



Karuna Yoga Newsletter

Issue no: 117

December 2018

YOGA THERAPY BALANCING THE CHAKRAS WITH YOGA THE FOURTH CHAKRA - ANAHATA

Since September we have been balancing the chakras with specific yoga postures, adopting a specific mudra and chanting a Bija mantra relating to the chakra.

This month is the heart or fourth chakra – the **Anahata**. We will practice the Bhramara Mudra which helps to strengthen the heart chakra. It also balances and strengthens the immune system and reduces environmental sensitivity and allergic reactions. It improves the health of the lungs and aids the functioning of the thymus gland.

The technique is to touch the tip of the index finger to the base of the thumb. Touch the thumb to the middle finger between the side of the fingernail and the first joint. Extend the ring and little finger. Place your hands on your thighs with palms facing up.

Chanting the Bija mantra of YAM (yyyyyyaaaaaaammmmmmm) helps to increase movement, compassion and neutrality. It strengthens the immune system and increases circulation to your arms, hands and heart.

A deficient heart chakra makes you fearful of intimacy, judgmental and isolating. An excessive heart chakra makes you codependent, desperate for love and attention.

The body parts that we'll focus on for the **Anahata** are the chest, lungs, diaphragm, shoulder blades, ribs, heart and the respiratory system. We'll be opening the chest, expanding the breath, surrendering the ego, and embracing forgiveness and empathy.

Now that we have entered, aligned and activated the lower three chakras, the key to opening the fourth chakra is to soften, allowing you to open and expand. Once you find your alignment in a posture, notice if you are rigid or if you can soften your face, your eyes, your shoulders and, most of all, your heart. Your breath has great power to bring spaciousness into your body and to help your muscles soften.

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YOGA POSTURES TO BALANCE THE ANAHATA

The meaning of the Sanskrit is unstruck and unhurt.

<p>MARJARYASANA (cat) and BITILASANA (cow) These two postures promote flexibility of the spine. They open the heart through the process of expansion and contraction. Coordinate each move with the breath as you go back and forth between cat and cow. End with your spine in a neutral position. Soften the heart and feel the effects of the practice.</p>	
<p>ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA (downward dog) This posture grounds the whole body, creates core strength, and opens your arms and shoulders. If you outwardly rotate your upper arms, this will open the shoulders and the chest, softening the heart as you extend from the heart to your wrists and from the heart to the pelvis.</p>	
<p>ANJANEYASANA (deep lunge) From downward dog, step your left foot forward and lower your back knee down to the floor. This posture stimulates the heart chakra, promotes balance and is also energising. Repeat on the other leg.</p>	
<p>UTTANASANA (standing forward fold) Begin in Tadasana and place your feet hip-width apart. Hands on your hips as you open your chest and let your upper body be fluid and relaxed as you fold forward. Legs are straight, but knees are not locked or hyperextended.</p>	
<p>VIRABHADRASANA I (warrior I) Come into the posture with hands on hips. Take your elbows back and open your chest as you bend your knee. Stretch arms up and feel your heart chakra opening. Hold for several breaths expanding the ribs.</p>	
<p>GOMUKHASANA (cow face) You can do this posture standing and just including the arms. Use a yoga belt as an aid if necessary. This posture opens the chest and shoulders, promotes deeper breathing and softens the heart.</p>	
<p>BHUVANGASANA (cobra) This is a classic heart chakra opener. Draw your elbows into your sides and energetically draw the arms toward your hips to allow the heart to blossom.</p>	
<p>USTRASANA (camel) This posture opens the chest and stretches the front of the body. It's good for addressing the collapsed chest of a deficient heart chakra and for relieving rigidity in the upper spine.</p>	
<p>SAVASANA (corpse or relaxation posture) Always finish with Savasana as you completely surrender into stillness, letting down into the earth and allowing your body to integrate your practice.</p>	