

Ashwini Mudra (Horse Gesture)

Ashwa means “horse” in *Sanskrit*, and **mudra** is a “gesture” or “sign”.

The practice of ashwini mudra is a rhythmic contraction of the anal sphincter, which allows the directing of prana (apana) to flow upward through the spine, through the main energy channel called sushumna.

In yoga ashwini mudra is a beginner’s technique, which means it’s relatively easy, and we learn it before doing mulabandha.

The basic technique for the mudra is pretty simple, but it nevertheless is powerful and makes the mudra one of the essential parts of many internal yoga practices, such as mula bandha or viparita karani mudra.

How to Do Ashwini Mudra

There are two methods. For the sake of explanation we will assume that ashwini mudra is performed in a meditational sitting asana.

Method 1: rapid contraction

Sit in a comfortable sitting pose. Relax the whole body. Close the eyes. Breathe normally. Rapidly contract and relax the anus. Try to confine the contraction to the area of the anus though you will find that other pelvic muscles will come into action. Let the muscular contraction and relaxation be rhythmical. Don’t strain.

Repeat the practice for as long as you have time available.

In this method there is no synchronisation between breath and contraction.

Method 2: slow contraction and retention

Sit in a comfortable pose. Contract the anus as you inhale. At the end of inhalation hold the breath and also the contraction. Let the contraction be as tight as possible but without strain. Release the muscular contraction as you breathe out.

This is 1 round. Repeat 5 to 10 rounds.

This method requires synchronisation between the breath and the movement of the anus.

Note

It is impossible to confine the muscular contraction only to the small area of the anus. Other pelvic muscles and muscles associated with the sexual organs will also contract. But try as much as possible to concentrate on the contraction at the anus. At first this is difficult, but with practice it becomes easier and easier.

Awareness

In method 1 the awareness should be on the muscular contraction and relaxation at the anus.

In method 2 you should be aware of the coordination between the breathing and the muscular contraction and relaxation.

Contraindications

People with high blood pressure or heart disease should not practice breath retention.

Ashwini Mudra Benefits

The mudra works both externally and internally, or, in other words, on the level of the physical body and on the energy level.

In a physical plane the asana stimulates the abdomen and pelvis area including reproductive and digestive organs. This simple practice can help you get rid of constipation, deals with diseases of the rectum and haemorrhoids, and can improve your sexual health. Since it stimulates the prana flow toward the upper part of the body, it slows down the aging process and improves the health in general. It is also believed to make your body more resistant to diseases if you practice this yoga mudra regularly.

- Strengthens the anal muscles
- Prevents the escape of pranic energy and redirects it upward
- Helps to stimulate intestinal peristalsis so helps constipation
- Squeezes stagnant blood away from the anus therefore helping prevent piles
- Helps alleviate prolapse of anus or rectum and encourages pelvic floor muscles to engage