**Chakra Balancing**

The Sanskrit word *Chakra* literally translates to wheel or disk. In yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda, this term refers to wheels of energy throughout the body. There are seven main chakras, which align the spine, starting from the base of the spine through to the crown of the head. To visualize a chakra in the body, imagine a swirling wheel of energy where matter and consciousness meet. This invisible healing energy, called *Prana*, is vital life force, which keeps us vibrant, healthy, and alive.

**The Importance of the Main Chakras in the Body**

These swirling wheels of energy correspond to massive nerve centers in the body. Each of the seven main chakras contains bundles of nerves and major organs as well as our psychological, emotional, and spiritual states of being. Since everything is moving, it’s essential that our seven main chakras stay open, aligned, and fluid. If there is a blockage, energy flows are restricted. Think of something as simple as your bathtub drain. If you allow too much hair to go into the drain, the bathtub will back up with water, stagnate and eventually bacteria and mold will grow. So is too with our bodies and the chakras. A bathtub is simple; it’s physical so the fix is easy.

Keeping a chakra open is a bit more of a challenge, but not so difficult when you have awareness. Since mind, body, soul, and spirit are intimately connected, awareness of an imbalance in one area through chakra meditation will help bring the others back into balance. Take for example, a wife, who has recently lost her husband. She develops acute bronchitis, which remains in the chest, and then gets chest pains each time she coughs. The whole heart chakra is affected in this case. If she realizes the connection between the loss and the bronchitis, healing will occur much faster if she honors the grieving process and treats that as well as the physical ailment.

**The Chakras of Matter**

The first three chakras, starting at the base of the spine are chakras of matter. They are more physical in nature.

**First Chakra**: The *Muladhara* is the chakra of stability, security, and our basic needs. It encompasses the first three vertebrae, the bladder, and the colon. When this chakra is open, we feel safe and fearless.

**Second Chakra**: The *Svadhisthana* chakra is our creativity and sexual center. It is located above the pubic bone, below the navel, and is responsible for our creative expression.

**Third Chakra**: The *Manipura* chakra means lustrous gem and it’s the area from the navel to the breastbone. The third chakra is our source of personal power.

**The Fourth Chakra: The Connection Between Matter and Spirit**

Located at the heart center, the fourth chakra, *anahata* is at the middle of the seven and unites the lower chakras of matter and the upper chakras of spirit. The fourth is also spiritual but serves as a bridge between our body, mind, emotions, and spirit. The heart chakra is our source of love and connection.

When we work through our physical chakras, or the first three, we can open the spiritual chakras more fully.

**The Chakras of Spirit**

**Fifth Chakra**: The *Vishuddha* chakra is the fifth chakra, located in the area of the throat. This is our source of verbal expression and the ability to speak our highest truth. The fifth chakra includes the neck, thyroid, and parathyroid glands, jaw, mouth, and tongue.

**Sixth Chakra**: The *Ajna* chakra is located in between the eyebrows. It is also referred to as the “third eye” chakra. *Ajna* is our center of intuition. We all have a sense of intuition but we may not listen to it or heed its warnings. Focus on opening the sixth chakra will help you hone this ability.

**Seventh Chakra**: The *Sahaswara* chakra or the “thousand petal lotus” chakra is

located at the crown of the head. This is the chakra of enlightenment and spiritual connection to our higher selves, others, and ultimately, to the divine. It is located at the crown of the head.

**Clue to Aligning the Chakras**

Awareness to which of your chakras are out of balance is key to aligning them. Our bodies are in constant flux between balance and imbalance. Unless you experience an apparent problem in one area of the body, imbalances can be difficult to detect. That being said, it’s good to bring pure awareness to your body/mind and start understanding its signals and clues so that you can align your chakras.

For example, frequent constipation can indicate a blockage in the first chakra. A recurring sore throat leaves clues to a blocked fifth chakra. Frequent headaches around the area of the forehead may mean your sixth chakra is blocked.