

Developing Awareness of the Chakras

Imagine that you'd never tasted chocolate before, I could try describing it to you in words, but the best way for you to experience chocolate would be for you to taste it. Likewise, the best way for you to understand the chakras is through direct experience, and the following three meditations will give you a taste of locating the chakras in your body.

Exercise: Chakra Awareness Meditation

This meditation is a foundational practice that will enable you to locate within your body the psychoenergetic field of each of the seven chakras. It is a simple, enjoyable way of connecting with and tuning into the seven main chakras.

The Chakra Awareness Meditation works well as a standalone practice, or it can be used at the beginning or end of a yoga session. The meditation is grounding and centring, it has a purifying effect on the chakras, shifting stuck, stagnant energy, clearing blocked subtle energy channels and helping energy to flow freely.

I'd like to encourage you to approach this meditation with curiosity and to let go of the notion that there is a correct way to do it. The ancient yogis developed the chakra model as an aid to meditation. It's important to remember when you are doing this meditation that the chakras are a poetic, symbolic representation of wheels of energy, rather than exact physical locations that can be pinpointed within the body. Allow your Inner Wisdom and intuition to guide you to where the exact location of each chakra is within your body. After a while you will easily be able to zoom into and locate each of the chakras every time you meditate upon them.

Allow 10 minutes.

In this meditation we take our awareness from the root chakra, at the base of spine, up the length of the spine to the crown chakra at the top of the head. We sequentially bring our awareness to, and feel into, the part of the body where each chakra is located.

To begin, find yourself a comfortable position: either an erect sitting position or lying on the floor in Relaxation Pose (*Savasana*). Whichever position you choose, take a minute to ground yourself. Be aware of where your body is in contact with the floor or your support. Relax into the support of the earth beneath you.

In this meditation you are going to direct the spotlight of your awareness along the midline of the body tuning into each of the seven chakras in turn. As you tune into the physical location associated with the chakra, be aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.

1. Bring your awareness to the root chakra, this chakra is associated with the lower body. Be aware of the pelvis, the legs, and the feet. Now tune into the base of the spine, the anus, the pelvic floor, and the sexual organs. noticing any sensations that are present here. The root chakra is your foundation, rooting you, and giving you support. Intuitively feel into and locate the centre of this spinning circle of psychospiritual energy, which is the root chakra, and as you do so, be aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.
2. Now bring your awareness to the sacral chakra. Be aware of the lower abdomen, the sacrum, and the parts of your body that you associate with fertility and sexual pleasure. Intuitively feel into the centre of the sacral chakra's circle, being aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.
3. Bring your awareness to the solar plexus chakra which is your centre of personal power. Tune into the upper abdomen, particularly the area between the navel and the base of the breastbone, along the midline of the body. Intuitively feel into the centre of the circle of energy that is your solar plexus chakra, being aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.

4. Bring your awareness to the heart chakra which is the centre of your loving and compassionate heart. Tune into the area around the heart, lungs, and ribcage, and the thoracic spine. Intuitively feel into the centre of the circle of your heart chakra, being aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.
5. Bring your awareness to the communication chakra which is the centre of your creative expression in the world. Feel into the area around your neck, throat, mouth and both ears. Intuitively feel into the centre of the circle that is your communication chakra, be aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.
6. Bring your awareness to the third eye chakra which is the centre of clear-sightedness, clairvoyance, intuition, and imagination. Tune into the area between the brows, the eyes, and behind the eyes. Intuitively feel into the centre of the circle of energy that is your third eye chakra, be aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.
7. Bring your awareness to the crown chakra which is the centre for self-realisation and transcendence. Tune into the space just above the crown of the head. Intuitively feel into the centre of the circle of energy that is your crown chakra, be aware of any physical sensations, thoughts, feelings, or visual images that arise.

Then repeat the steps above, in reverse order, from seven back to one. Observe how you are feeling having completed the meditation. Ground yourself by noticing the sensations associated with where your body is in contact with the floor or your support.

You can conclude the meditation with the *Chakra-Closing Lotus Visualisation* which follows.

Exercise: Chakra-Closing Lotus Visualisation

All the chakra meditations in this book can be concluded with the *Chakra-Closing Lotus Visualisation*. The picturing of the chakras closing that we use in this visualisation ensures that we are not too open after working with the chakras and that we have the necessary psychic protection in place to function well in our everyday life.

If you are lying, come back to sitting. Bring your hands together in the Prayer Position (*Namaste*) at the heart centre. Then from the Prayer Position make your hands and fingers into the shape of a fully open lotus flower (*Padma Mudra*). Then gently curl the fingers, so the hands look like a flower closing back to bud. As you do this, picture all your seven chakras closing back to bud too. Repeat three times, inhaling as your hand-flower opens and exhaling as it closes back to bud.

The above excerpt is adapted from the *Chakras for Creativity* book by Jilly Shipway