

The 7 Chakra

Inside the body there are seven energy centers, where physical, psychological and emotional forces interact and intercept. These centers are called chakra, which means wheel or circle. Prana inhaled in the nadi is directed to the different chakras during meditation to stimulate the particular energy center, healing and opening the area. When the energy is blocked to a certain chakra illness can occur. Each chakra is associated with different organs, endocrine glands and nerve plexuses. When we understand the parts of the body affected by each chakra we can use them to heal or avoid illnesses and create a deeper awareness of the corpo sottile.

In this paper I will discuss each chakra and its location, the parts of the body associated with this chakra, the primary functions the chakra is responsible for, possible illnesses that can result from blockages to the chakra and ways to balance or open the chakra. I will also indicate the color, mantra, foods and element associated with the chakra. Each chakra has a very specific symbol, which can be used for meditation. I have added a diagram to the end of this paper to show the major concepts of each chakra and the image.

The first chakra, Muladhara, is located at the base of the spine. It is associated with the sacral and pelvic nerve plexuses. Physical concerns include bowel functioning, while psychological issues include emotional security, survival and self-preservation worries. A lack of energy in this chakra creates feelings of insecurity, problems with bowel functioning and fear of others for self-preservation. Sitting directly on the earth and dancing are ways to activate this chakra, creating a sense of stability, security and a strong foundation for managing the complexities of life. The color associated with this chakra is red. The mantra of the Muladhara chakra is LAM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include roots, spices, vegetables and protein rich foods. Earth is the element associated with the first chakra.

The second chakra, Svadisthana, is located within the spinal column across from and slightly above the genital area. It is associated plexus and nerves of the sexual organs. Physical concerns include urinary functioning, sexuality issues and lower back pain. A lack of energy in this chakra creates urinary or genital problems. It may result in an excessive desire for sensual pleasure or a lack of desire and aversion to the opposite sex. Creatively expressing yourself, dancing, moving your hips, sexual healing and practicing yoga are ways to activate this chakra, creating self-confidence, stability and well-being. The color associated with this chakra is orange. The mantra of the Svadisthana chakra is VAM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include sweet fruits, spices, honey and nuts. Water is the element associated with the second chakra.

The third chakra, Manipura, is located across from the naval in the spinal cord. It is associated with the celiac plexus of nerves, the adrenal glands and the pancreas. It is the center of power. Physical concerns include stomach and digestive issues, while psychological issues involve the ego and competitiveness. Illnesses associated with this chakra include anorexia, bulimia, excesses financial worries, dominance or submissiveness issues, and excessive need to prove oneself. Breathing using the diaphragm, rubbing the belly and meditating on the energy radiating from the solar plexus are ways to activate this chakra, creating a sense of determination, assertiveness and personal power. The color associated with this chakra is yellow. The mantra of the Manipura chakra is RAM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include grains, dairy and spices. Fire is the element associated with the third chakra.

The fourth chakra, Anahata, is located across from the heart in the spinal cord. It is associated with the cardiac plexus of nerves. It allows us to emotionally, physically and spiritually nurture others. Physical concerns include lung and heart disease, while psychological issues include apathy or inability to offer love. A lack of energy in this chakra blocks feeling so love, compassion and empathy. Meditation, practicing yoga

and swimming are ways to activate this chakra, creating a sense of love, perseverance, stability, mental patience and compassion. The color associated with this chakra is green. The mantra of the Anahata chakra is YAM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include leafy vegetables, spices and liquids. Air is the element associated with the fourth chakra.

The fifth chakra, Vishuddha, is located across from the throat within the cervical spine. It is associated with cervical nerve plexus, the voice box and the thyroid gland. Physical concerns include poor metabolism, thyroid disease, respiratory and throat problems, while psychological issues include difficulty communicating or expressing ourselves creatively. Singing, humming, concentrating on breath and chanting are ways to activate this chakra, creating a sense of creativity, eloquence, communication and intuition. The color associated with this chakra is blue. The mantra of the Vishuddha chakra is HAM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include tart or tangy fruits, liquids, tree grown fruits and spices. Ether is the element associated with the fifth chakra.

The sixth chakra, Ajna, is located between the eyebrows. It is associated with the pineal and pituitary glands and the naso-ciliary plexus. This chakra is associated with the qualities of intuition, wisdom and clarity of vision. A lack of energy in this chakra leads to confusion and sometimes mental illness. Meditation and guided visualization are ways to activate this chakra, creating intuition, insight, imagination, self-mastery and concentration. The color associated with this chakra is purple or indigo. The mantra of the Ajna chakra is OM. Foods useful in activating this chakra include dark bluish colored fruits, liquids and spices. Mind is the element associated with the sixth chakra.

The seventh chakra, Sahasrara, is located just above the top of the head. It is associated with the cerebral cortex of the brain. It is an all-inclusive chakra, assimilating the other six and connecting the personal self to the universal self. There is no distinction between the knower and the known, just perfect understanding in this chakra. Meditation, guided visualization and energy work are ways to activate this chakra, creating unity, bliss and a sense of empathy. The color associated with this chakra is white, or it may take on the color of the dominant chakra. The Sahasrara chakra does not have a specific mantra, as all mantras stimulate this chakra. There are no foods related to this chakra, rather air, incense and herbs stimulate it. Space and thought are the elements associated with the seventh chakra, but it is said to incorporate all the elements.

As with all practices in yoga, the chakras must be experienced, not just intellectually understood. Every person is different and approaches meditation and yoga in a different way. For some people it may be beneficial to meditate using the image of the chakra or its color, for others focusing on the parts of the body will be most beneficial, and for yet other people repeating the mantra associated with the chakra is the most beneficial way to access its benefits. At times it is helpful to focus on one single chakra, spending a lot of time understanding and experiencing it. At other times it can be beneficial to do an overall scan of all seven chakras to see where there is an abundance or lack of energy. There are many ways to explore and rebalance these energy points; it is up to the practitioner to find the path best indicated for them.

Chakra	Color	Primary Functions	Associated Element	Location	Open or Balance	Foods	Symbol
Crown sahasrāra, सहस्रार	white or violet; may assume color of dominant chakra	Union, Bliss, Sense of empathy	space / thought	Top of the head	Meditation, guided visualization, energy work	Air, Incense and Smudging Herbs,	
Third eye ājñā, आज्ञा	indigo	Direct perception, intuition, imagination, visualization, concentration, Self-mastery, Extra Sensory Perception	time / light	Between the eyebrows	Meditation, guided visualization.	Dark bluish colored fruits, Liquids, Spices	
Throat viśuddha, विशुद्ध	azure blue	Creativity, communication, expression, eloquence, Intuition, synthesis, hearing	life / sound	Base of the throat	Sing, chant, hum, breathe consciously.	Liquids, Tart or tangy fruits, Other tree grown fruits, Spices	
Heart/Lung anāhata, अनाहत	green	Love, wisdom, stability, perseverance, mental patience and equilibrium, or pleasure, Compassion, Touch	air	Center of the chest	Meditating, practising yoga or other bodily techniques, by swimming regularly (because water has healing powers)	Leafy vegetables, Air vegetables, Liquids, Spices	
Solar plexus manipūra, मणिपूर	yellow	Will, determination, assertion, personal power, laughter, joy, anger, sight	fire	Located at the mouth of the stomach	Rub your belly, become aware of the energy radiating from your solar plexus, breathe using your diaphragm.	Granola and Grains, Dairy, Spices	
Sacrum svādhīsthāna, स्वाधिष्ठान	orange	Creativity, sexual energy (for women), desire, pleasure, Stability, self confidence, well-being, taste	Water	The lower belly	Sexual healing, try new ways of expressing yourself creatively, dance, move your hips, practice yoga.	Sweet fruits, honey, nuts, spices	
Root mūlādhāra, मूलाधार	red or coral red (shown)	Survival, grounding, sexuality (for men), stability, smell	Earth	The base of the spine	Spend some time each day sitting directly on the earth. Dance!	Root vegetables, Protein-rich foods, Spices	

Resources:

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