



## **Shankh mudra breathing**

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### **Abstract**

We all breath regularly, but never focused on how we breath and how to breath.

Breathing in a proper manner is very important, as we know breathing is the only source to intake oxygen (air) from which our lungs and whole bodily systems work properly, including our life line – blood. Oxygen is much important for us. Oxygen fuels our cells and helps provide the basic building blocks that our bodies need to survive. Oxygen is also necessary for constructing replacement cells for our bodies. Every day, about seven hundred billion cells in our bodies wear out and must be replaced. Without oxygen, our bodies cannot build these new cells. Oxygen is also a particularly important part of our immune system. It is used to help kill bacteria, and it fuel the cells that make up our body's defenses against viruses and other invaders.

Every human being has his own breathing pattern, which has its impact on his personality and vice – versa. But the actual, right way of breathing is somewhat different and we have to practice that ideal, standard pattern for some hours, every day, to maintain good health.

For this practice, if we have an object or an instrument, we can perform better. That's why we were in search of some instrument and tried to resemble Shankh (Conch, Sea Shell) by hand formation (Mudra) and by blowing this, we get better results. Anywhere, anytime, we can make this Mudra & start blowing, which gives us the results of deep breathing and acupressure both.

“Shankh” is the best tool, as I feel, based on its importance as one of the 14 ratnas released from the Samudra Manthan (churning of the sea) (Vishnu Purana). In our Hindu tradition it has an important place, to blow it is a information to start the prayers. In every Hindu Dharma-yudha, Shankh was blown, as a warning bell to the enemies, and many more. So, it is the best, easily available gift of Nature. My thought process guides me to make the hand formation (Mudra) as of this Shankh and blow it to its fullest, to get all the benefits of the natural Shankh, in deep breathing.

**Keywords:** shankh, shankh mudra, breathing, deep-breathing, lungs, immune system, oxygen

### **Introduction**

#### **The respiratory System**

#### **Anatomy of a Breath**

The entry gates of the respiratory system are the mouth and nose. This is where air comes into the human body, and this air is then directed toward and down the trachea into the lungs. The diaphragm is the dome shaped muscle located across the bottom of the chest, separating the chest area from the abdominal area. Diaphragm makes the body draw in air through the nose and mouth and then exhale air through the same orifices.

As air enters the nose and mouth, it is cleansed from impurities such as dust. Tiny hairs in the nose known as cilia, act almost like a brush to catch dust particles and other such things before the air can get into the lungs. Anything that gets past the cilia is trapped in the mucus that lines the trachea and the bronchial tubes that takes air from the trachea into the lungs. The human body is well equipped to trap these particles, but the body works best when air is relatively pure before it is inhaled.

Once air enters the lungs through the trachea and bronchial tubes, it is directed to tiny sacs called alveoli. There are more than six hundred million alveoli in an adult's lung, and in these alveoli, oxygen passes from the air into the blood stream. Tiny capillaries surround each sac, and air passes over a membrane between the capillaries and the sac. In the process of respiration, carbon dioxide passes from the bloodstream into the alveoli, and it is eventually directed out

of the human body through the bronchial tubes to the trachea to the nose and mouth where this air is exhaled. The human circulatory system takes the oxygen throughout the body and brings carbon dioxide back to the lungs. The entire process is repeated with every breath that human being s take.

Diaphragm is the main muscle used for breathing. It tightens on inhalation, allowing lungs to expand into the space in chest. Intercostals muscles, located near the lungs, helps to create space in chest by contracting to pull ribcage upward and outward during inhalation. The airways transport oxygen rich air into lungs and carbon dioxide out of lungs. Effective use of the respiratory system ensures that we are breathing well and to our maximum capacity.

Check the breathing pattern when we are in a relaxed mood – slow and deep breath.

Also check the breathing pattern when we are in a stress or anxious – fast and shallow breath.

Feel the difference in these two moods. When we are happy and in a relaxed mood, our body gets relaxed due to slow and deep breathing. But as we are in stress or in anxiety, our breath is fast and shallow. That means, breathing pattern will fix the psychological, nervous, physical status of our body and mind.

One of the very easiest and multi beneficial hand formation will be Shankh Mudra for Deep breathing. Especially for the betterment of Lung's functioning. Actually, this hand formation – Mudra, we are creating pressure on many reflex

points in hand. Also, we are performing deep breathing, through which Oxygen is stored in our lungs and body and when we exhale the Carbon dioxide by mouth in a slow and long form, it will create pressure on nervous system and facial muscles. All these combinedly creates many wonders, which neither the Mudra will do, nor the deep breathing exercises can separately.

### The Yoga Upanishads

The Yoga Upanishad is a subset of Upanishads, which contains various techniques and experiences of Yoga. The following passage is from the Hamsa Upanishad:

It (Nada, Sound) is (begun to be heard as) of ten kinds.

The first is Chini (like the sound of that word);

The second is Chini – Chini;

The third is the sound of Bell;

The fourth is the sound of Conch;

The Fifth is the sound of Tantiri (Lute);

The sixth is the sound of Tala (Cymbals);

The seventh is the sound of Flute;

The eighth is the sound of Bheri (Drum);

The ninth is the sound of Mridanga (Double drum);

The tenth is the sound of Clouds (thunder).

The Darsana Upanishad (6.36 -- .38) describes the sounds heard when the consciousness becomes centered in the Brahmrandhra (anterior - fontelle). Located at the top – centre region of the head (the place of the sahastradhara Chakra). When air (prana) enters the Brahmrandhra a sound is also produced there. Resembles sound of Conch Blast (Shankh Dhavni) & like the thunder-clap (Megha – Dhavni) in the middle; & when the air has reached the middle of the head, like the roaring of a mountain cataract (Giri – Prasaravana).

Shankh (Conch) is a wind instrument that is made of the shell of several kinds of sea snails. Their natural conical bore is used to produce a musical tone. The shape of seashells makes them great amplifiers of ambient noise. Any air that makes its way into a shell's cavity gets bounced by its hard, curved inner surfaces. The resonating air produces sound. Just blowing into the Shankh won't work. Buzzing sound made from a person's lips gets amplified by the Shankh shell.

### Shankh Mudra

India has an age-old tradition and that tradition is characterized by a number of things. Be it in our ancient cultures, scriptures, languages or dressing sense. We have an age-old tradition and a beautiful story attached to them. Sometimes these traditions have very significant meaning attributed with them. Similar is the case with Indian medicinal system.

Earlier humans didn't have so many health issues; they were quite good in health and well-being. At that time people were not so much inclined to medicines they relied on healthy eating and exercises. In those days yoga and mudras or hand formation were very much popular. They were known to give long term benefits to our bodily systems.

Each and every mudra is special in Indian mythology.

### How to create Shankh Mudra

#### To form this Mudra

- Join the palms and then open them like lotus flower.
- Now, try to interlock (cross) the first three fingers (index, middle and ring) and create a hollow space in

the joined palm.

- Join the little fingers by touching their faces.
- Put both the thumbs, as near as possible, on the index fingers, making a little passage or gap (for air blowing), in between the thumbs.
- Make sure that your hands are closer to your chest level.
- Check the formation. It should resemble Shankh (Sea Shell conch).

This is the perfect Shankh mudra with a lot of benefits. As of a Shankh, here is a 'mouth' end, gap in our thumb and a 'flair' end, our little fingers, like most wind instruments. We blow air into the cavity at the mouth end.

### Here comes the time to blow.

#### How to blow

- Place your lips on the gap between the thumbs. Adjust the shape of palms, so that the air may get space to amplify.
- Take a deep breath with your nose, filling up your lungs.
- Hold it for a second, to prevent yourself from getting dizzy or light-headed, when you blow out.
- Blow out forcefully through lips, causing them to vibrate. Use your stomach muscles to blow the air out of your lungs through mouth, keeping lips close together.
- Vibrating lips cause the noise like horn. If you are doing it perfectly, it should feel like your lips are buzzing. Remember to keep taking deep long breaths each time.

### Benefits

Decreases Stress, increases calmness. Our brain releases 'Cortisol' hormone, when we are stressed. By practicing deep breathing, more oxygen enters in our blood stream and communicates with the brain to relax it up the 'Endorphins', the 'feel good' hormone.

Relieves Pain: Deep breathing in Shankh Mudra will result the release of endorphins, which also combat pain, in the body.

Stimulates the Lymphatic System: During the exhale in Shankh Mudra, you may feel that breath out is somewhat longer than the inhale. This results the release of more carbon mono oxide (toxins).

Improves Immunity: In Shankh Mudra, when we take deep log breath, our blood gets highly oxygenated. From this it carries and absorbs nutrients & Vitamins more efficiently. The cleaner the blood, the harder it is for illness to come.

Enhances Energy Level: The more oxygen in the blood, the better the functions of our body. It improves our stamina.

Lowers Blood Pressure: When muscles relaxed, blood vessels dilate and this improves blood circulation and lowers the Blood Pressure. Shankh Mudra also slows down and regulates the Heart Beats, Which also helps in lowering Blood Pressure.

The Spinal cord becomes straight and gains flexibility, which provides many health benefits.

Improves Digestion: Highly oxygenated blood promotes the organs to function more effectively, including Intestine, which digests the food.

Helps Support correct Posture: During the Shankh Mudra breathing, our spine straightens, which corrects our body

posture.

**Helps support the Organs:** In Shankh Mudra breathing, as our body is in stretched fully, our organs gets full space to expand and contract. As during deep breathing, our lungs takes maximum space, diaphragm pulls down, which turn our torso straightens in order for this to be possible.

**Facial Muscles get massage:** In Shankh Mudra, our face muscles stretches & contracts to their fullest. As this happens periodically and many times, the face muscles get massages. As a result of this, aging gets delayed. Gums and teeth also become stronger. Improvement in vision.

In generalized way, we may feel improvements in our brain (thought process), spinal cord, nervous system, respiratory system, digestion system, our body posture and many more.

When we do Shankh Mudra breathing with controlled breath out, the primordial sound of "OM" emanates from it. This external sound is the origin of all Vedas. It represents the creation and the truth behind this.

As this blowing resembles the Shankh blowing, it also enhances the positive psychological vibrations such as courage, determination, hope, optimism, will power and bliss can be felt by all people assembled there and by the blower.

As and when we get the perfection in this Shankh Mudra, the frequencies of divine energy are emitted into atmosphere due to sound generated by this Mudra. This increases the proportion of energy, anand and chaitanya in the environment and that's why the negative energies get distressed and runaway.

Another speciality of the blowing sound of Shankh Mudra is that the vibrations emanating destroys the disease causing germs in the atmosphere. And makes the atmosphere holy, pure & conductive for the spiritual growth of the individuals.

The well-known scientist J. C. Bose has proved that the harmful invisible virus, insects are disappeared by the sound produced by the Shankh shell and the same is with our Shankh Mudra's sound.

Also, the moment we start controlled forceful exhale, our brain emptied of all thoughts. Invariably we will enter state of Tran's, where we are very receptive. This Tran's state is the one with awareness. Blockages in heart will go away and respiratory system gets benefits, by regularly do this Shankh Mudra Breathing. The pressure in both the hands and in spine and brain, stimulate the body's circulatory, lymphatic and hormonal systems. It also helps the functions of the immune system natural ability to heal itself.

### Conclusion

Deep breathing through Shankh Mudra is the unique, easiest, convenient and natural 'Mudra' to combat stress and anxiety, to reduce High Blood Pressure and an aid in digestion. Deep breathing through Shankh Mudra strengthens our respiratory organs, such as lungs, diaphragm, etc in a markable way. It activates the Thymus gland which help immune system.

During Shankh Mudra, we take deep and long breath and try to fill more oxygen in our body, so that the resultant exhalation, will create a long passage for the carbon dioxide to come out from the very corners of mind and body cells, in the form of sound be long enough, will do all these wonders. In Shankh Mudra, exhalation is long, forceful & in steps, which provides a chance to the toxins to come out of the body. This detoxifies our body and mind. Reduces tensions

and relieves stress.

Deep breathing in itself is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body and mind. This is because when we breathe slowly and deeply, a message is conveyed to brain to calm down & relaxed. The brain sends this message to the body and finally the body comes in relaxed mode.

'Mudra', hand formation, has also its own benefits. As you feel more pressure, in the form of attention towards our Mudra, at that time mind gets emptied and our whole energy is for the blow. This is wonderful. A state of Trans. Here the pressure points in hand activates, which gets multiple benefits because of the state, in which more and more carbon dioxide is travelling out. The emptied cell gets violent stimulation and purified blood in nerves boosts up the cleansing or detoxification processes.

As it is connected to sound, it is closely linked to Vishuddhi Chakra, which is the energy centre around the throat. As this fifth chakra governs communication, this Mudra is said to help you find your voice and to cure ailments of the throat.

According to Yoga Shastra, this Mudra energises 10 nadies and invigorates the whole body. The 10 nadies are: Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, Gandhari, Hastijiva, Poosha, Yashasvini, Alambhushaa, Kohoo and Shankhini. The nerve Shankhini would activates Mooladhara Chakra. The serpent power kundalini rises towards higher levels.

Performing the Shankh Mudra breathing exercise is easy to learn and practice. We can do it anywhere, anytime. We even not require any Yoga mat, chair or any other tool or instrument.

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