

# CHAKRAS

“Wheels”

According to the ancient yogis, there are 72,000 “Nadis” or energy channels within the human physical body. These are the same as the “chi” lines in Thai Chi and the “meridians” in Chinese medicine. These energy channels are a part of the “subtle” body. The channels cross at various places through out the body. There are 7 main places along the spine where the nadis cross. These main energy centers are called **Chakras**, or literally “wheels”- “Wheels of Energy”; Wheels of Light.”

Chakras are the centers of vital energy in the body that are responsible for balancing all levels of being-physical, psychological, and spiritual. Thus the Mind, Body, Breath connection that we often hear about. This is what makes yoga different from a regular exercise program.

The Chakras regulate the flow of subtle energy within the body.

Each Chakra resonates at a different frequency, a different refraction of Infinite Light. Red has a slower vibration, bends the least and is associated with the Root Chakra- the 1<sup>st</sup> and closest to the Earth. Violet is refracted the most, vibrates at the highest frequency and therefore corresponds to the Crown Chakra, the highest Chakra.

Yoga postures evolved as a means for opening and balancing the Chakras.

Auras are considered the visible expressions of the Chakras.

Yogis believe the chakras hold the fullest potential of each and every person and are the key to health.



**7<sup>th</sup> SAHASRARA  
CROWN CHAKRA**

**6<sup>th</sup> AJNA  
THIRD EYE CHAKRA**

**5<sup>th</sup> VISHUDDA  
THROAT CHAKRA**

**4<sup>th</sup> ANAHATA  
HEART CHAKRA**

**3<sup>rd</sup> MANIPURA  
SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA**

**2<sup>nd</sup> SVADHISHTHANA  
PELVIC CHAKRA**

**1<sup>st</sup> MULADHARA  
ROOT CHAKRA**

## MULADHARA CHAKRA

“Root Support”

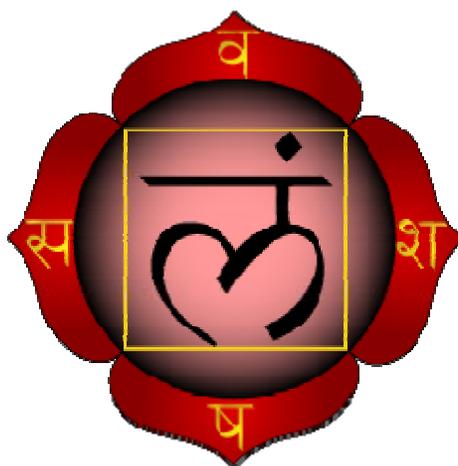
The 1<sup>st</sup> Chakra, or root chakra is the foundation of our system. It relates to the Earth, our feeling of being grounded and our sense of security. It is the building block of all the other chakras-built from the bottom or “foundation” up. The root chakra controls how you deal with family, money, basic needs, and survival.

**PHYSICAL LOCATION:** the perineum, at the base of the spine between the coccyx, pubic bone and sitting bone

**ELEMENT:** Earth    **COLOR:** Red    **SENSE:** Smell    **FORCE:** Gravity

**AREAS OF THE BODY:** Bones; Feet; Legs; Elimination system; Immune system

**MUDRA:** Earth    **BANDHA:** Mula    **MANTRA:** “I am safe.”



**WHEN UNBALANCED/ BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:**

Addictive behavior  
Intimacy avoidance  
Self Centeredness  
Distrustful, fearful  
Workaholic, driven by lack of self worth  
Health issues: constipation, hemorrhoids, obesity, sciatica, low back pain, bulimia  
Feeling: out of control, unable to make decisions, financial irresponsibility, family problems

**WHEN BALANCED/NOT BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:**

Valuing oneself  
Self confidence/able to trust  
Not afraid of change  
Able to be in the present moment  
Able to trust in the universe  
Able to learn from adversity  
Feel secure  
Feel grounded

**ASANA EXAMPLES THAT BALANCE THE ROOT CHAKRA:**

Mountain pose  
Bridge pose  
Sun Salutations  
Hero pose  
Hindi Squat

Seated Forward Fold  
Cobblers pose  
Child pose  
Chair pose  
Cow Face pose

Staff pose  
Boat pose  
Wind Release Pose  
Splits  
Swan Pose

## SVADHISTHANA CHAKRA

“Water Chakra”

The 2nd Chakra, or water chakra literally means “one’s own dwelling place”. It is regarded as the basis of all human existence. Without water, nothing could exist. This chakra brings movement to the other elements and mixes them together to create life. It is about fluidity, the flow of life and dealing with change. Like the ebb and flow of the tides, this chakra holds tremendous power that if harnessed and channeled correctly can help one overcome the patterns of the unconscious mind and find great fulfillment in life.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: the sacral spine, approximately 4 fingers below the navel

ELEMENT: Water COLOR: Orange SENSE: Touch FORCE: Magnetism

AREAS OF THE BODY: Hips, inner thighs, bladder, kidneys, sexual organs,

MUDRA: Apana

MANTRA: “I flow with the rhythm of life.”



WHEN UNBALANCED/ BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Never having enough; tries to buy happiness  
Trying to “keep up with the Jones”  
Shallow Relationships  
Shame of sexuality/body or exhibitionism  
Health issues: frigidity, impotence  
low back pain, urinary problems

Feelings: possessiveness, seek satisfaction  
through senses, food, material possessions,  
status, craves stimulation; inadequacy

WHEN BALANCED/NOT BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Creativity  
Empathy for others  
Able to have genuine intimacy  
Able to “Go with the Flow”  
Able to have passion for life  
Able to truly enjoy  
Able to share knowledge  
Able to give generously

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT BALANCE THE WATER CHAKRA:

Hip openers	Wide leg forward folds	Reverse Table	Cat pose
Fish pose	Supine Cobblers pose	Cobra	Scales pose
Short flows	Chair pose	Warrior II	Bow pose

# MANIPURA CHAKRA

"Navel Center"

The 3rd Chakra, literally means "city of the jewel". Fire is the element and with it comes choice, action, vitality and will. This chakra has been compared to the power of the sun as it warms, moves and activates us. Because of the intensity of the pranic energy contained in this chakra, it also refers to "tapas", the fire in the belly that brings forth transformation. With the right balance, this chakra gives you your "glow, burns your ego and illuminates your mind. Without it, you would have no life, no energy.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: the solar plexus; just above the naval

ELEMENT: Fire COLOR: Yellow SENSE: Sight FORCE: Combustion

AREAS OF THE BODY: stomach, liver, small intestine, middle spine

MUDRA: Naga BANDHA: Uddiana MANTRA: "I stand in my personal power."



WHEN UNBALANCED/ BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Too little: insecure, oversensitivity,  
need external validation, fear rejection,  
dogmatic conformity, allow people to walk  
over you /or take advantage, can become  
introverted and/or depressed

Too much: controlling, think you are always  
right, self centered, everything is me,me,me  
greedy, power hungry, blind to own faults

Health issues: diabetes, hepatitis, ulcers  
indigestion, more digestion in general

WHEN BALANCED/NOT BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Sense of self worth: Practical  
Control over actions  
Have will power  
Can handle crises, generate action  
Develop strength through courage/  
able to stand in own truth  
Have transformative power

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT BALANCE THE NAVEL CHAKRA:

Twists	Triangle	Seated Forward Fold	Pyramid
Lateral bends	Warrior poses	Plank	Wheel
Back bends	Downward Dog	Camel	Bow pose

# ANAHATA CHAKRA

"Heart Center"

The 4<sup>th</sup> Chakra is the halfway point between the 3 lower chakras and the 3 higher chakras, balancing the physical plane-Mother Earth with the spiritual plane-Father Sky. It literally means "unstuck sound" and is where we begin to tune into the subtle sound of the pulse of life. It is associated with the element of air and relates to our emotional thoughts, ideas and inspirations. Balancing the Anahata chakra allows us to release our emotional pain through unconditional love. The ancient Yogis believed that your "jiva atman" -personal spirit(soul)- resides in the heart chakra. It is where we begin to move beyond our material self to the divine self, connecting ourselves to the universe. As the heart center expands our seed of inner peace and harmony is able to open and grow.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: center of the chest

ELEMENT: Air COLOR: Green SENSE: Touch FORCE: Equilibrium

AREAS OF THE BODY: heart, lungs, shoulders, arms

MUDRA: Lotus @ heart BANDHA: Maha MANTRA: "I open my heart to-----."



WHEN UNBALANCED/ BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Too little: loneliness, jealousy, bitterness  
inability to forgive, pessimism, alienation,  
attachment, passive aggression, inability  
to love, judgmental, lack empathy  
Too much: emotional flamboyance,  
overly dramatic, smothering behavior  
Health issues: asthma, heart problems,  
circulatory system, respiratory system

WHEN BALANCED/NOT BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Unconditional love  
Harmony with nature  
Positive neutrality  
Harmonious relationships  
Nonjudgmental of self or others  
Compassionate  
Peaceful

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT BALANCE THE HEART CHAKRA:

Heart openers  
Lateral bends  
Back bends

Triangle  
Crescent Warrior  
Downward Dog

Dolphin  
Upward Plank  
Camel

Chest expansion  
Wheel  
Bow pose

# VISHUDDHA CHAKRA

"Throat Chakra"

Where, the first 3 chakras represent the lower earth plane and the 4<sup>th</sup> is where we balance the lower and higher planes, the 5<sup>th</sup> Chakra is where we begin to focus on the higher(spiritual) plane. Moving to rhythm, the vibration of sound, communication through writing and speaking are all functions of the Vishuddha Chakra. Literally "deep or extreme purification", this chakra brings together the "Jiva," individual consciousness with the "Atman," universal consciousness, allowing us to tap into our creativity and intention to bring about an underlying vibrational harmony to our entire being. It is like the brain of all the chakras as it controls all of the elements and allows them to work in unison. When the Anahata (Heart) Chakra, is balanced, the Vishuddha Chakra automatically communicates from the higher plane and unconditional love unfolds.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: throat

ELEMENT: Space COLOR: Blue SENSE: Sound FORCE: Vibration

AREAS OF THE BODY: throat, mouth, neck, shoulders

MUDRA: Shunya(Heaven) BANDHA: Jalandhara MANTRA: "I speak and follow my truth."



WHEN UNBALANCED/ BLOCKED

CAN MANIFEST IN:

Too little: have difficulty finding the right words; fear of speaking; secretive; shy; can't find your own voice; are overshadowed by other's truths; unable to reach full potential

Too much: loud; talk too much; aggressive; lie without lying-; gossip; very critical; unable to listen

Health issues: ear, nose, throat problems; stiff neck; TMJ-teeth grinding, jaw problems; thyroid problems

WHEN BALANCED/NOT BLOCKED

CAN MANIFEST IN:

Being in tune with surroundings

Coinciding principle working

Communications are clear

Able to speak own truth

Can see yourself clearly & able to listen to and follow the Universe

Live in harmony

Hearing what has not been said

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT BALANCE THE THROAT CHAKRA:

Neck Postures

Forward bends

Back bends

Shoulder Stand

Shoulder Postures

Yoga Mudra

Reverse Table

Fish

Chanting/singing

Upward Plank

Camel

Downward Dog

Chest expansion

Bridge/Wheel

Plow

Rabbit

# AJNA CHAKRA

"The Third Eye"

The Ajna Chakra is the highest of the psychic centers in man. Ajna literally means "command" and oversees all of the elements and the chakras. Where the Vishuddha Chakra is the music that brings the elements and chakras together facilitating the making of beautiful music; Ajna is the conductor of the orchestra. Ajna is the window of the soul and when open, psychic abilities are said to unfold. It is considered the seat of intuition, where wisdom and knowledge unfold. Reference to the Ajna chakra can be found in many different religious texts (including the Bible) and cultures; even Plato wrote of the "eye of the soul that can be awakened by the correct means." When the mind is still (Yogash Chitta Vritti Nirodah), and the lower Chakras balanced, Ajna Chakra opens to communicate with the higher plane to bring inspiration, creativity, clarity of thought and healing.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: center of forehead between eye brows

ELEMENT: Space/light COLOR: Indigo SENSE: Intuition FORCE: Psychic

AREAS OF THE BODY: eye, head, sinuses, the senses

MUDRA: Hakini Mudra BANDHA: Maha MANTRA: "I see." "I follow the path of truth."



WHEN CLOSED/ BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Overactive: inability to look within and see ourselves as we are; confusion as to what is real; difficulty concentrating; headaches; hallucinations; nightmares  
Lacking: poor memory; lack of clarity about life-where we are going; unable to find our true path; can't see alternatives; skeptical; inability to focus  
Health issues: sense related(eye or ear problems); sinuses, headaches

WHEN OPEN/NOT BLOCKED  
CAN MANIFEST IN:

Clear perception  
Reliable intuition  
Able to feel underlying vibration  
Able to follow own truth  
Able to see your path  
Have gift of insight

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT OPEN THE AJNA CHAKRA:

Balances	Inversions	Chanting/singing	Gate	Shoulder Stand
Eye Movements	Yoga Mudra	Tree	Bridge	Hand Stand
Child	Seated Wide Leg Fold	Standing Fold	Plow	Sunbird
Head to Knee	Fish	Downward Dog	Rabbit	Runners Lunge

# SAHASRARA CHAKRA

"The Crown"

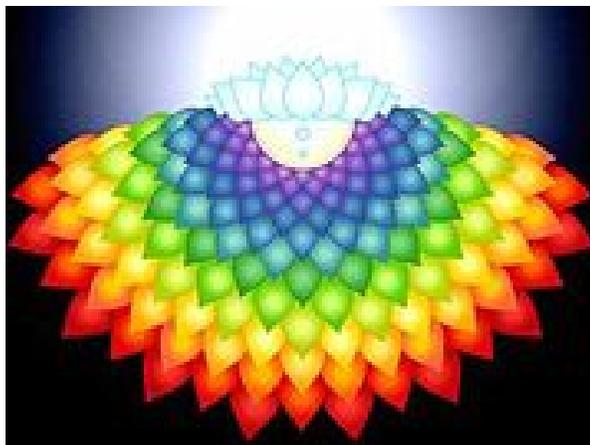
Considered the 7<sup>th</sup> Chakra, Sahasrara literally means "one thousand" and is often depicted as a 1000 petal lotus flower in full bloom at the crown of the head. As the lotus flower is a symbol of enlightenment to the Yogi's, Sahasrara is all about Knowing. Sahasrara is not like the other chakras as it is everything and nothing all at once. It isn't really opened or balanced; one could say more like "reached"-it just is. Any way we define it would actually be incorrect because we would then limit it and Sahasrara is that which cannot be limited. It is said to be infinite, but even that would be incorrect because that would be categorizing it. Sahasrara is form without form. The experience, the experienced and the experiencer; the seeing, the seer and the seen are all one in the same. The lower chakras are the switches and the Sahasrara is the power. It vibrates to the sound of silence-the sound before sound. It is pure Bliss.

PHYSICAL LOCATION: top of head; projecting up from the anterior fontenelle

ELEMENT: beyond elements-thought COLOR: Crystal light/violet SENSE: Divine FORCE: Consciousness

AREAS OF THE BODY: brain; nervous system

MUDRA: Lotus BANDHA: All MANTRA: "I know." "I accept."



WHEN CLOSED/ BLOCKED

CAN MANIFEST IN:

- Closed mindedness
- Live in head
- Several emotional difficulties
- Spiritual elitism/extremism
- Abuse of "lower" life forms

WHEN "REACHED"

CAN MANIFEST IN:

- Open mindedness
- Acceptance of all
- Inner wisdom-where you just know
- At peace with oneself
- Bliss/Samadhi/Nirvana

ASANA EXAMPLES THAT ALLOW ONE TO REACH SAHASRARA:

Meditation          Inversions          Lotus          Handstand          Headstand

All of the lower chakras must be balanced in order to reach Sahasrara

REFERENCES:

ASHTANGA YOGA PRIMER—BABA HARI DASS

CHAKRA YOGA—ALAN FINGER

GUIDING YOGA'S LIGHT—NANCY GERSTIEN

HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA—SWAMI MUKTIBODHANANDA

THE KUNDALINI YOGA EXPERIENCE—GURU DHARAM S. KHALSA &  
DARRYL O'KEEFFE

MUDRAS, YOGA IN YOUR HANDS—GERTRUD HIRSCHI

NAMASTE YOGA WORKSHOP—KATE POTTER

YOGA AND KRIYA—SWAMI SATYANANDA SARASWATI

YOGA BEYOND BELIEF—GANGA WHITE

YOGA TEACHERS' TOOLBOX—JOSEPH & LILIAN LEPAGE