

Basic Theory of Bharatanatyam

Single Hand Gestures (Asamyutha Hastha)

There are 28 single hand gestures, each with defined uses, according to the Abhinaya Darpanam

Pataaka-s

Tripataako

Ardhapataaka-h

Kartarimukha-ha

Mayura-akhyo

Ardhachandra-scha

Araala-h

Shukathundaka-ha

Mushti-scha

Shikhara-akhyascha

Kapiththa-h

Katakamukha-ha

Soochee

Chandrakala

Padmakosha-h

Sarpasira-sthatha

Mrigasheersha-h

Simhamukha-ha

Kangula-scha

Alapadmaka-ha

Chaturo

Bhramara-schaiva

Hamsasyo

Hamsapakshaka-ha

Sandamsho

Mukula-schaiva

Thaamrachooda-h

Thrishoolaka-ha

*Ithya Asamyutha Hasthaanaam,
Ashtaa vimshathi reerithaa*

Meaning: These are the twenty-eight single hand gestures

Double Hand Gestures (Samyutha Hastha)

Anjali-scha

Kapota-scha

Karkataka-h

Swastika-sthatha

Dola hastha

Pushpaputa-ha

Utsanga

Shivalingaka-ha

Katakavardhana-schaiva

Kartariswatika-sthatha

Shakatam

Shanka

Chakra-icha

Samputa-ha

Paasha

Keelaka-u

Matsya

Kurmo

Varaha-scha

Garudo

Nagabandhaka-ha

Khatva

Bherunda

*Ithyethe sankhyathaaha samyuthaa karaaha
Meaning: These are the double hand gestures*

Head Movements (Shiro Bhedha)

Samam

Udvahitam

Adhomukham

Aalolitam

Dhutam

Kampitancha

Paravrittam

Ukshiptam

Parivahitam

Navadha Katitham Sheersham Natyashastra vishaaradhahi

Meaning: These are the nine head movements, according to the Natya Shastra

Eye Movements (Drishti Bhedha)

Samam

Alokitam

Sachi

Pralokita

Nimeelita

Ullokita

thadachaiva (and)

Avalokitam

Ithyashtau Drishti bedhasyuhu, keerthithaa poorva suribihi

Meaning: These are the eight eye movements

Neck Movements (Greeva Bhedha)

Sundari-cha

Tirascheena

thathaiva (and)

Parivarthitha

Prakampitha –*cha bhaavagnaihi, Greeva bhedha chaturvidha*

Meaning: These are the four neck movements