

Jalandhara Bandha ‘The Chin Lock’

“jal” = throat “dhara” = supporting

Method

Sit comfortably with your spine erect. Place hands on knees, arms straight. Inhale, hold the breath, drop the chin forwards and down onto the jugular notch, continue to retain the breath, lift the head, and then exhale. Ensure that you keep your chest open and remember we can also swallow first to release neck tension and lengthen the neck.

Benefits for Jalandhara Bandha

It stretches the neck, pulling the spinal cord and thus the brain. This has subtle effects on the pituitary and pineal glands while the forward flexion of the neck affects the thyroid, parathyroid and thymus glands. Jalandhara bandha at the same time stimulates the **parasympathetic** spinal area in the medulla oblongata (situated at the bottom of the brain and the top of the spinal cord) regulating heart rate, respiration, blood pressure etc. Finally, it also compresses the carotid sinuses, which help in lowering the blood pressure. By reducing sympathetic activity, one achieves a sense of rest, relaxation and general wellbeing, and this can also be achieved without the additional use of breath retention.

JB also encourages pratyahara where the brain does not receive as much sensory information from the body. It also inhibits the flow of information from the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems to the Adhares, or life centres of the body. These include the toes, ankle, knees, thighs, perineum, generative organs, navel, heart, neck, throat, palate, nose, eyebrow centre, forehead centre, skull and the opening of the sushumna nadi. It is therefore an excellent prelude to meditation.

Esoterically JB places pressure on the nadis preventing the ‘cooling energy of the moon plexus’ i.e. Maha Bindu from flowing down from the brain dispersing the heat of the abdominal plexi, enabling the unification of prana and apana (this cooling secretion is often called nectar in the classic texts).

Precautions & Prohibitions

If short-necked roll a scarf under the chin can help to supply the pressure. When practiced without breath retention there are no cautions, rather we will find that it is a relaxing practice.

See HYP Ch3 v70 to 72
 Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha, Bihar School, p326 to 328

Mula Bandha ‘The Root Lock’

Method

Practice general techniques to strengthen the pelvic floor first. Contract the rectal muscles repeatedly (Ashwini Mudra). Contract the muscles around the pubis repeatedly (Yoni Mudra). Aim to isolate one movement from the other then finally when some control is experienced, practice the muscle lift into Mula Bandha on the central point, not the front or back. For men MB is located at the perineum whereas for women it is at the entrance of the cervix. Everyone can lie down with knees bent to practice pelvis rolling to locate the point in the perineum. Performing the cat or shoulderstand can help to locate this point. We can also adopt a subtler version by directing attention to the location.

Benefits of Mula Bandha (perineal contraction)

This stimulates both the sensory-motor and the autonomic nervous systems in the pelvic region. When mula bandha is performed, pelvic stimulation activates parasympathetic fibres emerging from the spinal cord. **Note: parasympathetic fibres emerge from the cervical (neck) and sacral (pelvic) areas only, while sympathetic fibres emerge from the thoracic and lumbar areas only.**

MB increases the blood supply, removes toxins, tones muscles, strengthens vagina and anal

sphincter muscles, prevents prolapse of the uterus or bladder and is good for piles.

Esoterically MB helps to direct prana, helping the union of prana and apana, and is responsible for the awakening of kundalini.

Precautions & Prohibitions

As for jalandhara bandha, and we can also practice it without breath retention with natural breathing with no contraindications. It is an excellent practice for the elderly when done without retention.

See HYP Ch3 v61 to 63

Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha, Bihar School, p329 to 328