

The Kriya Yoga Practices

2010 06 21

The Kriya Yoga Practices

By tradition there are a total of 76 kundalini kriyas of kriya yoga. We present the following 20 main practices, which are sufficient for the daily practice of any sincere sadhaka.

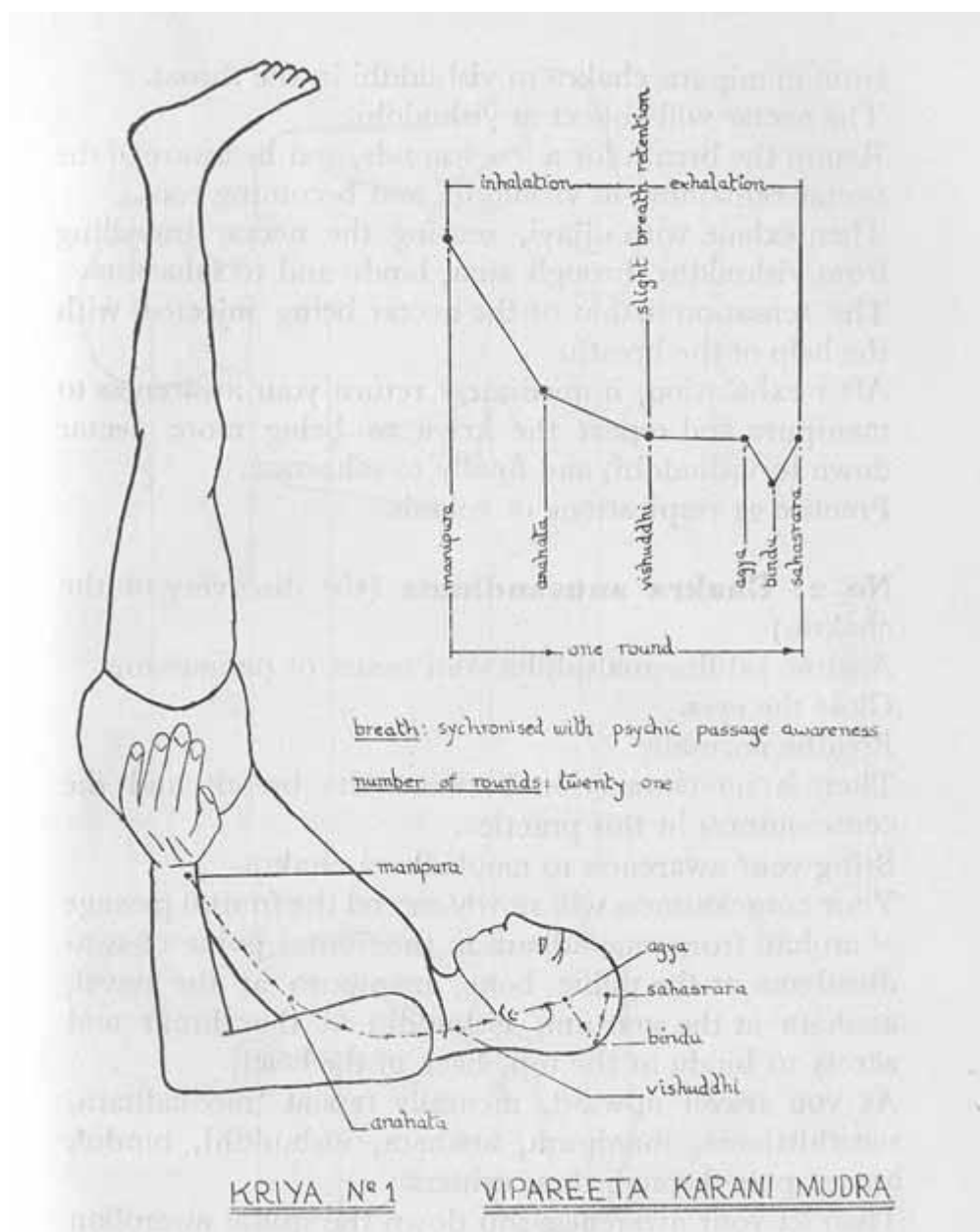
The practices are divided into three groups: those which induce pratyahara, those which induce dharana, and those which induce dhyana. It should be noted that these three states are actually a continuity of evolution, that is, the consciousness flows from one to the next without any apparent dividing point - so these practices should be done in an unbroken sequence. Of course, from the first day, the practice of these kriyas will not necessarily lead to such exalted states of awareness, but if they are practised properly with correct guidance, by an aspirant who is ready for them, then most likely, one day they will. It will be at that stage that the constant, unbroken progression of awareness will become essential. Remember, you should learn one kriya per week.

PRATYAHARA PRACTICES

№ 1: Vipareeta karani mudra (the attitude of inversion)

Assume vipareeta karani asana (described in chapter 9).

The chin should not touch the chest.



Kriya №1 Vipareeta Karani Mudra

Practise subtle ujjayi pranayama.

Be sure that your legs are completely vertical.

Close your eyes.

Inhale with ujjayi and simultaneously feel a hot stream of amrit or nectar flowing through the spinal passage from manipura chakra to vishuddhi in the throat.

The nectar will collect at vishuddhi.

Retain the breath for a few seconds, and be aware of the nectar remaining at vishuddhi and becoming cool.

Then exhale with ujjayi, sensing the nectar travelling from vishuddhi through ajna, bindu and to sahasrara.

The sensation is that of the nectar being injected with the help of the breath.

After exhalation, immediately return your awareness to manipura and repeat the kriya to bring more nectar down to vishuddhi, and finally to sahasrara.

Practise 21 respirations or rounds.

№ 2: Chakra anusandhana (the discovery of the chakras)

Assume siddhasana/siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Close the eyes.

Breathe normally.

There is no connection between the breath and the consciousness in this practice.

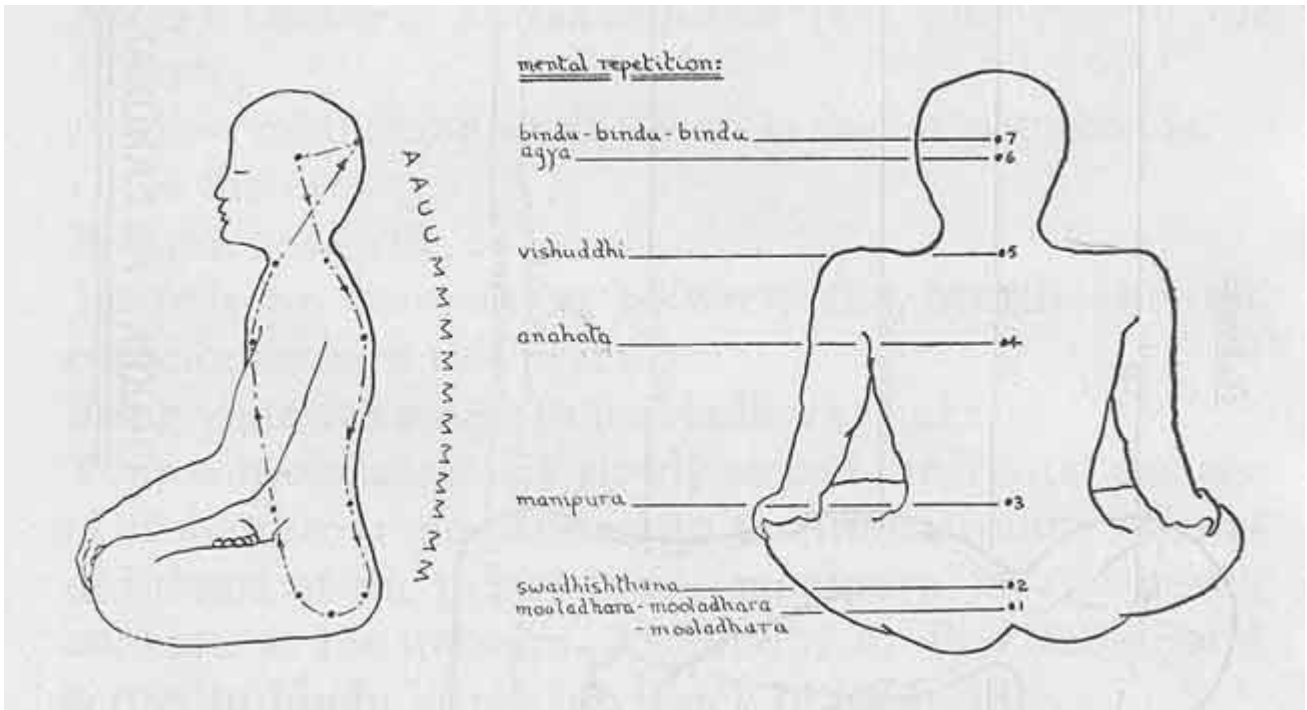
Bring your awareness to mooladhara chakra.

Your consciousness will slowly ascend the frontal passage of arohan from mooladhara to the frontal point of swadhisthana at the pubic bone, manipura at the navel, anahata at the sternum, vishuddhi at the throat and across to bindu at the top, back of the head.

As you travel upward, mentally repeat "mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, bindu", as you pass through these centers.

Then let your awareness slip down the spinal avarohan passage from bindu to mooladhara, mentally repeating "ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana, mooladhara" as you pass through these centers.

From mooladhara, immediately start ascending in the frontal passage as before, mentally reciting the chakra names as you ascend, starting with swadhisthana.



Kriya №2 Chakra anusadhana

Continue this rotation of awareness through the chakras in a constant flow of rounds.

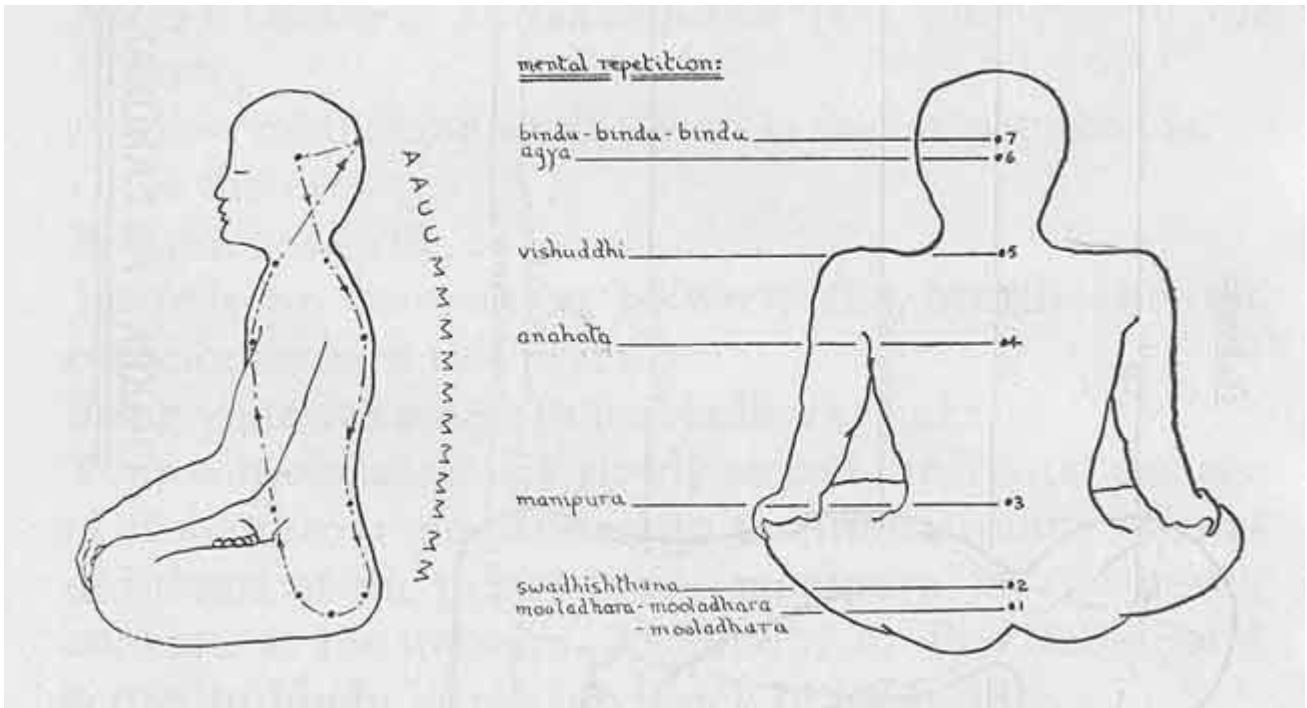
Do not make a serious, tensed effort to locate the chakras as you pass through them.

Merely glance at them as you go by, as you would view the scenery from a fast moving train.

If you wish, you can visualize your awareness in this kriya as a thin silver serpent travelling in an ellipse within your body.

Practise 9 rounds.

№ 3: Nada sanchalana (conducting the sound consciousness)



Sit in siddhasana/siddha yoni asana or padmasana.

Exhale completely.

Keep your eyes open.

Bend your head forward, so that it drops downward in a relaxed manner.

The chin should not press tightly on the chest.

Bring your awareness to mooladhara chakra.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Then as you inhale, your consciousness should rise up through the frontal passage of arohan to bindu.

Have a clear awareness of swadhishthana, manipura, anahata and vishuddhi, as you pass by them on your way to bindu, and mentally repeat their names.

As your awareness is travelling from vishuddhi to bindu during the last segment of your inhalation, your head will slowly rise and tilt back slightly into a position facing about 20° above the horizontal.

With the breath stored inside you and the awareness at bindu, mentally repeat, "bindu, bindu, bindu."

The power of the awareness will build up as you are repeating the word "bindu" and it will explode into the vocal chant of Om, which will carry you down through the spinal passage of avarohan to mooladhara.

The "O" sound of Om will be explosive and sudden.

The "m" sound will be long and drawn out, culminating almost in a buzz as you approach mooladhara.

As your awareness descends in the spine, your eyes will gradually close in unmani mudra.

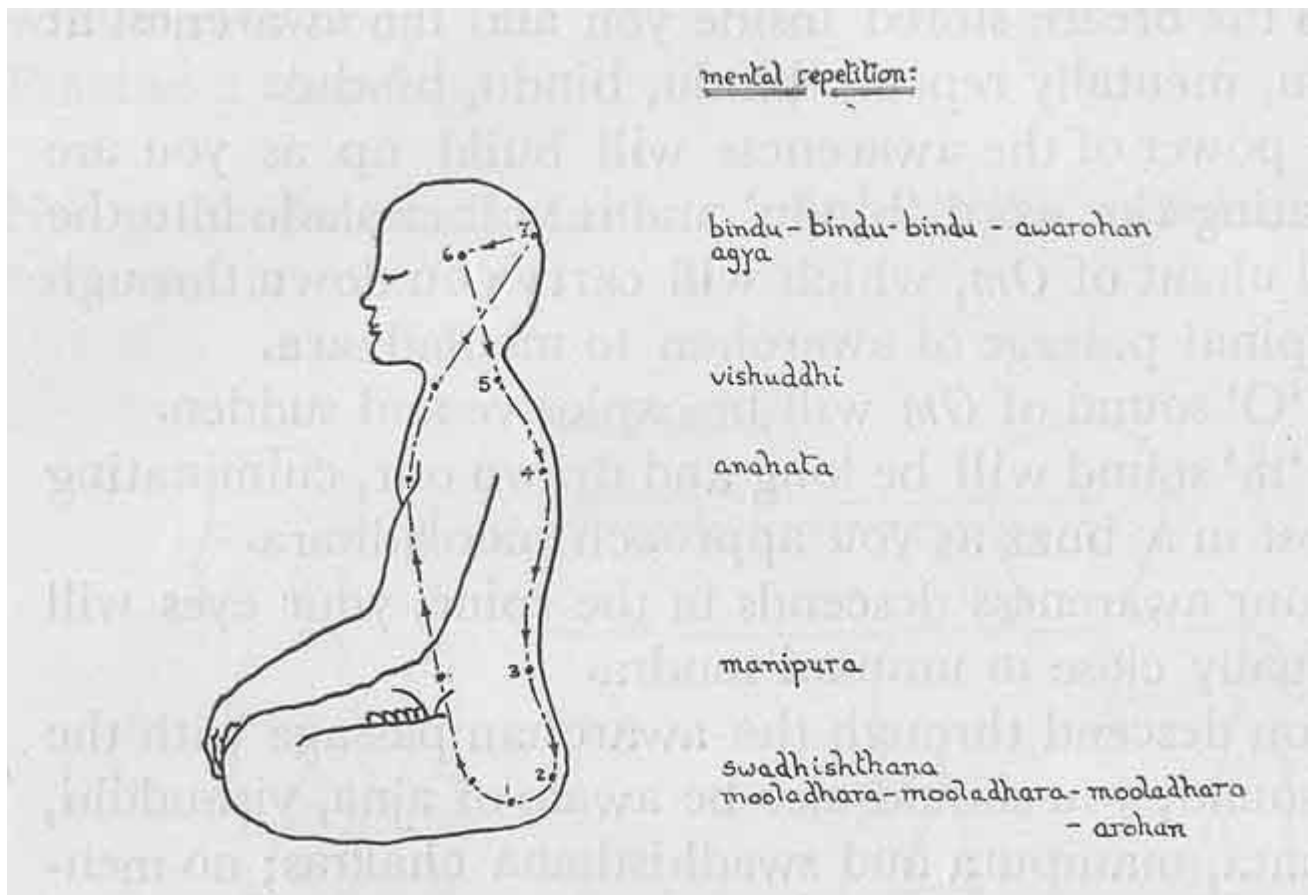
As you descend through the avarohan passage with the Om sound, you should also be aware of ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura and swadhishthana chakras; no mental repetition.

When you have reached mooladhara, drop your head forward and open your eyes.

Mentally repeat, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", with the breath retained outside and start on the ascent as before, with inhalation and repetition of the chakra names as you pass through them.

Practise 13 full rounds or breaths and end after the last "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara."

№ 4: Pawan sanchalana (conducting the breath consciousness)



Sit in padmasana, siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, and keep your eyes closed.

Simultaneously, be aware of each kshetram, without mental repetition.

As you travel from vishuddhi to bindu, the head will move upward as in pawan sanchalana and nada sanchalana.

Then, with the breath retained inside, be aware of bindu for a few seconds.

Then descend the spinal passage doing unmani mudra and being simultaneously aware of the natural sound of exhalation and the mantra ham.

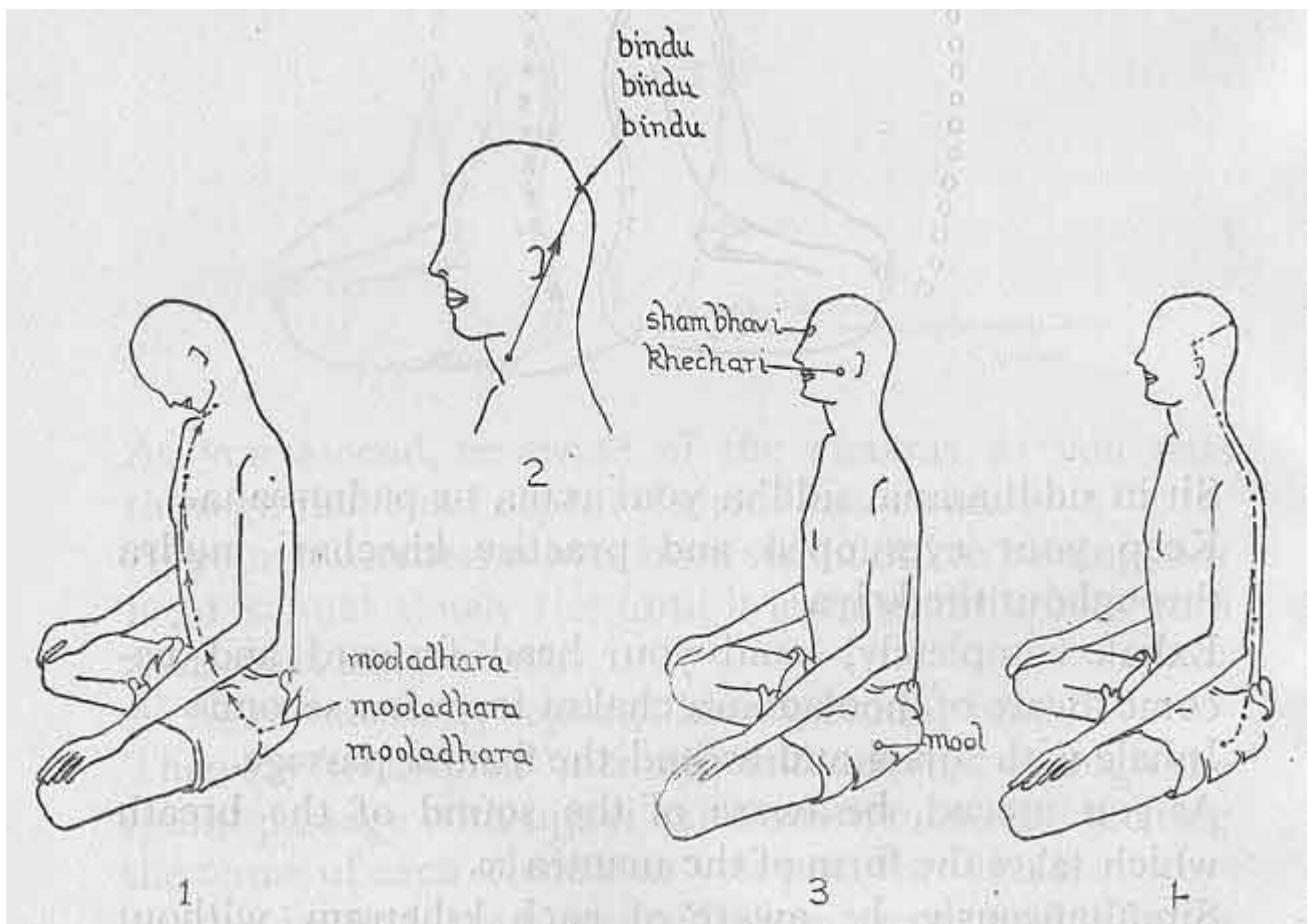
Be aware of each chakra without repetition of its name.

After reaching mooladhara, open the eyes and lower your head.

Begin your ujjayi inhalation, rising through the frontal passage with the inhalation mantra of so.

Continue in this manner for 59 full rounds or breaths.

No. 6: Maha mudra (the great attitude)



This kriya can either be practised in perfect siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, or in the asana known as utthan padasana. If maha mudra is to be practised in siddhasana, then it should be done as follows:

Sit in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, with the heel of the lower foot pressing firmly in towards mooladhara chakra.

Practise khechari mudra, exhale completely and bend your head forward.

Keep your eyes open.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Ascend through the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation, being aware of the kshetram as you pass through them.

Raise your head as you are crossing from vishuddhi to bindu.

At bindu repeat mentally, "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Practise moola bandha and shambhavi mudra with the breath still retained inside.

Say to yourself mentally, "shambhavi - khechari - mool", while at the same time shifting your awareness to the center of these practices.

When you say "shambhavi", your awareness should be fixed at the eyebrow center.

When you say "khechari", your awareness should be fixed at the tongue and roof of the mouth.

When you say "mool", your awareness should be fixed at mooladhara chakra.

Beginners should repeat this shifting of awareness 3 times. Advanced aspirants can rotate their awareness up to 12 times.

Then, first release shambhavi mudra, then moola bandha.

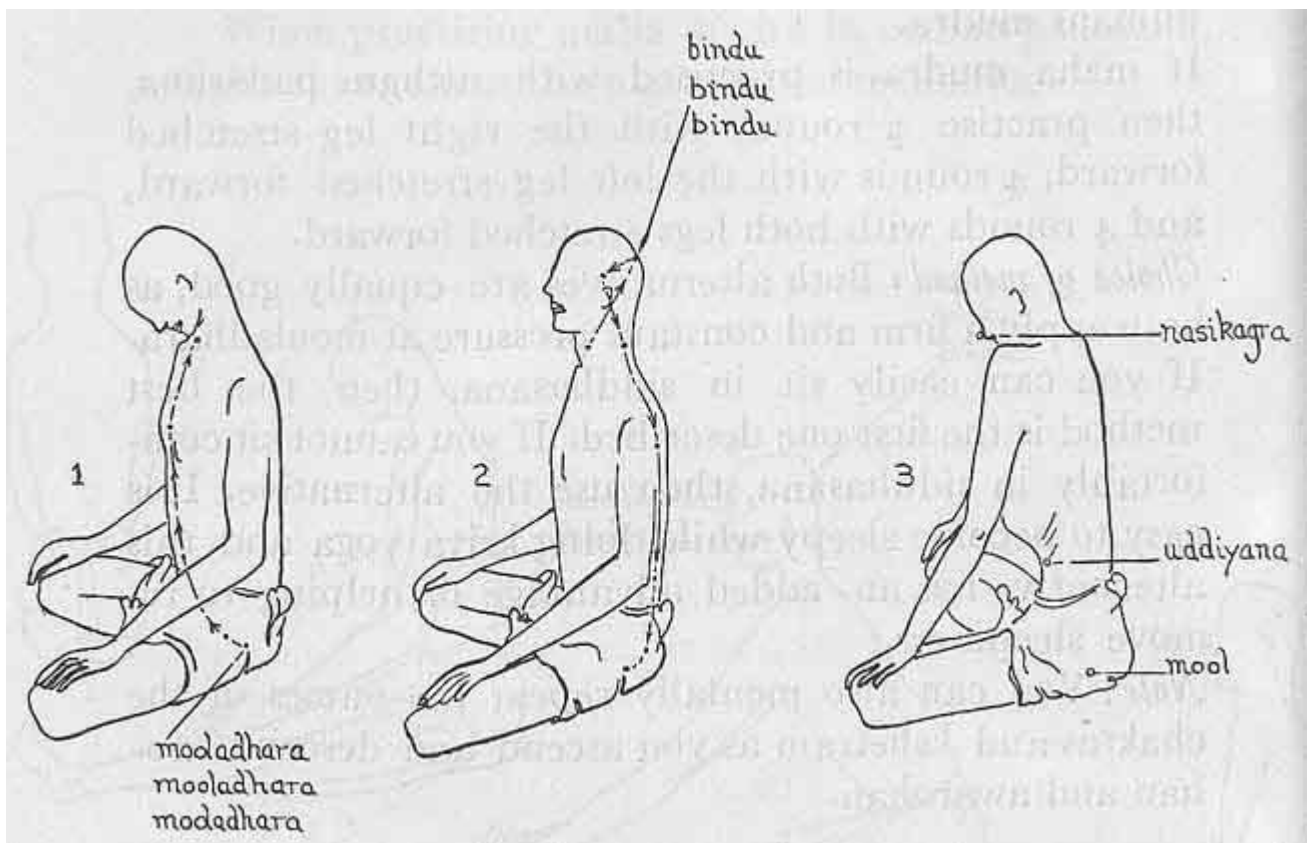
Bring your awareness back to bindu and travel down your spinal passage to mooladhara, with ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra, and be aware of the chakras as you pass through them.

On reaching mooladhara, bend your head forward.

Then repeat "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara" and ascend the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation, as before.

Practise 12 rounds or breaths and end after the last "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Alternative practice in utthan padasana



When practising maha mudra in utthan padasana, a slight change must be made in the technique.

After ascending to bindu, repeat "bindu, bindu, bindu".

Lean forward and hold the big toe of your extended foot with the fingers of both hands, to form utthan padasana.

The stretched knee must not bend.

Now practise moola bandha and shambhavi mudra.

Repeat, "shambhavi - khechari - mool" from 3 to 12 times, passing your awareness to the seats of these practices as you repeat their names.

Release shambhavi, then moola bandha, then utthan padasana, and place your hands back on your knee.

Bring your consciousness back to bindu, and then descend the spinal passage with the ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra.

If maha mudra is practised with utthan padasana, then practise 4 rounds with the right leg stretched forward, 4 rounds with the

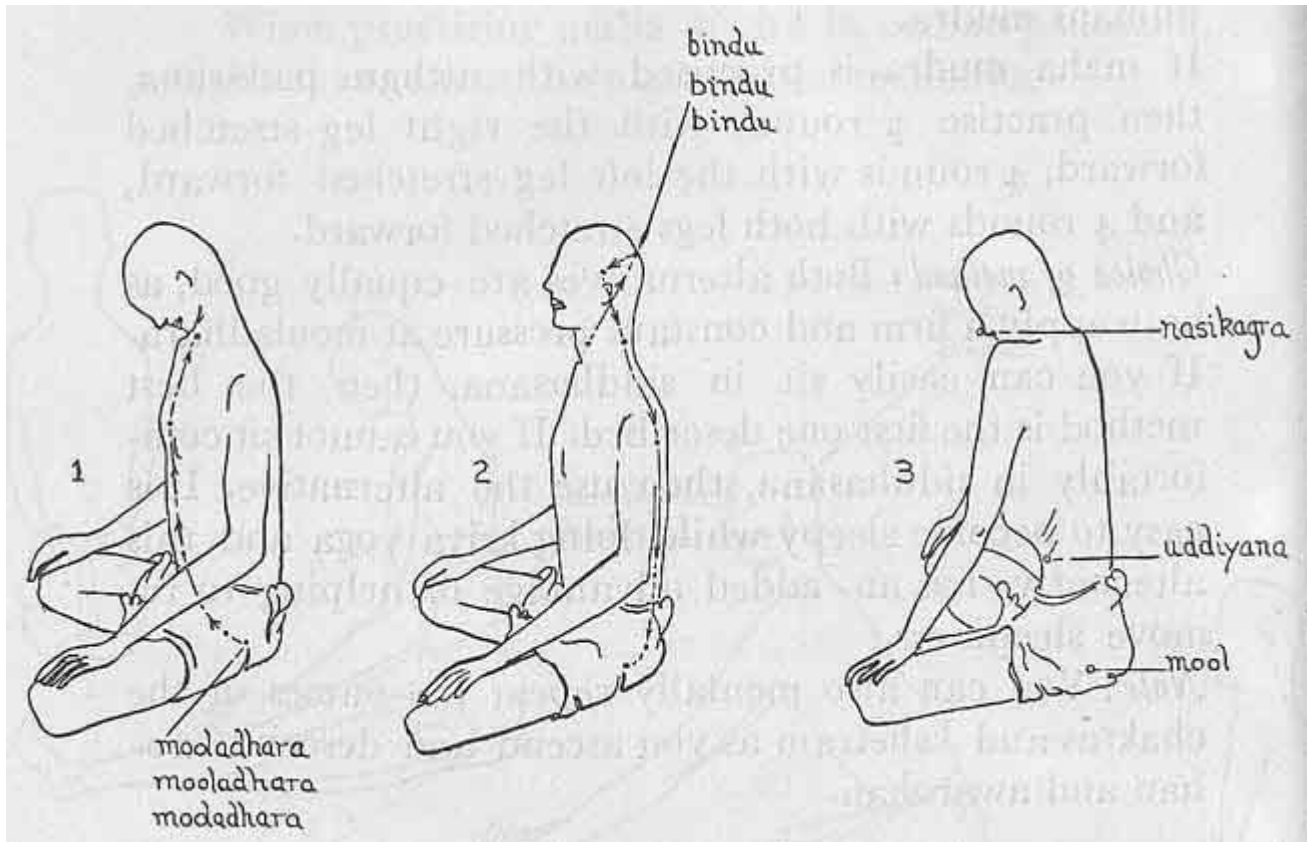
left leg stretched forward, and 4 rounds with both legs stretched forward.

Choice of method: Both alternatives are equally good, as both apply a firm and constant pressure at mooladhara.

If you can easily sit in siddhasana, then the best method is the first one described. If you cannot sit comfortably in siddhasana, then use the alternative. It is easy to become sleepy while doing kriya yoga and this alternative has an added advantage of helping to remove sleepiness.

Note: You can also mentally repeat the names of the chakras and kshetram as you ascend and descend arohan and awrohan.

No. 7: Maha bheda mudra (the great piercing attitude)



This mudra can either be practised in perfect siddhasana, siddha yoni asana, or in utthan padasana, as with maha mudra. If practised in siddhasana or siddha yoni asana, the technique is as follows:

Practise khechari mudra and keep your eyes open and head down.

Exhale completely.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Inhale with ujjayi as you ascend the frontal passage to bindu.

As you ascend from vishuddhi to bindu, raise your head.

Repeat mentally, "bindu, bindu, bindu", and then descend the spinal passage to mooladhara with ujjayi exhalation and unmani mudra.

Be sure to notice the chakras as you pass through them.

Then practise jalandhara bandha with the breath retained outside.

Practise moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and nasikagra drishti.

Repeat mentally, "nasikagra-uddiyana-mool", while simultaneously placing your awareness at the seats of these practices in turn.

Repeat this cycle of awareness 3 times if you are a beginner, or up to 12 times if you are experienced.

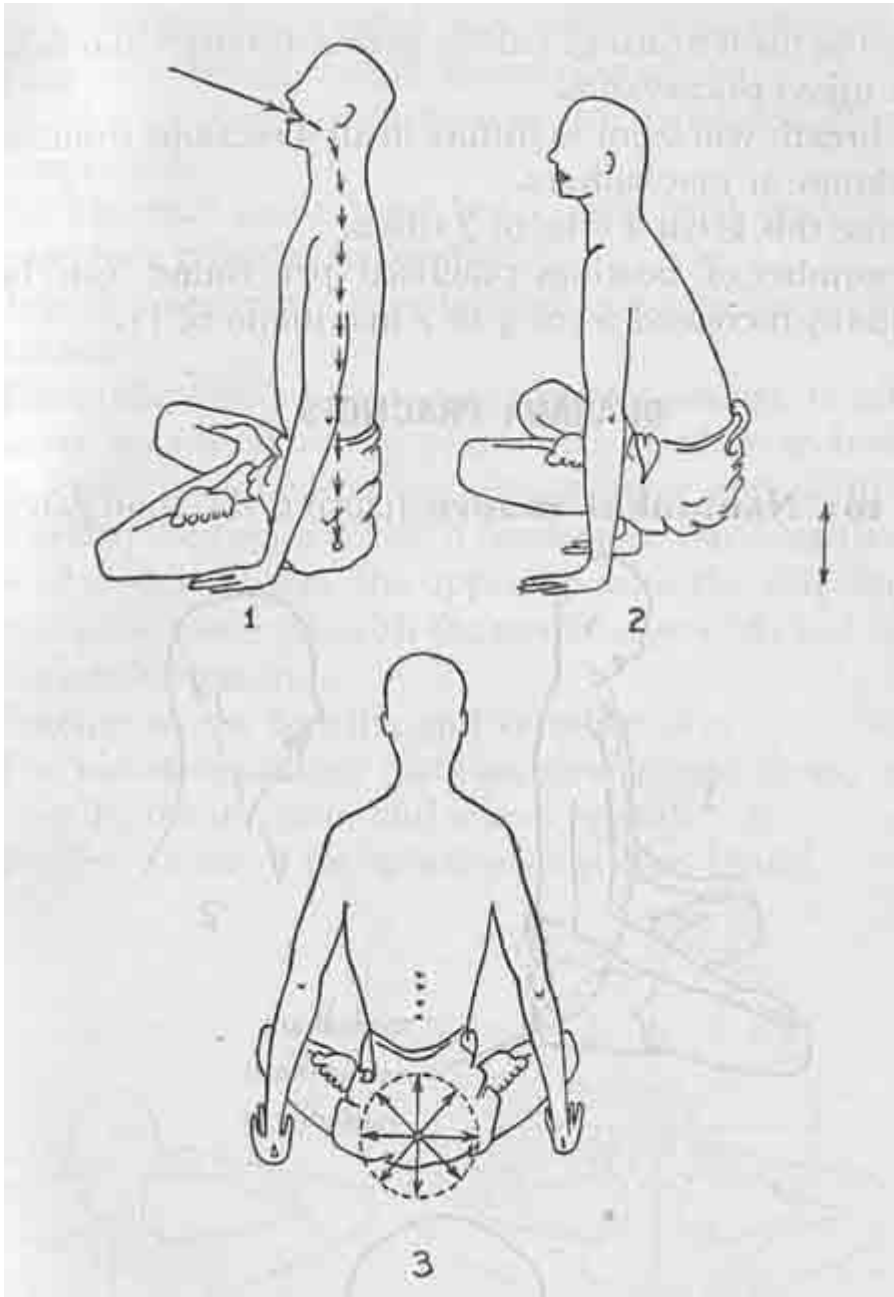
Then release nasikagra drishti, moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and jalandhara bandha, but keep the head down.

Bring your awareness back to mooladhara. Repeat the mantra "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", mentally.

Then with ujjayi inhalation, ascend the frontal passage to bindu for the next round.

Practise 12 full rounds or breaths.

Alternative method in utthan padasana



If maha mudra is practised in utthan padasana, then it must be done as follows:

Place your hands on your bent knee, exhale completely and bend your head forward, eyes open.

Repeat mentally, "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara".

Inhale with ujjayi through the frontal passage from mooladhara to bindu, raising your head while moving from vishuddhi to bindu.

Repeat "bindu, bindu, bindu", and then exhale with ujjayi through the spinal passage, doing unmani mudra and being aware of the chakras en route.

Hold the breath outside and bend forward to grasp the big toe of your extended foot to form utthan padasana.

Press your chin against the chest to form jalandhara bandha.

Practise moola bandha, uddiyana bandha and nasikagra drishti while still retaining the breath outside.

Repeat mentally, "nasikagra - uddiyana - mool", while simultaneously placing your awareness at the seats of these practices in turn.

Repeat this cycle of awareness 3 times if you are a beginner, or up to 12 times if you are experienced.

Then release nasikagra drishti, moola bandha and uddiyana bandha.

Bring your hands to your knees and sit up straight. Release jalandhara but keep your head bent down.

Bring your awareness back to mooladhara.

Repeat the mantra "mooladhara, mooladhara, mooladhara", and then ascend the frontal passage with ujjayi inhalation.

Practise in this way for 4 full rounds or breaths with your right leg extended, then practise 4 times with the left leg extended, and finally 4 times with both legs extended.

After the fourth time in each position, ascend once to bindu with ujjayi inhalation. Repeat the bindu mantra, descend to mooladhara and repeat its mantra, relax and then change legs.

Note: The rotation of awareness through nasikagra, uddiyana and mool is done with outside retention of the breath at mooladhara. You are advised to practise only 3 rotations at first, slowly increasing one rotation per week until you can complete 12 rotations.

* Make sure that all the bandhas are performed correctly and in the right sequence. At first you will have to pay special attention to this, but with regular practice the bandhas will lock and tighten automatically, without effort and at the right stages of the kriya.

* Nosetip gazing helps to tighten the lock of the bandhas. Make sure that nasikagra drishti and the bandhas are practised simultaneously and that you do not omit any of them while rotating awareness through the centers. Do not strain.

* If you are feeling pain or discomfort in the eyes, stop nasikagra drishti but continue the bandhas and rotation of awareness. Slowly increase the duration of nasikagra as the eye muscles adapt to the practice.

* You can repeat the "mooladhara" mantra 3 times before applying the bandhas as well as repeating "mooladhara" 3 times at the beginning of a new round.

* Also, the names of the chakras and kshetram can be mentally repeated as you ascend and descend arohan and awarehan.

No. 8: Manduki kriya (the frog attitude)

Sit in bhadrasana, the gentleman's pose.

Your eyes should remain open.

The area of your body below mooladhara chakra must touch the ground. If it doesn't, then use a cushion to exert pressure on this point.

Place your hands on your knees and practise nasikagra drishti.

Become aware of your natural breath flowing in and out of your nostrils.

With inhalation the breath flows through both nostrils and merges at the eyebrow center. As you exhale the two flows diverge from the eyebrow center and move out through both nostrils.

The breath follows a conical or inverted V-shaped pathway. Feel this.

Simultaneously, be aware of all smells.

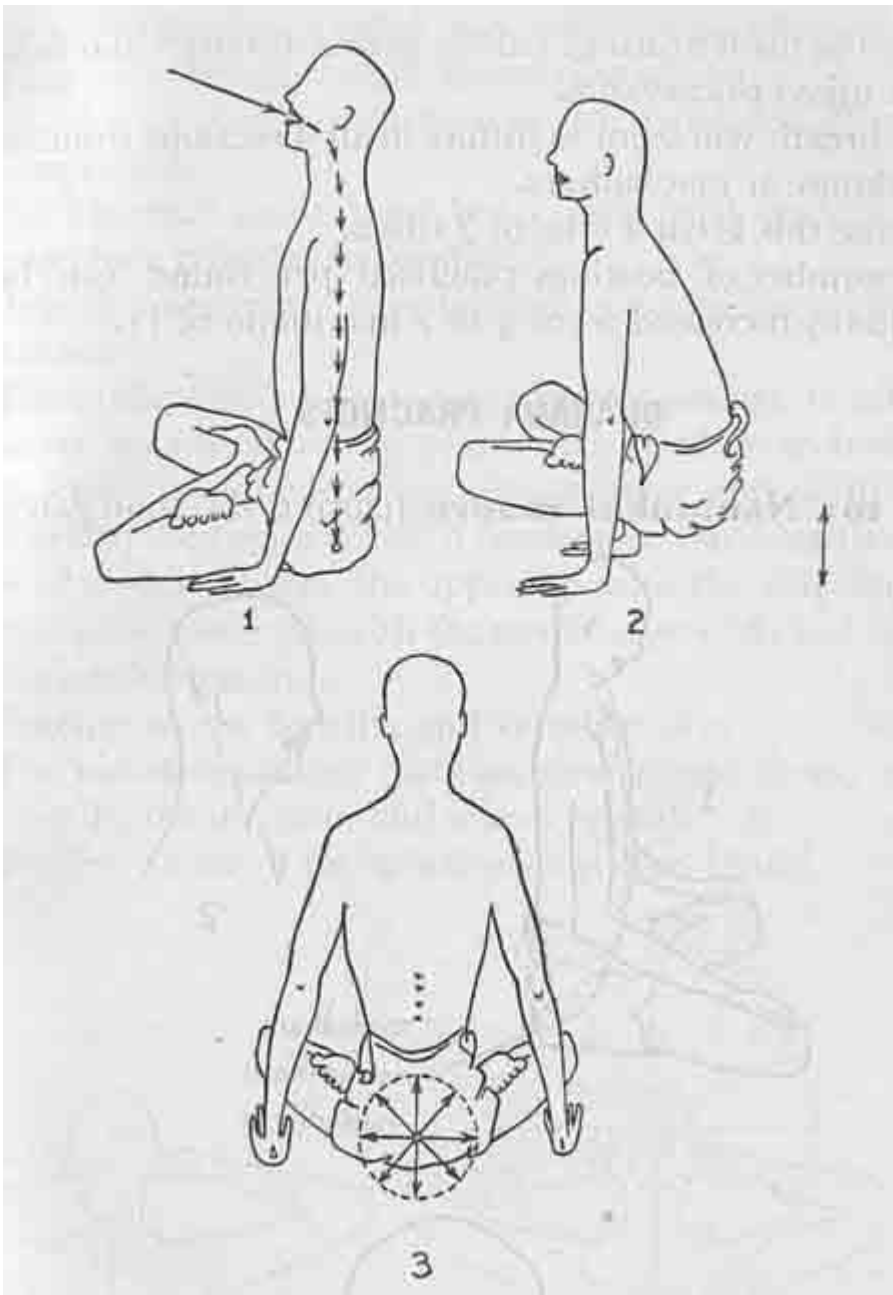
The point of this kriya is to smell the aroma of the astral body which has a scent like that of sandalwood.

If your eyes become tired, close them for some time and then resume nasikagra drishti.

Practise this kriya until it becomes intoxicating.

Do not carry it so far that you become totally absorbed in it and do not wish to end the practice.

No. 9: Tadan kriya (beating the kundalini)



Sit in padmasana with the eyes open.

Place your palms on the floor at the sides of your body, next to your hips, with the fingers pointing forward.

Tilt your head slightly backward and practise shambhavi mudra.

Inhale through your mouth in audible ujjayi pranayama.

As you inhale, feel the breath travelling downward through a tube connecting the mouth to mooladhara chakra.

The breath will collect at mooladhara chakra.

Hold the breath, keep your awareness at mooladhara and practise moola bandha.

Using your hands, lift your body off the ground.

Then drop your body lightly so that mooladhara is gently beaten.

Repeat this beating a few times.

Do not practise this quickly or harshly.

After the third beating, exhale gently through the nose with ujjayi pranayama.

The breath will seem to diffuse in all directions from its storehouse at mooladhar.