

REVIEW ARTICLE

Yogic Perspectives on *Tri-bandha* – A Review

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ABSTRACT

The term “*Tri Bandha*” refers to the three locks or *Bandha*; *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha* that direct and regulate the flow of *prana*, or life energy. These locks are described in a number of Hatha Yoga texts, including Hatha Pradipika, Gherand Samhita, Siddha-Siddhant Paddati, and many more. The pelvic floor muscles are contracted in the *Moola Bandha*, the abdominal muscles are contracted in the *Uddiyana Bandha*, and the chin lock is performed by pulling the chin to the chest in the *Jalandhara Bandha*. *Bandhas* are generally performed after a complete exhalation. *Bandhas* have a significant impact on both the body’s subtle energy systems and the physical body. *Bandha* promotes mental stability and improves organ function. The *bandhas* are considered to be extremely important in yoga practice. By practicing *bandhas*, practitioners may block the passage of energy into and out of a certain area of their body. *Bandhas* promote inner harmony and balance. *Bandhas* can also be combined with *pranayama* and *mudra*. *Bandhas* stimulate the body’s essential organs and endocrine glands. *Bandhas* promote optimal health and well-being when paired with other yoga techniques.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental, and spiritual discipline that originated in ancient India, aimed at achieving self-realization and ultimate liberation (*kaivalya*). *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Mudra*, *Bandha*, *Shatkarma*, and *Dhyana* are only a few of the therapeutic techniques used in yoga, the ancient discipline of moral living that affects many aspects of human health. Hatha yoga was developed by *Natha-yogis* who combined breath control (*pranayama*) with physical postures (*asanas*) to channel vital energy and prepare the mind for more profound spiritual awakenings. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Shiva Samhita, and Goraksa Sataka are among the traditional Hatha Yoga texts that offer comprehensive information, direction, and advantages of *tri-bandhas*. Hatha yoga describes *bandhas* as energy locks that facilitate *prana* flow.^[1] *Sushumna Nadi*, the major energy channel that runs along the spinal column from *Mooladhara chakra* to *Sahasrara*, receives the vital force through the *bandhas*, which are gateways that seal the pranic channels. The *bandha* is a type of yogic practice described by *Natha-yogis* in various hatha yoga texts. *Bandha* is concerned with the physical contraction of muscles and its impact on the pranic body. The benefits of *Asana*, *Mudra*, and *Pranayama* are increased when *bandha* is combined with them.

In the Hatha Yoga discipline, there are three main *bandhas*; *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha*.^[2] The perineum is contracted for *Moola Bandha*, the abdominal lock is used for *Uddiyana Bandha* at the diaphragm, and the throat lock is used for *Jalandhara Bandha* at the neck.^[3] *Prana* is redirected, core stability is strengthened, the endocrine system is balanced, and energy pathways are purified by practicing the three *bandhas* alone or in combination. The advantages of *bandha* are increased when it is combined with other *bandha*, *mudra*, and *pranayama* practices. Ultimately, *bandha* offers a transformative journey toward enlightenment and inner tranquility.

1.1. Aim

The aim of the study was to review the philosophical, physiological, and spiritual relevance of the *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha* by critically analyzing it from traditional Hatha yogic texts such as Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gherand Samhita.

1.2. Objectives

- To describe the concept and meaning of *Tri-bandha* as explained in classical Hatha yoga literature
- To review the characteristics, techniques, and functions of *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha*
- To summarize the potential health benefits and spiritual significance of *tri-bandha*.

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2. MOOLA BANDHA

Bandhas assist the practitioner in locking certain bodily muscles in a particular manner in order to positively impact the release of energy. The primary *bandha* in the yogic tradition is *Moola Bandha*. *Moola* is the Sanskrit word for root. It refers to the perineum or the base of the spine, where the *mooladhara chakra* – the seat of *kundalini*, or primal energy – is situated. Swami Swatmarama describes the method of *Moola Bandha* in the third chapter of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. In the third chapter, *Mudra* and *Bandha* of Gherand Samhita, Maharshi Gherand also discusses the practice and advantages of *moola bandha*. In *moola-bandha*, the contraction of pelvic floor muscles takes place. This causes stimulation of the pelvic nerves. In addition, this *bandha* tones the excretory system. *Moola Bandha* has several positive effects on the body, mind, and soul when practiced regularly.

2.1. Method and Benefits of Moola Bandha

As stated in Hatha Yoga Pradipika 3:61 for *moolabandha*, contract the anus by pressing the perineum from the heel and simultaneously raising the *apana vayu* upward. Since *apana vayu* is a descending energy channel that removes impurities, it is compelled to go upward when the perineum contracts. This is known to yogis as *moola bandha*.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 3:65 states that regular *moola bandha* practice unites *prana* and *apana*, reduces urine and feces, and even makes an elderly person appear younger. According to Hatha Pradipika verses 3/66, 3/67, and 3/68, the downward-moving *apana vayu* is forcefully drawn up into the naval area by performing *Moola bandha*. When this energy reaches the seat of the stomach fire (*Jatharagni*), the body's heat increases, and the fire becomes more intensified. This causes the sleeping *kundalini* to awaken.^[3]

3. UDDIYANA BANDHA

Uddiyana, which means “upward flying” in Sanskrit, which accurately describes the effects of this practice. One of the three core bandhas of hatha yoga is *Uddiyana*. This *bandha* pulls the abdominal wall up and in beneath the rib cage. The *Manipura Chakra* is triggered by the *Uddiyana Bandha*. *Uddiyana Bandha* relieves constipation and increases digestive function. It stimulates the pancreas. In addition, *uddiyana bandha* regulates mental processes and helps strengthen the immune system.

3.1. Method and Benefits of Uddiyana Bandha

The nature of *uddiyana bandha* is described as flying *bandha* in Hatha Pradipika's Chapter 3, verses 55 and 56, since the *prana* easily rises through *sushumna* and flies upward. In *uddiyana bandha*, the abdomen above the navel is pulled backward toward the spine (Hatha Pradipika verse 3/57). For the elephant of death, this *uddiyana bandha* is a lion.^[3]

Swatmarama in Hatha Pradipika describes the advantages of *uddiyana bandha* practice in verse 3/58, stating that the practitioner becomes young again if old. According to Swatmarama, if one practices *uddiyana bandha* regularly for 6 months, one can definitely overcome death.

4. JALANDHAR BANDHA

Jalandhara Bandha is described in the Hatha yoga texts specifically in Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. *Jalandhar Bandha* can be performed for as long as the practitioner is able to comfortably hold

the breath. *Jalandhara Bandha* offers several physical and spiritual advantages.

4.1. Method and Benefits of Jalandhar Bandha

Hatha Pradipika 3:70 states to contract the throat and place the chin on the chest. This becomes *jalandhara bandha*. It gives control over the sixteen bases. By mastering this *jalandhara bandha*, a yogi can achieve *siddhis*, defeat death, and become a perfected entity after just 6 months of practice. *Jalandhara Bandha* should be practiced carefully because it is frequently paired with breath retention.

According to sloka 3/71 of the Hatha Pradipika, the practice of *Jalandhara Bandha* eliminates all ailments of the throat. The verse 3/72 of the Hatha Pradipika states that the practice of *Jalandhara Bandha* reduces the likelihood of *vata*-related disorders.^[3]

5. DISCUSSION

According to some Hatha yogic texts, combining these *bandhas* has a beneficial effect on a number of autonomic processes. *Jalandhara Bandha* relaxes the mind by inducing a meditative state, controls blood flow in the head area, and aids in blood pressure regulation. According to Hatha yoga texts, *Moola Bandha* activates the *Mooladhara chakra*, the energy center at the base of the spine; *Uddiyana Bandha* awakens the *Manipura Chakra*; and *Jalandhar Bandha* stimulates the *Vishuddhi Chakra*.^[4-6] In the Hatha yoga tradition, the *bandha* is given utmost importance over *asana* and *pranayama*. *Bandha* offers several physical, mental, and spiritual advantages.^[7] *Tri bandha* is a yoga technique that involves simultaneously engaging three distinct bandhas in the body. The *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha* are three distinct muscle groups in the body that are contracted during the yoga practice known as *tri-bandha*. Physically, the *bandhas* stimulate the organs, glands, and muscular tissue in the respective area.^[8] In a spiritual sense, the *bandhas* aid in controlling the body's *prana* and energy flow. In addition, *bandhas* awaken latent energy like *kundalini*,^[9,10] unlock *nadis* (energy pathways), and activate *chakras*.

6. CONCLUSION

In the traditional Hatha yogic system, *Tri-Bandha* – the combined practice of *Moola Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha* holds a prominent position. *Tri-Bandha* may positively influence the various systems of the body. This review emphasizes how *Tri-Bandha* bridges the gap between ancient yogic wisdom and modern health sciences. When done properly, the practice of *tri-bandha* shows potential advantages for one's physical, physiological, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

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