

## The Seven Chakras

Chakra is a Sanskrit word meaning spinning wheel. These are a system of seven energy centers located along the spine. Each chakra corresponds to an area of the body, a set of behavioral characteristics and stages of spiritual growth. Practicing yoga and focusing your energies during different postures can help you to align your chakras and get all the wheels spinning in the same direction and speed. Understanding how to fine tune and control your chakras through yoga and meditation can help bring balance and peace to your mind, body and spirit.

There are seven chakras, each associated with a different part of the body along the spine from the perineum to the crown of your head. Each chakra is associated with a particular body location, a color, a central emotional/behavioral issue, as well as many other personal aspects including identity, goals, rights, etc.

The seven chakras are: Muladhara- base of the spine; Svadhisthana- abdomen, genitals, lower back/hip; Manipura- solar plexus; Anahata- heart area; Visshudha- throat; Ajna- brow; Sahasrara- top of head, cerebral cortex.

Through the movements and postures of yoga, you can learn to focus your concentration and energy to and from the various chakras in your body. This can allow you to compensate for areas that may be out of synch with the rest of your body or not active at all. By balancing the energy among all seven of the chakras, balance can be achieved. This spiritual energy is known as Kundalini energy. In its dormant state, it can be visualized as a coiled up snake resting at the base of your spine, the Muladhara chakra. Since the chakras act as valves or pumps regulating the flow of energy through your system, controlled and purposeful movements such as yoga can be extremely beneficial in realigning your chakras in a way that can cause great benefits to you in your physical and emotional wellbeing.