

Anjali Mudra - Salutation Seal



anjali = a gesture of reverence, benediction, salutation (from *anj*, "to honour, celebrate")

mudra = seal (The gesture "seals" energy in the body and "seals" your relationship with the Divine.)

1. Sit comfortably in Siddhasana (as shown) or stand in **Tadasana**. Inhale and bring your palms together. Rest the thumbs lightly on your sternum.
2. Press the hands firmly but evenly against each other. Make sure that one hand (usually your right hand if you are right-handed, your left if left-handed) doesn't dominate the other. If you find such imbalance, release the dominant hand slightly but don't increase the pressure of the non-dominant hand.
3. Bow your head slightly, drawing the crease of the neck toward the centre of your head. Lift your sternum into your thumbs and lengthen down along the back of the armpits, making the back elbows heavy.
4. Practicing **Anjali Mudra** is an excellent way to induce a meditative state of awareness. Start your practice sitting in meditation in Anjali Mudra for 5 minutes. You can also use this hand position in **Tadasana** prior to beginning the Sun Salutation sequence, contemplating the "sun" or light of awareness the yogis say is resident in your heart.

Benefits

- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Calms the brain, helps relieve stress
- Creates flexibility in the hands, fingers, wrists, and arms
- Opens the heart

Beginner's Tip

Take care not to harden the skin as you spread the palms against each other. The centre of the palm should always stay soft and maintain its "dome" shape. Keep the thumbs soft too.

Modifications and Props

Press a block or thick book (about 3 to 4 inches thickness) between your palms. Spread the skin of the palms and stretch the fingers out of the centres of the palms. Use the prop to help widen your sternum and collarbones. Then recreate this same width without the block, palms touching.

Partnering

Have your partner sit in front of you, also in a comfortable seated posture. Perform the gesture and have the partner cover your hands with his/hers. Sit together for a few minutes with joined hands, feeling the energetic exchange between your subtle hearts through your hands. Then reverse and cover your partner's hands with yours.

Deepen The Pose

This palms-together gesture completes an energetic circuit between the hands and the heart and harmonises the two hemispheres of the brain. See if you can discover, as you perform this gesture, the roots of the hands in the **yoga or subtle heart**, which unlike the physical heart is directly in the centre of your chest (below the sternum and between the shoulder blades), and towards the back of the torso.