



Unlocking the Benefits of Yoga Mudras

Riddhi Gaddamwar

Abstract

Yoga mudras offer a variety of benefits towards the mental and physical well being of an individual. There are numerous mudras; however, each mudra has a different role that plays in the process of exploring one's inner connection with the body and mind. Many health and emotional dilemmas can be prevented from escalating if there is a consistent practice of yoga postures; however, it isn't known as a replacement for medicine. With the proper guidance, position, time, mindset, and constancy, incorporating mudras within the routine of daily life can promote a paramount of long term blessings.

Introduction

The phrase "mudra" is an amalgamation of two unique words "mud" and "dravya". "Mud" symbolizes delight and joy; "dravya" epitomizes production or to draw something in (Bedi, 2020). Both terms put together reveal a meaning of a powerful conduit with the brain and the body, bringing out a superior version of oneself. "Mudra" is also a commonly used term within the forms of various rituals and dance techniques. More distinctly, within the famous language of Hindi, the phrase "mudra" has a meaning of closing or sealing. This presents that each position of mudras traps the strong power within the mind and body. A synonym for the word "mudra" can also be known as "hastha yoga" (Godbole, 2021). Both these terms refer to different styles of yoga with the use of a variety of hand motions. People mainly think of yoga as just a science; however, it holds much more meaning than just science. Yoga has been one of the few methods that have taught many individuals on how to create an evolution of themselves with their intellect and structure. "Yoga" was derived from a Sanskrit phrase "yuj" which means to join together or to indulge in energy within the faith of oneself (Jain, 2023). In this sense, yoga joins together the contacts of the world to the soul through bodily stances and breath control. Not only does yoga mudras benefit the body but also the inner soul of a human. Not only do mudras help connect with the body, but it opens up a new world of trying to exercise the mind and re-energize it.

Hand of Elements

The magical touch of fingertips can help fabricate a new affiliation with the body, unveiling new measures of vivacity. As the hand holds five different fingers, each finger represents a distinct element (Bedi, 2020). The thumb finger represents the famous element fire (agni) which corresponds with tension of the abdominal region and sensations. Since the index finger incorporates the element of air (vayu), it is associated with many dilemmas with the bronchi pleura as well as internal negative emotions. Holding the element of space (akasha), the middle finger is popularly connected with the internal body parts such as respiratory and circulatory systems. The ring finger holds the earth element (prithvi) which holds a correlation with various types of organs. Lastly, the pinky finger holds the element of water (jala) which is correlated with the body parts like kidneys as well as internal turmoil. The concept of mudras supports maintaining a balance within all five energies in order to amplify and sustain spiritual bonds.

Within the five elements, an imbalance in any one of them can create negative impacts on the mental and emotional health of society.

Performance Tips to Maximize Effects

Before taking upon any form of the mudras, it is crucial to be in a congenial sitting position called the "padmasana". Padmasana (lotus pose) can augment flexibility, tranquility, breathing control, and a sense of zen (Jain, 2024). According to the figure below (Fig 1), starting off the steps of padmasana can be started by being seated in a cross-legged stance. Resting each arm on its corresponding knee while touching the tips of the index and thumb finger will successfully accomplish the goal of the lotus pose (Sankhe, 2024b).



Fig 1: Padmasana Pose (Diamond, n.d.)

Being in the most comfortable position for an individual can lead to a successful performance of mudras. Many people perform mudras without truly knowing the history of how to start the preparation for it. More than just simply joining fingers, it is crucial to discern each and every step to perform before the act. In about 30 seconds, the mudra starts to precipitate throughout the hand gestures and gradually into the body. Each mudra placement should be held for around five to ten minutes and the whole ritual of yoga performances should be held for around 45 minutes per day ("Yoga Mudras: Here's Why Health Is In Your Own Hands, Literally!", 2021). Adding on, to enhance the total effect of each mudra, performing the ujjayi (inhaling 12-15 breaths of air) can create a more solid flow of breathing (Chowdhury, 2024). A combination of the padmasana, consistent time, and ujjayi will enhance overall efficiency through the impacts of each mudra.

Mastering Memory and Concentration Through Mudras

In the famous classical language of India, a text called "Natyashastra" from the early 300 BCE had included around 37 various mudras as well as each of their applications and effects (Godbole, 2021). There are a few mudras that specifically help in trying to optimize memory and focus : Hakini, Uttarabodhi, Bhoochari, Rudra, and Gyan.

Hakini Mudra is all about trying to elevate the potential of the brain. However, there is an order of steps that needs to be done in order to execute this effect fully. Stationed in the form of the padmasana, the fingers across both hands are required to touch in order to reunite both of the left and right meridians. Next, bring the hands towards the front of the chest and slowly click the fingertips of each hand together. Shut the eyes while the tongue is connecting with the hood of the mouth (Jain, 2024). While this process is occurring, it is exceedingly important to breathe in and out through the form of ujjayi. This mudra elevates neural activity while simultaneously augmenting consciousness. When there are tasks which require extreme levels of focus, Hakini can decrease agitation levels ; building an atmosphere of serenity.



Fig 2: Hakini Visualization (*Hakini Images*, n.d.)

Adding on, Uttarabodhi mudra focuses on relieving stress by trying to improve the ability of one's problem-solving skills and intellect. There is a small sequence of steps needed to be taken in order to carry out the full impact of Uttarabodhi. As the left palm and right palm are directly facing one another, the left index finger has to join with the right index finger. While this is taking place, the thumb should be joining this connection while facing downwards. This mudra is performed by creating a diamond like shape through connecting the index fingers and thumbs with its corresponding match (Reis, 2024). Once this is done, the rest of the three fingers should be intertwined with each other in a horizontal stance. Maintaining this locale between the scope of five to ten minutes assists in easing the nerves of stress (Jain, 2024). Uttarabodhi mudra represents a high sense of wisdom which can develop an emotional feeling of strength despite the obstacles one may go through. Fear gradually vanishes as self awareness takes place into the soul by performing this gesture. Before taking upon any overwhelming endeavor, Uttarabodhi will sooth the mind and remove potential thoughts of insecurities and unwanted energy.



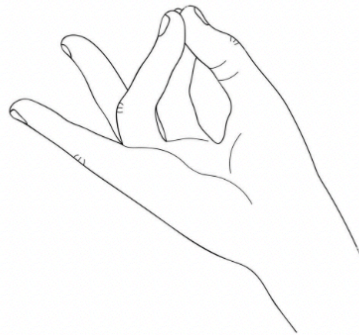
Fig 3: Uttarabodhi Depiction (Redazione, 2019)

Furthermore, Bhoochari mudra helps to steady one's mind while bringing in the composure within them. Once seated in the lotus pose, the left hand should be taking full control of synthesizing the energy levels. Whereas, the right hand should be at the same spot as the lip with the palm facing downwards. As the thumb is joined with the top lip, the left arm must be facing upwards resting on the knee. When the tip of the index unites with the tip of the thumb, the left hand should be in a still position. Similarly, as per all mudras, this stance should be held between the extent of five to ten minutes (Jain, 2024). Within this span of time, it is pivotal to engage abdominal breathing techniques (process of diaphragm contraction and relaxation). Proper inhaling and exhaling results in the body obtaining an adequate amount of oxygen which is required to triumphantly perform tasks. Simultaneously, the power of retention increases while attempting to balance all the powers with the execution of this mudra. Clearing the mind through the Bhoochari, a flow of clarity fulfills the soul and inner peace starts to spread within the body.



Fig 4: Bhoochari Illustration (*Bhoochari Mudra - Ayurwiki, n.d.*)

Moreover, the rudra mudra is derived from the Sanskrit term “rudra”, another phrase for Lord Shiva (Carver, 2020). In Hinduism, Lord Shiva exemplifies the strength of evil destruction and the rising of nobility. If and only the rudra mudra is performed accurately, it can lead to a boost in attention span, clean mind, endurance to overcome any predicament, and stability. Unlike many mudras, this one is best performed during precise times, either the early morning or in the later evening. Starting in the placement of padmasana, tilt the right and left palm upwards facing the ceiling. Once this has taken place successfully, connect the fingertips of the index fingers with the ring fingers on each hand (Jain, 2024). Subsequently, merge the top of the thumb to create a trio with the index and ring finger. Stretch the remaining fingers (middle and pinky) into a vertical arrangement. Rudra should be fulfilled within five to ten minutes and two to three times per day for maximum ramifications.



Rudra Mudra

Fig 5: Rudra Portrayal (Limited, n.d.)

Additionally, the Gyan mudra (mudra of knowledge) is well known to represent the elements of space and air (Carver, 2020). This leads to an elevation of knowledge as well as an increase in memory sharpening. Once settled in the lotus pose, connecting the tip of the index finger with the thumb while stabilizing the other remaining three fingers standing straight is the formation of the Gyan mudra. The connection of the index and thumb symbolizes a sense of wisdom. Initializing practice from five to ten minutes can promote the beginning benefits; however, holding it 30-45 minutes will result in ultimate advantages. Gyan handles enhancing relaxation, cognitive functions, and mental health. The poses of mudras have been seen within the frames of various gods as well as goddesses that many people hang inside their house. In fact, two famous Hindu gods named Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna are declared to be performing the Gyan mudra pose within their ideal framing picture (“Yoga Mudras: Here’s Why Health Is In Your Own Hands, Literally!”, 2021). Performing Gyan during work, meditation, stressful moments, or before sleep will lead to the most beneficial effects. These auspicious times can be denoted as the best duration for a certain activity; however, this concept is only embedded in a religion or beliefs. When something is being held within this range of time or day, it is believed that prosperity will continue after. Not only does Gyan mudra develop memory and reassurance, but it also cohesively combines all five elements equally to promote high intellect capabilities. By using the elements of space and air to balance the other elements, it creates a grounding momentum within one's connection of the physique and psyche.



GYAN MUDRA

Fig 6: Gyan Interpretation (*Gyan Mudra, Yoga Hand Gesture, Meditation Pose Stock Illustration, n.d.*)

Finally, the Ganesh Mudra is solely about trying to join the powers between the left side and the right side of the mind. In Hinduism, Ganesh is depicted as an obstacle remover to construct a clear guided path of life (Carver, 2020). To start this mudra after padmasana, both the left and right hand should be held in a namaste position. Rotate each hand 90 degrees in the opposite direction from each other and intertwine the fingers. As this is happening, slowly but calmly start to inhale and exhale to elevate the brain connectivity. This feeling should not only be felt within the hands but also across the upper levels of the body (Jain, 2024). Performing this mudra for ten minutes can start to provide an inner source of strength to overcome dilemmas. By relieving tension, a robust wave of self-esteem penetrates the mind and replenishes the body with internal and external stamina.



GANESHA MUDRA

Fig 7: Ganesha Diagram ("*Ganesha Mudra*", n.d.)

Minimizing Physical Complications with Mudras

Across the world, there are numerous mudras being performed by individuals to facilitate in generating a better version of themselves; many of these have mental and physical benefits. Throughout the pandemic, many people have taken in many vaccines, injections, and shots to improve their immune system. However, many researchers have found that the performance of mudras for half an hour with a combined exercise of breathing has resulted in high levels of immunity. It has been shown through studies from India that mudras have benefitted in health issues such as uneven breathing, high levels of blood pressure, and even inflammatory problems (Godbole, 2021). More importantly, people who may have health problems perform specific hand gestures to stop issues from intensifying. These include: Prana, Dhyana, Surya, Apana, Vayu, and Prithvi. It is vital to keep in mind that mudras have many perks, but it doesn't mean that it can be seen as a cure for different medical diagnoses.

Prana mudra assists in trying to connect the personal aura with all the forces revolving around it. As the tip of the pinky finger and ring finger connected with the thumb, the force of space and water indulge into creating an everlasting effect as one of the most prominent mudras (Carver,

2020). Prana is all about the force of life and is known to be one of the many sacred mudras. It enhances immunity, alleviates cramps, and refines blood flow. All of these aspects combined with consistent timed practice can even lead to advancing fundamental organs within the body such as the lung and heart, preventing possible medical issues from rising.



PRANA MUDRA

Fig 8: Prana Formation (*“Prana Mudra”*, n.d.)

Dhyana mudra is also commonly seen within the applications of Buddha representations (Carver, 2020). This special mudra contains the use of all five elements together as the right palm joins in with the left palm while sitting in the lotus pose. As the right hand is resting on the left hand while both are oriented upwards, the tips of the thumbs should gently touch. Holding this for approximately 30 minutes can contribute to creating an equal platform for the balancing of both left and right energies. Stabilizing a grounding sensation, Dhyana manages to produce abundant levels of inner peace. This creates a safe space for many individuals as the release of negativity leaves the body and recedes. Reducing high levels of depression, melancholy, and anxiety prevents possible cases of self-harm or even stress disorders (leading to possible health concerns). The importance of more focus and discipline aids to form a guarded atmosphere for the community.



Fig 9: Dhyana Assembly (Women and the Wilderness, 2020)

As many people try to better their health and digestion systems, Surya mudra handles the relieving process of sickness and rising temperatures within the body (Carver, 2020). Surya is widely known as the “curative mudra” due to the energies that connect with the body and the sunlight (Bisht 2024). This mudra combines the element of water and space as the thumb joins

and covers the ring finger. Either standing up or sitting down, place the thumb over the ring with slight pressure. The other fingers should be held in a vertical stance while this is occurring. Holding this within the recommended time range can result in amplifying the benefits. Surya can assist in trying to control the equivalent body temperatures in the right and left hemispheres, forming a better flow of the combination of energies within the body (Bisht, 2024). Not only does this benefit the homeostasis of body heat but also improves the function of the thyroid gland within the body; possibly reducing the risks of thyroid increasing.

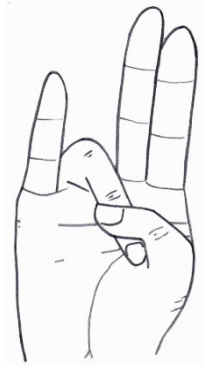


Fig 10: Surya Development (Sarvyoga, Yoga, 2020)

Waving off the evil and bringing in the good, the Apana mudra helps in the recession of negativity. Combining the elements of space, fire, and water releases the waste. Once seated in the lotus pose, bend the ring and middle finger down as the thumb crosses over it (Carver, 2020). Apply slight compression while performing ujjayi, finishing off the performance of the Apana mudra. Apana is well known as the purification mudra as it replenishes the energy needed to live life (Sankhe 23). Potentially maintaining the elevation of diabetes, consistent practice of Apana can lead to various systematic benefits. Without the escalation of diabetes, many cardiac diseases can be somewhat prevented from highly increasing. However, it is not a direct remedy to remove all diseases and medical issues (Sankhe 23).



Fig 11: Apana Mudra (Fitwithrt, 2023)

Vayu mudra is well known for its resolution of helping decrease body pains as well as diseases. The incorporation of the elements of air and space are combined as the thumb touches the knuckle of the index finger (Carver, 2020). Once this union takes place, the element of air comes into a state of balance which is crucial for the body to have. This can also decrease the

distress that is wedged into the joints of various body parts. Once this occurs, the high levels of swelling and inflammation will gradually alleviate. Strengthening muscles within the physique, individuals managed to gain external resilience. This mudra should be performed in the position of padmasana for roughly 15 minutes, three times in one day.



Vayu Mudra

Fig 12: Vayu Picture (*Vayu Mudra / Gesture of Air*, n.d.)

The Prithvi mudra manages to provide a grounding sensation as well as a relief in bone strengthening if performed between the range of a half hour to 45 minutes. The Prithvi mudra can only be performed in the famous position of pranayama (padmasana) with both right and left palms facing upwards as it is resting on each side-by-side knee (“Yoga Mudras: Here’s Why Health Is In Your Own Hands, Literally!”, 2021). Once this is done, the ring finger should be folded as it joins the fingertip of the thumb while the other fingers rest straight. Prithvi configures well with the element of earth, trying to keep a healthy balance between skin, bones, and tissues. Earth element is a prominent part of the body, more specifically the physical aspects. Prithvi is known to be one of many powerful mudras in possibly healing cases of fatigueness, uncommon sensations within the body, and bodily strength.



Fig 13: Prithvi Establishment (Chenreddy, 2022)

Conclusion

Mudras are not only a way of stretching hands and gestures but a way of connecting with the inner self and inner mentality. While performing each mudra, a specific amount of time and dedication should be provided until the entire process is fully completed. Each one of these mudras can benefit in providing a healthier mindset and a new movement of energy within the connection of the mind and body. Seemingly, the two most common ways of executing mudras is through the stances as well as breathing procedures. With the experience of practicing mudras and learning its impacts, awareness can be brought up about it to other people. Mudras



are like a clam, containing in all the positive energy while opening up and releasing the negativity. The sole hands of the body contain all the power and energy needed to find a new and better version of oneself mentally and physically. Yoga mudras end up creating a better version of one self through rejuvenation. Each mudra leaves a change within the movements of each breath inhaled.

References

Abarna, S. Rathikarani, V. Dhanalakshmi, P. (2022, October). Classification of Yoga Hand Mudras using SIFT and SURF Features. *International Research Journal of Engineering Science, Technology and Innovation*, 8(5), 1-6. <https://www.interestjournals.org/articles/classification-of-yoga-hand-mudras-using-sift-and-surf-features.pdf/>.

Azulfit. (2015, December 8). The Power of Hands and their meaning: Improving your yoga practice. <https://www.azulfit.com/hand-mudras-power-and-meaning/>.

Bedi, S. (2020, May 12). The Magical Benefits of Yoga Mudras. *Yoga Download*. <https://yogadownload.com/Blog/TabId/424/PostId/1756/yoga-mudras-101-the-benefits-science-and-how-to-do-them.aspx/>.

Bhoochari Mudra - Ayurwiki. (n.d.). https://ayurwiki.org/Ayurwiki/Bhoochari_Mudra

Bisht, H. (2024, May 6). Benefits of Surya Mudra and How to Do it. *PharmEasy*. <https://pharmeasy.in/blog/health-fitness-benefits-of-surya-mudra-and-how-to-do-it/>.

Carver, L. (2020, October 26). 10 Powerful Meditation Mudras and How to Use Them. *Chopra*. <https://chopra.com/blogs/yoga/10-powerful-meditation-mudras-and-how-to-use-them/>.

Chenreddy, A. (2022, December 15). Prithvi Mudra - Anusha Chenreddy - Medium. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@anusha.chenreddy/prithvi-mudra-de79e6be2f3e>

Chowdhury, R. (2024). Yoga 101: Mudras for Beginners. *The Art of Living Retreat Center*. <https://artoflivingretreatcenter.org/blog/yoga-101-mudras-for-beginners/>.

Corepower Yoga. (2019, October 1). Mudras Explained. <https://www.corepoweryoga.com/blog/mindfulness/mudras-explained/>.

Diamond. (n.d.). *Lotus pose (Padmasana)*. <http://diamondkey.blogspot.com/2008/10/lotus-pose-padmasana.html/>.

Fitwithrt. (2023, July 1). Apana mudra: harmonize your digestion and relieve gastric discomfort. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/@fitwithrt/apana-mudra-harmonize-your-digestion-and-relieve-gastric-discomfort-1644605eb728>

“Ganesha Mudra” Images – Browse 4 stock photos, vectors, and video. (n.d.). Adobe Stock. <https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=%22ganesha+mudra%22/>.

Godbole, N. (2021, June 27). Mudras for Sleep: Can This Ancient Yoga Practice Help You Sleep More Soundly. *Healthline*. <https://www.healthline.com/health/mind-body/mudra-for-sleep/>.

Gyan Mudra, yoga hand gesture, meditation pose Stock Illustration. (n.d.). Adobe Stock. <https://stock.adobe.com/images/gyan-mudra-yoga-hand-gesture-meditation-pose/365897704/>.

Hakini Images. (n.d.). Adobe Stock. https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=hakini&asset_id=365897709/.

Jain, P. (2024, May 12). Yoga Mudras and Their Effect on Memory - Different Yoga Mudras for Memory. *iCliniq*. <https://www.icliniq.com/articles/healthy-living-wellness-and-prevention/yoga-mudras-and-their-effect-on-memory/>.

Jain, R. (2023, October 8). Complete Guide To Mudras: Benefits and Use in Yoga, Meditation, & Chakra Balancing. *Arhanta Yoga*. <https://www.arhantayoga.org/blog/complete-guide-to-mudras-and-benefits/>. Kumar, S.N. Venu, A. Jaya, H.M. (2022, June 24). Effect of yoga mudras in improving the health of users: A precautionary measure practice in daily life for resisting the deadly COVID-19 disease. *National Library of Medicine*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9347266/>.

Jeffries, T.Y. (2022, November 28). Have You Been Doing Mudras All Wrong?. *Yoga Journal*. <https://www.yogajournal.com/yoga-101/hand-yoga/>.

Limited, A. (n.d.). *Rudra Mudra / Gesture of Solar Plexus. Vector*. Alamy Images. <https://www.alamy.com/rudra-mudra-gesture-of-solar-plexus-vector-image364211370.html/>.

Netmeds. (2021, September 8). Yoga Mudras: Here’s Why Health Is In Your Own Hands, Literally!. <https://www.netmeds.com/health-library/post/yoga-mudras-heres-why-health-is-in-your-own-hands-literally/>.

“Prana Mudra” Images – Browse 11 stock photos, vectors, and video. (n.d.). Adobe Stock. <https://stock.adobe.com/search?k=%22prana+mudra%22/>.

Redazione. (2019, June 28). Uttarabodhi mudra. *EdizioniilPuntoDincontro.it*. <https://www.edizioniilpuntodincontro.it/articoli/benessere/uttarabodhi-mudra.html/>.

Reis, J. (2024). Inner Strength Mudra: Prithivi, Dhyana, & Uttarabodhi. *Jennifer Reis Yoga*. <https://jenniferreisyoga.com/blogs/inner-strength-mudra-flow/>.

Sankhe, A. (2023, Nov 7). Benefits of Apana Mudra and How to Do it. *PharmEasy*.
<https://pharmeasy.in/blog/health-fitness-benefits-of-apanamudra-and-how-to-do-it/>.

Sankhe, A. (2024, January 17). Benefits of Yoni Mudra and How to Do it. *PharmEasy*.
<https://pharmeasy.in/blog/health-fitness-benefits-of-yoni-mudra-and-how-to-do-it/>.

Sarvyoga, Yoga. (2020, May 23). *Yoga Mudras| Miracle of fingers gesture*.
<https://sarvyoga.com/yoga-mudras-miracle-of-fingers-gesture/>

Times of India. (2024, January 12). 5 powerful mudras and how they can impact your life. *Entertainment Times*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/soul-search/5-powerful-mudras-and-how-they-can-impact-your-life/photostory/106676333.cms/>.

Tumme (Yoga Sequence Builder). (2021). Vayu Mudra. <https://www.tumme.com/yoga-poses/vayu-mudra/>.

Vayu Mudra / Gesture of Air. Vector. Stock vector. (n.d.). Adobe Stock.
<https://stock.adobe.com/images/vayu-mudra-gesture-of-air-vector/213763394>

Women and the Wilderness. (2020, July 2). *What the Hell are Mudras and What Do They Mean*. <https://womenandthewilderness.com/blog/common-yoga-mudras/>.

Yogapedia. (2023, December 21). Prithvi mudra. <https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/6853/prithvi-mudra/>.

Yoga U (Online Yoga Education For Every Body). (2017, December 1). Building Presence in Your Practice: The Power of Mudras. <https://yogauonline.com/yoga-practice-teaching-tips/yoga-practice-tips/building-presence-in-your-practice-the-power-of-mudras/>.