

# Panchmahabhutas and Mudras

~Dr. Indu Arora

## Overview of the Talk:

- Understanding of Mudras: Definition, How they work, Type of Mudras: 20 minutes
- Relationship between Ayurveda and Mudras: 5 minutes
- PanchTattva- PanchMahabhutas Mudras: Explanation, practice: 30 minutes
- Open forum: questions and answers: 10 minutes



## Origin of Mudras

- Hinduism shows the earliest recorded knowledge and analysis of Mudras. The earliest documentations are found in Mantra Shastra (the book of incantations), Upasana Shastra (the book of worship and prayers) and the Nritya Shastra (the book of classical dances).
- The mudra has a deep relationship to one of the oldest records of ancient Chinese civilization, the Book of Changes (Yijing).
- In Christian art Jesus, John the Baptist and Virgin Mary are shown in various Mudras. Reference may be had from the book "The sign Language of the Mysteries" by J.S.M.Ward. Even today, the sign used by the priests of Catholic Churches while blessing the devotees, is known as "Mahagyan Mudra"
- Egyptian hieroglyphics are a virtual treasure house of mudras. The postures of their kings and queens even as mummies show them holding mudras.
- The Babylonian sun God Damuzi depicts Mudras while descending into the underworld.
- In Islam, the mystical Whirling Dervishes used Hand signs or Mudras for various rites and rituals.
- Roman art is replete with mudras.
- In the Orient these can be observed in the rituals and rites of the rich cultural traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism in India, Tibet, China, Japan Indonesia etc. The paintings in the caves of Ajanta and sculptures in the Ellora caves, dating back to 2nd. and 1st. centuries BC show innumerable mudras.

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## What is a Mudra?

The name of an object should carry all the information contained in that object as it retains the efficacy of the spoken word. Mudra in Sanskrit means a posture/seal.

As per Eastern philosophies and culture and Yogic practices, 'Mudras' are "closed electrical circuits" of the subtle channels in physical and etheric bodies.

## Why Hand Mudras?

Mudra is intrinsically related to union and connection. Union is oneness, and oneness is reverberating in everything in this universe. It is most non-violent, inexpensive and available source of health and well-being for all. It is also said that anyone who can breathe can do mudras.

## Benefits of Mudra Practice

Mudras benefit the mind, body, psyche and bio-magnetic fields.

1. Health
2. I.Q. Improvement
3. Enhancing and Expanding the Aura
4. Expansion of Consciousness
5. Acquisition of Siddhis/ powers/ attainments:
6. Transformation & Regeneration of the Physical Body

## When to Practice?

In physics the time, space and observer are the three important factors. Exactly like that the time, space and the person connected with performing mudras are three important factors for deriving benefit of mudras. The ideal timings are the prabhata kaal (morning) and saayam kaal(evening). Mudras are generally practiced empty stomach.

**Duration:** Minimum 30 seconds to 45 minutes daily. It can be practiced in breaks, 3 times a day for a particular duration as per the capacity and convenience. Let your intuition function here.

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### Science behind Mudras:

There are different analysis as to how a Mudra works to balance & harmonize life current in the body & maintaining a healthy state of the mind & body.

Various theories behind the ancient science of Mudra:

1. (Five) element theory / Law of Nature.
2. Shiva and Shakti/ polarity/ Spiritual reason
3. Acupressure/ Reflexology/ Alternative Medicine reason
4. Activation of nerve endings / Scientific reason.
5. Chakra Activation/ Yogic View

### AYURVEDA AND MUDRA



THE FIVE ELEMENT THEORY : According to the ancient Sankhya theory of cosmology, on which ayurveda is based, the "five great elements"(Panchamahabhuta); combine in different proportions to form the material world. Human body is made up of five elements and 5 (Five) fingers represent either of the five elements. According to yogic view any disease in the body is due to the imbalance of one or more of the elements in the body. By practicing Mudra one can heal self to maintain the ratio of that element. Mudra Vigyan is also a science based on the principles of the Indian Medical Science (Ayurveda)

which lays down three factors primarily responsible for the body's ills, Vata (wind), Pitta (bile) and Kapha (Phlegm).

Thus, the tension applied to the nerve/s and/or the neural or psycho-neural circuits formed by the mudras help in balancing the five basic elements (or building blocks). This balancing of the tension, and redirection of the internal energy effects the changes in veins, tendons, glands and sensory organs, to bring the body back to a healthy state. The fingers of each and every individual in the world are different in their shapes and sizes.

### Types of Hand Mudras

The division of hand mudras could be on the following basis:

- 1: General Mudras
- 2: Therapeutic Mudras
- 3: Spiritual Mudras

## Panchmahabhutas and Mudras

### Panchtattva~ Panchmahabhuta Mudras

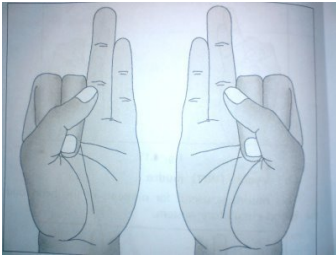
#### 1(a) Vaayu Mudra/ Air Element



How & When: One can perform this Mudra in any pose sitting, standing, lying down or walking. To do, fold the index finger at the base of the thumb and press the back of second phalange with the thumb. Keep the other three fingers as straight as possible. One can perform it any time of the day irrespective of empty or full stomach.

Benefits:

#### 1 (b)Vaata Nashak Mudra



Practice of Vaata-naashak mudra pacifies the aggravated Vaat humor. It is, therefore, an excellent mudra for people with a pronounced Vaata constitution (vaata dosha). In fact, they can regularly perform this mudra even to avoid illness.

Benefits:

#### 1(c) Vaayu Vardhak Mudra/ Gyan Mudra



How & WhenTo perform this Mudra one joins the tip of the index finger with the tip of the thumb. Popularly known as Gyaan mudra this mudra increases the vaayu(air) element within the body.

Benefits:

#### 1 (d) Vaata Karak Mudra/Vyayan Vaayu Mudra

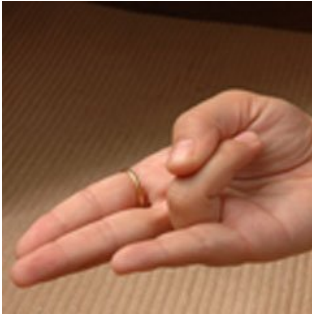


How & When: Sit comfortably in Sukhasan or on chair with back straight and join the tip of the index and the middle finger with the tip of the thumb, keeping the other two fingers straight.

Benefits:

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### 2. Prithvi Shaamak Mudra/ Agni Vardhak Mudra/ Surya Mudra /Fire Element



How & When: One should practice this Mudra empty stomach by folding the ring finger at the base of thumb and pressing it with the thumb at the second phalange. Keep the rest of the three fingers straight and perform it in sitting position only.

Benefits

### 3. Prithvi Vardhak/ Prithivi Mudra/ Earth Element



How & When: Touch the tip of the thumb and the tip of the ring finger together, keeping the rest of the three fingers straight. Make sure you do not force the fingers to be straight, only try to keep them so. This Mudra is preferably done in the morning, but could be done any time of the day otherwise and for any duration.

Benefits

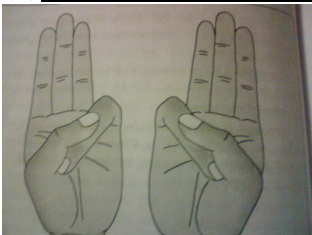
### 4 (a) Jala Vardhak Mudra/ Varun Mudra/ Water Element



How & When: One may perform this Mudra any time of the day by joining the little finger tip with the tip of the thumb, keeping the rest of the three fingers straight. One may perform this Mudra in sitting, lying down or standing pose. Though, the best pose is still the sitting cross legged pose.

Benefits:

### 4 (b) Jal-shaamak mudra :brings about a reduction of the jal(water) element with in the body.



How & When: this mudra is formed by first placing the tip of the little finger on the base of the thumb and then bringing gentle pressure of the thumb upon this finger, this amounts to suppression of element water(residing in the little finger) by

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element fire( residing in the thumb).

### Benefits:

#### 5. Aakash Vardhak Mudra / Vyom Mudra/ Ether Element



How & When: Join the tip of the middle finger with the tip of the thumb, keeping the rest of the three fingers straight. One may perform this Mudra anytime of the day for any duration. The best time for practicing this Mudra is either morning time by sitting in Sukhasan or Padmasana. One must try to keep this Mudra intact for 45 minutes, though one may start with a shorter time period as per convenience and capacity.

### Benefits

#### OTHER DOSHA BALANCING MUDRAS

1. Vaata Naskah - Pitta Karak Mudra
2. Pitta Karak - Kapha Nashak Mudra
3. Kapaha Kaarak –Pitta Nashak Mudra- Prana Vaayu Mudra
4. Panch Vaayu Mudra
5. Ailment specific Mudra
6. Chakra Specific Mudra
7. Mantra Specific Mudra
8. many more.....



Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!