

Bandhas: Energy Gates for your Practice



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Bandha (literally, “binding”) is a word which, in the context of [yoga](#), describes one of several energy gates in the subtle body, activated by both willful concentration and specific muscular control.

name	meaning	how to
Mulabandha	the root lock	contract the muscular body from the anus to the navel so that it lifts up and towards the spine. The specific muscle is the perineum, which lies between the anus and the genitalia. This activates the <i>prana</i> energy and helps it on its upward journey.
Uddiyana Bandha	the flying upward	Exhale completely. hold your breath. now pull the abdomen in and up under the rib cage by means of taking a false inhale (performing the same action of an inhale without actually pulling any air into the body). Pause. Release the abdomen but do not inhale. Repeat. After several cycles, inhale deeply and resume normal breath.
Jalandhara Bandha	the chin lock	Drop the head slightly so that the chin is tucked close to the chest and so that the tongue pushes up against the palate in the mouth
Mahabandha	the great lock	Simultaneously engage all three locks above

adapted from “Ashtanga Yoga: The Basics”, by David Swenson
For a comprehensive reference listing more than 100 asanas, visit [WikiPedia](#).