

# Spandana

Yoga therapy tools from Leigh Blashki

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Spanda is a Sanskrit term that refers to the subtle creative pulse of the universe as it manifests into the dynamism of living form. The word “spanda” is variously translated as vibration; scintillation; throb; subtle pulse; or micro-movement.

According to the Spanda Karika, a 9<sup>th</sup> Century Tantra Yoga text of the Kashmir Shaivism tradition, all of life is imbued with spanda – something that is not quite physical, but more than just energetic. The term is used to describe the pulse-like or wave-like movement of consciousness within manifested life. Spanda can be regarded as a means by which Siva Consciousness moves into expression through the power of Shakti (expressed as both cosmic and terrestrial nature).

As photons are to light, in a similar way spanda can be regarded as the foundation of prana. Some scholars believe that in fact prana is derived from spanda.

When we can sense the throb of spanda inside us, we are sensing our personalized spark of the omnipresent and vast primordial life force. Spanda vitalizes every movement – the breath, cellular metabolism, thoughts and feelings.

By attuning to spanda and working with it, we not only release contractions on the physical level, but go deep into ourselves to reveal our authentic, multidimensional wholeness.

Spandana provides a series of simple and effective tools that are applied at the physical level in order to gain a connection with our subtle spanda.

Spandana utilizes a range of pulsing techniques that help the physical body better align with its subtle counterparts. These pulsing techniques can be self-applied, or provided by another person.

While spandana is primarily a set of tools related to the traditional principles of spanda, in recent decades similar practices have been developed and explored by mind-body workers informed more by the prevailing Western world-view relating to well-being.

In the 1970s practitioners such as Curtis Turchin started using small pulsing movements that they found helpful in: releasing physical tension; increasing range of motion and flexibility; and improved general sense of energy and well-being.

The spandana practices explored in this workshop can form a valuable part of the yoga therapy toolkit. As with all practices that have just been learnt, it is recommended that you practice them yourself numerous times before assisting clients with them. Before using the therapist assisted practices with clients, yoga therapists are encouraged to carefully consider how this ‘hands-on’ assisting fits with their interpretation of the yoga therapist’s scope of practice.