

Chakra

Introduction

“May the force be with you.”

The term emerged as a popular catchphrase and blessing with the success of the Star Wars film series beginning in the 1970s.

Since that time, the popularity of the ancient Indian practice of yoga has steadily increased in modern cultures.

A coincidence? Probably not. Because the ancient and powerful idea behind “the force” forms the foundation of the philosophy and practice of yoga’s chakra system.

The chakras offer a means of identifying and channeling the Universal Life Force – the power that teachers in ancient India (and many contemporary physicists) say swirls through the cosmos, nature and our bodies. The chakra system shows how you can gain that “force” and “keep it with you” for a lifetime to improve your health, emotions, spirituality and every other aspect of your being.

If that sounds a little far-fetched to our postmodern ears, consider a 2002 article in *The Wall Street Journal*. The article cited studies performed by mainstream medical institutions that found yoga provided significant relief to those suffering from chronic back pain, cardiovascular disease, mental health challenges and respiratory problems.

More studies uncovering further benefits enjoyed by people practicing yoga and chakra health continue to emerge each year.

Modern science is beginning to catch on to what yoga practitioners have known for thousands of years: the power of chakras.

A basic chakra kit offers an introduction on how to balance and maintain your chakra system. It also contains a velvety pouch with seven colored stones – each variety of stone corresponds to a different chakra. These stones are ancient Indian meditation tools that work on the same principle as the chakras.

To use the stones, simply place the corresponding stone on or near the body part associated with the chakra you would like to balance. Then meditate on the color and the elements associated with that chakra.

According to tradition, one should “cleanse” the stones before using them to clear them of residual energies. To purify chakra stones, simply place them in direct sunlight for a couple hours. Because it is composed of every color of light, sunlight neutralizes the stones’ energy palette.

The Meaning of Chakra

Chakra means “wheel” or “disc” in the Sanskrit language of ancient India. According to Indian teachings, all of the chakras spin within our bodies like windmills, channeling the Universal Life Force into us and through us, regulating out energies, emotions and health.

The center of the body contains seven major chakras, or energy centers, positioned vertically along the spine from the groin to the crown of the head.

Each of the chakras relates to a different aspect of your life. The lowest chakra corresponds to fundamental requirements, such as the need for security and survival. As the chakras move up the body, their effects elevate to our higher-level functions and desires, such as communication and spirituality.

But no chakra is an island.

Together, the seven chakras form a holistic system; they must spin in harmony for you to feel energized and to achieve your full potential. When your system becomes unbalanced because one chakra is spinning too fast or too slow, you are thrown off stride and weakened. Your life “force” becomes less forceful and, as a result, you become less content, confident, healthy and effective.

By working to balance your chakras using the techniques outlined in this book, you can optimize the functioning of the chakra system – thereby clearing the path to deeper personal fulfillment, wholeness, and a sense of harmony with the world.

Chakra 1: Dark, clear stone.

Chakra 2: Light brown stone.

Chakra 3: Yellow stone.

Chakra 4: Lighter blue stone.

Chakra 5: Darker blue stone.

Chakra 6: Violet stone.

Chakra 7: Light rose stone.

Chakra 1: The Root Chakra (Muladhara)

Color: Red.

Element: Earth.

Stone: Smokey Quartz.

Sense: Smell.

Just as a tree without strong roots will topple with the first strong wind, a person without a strong base can never hope to achieve lasting balance. So let's start your journey to greater balance and fulfillment at the Root Chakra.

Known as the *Muladhara* in Sanskrit, the Root Chakra sits within the perineum – the area between the tailbone and the genitals. This chakra relates to our primary physical needs such as survival and security. A healthy Root Chakra helps one feel grounded – connected to the planet and to the people and creatures that inhabit it.

Challenges that can weaken your Root Chakra include travel, illness, financial problems, or anything else that threatens your sense of security.

An underactive root may manifest itself in weight gain, sluggishness, low self-esteem and worry. Signs of an overactive Root Chakra include preoccupation with money and shopping, as well as an excessive need for control.

Exercise remains one of the most effective ways to balance your Root Chakra. Gardening, tai-chi, walks in the woods, and yoga – all of these activities strengthen the body while relaxing the mind so that it can access your body's wisdom and power.

Chakra 2: The Sacral Chakra (Svadhithana)

Color: Orange.

Element: Water.

Stone: Carnelian.

Sense: Taste.

Life is sweet for those in tune with their *Svadhithana*, or Sacral Chakra.

Meaning sweetness in Sanskrit, the *Svadhithana* governs your ability to feel pleasure. Your emotions, sensuality, sexuality, creativity, and sense of taste are all regulated by this energy center between the sex organs and the belly button.

Water serves as the key metaphor for the Sacral Chakra. And like a stream flowing upward, a balanced *Svadhithana* helps energy run from the lower chakras up into the higher regions of the system.

Struggles with stress, taboos and past sexual traumas, rank as major life issues which can wreak havoc on the balance of the sacral system.

Symptoms of sacral underactivity include sexual disinterest, creative blocks and a fear of pleasure. An overactive Sacral Chakra might lead to problems like sexual or substance addiction.

To balance the Sacral Chakra, you must turn pleasure into a fundamental daily ritual with activities like healthy sex and intimacy, creative stimulation, savoring delicious meals and ecstatic dance. Therapy for past physical and emotional traumas may also be necessary.

Chakra 3: The Solar Plexus Chakra (Manipura)

Color: Yellow.

Element: Fire.

Stone: Aragonite.

Sense: Sight.

Ever known someone so dynamic that he or she seemed to have a fire burning in the belly? Then you've witnessed the power of a balanced Solar Plexus Chakra. Called *Manipura* (lustrous gem) in Sanskrit, this chakra rests in the area between the solar plexus and the navel, emanating the energy to light the way down your own unique path in the world.

You'll know your solar plexus need soothing if you're experiencing problems with perfectionism or are overly focused on achieving material status or power. To balance an overheated solar plexus try cooling, restorative baths, gentle stretches and supported back bends.

An underactive *Manipura* manifests itself as passivity and can be balance by acts of bravery, educated risks and deep belly laughs, as well as yoga poses that focus on toning or opening up the stomach area.

Chakra 4: The Heart Chakra (Anahata)

Color: Pink and green.

Element: Air.

Stone: Rose Quartz.

Sense: Touch.

The Heart Chakra governs our ability to love others, as well as to love ourselves. *Anahata* in Sanskrit, this chakra forms the center of the entire chakra system, providing a connection between your basic needs and your higher, more spiritual desires.

Signs of an underactive Heart Chakra include feeling like a martyr in relationships, burying your emotions and fearing rejection.

A Heart Chakra that spins too fast may result in jealousy or controlling behavior, and can lead to your lover feeling that you're withholding.

Balance for the Heart Chakra can be achieved by striving for healthy, fulfilling relationships. To put it simple: Love, and be loved.

Yoga poses that open the chest can also help you unleash this awesome power.

Chakra 5: The Throat Chakra (Vishuddha)

Color: Blue.

Element: Ether.

Stone: Sodalite.

Sense: Hearing.

The Sanskrit name for the fifth chakra, *Vishuddha*, means purity. Located at the base of the throat, this chakra regulates your ability to communicate honestly and forcefully.

Vishuddha corresponds with our sense of hearing. A person with a balanced Throat Chakra excels as a good listener as well as an eloquent speaker.

When the Throat Chakra is overactive, you might feel yourself talking too much or too fast, and experience trouble concentrating when others speak. If your Throat Chakra is underactive, you will probably have a hard time communicating your thought and needs.

Suggestions for balancing this chakra include striving for purity in your diet and lifestyle, drinking an adequate amount of water, listening to music and practicing yoga moves that stretch the throat.

Chakra 6: The Brow or “Third Eye” Chakra (Ajna)

Color: Indigo.

Element: Light.

Stone: Lapis Lazuli.

Sense: Intuition.

Not all that exists can be seen – at least not by our first two eyes. Located in the center of the brow, the *Ajna*, or Third Eye Chakra, serves as a “perception center” for the imaginative and intuitive aspects of your life – your dreams, your ability to visualize, your capacity to fantasize, plus your ability to create and perceive meaning in art.

People with balanced Third Eye Chakras usually thrive in creative or therapeutic professions, and are valued for the insight by friends.

When the third eye becomes excessively active, one may experience symptoms like headaches, lack of concentration, and nightmares. To soothe an overactive Third Eye Chakra, try restorative yoga, meditation and good old-fashioned sleep.

Symptoms of a sluggish third eye include memory loss, eye problems, and difficulties with visualization.

Exercises for developing the third eyes include positive visualization, hypnosis, dream analysis, meditation and yoga.

Chakra 7: The Crown Chakra (Sahasrara)

Color: Violet, gold and white.

Element: Thought.

Stone: Amethyst.

Sense: Beyond self.

This final chakra represents a synthesis of all the chakras and provides a portal to infinite wisdom, spiritual enlightenment and rebirth into a state of bliss.

Individuals with balanced Crown Chakras tend to be charismatic spiritual leaders, great thinkers, artists and visionaries.

Hyperactivity in this chakra manifests itself in over-intellectualism, delusions of grandeur, even psychosis. Signs of deficient energy are difficulty thinking for yourself, apathy, and spiritual disconnection.

Mediation ranks as the best therapy for an imbalanced Crown Chakra. Also, since all of the chakras must function properly for the crown to achieve balance, it is important to revisit the chakras below, making sure they are all lined up along the way to the crown.

Conclusion

Can you feel it yet?

You may not sense a Jedi quantity of “the force” streaming through your being. But by using the techniques found here, you can begin to fine tune your body’s chakra system.

In the process, you could improve not only your physique, but your mental capacities, your emotions, your relationships and your spirit.