tall and erect start to breathe with me as we synchronize you'll inhale through the nose and exhale through the nose. You can close your eyes for this practice, or you can keep your gaze slightly open directed just in front of you towards the ground. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the nose. Inhale and

and exhale.

I'm going to start to count, starting with a four count, inhale for four. Three, two, one. No hold, just exhale four, three, two, one. We want to regulate on the Inhale and exhale for four, three, two, one. Exhale, four, three, two, one. I'm increasing to five. Inhale for five, four, three, two, one. Exhale, five, four, three, two, one, squeeze the breath out. You're going to start to feel that bond of drawing in. Inhale, for five, four, three. Fill up the heart and lungs with the breath and prana all the way. Exhale for five, four, three, two, all the breath out. Draw the navel in, squeezing the breath out. Keep the spine erect. Increase the breath to six, five, four, three, two, one, lift up through the spine and exhale, six, five, four, three, two, and one. navel in and inhale Inhale, first six, five, four, three, two, one. Sit up tall and exhale for six, five, four, three, two, and one, draw the belly in. We're going to add a hold at the top. Inhale, for six, four three two take more air in sit up tall and then mula banda draw and dara banda gently lifts the throat and open the neck and exhale six five four three two one all the breath out, draw the navel in. Moolabanda, Duranarabanda, hold, no breath, and lift the chin, open the throat. Inhale, first six, five, four, three, two, one, sit up tall, more breath in. Three counts, hold, Lift the chin open the throat. Exhale. Regulate that exhale for six. Five, four, three, two. Squeeze the breath out. Draw the navel in. All the breath out. No breath. Make sure you're empty. Chin down. Root lock for three. Lift the chin, open the throat. Inhale, smoothly for six, five, four, three, two, one. Lengthen the breath, lengthen the spine, more breath in. Mula Banda, Jalindarabanda, chin down, hold for three. Lift the chin, open the throat. Exhale, gently. Six, five, four, three, two, one. All the breath out, draw the navel in, squeezing breath out, and then Banda's. Mula Banda, draw in Dara Banda. Hold no breath. Gently lift the chin in. Inhale, take it in easy. for six five four three two one length and take more breath in this is your last inhale hold

releasing that Jalandharabanda and all the breath out for six five
Three, two, and we're going to finish with an exhalation external hold.
So all the breath out, all the breath out, all the breath out. And then mullah
banda, Jalandharabanda, this pumps the prana. You might almost feel like a swelling,
a swell, a swell, a pulse. That's the prana. It's moving through the body.
It's pumping. Then soften the bandhas, inhale, take a full breath in,
release the breath.
Regulating the breath, just finding that balance, inhale,
exhale,
draw your attention inward sense and notice the sensations.
Notice how quickly the mind and the body and the breath return back to equanimity,
how resilient the breath is, how the focus calms the mind.
Easy breathing in, easy breathing out.
You can repeat that entire process again, up to three or four or five times.
You can keep the whole set longer or just do short sets. Starting with this, just
getting an idea of the holds is a great way to start your practice of breath
retention. That swelling and that pulsing that you felt on a physical level is that
energetic form of prana moving through your body. You're harnessing the prana,
that life force and starting to let it circulate through your body so that you can
clean out what doesn't need to be in your body, what needs to be out and keep
what moves and energizes the body from within. That's your prana,
your life force. You're sort of cleaning out the pipes, the energetic pipes by using
practices like this. So keep practicing, do it slowly,
slowly, slowly over time, and it will come with ease. Thank you for joining me,
enjoy the rest of your day and that life force within you