

# Basic Yoga Techniques

**Asanas** are bodily postures in yoga. They stretch and fortify your body, awaken and stimulate prana (vital force), purify nadis (energy flows) and strengthen your nervous system. They are performed step-by-step and carefully, without much force.

**Pranayamas** are breathing techniques. By controlling and guiding one's breath, a person purges the body of toxins, purifies and balances the energy system and awakens creativity and talents.

**Mudras** are gestures/positions of the body or its parts. Their effect is much stronger than that of asanas and they are used to create or express definitely specific state of being.

**Kriyas** are advanced yoga techniques. Some of them are used for cleansing the body of toxins (hatha yoga kriyas), while others are practiced for the awakening and broadening of consciousness (Raja yoga kriyas).

**Bandhas** also belong to the advanced yoga techniques and should be learned from an experienced teacher. Bandha means to "lock", or "seal". Bandhas interrupt the flow of energy, which erupts after the block is released. Bandhas are used for awakening and guiding one's energy.

**Yoga nidra** is a deep relaxation technique. The practitioner remains awake and conscious throughout, although profoundly relaxed as if asleep.

**Meditation** is immersion into the subject of meditation and unification with it. In that way, the meditator directly experiences the reality of this phenomenon. Meditation is the ultimate and crucial yoga technique, while the others are just a preparation for meditation.