



# *Mudra and the Emotions*

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Lecture

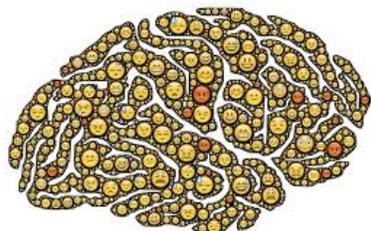
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## The Five Koshas

|   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
|  |  |  |     |       |
| <b>Anamaya Kosha</b><br>The physical body (bones, muscles, organs)                  | <b>Pranamaya Kosha</b><br>The energetic body (nervous system, prana, nadis)         | <b>Manomaya Kosha</b><br>The everyday uncontrolled mind and emotions                | <b>Vijnanamaya Kosha</b><br>The witness conscious, awareness of the self & other koshas | <b>Anandamaya Kosha</b><br>The bliss inherent in ourselves, our connection with the divine |

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## Manomaya Kosha: Mental/Emotional Body



- The next innermost sheath is the mental/emotional body
- Encompasses all of our thoughts and feelings, opinions, judgments, memories and reactions.
- We spend much of our time tied up in the whirlwind of our minds and emotional reactions and all psychological disorders directly affect this kosha.

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## What are Mudrās?

- Mudrā comes from “mud” or happiness, bliss and “dhra” to draw forth or dissolve
  - Gestures that are used to dissolve duality so the bliss that is our true nature to be recognized.
  - Mudrā is also commonly translated to mean seal, lock or gesture
- Mudrās form a bridge between the physical body and the subtle energies
- They stimulate the nerve endings, nadis, and chakras in the hands that correlate to different brain areas and body systems
- They affect the five elements that make up our bodies, emotions, breath, mind, and spirit
- They redirect prana back into the body in specific patterns to illicit a specific response

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## Think of Mudrās Like...



An antennae that is picking up a subtle signal and amplifying it to create change.

A remote control that is maintaining balance between the physical and energetic bodies.



Or a radio that is tuned to a specific frequency to elicit a response in the body, mind or emotions.

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## Hand Prana Exercise

- Gently but swiftly rub your palms together, stimulating the nerve endings, chakra points, and nadis in the hands
- Once the hands begin to feel warm, slowly separate hands a few inches from each other and imaging a glowing sphere of energy forming between the palms
  - Separate hands to find the point where you lose the energetic connection
  - Bring hands closer together and feel the energy become denser
- Finally bring palms together and imagine that the prana flows back up the arms and into your heart
- Then place hands on any area of your body that needs healing



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## History of Mudrā

- Mudrās appear in many different world traditions including Egyptian hieroglyphics, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Babylon, Roman art, Asian martial arts and Indian classical dance.
  - Some say that ancient Rishis spontaneously practiced mudrā in deep states of meditation.
- The purpose of mudrās varies and can include the focus of subtle energies, as a healing tool, as a metaphysical language and transmission of story through body language.



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## Mudrā as a Tool for Self-Realization

- The first mention of mudrā as a tool for self-realization was in the Yoga Vasistha (600-800 CE). They are also mentioned in:
  - Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (500 BCE-400 CE)
    - Scholars argue about when this work was compiled hence the wide date range
  - Kularnava Tantra (1000-1400 CE)
  - Siva Samhita (1300-1500 CE)
  - Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Nath Yogi Swatmarama (1350 CE)
  - Gheranda Samhita (1700 CE)

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## How to Hold Your Hands (Women & Men)

- **WOMEN:** Practice mudrās with the LEFT hand on top or closest to the heart
- **MEN:** Practice mudrās with the RIGHT hand on top, or closest to heart
- Notice how you habitually clasp your hands together, try the mudrās both ways and see which way creates the strongest energetic effect.



Matsya Mudrā for Women (left over right)

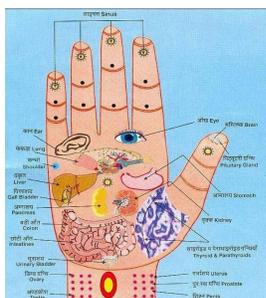


Matsya Mudrā for Men (right over left)

*The Healing Power of Mudrā, Rajendar Menen*

## Palmistry, Acupressure & Reflexology

- Palmistry (chiromancy) originated by Hindu Brahmins and astrologers, Book of Job
- Links hand structures to personality traits
  - Dominant hand represents the conscious mind
  - Non-dominant hand is the subconscious, family traits, and karmic conditions



- Acupressure (6000 BC in China)
  - Points on hands and body stimulate Qi to promote healing
- Reflexology (2330 BC in Egypt)
  - Points on hands (and feet and body) are homunculi or mirrors to body systems and internal organs Treat illness and pain by stimulating these points

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## Functional Brain Areas & Hands

Functional Areas of the Brain

- The RIGHT hand corresponds to the LEFT hemisphere of the brain which controls analysis
- The LEFT hand corresponds to the RIGHT hemisphere which controls intuition

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## Nadis & Minor Chakras in Hands

- There are also both nadis and chakra points in the hands
  - Nadis run from the palm down each fingertip
  - Chakra points are in the center of the wrists and palms, in each joint of the fingers, and in the tips of the fingers
  - Different sources claim these points correlate to chakras and other systems of the body

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## Tips for Mudrā Practice

- Some mudrās are helpful for chronic conditions and others can be helpful for emergencies
- What actions, thoughts or words contribute to your present state of un-wellness?
- Be patient with your progress, look for subtle positive changes
- When working with chronic conditions, mudrās may need to be practiced regularly for several weeks before benefit is observed
  - With consistent practice, the effect of the mudrā occurs more quickly
  - Even if you don't feel any effect, TRUST that it is still working
- If you experience nausea, sweating, dizziness, chills or other disturbance, discontinue the practice of that mudrā

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## Mudrā Practice Techniques

- Before you practice mudrās, warm up your hands:
  - Clap the hands three times to awaken the blood flow
  - Energetically "wash" your hands by rubbing the palms all over the inside and outside of the hands for up to one minute to activate the flow of prana to the hands
- Be gentle with your hands if performing a mudrā is difficult.
- Try one mudrā for a few minutes so that you can feel its effects fully, sometimes you will feel a stronger energy change when you release a mudrā that has been held for a few minutes.
  - Be careful to not do too many mudrās in one session, select one or two with similar effects
- Develop a regular mudrā practice by meditating on the same mudrā daily to build the cumulative effect of the practice.

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## How Long Should You Practice Mudrā?

- Practice each mudrā for a **minimum of 2 minutes**
  - It takes 30 seconds to ignite the energies in the circuit
  - Ideally practice during transitional times (morning, afternoon, evening)
  - Ideally practice **15 minutes, 3 times a day** (45 min total)
  - Effect of mudrā can stay in body 6-8 hours
- Try meditating with the same mudrā every day for a week to feel its cumulative effects.
  - Use during meditation, asana practice, pranayama practice, in restorative poses.
  - Or while on the phone, on the bus, while walking, with your hands in your pockets, during a stressful conversation or while falling asleep.

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## Mudrā Research

- 2018 Research into electro photonic imaging with mudrās found that the impact is cumulative when held longer than 20 minutes (used Prana Mudrā)



Prana Mudrā



Kumar 2018, *Classification of Electrophotonic Images of Yogic Practice of Mudrā through Neural Networks* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5934951/>

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*Mudra*

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Practice

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## Kanishtha Mudrā



**Little Finger Seal**  
*Hold hands open with palms facing center. Touch tips of pinkie fingers together.*

*"Red earth grounds me"*

- Physical Benefits: Promotes relaxation
- Prana & Vayus: Activates Apana vayu, brings breath awareness to pelvis, lengthens exhalation, and pause after exhalation
- Emotional: Promotes stability and grounding, cultivates relaxation and calm
- Elements: Activates earth
- Chakras: Activates Muladhara chakra
- Practice Tips: Hold 5-45 minutes

*Imagine red earth energy moving from your pelvic floor downward toward the center of the earth.*

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## Anamika Mudrā



### Ring Finger Seal

Hold hands loosely with palms facing body. Touch tips of ring fingers together.

*"Orange water nourishes me"*

- Body Systems: Reproductive and urinary
- Physical Benefits: Eases joint stiffness, promotes self-healing
- Prana & Vayus: Activates Apana vayu
- Emotional: Assists with healthy intimacy, assists with overcoming addiction and co-dependency
- Elements: Activates water
- Chakras: Activates Svadhisthana

Practice Tips: Hold 5-45 minutes

Imagine orange water energy flowing through your pelvic bowl.

## Madhyama Mudrā



### Middle Finger Seal

Hold hands open with palms facing center. Touch tips of middle fingers together.

*"I burn with the golden fire of transformation"*

- Body Systems: Digestive
- Physical Benefits: Eases tension in the middle back
- Breath & Prana Vayus: Facilitates full yogic breath
- Emotional: Brings balance between giving and receiving, promotes balanced energy levels and understanding of how we use our energy in the world, promotes healthy self-esteem and confidence
- Elements: Activates fire
- Chakras: Activates Manipura chakra

Practice Tips: Hold 5-45 minutes

Imagine golden fire energy in your solar plexus giving you energy, enthusiasm, and drive.

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## Tarjani Mudrā



### Index Finger Seal

Hold hands open with palms facing center. Touch tips of index fingers together.

*"I expand with the emerald air of my heart"*

- Body Systems: Respiratory
- Physical Benefits: Brings awareness to the upper chest,
- Prana & Vayus: Activates prana vayus, brings focus to inhalation and expands the breath
- Emotional: Opens the emotional heart, eases depression, promotes emotional processing, enhances enthusiasm, compassion and unconditional love
- Elements: Activates air
- Chakras: Opens Anahata chakra
- Practice Tips: Hold 5-45 minutes

Imagine green air energy in your heart expanding in all directions opening you to unconditional love and compassion.

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## Angustha Mudrā



### Thumb Seal

Hold hands open with palms facing center. Touch tips of thumbs together.

*"I communicate in the blue space of my throat"*

- Body Systems: Endocrine and nervous
- Physical Benefits: Brings awareness to the throat, lengthens cervical spine, promotes health of thyroid
- Prana & Vayus: Activates Prana vayu, directs breath into throat area
- Emotional: Enhances communication and awakens inner listening
- Elements: Activates space
- Chakras: Activates Vishuddha chakra
- Practice Tips: Hold 5-45 minutes

Imagine blue space in your throat that rings with what is true.

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## Hakini Mudrā



### Seal of Union

*Touch the tips of all fingers together creating a spherical shape within the palms.*

Imagine all five elements integrating within you.

- **Body Systems:** Integrates all systems of the body
- **Physical Benefits:** Enhances body awareness and integration, improves memory and concentration, promotes communication between right and left hemispheres of the brain
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates all vayus, facilitates full yogic breathing
- **Emotional:** Promotes confidence and equanimity
- **Elements:** Integrates earth, water, fire, air, and space
- **Chakras:** Integrates lower six chakras

*"My body, mind and spirit are integrated"*

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## Anjali Mudrā



### Seal of Prayer

*Press your hands together gently, leaving a small hollow space between palms; hold hands over your heart.*

Imagine sitting in meditation in a sacred place; feel the divine power seeping into your body, mind, and spirit and know that it is always within you.

- **Body Systems:** All systems
- **Physical Benefits:** Coordinates right and left hemispheres of the brain, stimulates the thymus gland, promotes heart health, reduces headaches, helps with auto-immune disorders, eases neck and shoulder pain, promotes integration
- **Emotional:** Invokes connection to your divine light and honors that divine light in others, cultivates equanimity. reduces stress and anxiety
- **Mental Benefits:** Calms overactive thoughts, directs awareness inward
- **Practice Tips:** Hold for 5-45 minutes

*"I bow to the divine within all beings"*

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## Focus: Jnana Mudrā



### Seal of Air & Wisdom

*Touch the tips of thumb and index fingers together, extend middle, ring and little fingers; rest backs of hands on thighs.*

Imagine a healing white light enveloping your mind providing clarity, wisdom and peace.

- **Body Systems:** Endocrine, pulmonary and nervous systems
- **Physical Benefits:** Helpful for addiction, balances pituitary and pineal glands, eases insomnia, helpful for Alzheimer's patients
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Udana vayu, directs breath into upper lungs, increases breath capacity
- **Emotional:** Relieves stress
- **Mental Benefits:** Promotes concentration, calms circular thoughts, improves memory, and enhances intuition
- **Elements:** Increases space element
- **Chakras:** Opens Ajna chakra
- **Practice Tips:** Hold for 5-45 minutes

*"I am one with the universe"*

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## Anxiety: Adhi Mudrā



### First Mudrā

*Make a soft fist with the thumb tucked inside touching the base of the little finger. Turn palms down and rest hands on knees.*

Visualize yourself sitting with your feet in a fountain, stream or the ocean. Feel the soft movement of the water over your feet. Imagine that the water could wash away all sadness, anxiety and depression. Feel the sun on your back and refreshed from your experience.

- **Body Systems:** Pulmonary, Nervous system
- **Physical Benefits:** Facilitates breath into pelvis and lower abdomen.
- **Emotional:** Eases anxiety, enhances intuition
- **Elements:** Activates all elements
- **Doshas:** Balances all doshas
- **Practice Tips:** Hold 5-45 minutes, or as needed
- **Contraindications:** Low blood pressure

*"I am calm and grounded"*

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## Abdominal Cramps: Adho Merudanda Mudrā



### Seal of the Downward Facing Staff

*Make a fist and extend thumb up, keeping gentle pressure of fingernails against palm. Rest hands on thighs palms down.*

Visualize the floor of your pelvis as strong and healthy, like a hammock supporting all of your reproductive, urinary, and eliminatory organs.

- **Body Systems:** Digestive, eliminatory, reproductive, cardiovascular, and nervous systems
- **Physical Benefits:** Gently stimulates pelvic floor muscles, helpful for prolapse and incontinence, balances over/under assimilation (diarrhea/constipation)
- **Contraindications:** Low blood pressure
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Apana vayu, directs prana to the pelvis and low back.
- **Emotional:** Helpful for depression, promotes equanimity
- **Elements:** Activates water
- **Chakras:** Activates Svadhisthana chakra

*"My pelvic floor supports me"*

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## Constipation: Apana Mudrā



### Seal of the Downward Wind

*Touch the tips of your thumb, middle, and ring fingers together and extend your index and little fingers. Rest the backs of your hands on your lap facing up. For Constipation, point your index and little fingers toward the floor.*

*"I release all blockages"*

- **Body Systems:** Digestive, eliminatory, urinary, reproductive, endocrine, skeletal
- **Physical Benefits:** Eases constipation and gas, detoxifies, maintains reproductive health, and strengthens teeth and bones.
- **Breath:** Slows breath
- **Emotional:** Creates calm and harmony
- **Practice Tips:** Hold for 5-15 minutes or as needed.

Imagine planting a seed in the ground to represent your future goals. See it sprout, grow, bloom, and bear fruit.

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## Immunity: Uttarabodhi Mudrā



### Seal of Superior Wisdom

**UPPER:** Clasp hands together and press index fingers together and thumbs together. Hold hands against sternum, thumbs down  
**LOWER:** Hold thumbs against navel and pinkie fingers on belly

*"My immunity is strong"*

- **Body Systems:** Immune and cardiovascular
- **Physical Benefits (Upper):** Stimulates immunity by activating the thymus gland, energizing
- **Physical Benefits (Lower):** Brings immune system back to baseline
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Prana vayu, strengthens inhalations, directs breath into upper chest
- **Emotional:** Promotes self-confidence
- **Mental Benefits:** Increases inspiration
- **Elements:** Activates air
- **Chakras:** Balances Anahata chakra
- **Practice Tips:** Hold for 5-45 minutes

Imagine healing light bathing your throat and upper chest encompassing your thymus gland. Imagine healing light moving throughout your entire body boosting the strength of your immune system. Each inhalation increases the power of this light.

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## Confidence: Brahma Mudrā



### Seal of Brahma

Make a fist and turn palms upwards pressing knuckles against each other. Hold hands in front of solar plexus.

*"I confidently take steps toward success and release all blockages"*

- **Body Systems:** Digestive and eliminatory
- **Physical Benefits:** Activates metabolism, strengthens diaphragm, supports weight loss, gentle energizing
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Samana vayu
- **Emotional:** Connects you to your personal power
- **Contraindications:** Anxiety use caution
- **Elements:** Activates fire
- **Chakras:** Opens Manipura chakra
- **Practice Tips:** Hold 5-45 minutes

See your personal power like a fire burning brightly in your upper abdomen behind your hands. Allow the warmth to spread throughout your whole middle torso, through your abdominal organs, through your diaphragm, bringing with it a sense of strength and an ability to release the things that you no longer need. Can you sit in your power and let go of what is holding you back?

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## Depression: Hansi Mudrā



- **Body Systems:** Immune, endocrine, and nervous system
- **Physical Benefits:** Stimulates thymus gland, releases jaw tension
- **Prana & Vayus:** Activates Udana vayu
- **Emotional:** Releases inner smile, eases depression and loneliness, encourages contentment, promotes joyfulness and positivity
- **Elements:** Activates space
- **Chakras:** Opens Vishuddha, Ajna and Sahasrara chakras
- **Doshas:** Balances Pitta and Kapha dosha
- **Practice Tips:** Hold 3 times a day for 15 minutes, or as needed.

*"I smile from deep within my being"*

**Seal of the Smile**

*Touch tips of all fingers together except for the pinkie fingers. Either rest hands palms up on the lap, or hold hands out to sides in a cactus position with extended pinkies pointing upwards.*

Imagine a smile forming in the center of your body and radiating upwards towards the face. Can you smile in your heart, in your throat, with your expression? Does smiling ease your emotional load? Does it create any lightness in your mood?

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## Insomnia: Nidra Mudrā



- **Body Systems:** Nervous system
- **Physical Benefits:** Eases insomnia, promotes relaxation
- **Breath:** Slows breath
- **Emotional:** Eases stress
- **Mental Benefits:** Calms thoughts
- **Practice Tips:** Hold for 15 minutes before bed

**Seal of Divine Sleep**

*Make a fist with the thumb between the index and middle fingers. Rest backs of hands on lap.*

Imagine your day coming to a close. What you were able to accomplish in this day was the perfect amount, nothing else was needed to make the day complete. Release your mind from all stresses and sink deeply into divine rest.

*"I deserve to be well-rested"*

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## Heart Attack: Apana Vayu Mudrā



**Seal of**

Bend your index fingers down to touch the base of your thumbs. Next, touch the tips of your thumbs to the middle and ring fingers, and extend your pinkies. Rest the backs of your hands on your lap.

*"I release others' expectations of me"*

- Body Systems: All
- Physical Benefits: Reinforces blood circulation to the heart and regulates heartbeat; may also relieve hiccups and migraines
- Breath: Slows exhalation
- Emotional: Eases stress
- Practice Tips: Hold for 15 minutes three times a day. Often called the "lifesaver," mudra can be used at the first sign of a heart attack. **STILL SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION!**

Imagine a rosebud in your heart. With each inhale, the rose blossoms open more and more until it takes up all the space of your energetic heart.

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## 4-Part Breath, Mudrā & Mantra Meditation



Avhana Mudrā

**1**

INHALE

*"I accept"*



Samputa Mudrā

**2**

PAUSE

*"I am grateful"*



Pushpanjali Mudrā

**3**

EXHALE

*"I give"*



Vajrapradama Mudrā

**4**

PAUSE

*"I trust"*

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