



Prenatal Yoga Tip #2 – Mula Bandha

Mula bandha, also known as Kegel exercises or root lock are important for everyone but are essential during pregnancy! So, what's a bandha anyway?

A bandha is an internal "lock" we create with muscles and breath in order to hold energy in the body during a yoga practice. There are three different bandhas and a fourth, which is created by drawing in all three at once. Mula bandha is a contraction of the pelvic floor. If you're pregnant, the mula bandha is the only one you want to focus on right now.

The pelvic floor muscles form the supporting base below the downward compression of the growing baby in the womb. This compression force becomes stronger as pregnancy progresses. The pelvic floor must also become stronger to counteract this force in order to support the mother's internal organs and help her maintain postural integrity.

These muscles will also be used during labour and delivery. A stronger pelvic floor (or mula bandha) generally means an easier birth as these muscles are what are used to push the baby out. They will be stretched during a vaginal birth, so having performed mula bandha prior to delivery will greatly enhance a woman's ability to tone these muscles after the baby has arrived.

There are a variety of different mula bandha exercises one can perform. Here are two examples:

1. Simple Contraction – on the inhale squeeze and contract your entire pelvic floor on the inhale (imagine there is a long line at the bathroom and you really need to go). Lift entire pelvic floor like a suction cup. Exhale release and relax.
2. Contract and Hold – contract the pelvic floor on the inhale and hold. Make sure to keep breathing, you can count to 5 or 10, or hold for one breath cycle. Remember to release and relax on an exhale.

In Prenatal yoga we focus on doing kegels by squeezing the pelvic floor on the inhale (note: once the baby is born or whenever not pregnant we squeeze the pelvic floor on the exhale)