

Chakras – By Deepak Chopra

According to Tantric tradition, everyone has seven energy centers that serve as junction points between the body and consciousness, or between matter and the mind. These spinning vortices, called chakras in Sanskrit, receive, assimilate and express our vital life energy. When the flow of energy in one or more of the chakras becomes blocked, we may develop physical and mental illnesses.

The ancient seers perceived the chakra system as a column of energy centers that extends from the base of the spine to the top of the head. The location of each chakra loosely corresponds to an area of the body's anatomy and is associated with a specific color. The following description provides more detail about the seven chakras and their Sanskrit names:

First Chakra: Muladhara (red)



Located at the base of the spine, the first energy center, sometimes called “the root chakra,” relates to our most basic survival needs and our sense of belonging, whether to our family or a larger group. When this chakra is clear and energy flows through it freely, we feel secure and confident that we can easily fulfill our needs. On the other hand, blockage in this area can cause us to feel anxious and worried. This chakra, which connects us to the earth, gives us vital information about whether actions we’re considering will nourish us or pose a threat. When we have a decision to make, we can listen to the signals of the root chakra: Uncomfortable sensations are a message to be alert and reconsider, while pleasant feelings indicate that a given course of action is likely to meet our needs for safety and nourishment.

Second Chakra: Svadhisthana (orange)



This chakra resides in reproductive area and is associated with creativity and birth—both literally to a new baby but also metaphorically to new aspects of ourselves, projects and ideas. When this chakra is healthy, we’re tapped into the source of higher energy that helps us write beautiful music, develop an innovative business, or create a loving family life. When this chakra becomes congested, we may experience a block in our creative powers and a sense of dryness or emptiness.

Third Chakra: Manipura (yellow)



The third chakra, which governs our will, self-esteem and sense of personal power, is located in the solar plexus. When energy flows freely through this center, we’re confident about our ability to manifest our intentions and desires. When the third chakra is blocked, however, we feel powerless and frustrated.

Fourth Chakra: Anahata (green)



This energy center is sometimes referred to as “the heart chakra” because it resonates in the heart and relates to compassion and love. When the fourth chakra is flowing and open, we feel deeply connected to everyone in our life. But when it’s obstructed, we experience loneliness and a sense of alienation.

Fifth Chakra: Vishuddha (blue)



This energy center is localized in the throat area and relates to communication and self-expression . . . the ability to voice our dreams. When our center of communication is clear, we're able to express our truth without worrying about what others may think. In contrast, with a congested fifth chakra, we feel anxious about how other people will react to our views and are likely to censor ourselves.

Sixth chakra: Ajna (indigo)



The sixth chakra, also known as the 'brow chakra' or the "third eye" is located between the eyes. It's the center of insight, where we integrate all the information and intuition in our life. When energy isn't flowing easily through this chakra, we have a sense of self-doubt and distrust. When it's open and clear, we feel deeply connected to our inner wisdom and trust that it guides us in our choices.

Seventh chakra: Sahasrara (violet)



This chakra resides at the crown of the head and is therefore sometimes called the "crown chakra." It connects us to Divine consciousness and pure awareness. The seventh chakra is known as the "Thousand Petaled Lotus" that bursts open when we remember our true nature and experience enlightenment.

Chakra Tuning

In Tantric teachings, each chakra has a specific vibration or primordial sound that we can repeat to release any energy that may be congested in that region. We can open up blocked energy by focusing our attention and intention on the location of a chakra, and repeating its associated sound or mantra aloud. The following is a list of the energy centers and their corresponding vibrational sounds:

Base of Spine: LAM

Reproductive Area: VAM

Solar Plexus: RAM

Heart: YAM

Throat: HAM

Forehead: SHAM

Crown: AUM

The practice of sound healing is referred to as chakra tuning and helps heal the body and enliven the energy centers. We can tune all of the chakras during a meditation session, moving up the spine. Alternately, it's also useful to focus on a single chakra related to a physical or emotional difficulty we may be experiencing. For example, if we have a nervous stomach and feel powerless about some issue in our life, we can focus on the third chakra and repeat the sound RAM.