

RANJANA YOGA CLASS

Prana, Nadis, Bandhas

A Beginner's Guide

Traditional ideas about breath, energy channels and locks, and how to approach them with care

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General education only. Not medical advice. Speak with your doctor before starting any new practice.

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1. What prana is

In yoga traditions, prana is the life force often linked with breath. Nadis are described as channels through which prana flows, and bandhas are described as "locks", muscular engagements used in some practices.

These are traditional concepts. They are not structures found in anatomy books, and science has not measured them as the texts describe them. You can still learn them as part of the tradition and as ways to direct attention.

The short answer

Prana, nadis and bandhas are traditional yoga ideas, not anatomical facts. Learn them from a qualified teacher, practise gently, and avoid forceful breath holds or strong locks unless you have been taught and your doctor agrees.

2. Before you begin: safety first

General education only. Check with your doctor first if you are pregnant, have high blood pressure, a heart, lung, joint or spine condition, osteoporosis, an eye condition such as glaucoma, or have had recent surgery or injury.

Stop and rest if you feel:

- sharp, pinching or burning pain (a mild stretch is fine, pain is a stop sign);
- dizziness, nausea or breathlessness;
- numbness or tingling, or pressure in the head or neck.

Breath retention and strong bandhas can affect blood pressure and breathing. Avoid them if you are pregnant or have heart disease, high or low blood pressure, glaucoma or a respiratory condition, unless your doctor agrees. Stop if you feel dizzy.

3. Key terms

Term	Traditional meaning	Simple approach
Prana	Life force, linked with breath.	Notice your breath.
Nadi	Channel through which prana flows.	Treat as a concept to study.
Ida and pingala	Two major channels, often linked with left and right.	Learn from a teacher.
Mula bandha	Root lock.	Learn from a teacher; gentle awareness only.
Uddiyana bandha	Abdominal lock.	Avoid unless taught; not for pregnancy.
Jalandhara bandha	Chin lock.	Avoid unless taught.

Alternate nostril breathing is often linked with the nadis. A gentle version without breath holds is widely taught.

4. Your four-week plan

Week	Focus	Length	What to notice
1	Notice your natural breath	5 min	Where do you feel it?
2	Try gentle alternate nostril breathing, no holds	5 min	Do you feel calm or dizzy?
3	Read about the nadis	10 min	What is the tradition saying?
4	Ask a teacher about bandhas	Class	Do not self-teach strong locks.

5. Choosing a class or teacher

Teachers who teach bandhas should explain contraindications and build up slowly. Be cautious of anyone who claims they work miracles.

- Tell the teacher about any injury, surgery, pregnancy or health condition before class.
- Ask which poses are optional; a good teacher says most are.
- If a teacher dismisses pain as part of the process, find another class.

6. Practising at home

At home, stick to easy, comfortable breathing. Avoid breath holds and forceful locks without a teacher.

7. Honest expectations

Descriptions of prana and the nadis come from tradition. They are not medical claims and do not replace treatment. If you notice dizziness, tingling or discomfort, stop.

8. Common mistakes and fixes

Mistake	Fix
Forcing breath holds	Keep breathing easy.
Self-teaching strong locks	Learn with a teacher.
Treating nadis as anatomy	They are traditional concepts.
Ignoring contraindications	Check with your doctor.
Expecting energy experiences	Treat sensations as information.

9. Questions people ask

Is prana the same as breath?

Not exactly. In tradition prana is life force and breath is a way to work with it.

Are nadis real?

They are traditional concepts. They do not match nerves or blood vessels.

What are bandhas?

Traditional muscular locks used in some practices.

Are bandhas safe?

Gentle awareness is usually fine, but strong locks and holds are not suitable for everyone.

10. A pre-session checklist

- Have I eaten lightly, at least two hours ago, and had some water?
- Is my space clear, warm and free from interruptions?
- Do I know what I will practise, and how long I have?
- Is there anything in my body today (pain, tiredness, illness) that means I should do less?
- Do I know my stop signs: sharp pain, dizziness, breathlessness?

Running through these five questions takes less than a minute and prevents most beginner problems.

11. Your first week, day by day

Day	Suggestion
1	Read this guide. Try just the warm-up and the final rest.
2	Rest, or a five-minute walk.
3	Repeat day 1 and add one new pose or step.
4	Rest.
5	Practise a short version. Notice how you feel afterwards.
6	Write a few lines in the practice log.
7	Rest. Plan next week from what you noticed.

Three short sessions a week are a good start. Regular, gentle practice builds confidence, and rest days let the body adapt.

12. Glossary

Term	Plain meaning
Prana	Life force in yoga.
Nadi	Energy channel, in tradition.
Bandha	Lock.
Kumbhaka	Breath retention.

Reminder

This guide is general education and not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat or cure any condition. If you have a health concern, speak with your doctor before starting a new practice.

Practice log

Print this page and keep a short record. Notes help you see patterns over time.

Day	Minutes	Practice done	How it felt	Notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				