

A Journey Through Chakras

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As part of our subtle body, it is said we have 7 chakras or spinning wheels or disks. Chakra is pronounced with the “ch” similar to “cherrio’s.” The chakras travel up the length of our spine starting at the base and moving up to the crown of our head. Each chakra represents a different energy and relies upon the chakras surrounding them to also feel balanced. If our first chakra is unbalanced, perhaps we’ve just lost our job; it’s difficult to feel emotionally grounded, as we are most likely focusing on the security lost in losing our regular source of income. Along the same line, when we are working through grief we often feel that our inner strength has been diminished, and that it is difficult to put our grief into words – characteristics of both the lower and upper chakras surrounding our heart.

Muladhara or Root Chakra: Is considered our first chakra and represents safety and security. Located at the base of our spine, represented by the colour red, the earth and a general sense of grounding. This chakra becomes imbalanced when things we rely upon are in flux, such as when we find ourselves between homes or jobs. In our society we need both a home to live and a stream of income coming in to support us, if these things are challenged it also challenges our safety and security in the world. *To bring our Root Chakra into balance: grounding exercises such as walking in bare feet on the grass, standing poses in yoga such as warriors or chair pose.*

Svadhithana or Sacral Chakra: The second chakra is represented by the colour orange, the element of water and the ability to go with the flow. Located between our navel and pelvic bone, this chakra is our emotional wellbeing, our creativity and sexuality. When this chakra is balanced we feel in tune with ourselves and comfortable with the ebb and flow and life’s challenges. Imbalances often show up as physical tightness in the hips, and a discomfort with intimacy. *To bring our Sacral Chakra into balance: get close to water, walk down the beach or watch a gentle stream flow. In yoga focusing on gentle hip openers is a wonderful way to release stored emotions and connect to somatic awareness.*

Manipura or Solar Plexus Chakra: Translated to mean “city of jewels” our third chakra governs our inner strength and power. Located between our diaphragm and navel and defined by the colour yellow, the element of fire and also encompasses our digestive fire or tapas to get things done. There is a very close connection between the 2nd and 3rd chakras as they both represent how we understand and define ourselves. My favourite example of this chakra in balance is when we are doing tough abdominal exercises and we get this rush of “YES! I can do this, I am strong” that’s the third chakra showing its true colours. Deficiencies in this chakra often show up as feeling overwhelmed by the world around

us and often manifest as digestive issues. *To bring the Solar Plexus Chakra into balance: meditate on a mantra that builds confidence “I am resilient” or “I am in charge of me.” In yoga practicing poses that build abdominal strength such as side plank or boat pose.*

Anahata or Heart Chakra: This is the chakra of love and gratitude, universal love for all things. The colour green, the element of air and the sensation of feeling open across our chest and upper back, which is where this chakra is located – our heart centre. The English translation of Anahata is un-struck or un-hurt and so the important aspects of the fourth chakra are forgiveness and the ability to release grief. *To bring our Heart Chakra into balance: spend time with those you love whether people, animals or nature. Our connection to others is paramount to this chakra. In yoga practicing heart openers or back bends frees our body of tension and opens us up to the love waiting around us.*

Vishuddha or Throat Chakra: Our fifth chakra is our truth, the ability to speak our truth out loud and also to ourselves. We all know the feeling of having a lump in our throat when we are scared to speak. This is a block in our throat chakra. This powerful chakra is represented by the colour blue and the element of ether or space; closely aligned to our Heart Chakra, when we are unable to speak our truth we will also feel blocked in our heart. Characteristics of imbalance in this chakra are both not saying anything and talking too much. Those with imbalances will often suffer from chronic throat conditions. *To bring our Throat Chakra into balance: practice chanting or just sing out loud! Sing in the shower, sing in the car – let your voice be heard. In Yoga, poses that welcome an opening in the throat such as camel pose or fish pose. Ujjayi breathing is also healing for the vibrations experienced in our throat.*

Ajna or Third Eye Chakra: Is our space of intuition; that we know what the best thing for us is, though often it becomes buried in our desire to please others. Identified by the colour indigo or purple and located in the space between our brow, this chakra is extremely important as it provides our sense of self in the world. It is connected to our pituitary gland – interesting that this is the gland connected to puberty and the exact time we start to find our independence. This chakra is about trusting ourselves, the ability to see clearly. Also closely linked to the 5th chakra and the ability to speak our truth, the 6th chakra is our ability to see our truth. *To bring our Third Eye Chakra into balance: practice journaling as a cathartic way to move through your emotions, discovering what is true in your heart. In Yoga, meditation or any point we pause to reflect. In Child’s Pose, bringing your forehead to our mats and gently rocking side to side stimulates our third eye.*

Sahasrara or Crown Chakra: Located at the crown of our head, this chakra represents our spirituality and/or connection to a higher power whether through religion or a general connection to the universe at large, the seat of cosmic consciousness. Our seventh chakra is about surrendering and presented through the colour purple or white. Interesting that we are born with our crown chakra fully open - the soft spot on our skull, and as we continue to grow our skull closes and we become more challenged to stay balanced in this space. *To bring our Crown Chakra into balance we must meditate; to spend time in quiet space, fully present in the moment. In Yoga, we can practice inversions such as Headstand or Handstand, or even Rabbit Pose – seated almost in Child’s Pose with the crown of our head forward and gently touching the floor.*

Resources:

The Chakra Balancing Kit by: Anodea Judith
Eastern Body, Western Mind by: Anodea Judith
A Handbook of Chakra Healing by: Kalashatra Govinda
Chakra Meditation by: Swami Saradananda
The Chakra Bible by: Patricia Mercier