

MUDRA THERAPY FOR CHAKRAS



A simple practical guide



What are Mudras?

A Mudra is the Sanskrit word that can be translated as stamp, seal, to impress, attitude, gesture or lock. A Mudra is a body position held that can affect the flow of energy also known as chi or prana within the body. Mudras usually focus on a specific way the hands are held and are used in conjunction with meditation. Mudras were initially used as a part of Hindu or Buddhist practice to enhance awareness and can be found in various religions including Christianity throughout history.

Indian sages also known as Rishis have dedicated themselves to connecting with source energy and Mudras were one of the tools that arose from that enlightened state. Mudras were then used as a way for initiates to more easily access that heightened awareness. Indigenous shamanic practices also included the use of movement and hand gestures as a way of connecting with universal energies.

Today Mudras are used as a part of yoga and meditation to help channel energy with the goals of positively shaping physical emotional and energetic health.

Mudras are thought of as ways to access specific motions with “MUD” being associated with pleasure and “DRU” or “DRATI” meaning drawing forth or to produce.

The goal of performing a Mudra is to access a specific level of awareness which can in turn impact your body mind on all levels. Each area of the hand corresponds with an area in the brain and body and by changing the position of our hands during meditation, we are adjusting the energy flow within our body mind. The most common form of Mudras focuses on the positioning of the hands.



Background and History of the Mudras

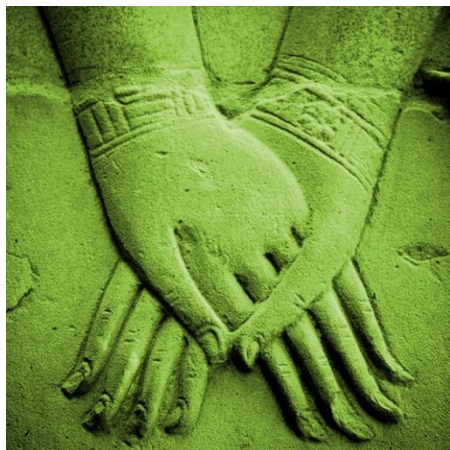
While all the ancient civilizations have seen the birth of an innate gestural language of which certain gestures are universal (to show one's hand to say stop, to point the finger to reprimand ...), certain gestures have always had a much more spiritual and sacred purpose. These gestures were used during rituals, ceremonies and healing ...

In ancient Egypt, certain particular gestures appeared, stemming from a secret knowledge notably taught in the School of Mysteries. They served to connect man to the Cosmos and help him take care of his health by connecting to the prana or chi (energy) that surrounds us. They were practiced especially by priests. Many bas-reliefs represent them.

From Egypt, they then traveled with the expansion of trade and exploration, to Greece and Asia, where they were incorporated into Buddhism and Hinduism. India then gave them the name of Mudras and included them in yoga practice.

There are still some Mudras in many representations of saints and gods from all over the world, in all cultures. But while their meaning was lost in the West to become primarily an iconographic style, Asia has retained their ancestral use. They then crossed the centuries by being transmitted from generation to generation, to initiates.

Mudras are still used mainly in rituals among Tibetans and Buddhists, who kept them secret and would have remained so if a wise man had not decided otherwise. In the 1960s, Yogi Bhajan, living master of Kundalini yoga and white tantric yoga, chose to reveal to the Western world his knowledge kept secret in the Sikh tradition (provoking the wrath of his colleagues) because he felt it was time that the world reappropriates this knowledge coming from the mists of time to face the difficult times ahead.





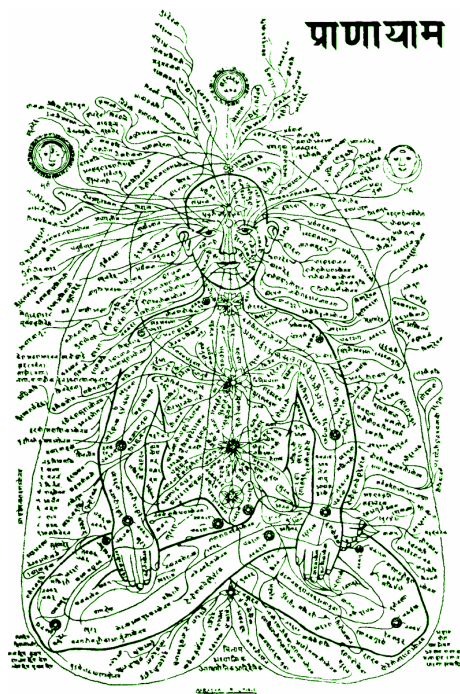
How do Mudras work?

Your body is a conduit for energy. Like an antenna it can pick up and transmit frequencies around it. And like a battery that energy can be stored. Mudras act like a switch that can turn the reception on and off as well as what frequencies you're tuning into. Although it infuses every cell in our body, energy is also thought to travel along pathways in the body known as Nadis. Similar to the Meridien system in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Mudras can be an effective form of self-acupressure.

In Ayurveda, energy known as prana is thought to run through the channels called Nadis. There are thought to be approximately 72000 Nadis that run through the body within the three main channels being: Ida, Pingala and Sushumna.

Those three main channels begin at the base of the spine. The Ida channel runs along the left side, the Pingala along the right with them interconnecting and ending at the sixth Chakra. When the Ida/Pingala channels are balanced, energy can move freely along the Sushumna in the center of the spine. It's thought that spiritual awakening relates to a healthy Sushumna. The joining of hands in various Mudras is the joining of the Ida and Pingala channels which assists in directing the energy to the Sushumna.

In Mudra practice, the body communicates with the mind; because mind and body are interconnected in a vital unity. It is estimated that around 399 different Mudras are accessible, 36 being the most practiced ones. We use these gestures mostly in meditation or in pranayama practice to direct the flow of energy within the body by using the hands.





The Benefits of Mudra Therapy

Mudras are credited for therapeutic or curative powers of the mind and body. They help to link the brain to the body, soothe pain, stimulating the endorphin system, change the mood and increase our vitality. However, their degree of effectiveness depends not only on the frequency or regularity of practice, but also, among other factors, the quality of the diet, eating habits and life in general. A daily practice of Mudras contributes to improving and strengthening of our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual achievement.

Mudras help us to:

- *Take care of our health
- *Become aware of our breathing and work with it
- *Enjoy a moment of peace and intense well-being
- *Learn to rebalance emotionally in everyday life for more autonomy and well-being,
- *To clean ourselves energetically in depth, in a targeted way and to activate our energy at will
- *Connect to the energy around us to recharge and live in the present moment
- *To liberate ourselves, to develop and to rise spiritually,

Mudras help us with:

- *Deep relief, both physical and mental
- *Regulation of emotions and better emotional stability in everyday life
- *Vital energy is energized (stimulated energy flow and oxygenation)
- *Better resistance to stress and distancing from difficult events
- *Increased self-presence and connection to the world
- *Well-being, relaxation





Mudras and Meditation

“Mudras draw your mindfulness inward and reconnect you with your heart’s language of compassion, kindness, goodness, creativity, and joy.”
—meditation teacher Sah D’Simone

Developing Awareness:

Begin by simply becoming aware of your breathing and of your heartbeat. Focusing on something this simple helps to calm your mind and allows you to take in your immediate surroundings without the mind becoming overly crowded or chaotic. Then move your mind outwards to your immediate surroundings: find and name one thing you can touch, one you can smell and one you can see. Just by naming these three things you have already become more aware of your surroundings and the here and now. By regarding your senses in this way, you are laying the foundations for what it means to be living in the present.

Breathing:

Breathing is at the heart of both mindfulness and meditation techniques. Learning to control your breathing will develop your sense of awareness and help to take your way to another plane of consciousness. Note the sensations of your body as your chest rises and falls with each breath. If something external or your own thoughts start to distract you, simply accept and recognize the distraction for what it is and then return your focus to your breathing. Start by taking in small amounts of information such as noises smells all sensations, giving yourself time to process them. Then when you're ready gently bring yourself fully back to the world around you, quietly and peacefully.

Creating Your Space:

Here are my suggestions for a simple and supportive meditation space:

- * *A regular place:* Sit in the same space each day, if you can. The familiarity will help you build and stabilize your practice. After a while, many people find their mind begins to relax as soon as they enter their meditation space.
- * *Relative quiet:* As a beginner, it helps to have a relatively quiet space for meditation. In the beginning sounds may distract you, so opt for a relatively quiet place. Later on, once you’ve gained some stability in meditation, you can

learn to use sound (whatever sounds arise in the environment rather produced sounds like singing bowls or music) as a support for mindfulness.

* *Well ventilated / well heated:* The two main obstacles in mindfulness meditation are restlessness (also called agitation) and dullness (includes sleepiness). If your meditation space is too cold, you will feel restless and agitated. If your meditation space is too warm, you're more likely to feel sleepy and lose your mindfulness. Adjust the temperature in your meditation space according to the weather and your particular body thermostat. This will help you stay clear, fresh, and awake during meditation.

* *Relatively uncluttered and clean:* Clutter can be highly distracting. The opposite of mindfulness is distraction. So, keep your meditation space as free from clutter as possible. The same applies to cleanliness. For most of us, a clean environment raises our energy while a dirty one brings us down.

* *A comfortable seat:* The mind and body are intimately interconnected. A feeling of relaxation in your body usually enhances relaxation in your mind. So, a comfortable seat can support the quality of your overall meditation experience. In sitting meditation, your back should be straight, but not tense, allowing for the natural curve of your spine. This allows the energy to flow more freely through your subtle energy channels and helps to reduce mind chatter.

* *Clear boundaries:* Your space may have built in boundaries, like a door, that protect you from interruption. If your space doesn't have physical boundaries, you'll need to create verbal boundaries.

* *Optional: A Journal:* If you'd like to make a few notes about your practice or record insights that arose during your meditation keep a journal nearby. Always makes notes at the end of a session, not during your practice.

Visualization:

Visualization in meditation has numerous purposes from aiding your concentration and focus to helping you attain specific goals. Skilled practitioners of meditation can even use visualization to aid recovery from illness and injury. If you understand the world and everything in it as energy, then change can be affected simply by redirecting that energy. Visualization enables you to focus that energy to where it is needed. Visualization can be used to change the direction of your future as well as improve your present. Visualizing yourself attaining your goals takes greater focus. And this is partly due to the fact that not only do you need to visualize where you want to be but also the route you need to take to get there. For visualization to be effective, your intention needs to be clear as does your belief that you can affect change.

Visualization isn't a magic trick. You can't visualize the end goal and then simply expect it to happen without any effort on your part.

Intention:

Energy surrounds us in many different forms from the obvious physical energy we gain from food and rest to the more ether real energy that we tap into the healing. Energy in itself is benign. It is not a good or evil, dark or light. It is our intent that changes the form of the energy. We will all have walked a negative path at some time in our life. We have two options. We can let our mood take over and color the rest of our day, or we can choose to find some positives to focus on. Negative thoughts encourage negative energy and similarly, positive thoughts breed more positivity. Life isn't that simple and just setting your intention to be positive isn't going to solve every problem every time. But it does help. When it comes to meditation where the problems of the world are left behind, that intent and its power is even stronger and therefore more important. Be clear in your intent when you meditate. If you can do this effectively in your meditation you will be able to take it out into your everyday life as well.





Mudras and the Elements

According to Ayurveda and yogic philosophy, everything is made up of 5 elements: Fire, Air, Space (Ether), Earth and Water. All things contain these 5 elements and there is profound connection between these elements and the human hand. Vedic wisdom describes the relationship between the 5 fingers and the 5 elements as follows:

THUMB=FIRE, INDEX=AIR, MIDDLE=SPACE,
RING=EARTH, PINKY=WATER.

When speaking about the 5 elements, we associate particular qualities with each. The elements and their corresponding qualities are vital to our sense of balanced energy.



Fire (Tejas): The qualities of heat, transformation, light and energy. The element of Fire is related to the sense of sight, the digestive system and the feeling of courage and confidence.

Air (Vayu): The qualities of lightness, movement, sensitivity and openness. The element of Air is related to the sense of touch, the cardiovascular and immune systems, and the feeling of love and compassion.

Space (Akasha): The qualities of expansion, freedom, communication and subtleness. The Space element is related to the sense of hearing, the endocrine and nervous systems, and the feeling of unity and spaciousness.

Earth (Prithivi): The qualities of stability, grounding, stability and sustenance. The element of Earth is related to the sense of smell, the structure of the physical body and the feeling of connection and safety.

Water (Jala): The qualities of flexibility, fluidity, flow and adaptability. The element of Water is related to the sense of taste, the reproductive, urinary and lymphatic systems, and the feeling of pleasure and self-nourishment.

By adjusting the positions of our fingers, we can influence these elements. Like electrical circuits, touching specific fingers will close or open different energy pathways. The left hand is associated with feminine energy, the moon and receiving. The right hand is associated with masculine energy, the sun and giving.

Touching the tips of the fingers encourage a balancing of the elements. Touching the base or origin of those fingers is thought to stimulate the elements.

Touching the back or nail of the finger can reduce the dominance of that element.

A Mudra with palms upward can draw in energy.

A Mudra with palms facing downward grounds the energy.



Mudras and Chakras

There are seven main areas in the body where Nadis (channels or pathways) intersect. These energy centers are known as Chakras. Chakra is a Sanskrit word and can be translated into wheel or disk. This system was developed in India over 4000 years ago. Like a traffic circle that processes traffic from multiple directions, the shoppers process energy from many Nadis. When these centers become congested all aspects of the body mind are impacted. Chakras can impact the functioning of our organs, endocrine glands, body shape, chronic conditions, beliefs and even the way we act. Chakras could also be seen as software programs that were given and then update as we are conditioned by our environment. Some of our software is corrupt and healing occurs when we defragment these damaged files, reconciles them and then delete them to be replaced with updated optimized programs that help us to live out our full potential. Each Chakra has an incoming and outgoing flow of energy connected with the resonance it holds.

The lower three Chakras are thought to focus on the material plane and practical aspects of living such a survival creation and personal power.

The upper three Chakras are connected with our Higher Self in consciousness with a focus on expressing

truth. Listening to our inner voice and connecting with source the heart Chakra which lies in the middle balances the other Chakras with a focus on love.

Imbalance in the Chakras can occur as a result of trauma, conditioning, destructive habits and limiting beliefs... When our thinking and feeling is

restricted, our body can reflect that by creating tension on a physical level. We can use Mudras to help increase the flow of energy so the body can release those tension patterns and the beliefs that are linked to them. Each finger is associated with a Chakra and working with that finger through Mudras can help to balance that Chakra's energy.





Practicing Mudras

Mudras can be practiced seated, standing, walking or lying down. Many of the Mudras, especially those that awaken the upper energy centers, are done in a traditional *Sukhasana*, or easy cross-legged seated position. In any position, it is important that the spine is long and naturally aligned. The shoulders should be relaxed and the chest soft to allow the diaphragm and rib cage to move freely as you breathe. Smooth and deep breaths further enable the flow of prana, or energy. Mudras can be held anywhere from five breaths to a few minutes. The effects of the Mudra may not appear immediately. Allow your awareness to deepen, noticing the physical body sensations, energetic sensations, the quality of the thoughts and emotions and spiritual connections.



Preparing to Perform Mudras

As you begin working with Mudras you will find the dexterity and flexibility in your fingers, hands and arms increases. Because we use our hands for so many things each day, having them in optimal condition will make performing everyday activities easier, as well as helping prana flow through.

We will explore some ways you can warm up and stretch your fingers, hands and arms in preparation for performing Mudras.

Some practitioners like to clap as a way of warming up their hands or opening and closing their fists.

You may find spreading your fingers on each hand as a warmup is a way to encourage the expansion of your lungs and some deep breathing.

You can also massage your hands whenever you feel called to or in preparation of performing Mudras.

You may find gentle rotating and bending of your wrist to be soothing.

You may also find stretching your arms and shoulders to be helpful.

Although it is common to see Mudras being performed in the traditional seated meditation pose, you may find lying down with your back supported to be the ideal position when working with Mudras focused on healing.

Breathwork known as pranayama can be practiced in conjunction with Mudras. Each finger is also associated with an area of the respiratory system.

The thumb and index finger are associated with the upper lungs, the middle finger relates to medial aspects, and the ring and pinky fingers relate to the lower levels.

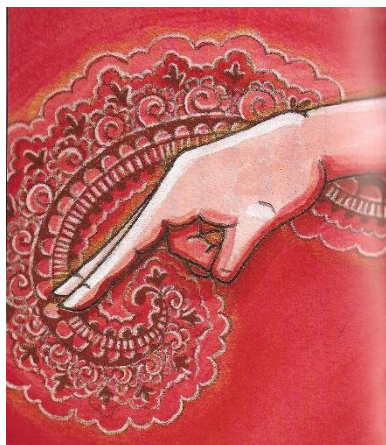
You can also perform the following basic stretches before your practice:





Mudras for Chakras

Root Chakra: Muladhara

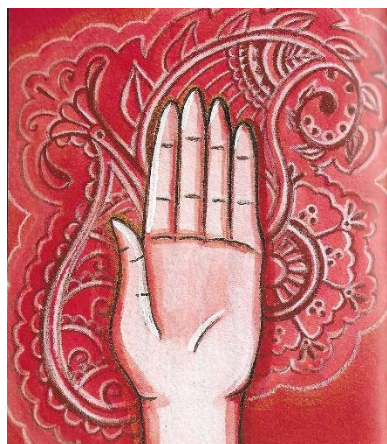


BHU MUDRA

Goal: GROUNDING

Benefits: Reduces stress and blood pressure. Activates Root Chakra. Helps to ground energy and connect to the Earth element.

Focus: Grounded to the Earth, I receive support and abundance.

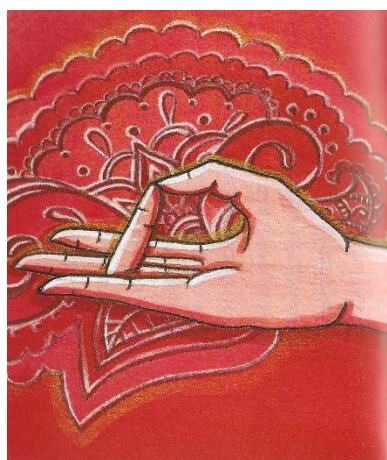


ABHAYA MUDRA

Goal: FEARLESSNESS

Benefits: Reduces anxiety. Supports elimination. Cultivates a sense of fearlessness and grounding.

Focus: My courage and self-assurance are unwavering.



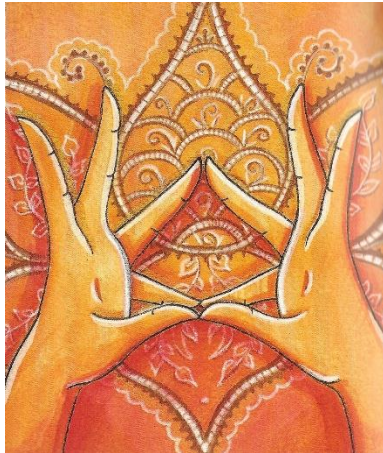
PRITHIVI MUDRA

Goal: CENTERING

Benefits: Reduces stress and blood pressure. Strengthens digestion and assimilation. Supports posture and skeletal system.

Focus: Present to my body, I am perfectly centered.

Sacral Chakra: Svadhisthana

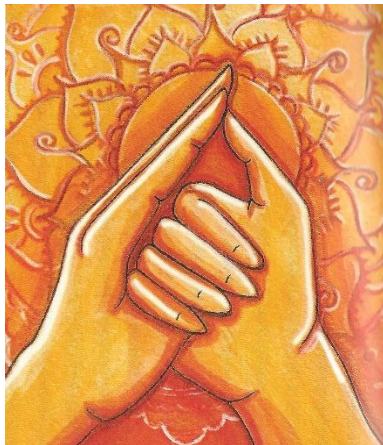


MIRA MUDRA

Goal: NOURISHMENT

Benefits: Promotes abdominal breathing. Provides relief for asthma. Supports reproductive, eliminatory and urinary systems. Directs breath to sacrum, lower back and pelvis.

Focus: My natural breath flows in calm nourishing waves.

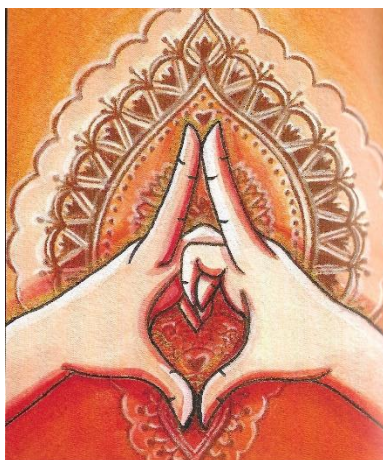


SHANKA MUDRA

Goal: REASSURANCE

Benefits: Relieves tension and assists pelvic and prostate issues. Enhances circulation in reproductive and urinary systems. Calming and stabilizing.

Focus: Self-reassurance guides me to perfect well-being.



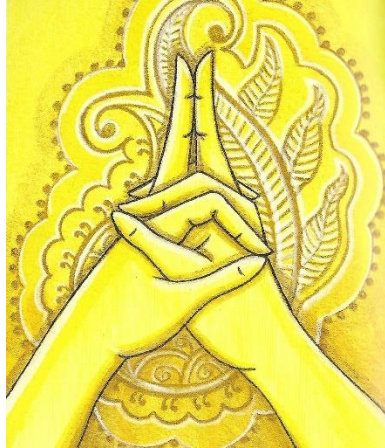
YONI MUDRA

Goal: OPENING

Benefits: Supports reproductive and urinary health. Eases menstrual, PMS and menopausal symptoms. Directs breath to sacrum, lower back and pelvis.

Focus: I open to the divine feminine within me.

Solar Plexus Chakra: Manipura

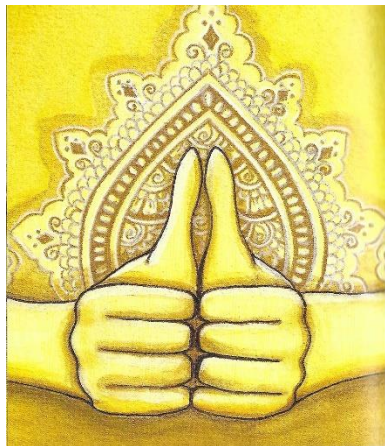


MATANGI MUDRA

Goal: TRANSFORMATION

Benefits: Enhances digestion and assimilation of life experiences. Supports circulation and lymphatic systems. Cultivates energy, passion and will.

Focus: Inner light illuminates and guides me on my path.

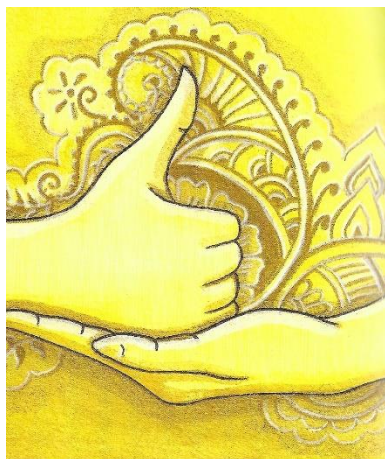


MUSHTIKA MUDRA

Goal: DETERMINATION

Benefits: Optimized digestion and assimilation of nutrients. Supports the kidneys and adrenal glands. Cultivates determination to releasing self-limiting beliefs.

Focus: My sense of positive determination arises from within.



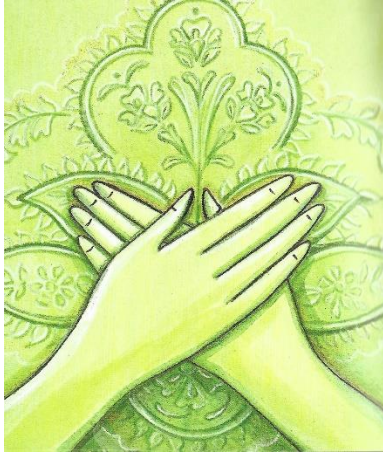
SHIVA LINGA MUDRA

Goal: COMMITMENT

Benefits: Enhances digestion and support spinal alignment. Cultivates concentration and spiritual commitment.

Focus: I align awareness, focus and commitment.

Heart Chakra: Anahata

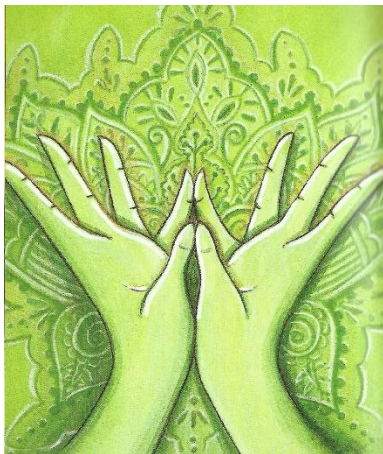


HRIDAYA MUDRA

Goal: INNER GUIDANCE

Benefits: Supports heart and respiratory systems. Releases tension in the chest and ribs. Assists the immune system. Cultivate trust in inner knowledge.

Focus: I listen openly and honor the voice of my heart.

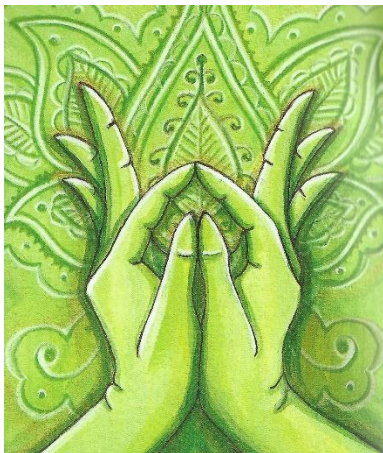


PADMA MUDRA

Goal: UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Benefits: Supports the cardio-respiratory and immune systems. Increases circulation in the chest, heart and lungs.

Focus: My heart blossoms open with unconditional love.



TEJAS MUDRA

Goal: BRILLIANCE

Benefits: Directs breath to heart, chest and ribs. Assists the immune system. Awakens and uplifts energy.

Focus: I embrace the radiant brilliance of my loving heart.

Throat Chakra: Vishuddha



GARUDA MUDRA

Goal: FREEDOM

Benefits: Directs breath and awareness to neck and throat area. Aligns cervical spine. Releases tension from neck and jaw. Helps to balance energy and metabolism.

Focus: I embrace the freedom of pure expression.



SAMPUTA MUDRA

Goal: INNER TRUTH

Benefits: Brings balance to the throat and vocal cords. Assists immune system. Opens clear communication. Supports balanced metabolism.

Focus: I speak my truth clearly with integrity and compassion.



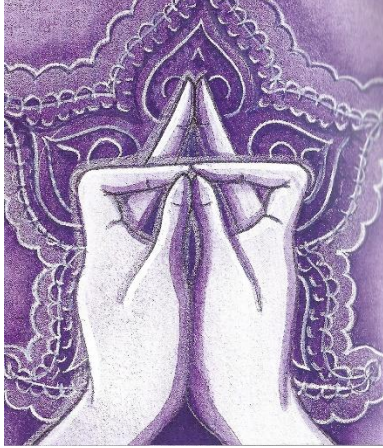
GRANTHITA MUDRA

Goal: FLOWING SPEECH

Benefits: Opens the knot in the throat center. Activates the throat chakra. Opens the vocal cord passage. Balances the thyroid gland. Induces self-healing.

Focus: I am able to express myself and receive communication with consciousness and coherence.

3rd Eye Chakra: Ajna

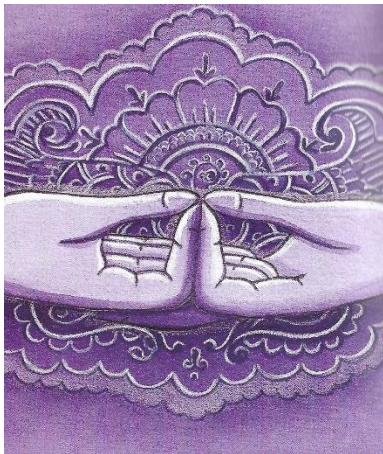


CITTA MUDRA

Goal: CONSCIOUSNESS

Benefits: Releases tension in the face, throat and shoulders. Brings breath and awareness to the 3rd eye chakra. Improves mental clarity.

Focus: Consciousness guides me to true clarity and freedom.

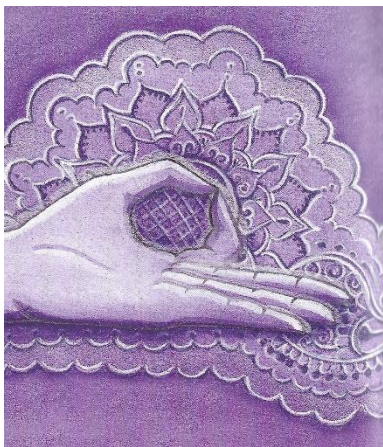


DYANA MUDRA

Goal: CONTEMPLATION

Benefits: Enhances full body balance and health. Supports full yogic breath. Allows for effortless meditation.

Focus: My mind and body rest in effortless contemplation.



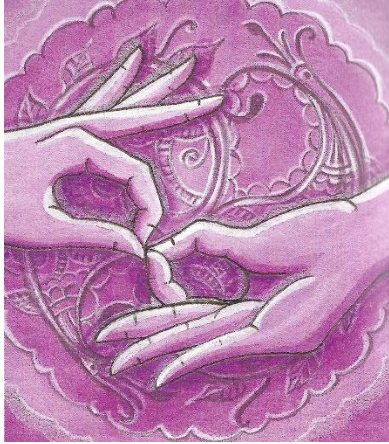
JNANA MUDRA

Goal: HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

Benefits: Balances right and left sides of the brain. Improves concentration. Opens and balances the 3rd eye chakra. Assists meditation.

Focus: I awaken to the divine wisdom of the Universe.

Crown Chakra: Sahasrara

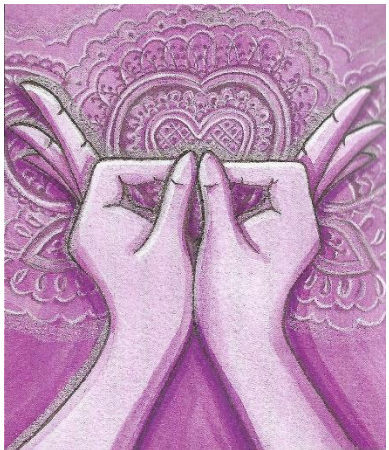


DHARMA CHAKRA MUDRA

Goal: SPIRITUAL TRUTH

Benefits: Balances all systems and energy centers of the body. Supports full yogic breath. Enhances sense of well-being.

Focus: I awaken the vision of my highest spiritual truth.

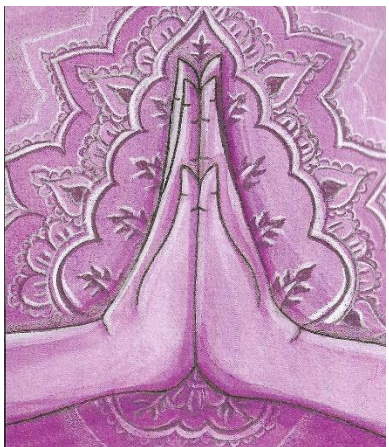


MANI RATNA MUDRA

Goal: ONENESS

Benefits: Supports and balances all body systems. Directs breath and awareness throughout the body. Opens crown chakra.

Focus: I experience the oneness of everything.



ANJALI MUDRA

Goal: REVERENCE

Benefits: Cultivates inner awareness. Reduces stress and blood pressure. Assists prayer and devotion.

Focus: I bow with reverence to the divine heart within.

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Edited from information found in:

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