

Chakra 7: Sahasrara- The Crown Chakra

Our final chakra, Sahasrara is located at the top of the head. It is not a proper chakra but an autonomous centre which synthesizes all the energy of the other 6. The energy starting in muladhara unites in Sahasrara with the Absolute Essence of the being at this level, energy and consciousness merge beyond duality (has no polarity). Sahasrara corresponds to the eternal absolute, pure spirituality, the connection with God and at the human level gives great wisdom. The Absolute, the universal cosmic consciousness or state of total fusion with the macrocosm (Universe) on all levels of manifestation.

Sahasrara is the focus of control and activity of fundamental consciousness of the being according the extent it is aroused and energized. This arousal produces both extraordinary blissful experience and amazingly deep sublime feelings.

Sahasrara has direct control over the pineal gland, the secretions of which are called 'somadhara' or the fluid essential nectar. These secretions overflow in direct proportion to the degree of energizing of sahasrara. This 'nectar' helps in maintaining a perfect condition of harmony within the body and the entire nervous system. Both will be vitalized, filled with energy, strong healthy and entirely balanced, being capable of huge intellectual and spiritual efforts over a great period of time.

Those very rare people with full and dominant energization of sahasrara have been and always will be the embodiment of the highest wisdom and at the same time embodiment of infinite compassion and tenderness. Physical pain, sorrow or weakness of the physical body cannot in any way influence the fundamental and balancing activity of these glands when this centre is fully energized.

In average people, the action of glands of super-mental perception- which makes possible the realization of the supernatural aspects of manifestation- remains entirely dormant and unobserved. Our glands both endocrine and others are mere instruments for the activity of chakras through which certain subtle energies operate.

As we are average people with little to no activation of sahasrara our task lies in creating resonance with this chakra through asanas and subliming the energy from the other chakras up to it. This takes persistence and a dedicated practice. In this series I have provided written instructions on how to perform the warming exercises and asanas in hopes a regular home based practice can become a part of your life and you can reap the great physical, emotional and spiritual benefits from yoga. We will conclude our course with some final recommendations for a regular practice.

General recommendations

1. Practice on a firm surface, never in a bed.
2. Breath is through the nostrils only when performing asanas
3. When time is limited concentrate in the asanas you enjoy in the proper order. But when you have more time try other asanas but never to the point of exhaustion.
4. concentrate your whole attention as forcefully, deeply and continuously as possible while performing each asana. Never let the spirit be diverted as this diminishes the efficiency of the practice and slows the pace of development.
5. If a certain asana is especially pleasant to you hold it as long as possible. This will facilitate the process of yoga fusion and provide energy to attain a mood of inner enthusiasm. Feeling this enthusiasm will encourage you to try more difficult asanas. In the first month of practice do not exceed more than 15 minutes in any one asana.
6. Dress minimally and comfortably. Remove glasses, watch and any metallic objects. Metal may generate phenomena of resonance with undesirable cosmic energies, especially if you have developed greater sensitivity.

7. If you feel any pain during or after an asana, massage the area gently with your right hand. Concentrate forcefully and visualize that you energize, tone and elasticize the painful area as deeply as possible at the bio-energetic level.
8. Never begin yoga techniques with a full stomach or without satisfying natural necessities (toilet). Otherwise this could create discomfort and distraction.
9. Always conclude with 5-10 minutes of savasana, final relaxation. This provides a harmonious and balanced distribution of the collected energies.
10. A phase of gentle reflection and awareness should be performed after each asana.
11. Practice daily with utmost perseverance. Results may not be clearly evident until a few months of dedicated practice. Yoga is undertaken as maintenance and healing for the body, done daily much like brushing the teeth is done for care of the mouth.
12. Have fun, love, laugh and enjoy. Take gratitude in your ability to do so. Remember that contentment is the key to happiness.

The yogic tradition advises the following dietary rules for attaining perfect health, longevity, vigor and vitality:

- Eat only when you are really hungry, avoid false hunger
- Don't overfill the stomach. Cease eating when you feel the stomach $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
- Don't eat what you don't like and don't overdo those you do like.
- Don't eat too fast. You will eat less the more you chew. Chew eat mouthful 30-50 times if possible
- Eat as many fruits as possible, don't eat too many unripe or acid fruits.
- Fast one day ever week. Fasting is important for it removes the toxins, balances the physiologic mechanisms and reposes the organs.
- Eat only food items compatible with each other. Starchy foods not with carbohydrate based foods, acid producing not with alkaline producing foods. Trust your experience and instinct.
- Each meal should include as much raw vegetables as possible. Eat all food raw as much as possible.
- Keep foods simple and try to eat at fixed times.
- Don't eat when angry or upset. Wait until calm before eating as when anxious poisons are secreted by the glands.
- Whenever possible don't peel vegetables or fruits (apples, carrots etc) as this outer shell contains precious vitamins and minerals.
- For great digestion sit in vajrasana, diamond pose for 8-10 minutes after eating.
- Macrobiotics, the energy of food, eat a diet predominate in Yang energy. Whole grains and solid vegetables primarily.
- In yogic tradition use of ghee (refined butter) and eggs are tradition while the eating the flesh of animals is discouraged.

ELEMENT	DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE	DEFICIENCY	HEALING PRACTICES
Thought	Early adulthood and after	Spiritual cynicism	Reestablish physical, emotional connection (excess)
NAME	DEVELOPMENTAL TASK	Learning difficulties	Reestablish spirit connection (deficiency)
<i>Sahasrara</i> (thousandfold)	Assimilation of knowledge	Rigid belief systems	Learning and study
PURPOSE	Development of wisdom	Apathy	Spiritual discipline
Understanding	To know and to learn	Excess in lower chakras—	Meditation
ISSUES	BASIC RIGHTS	materialism, greed, domination of others	Psychotherapy
Transcendence	BALANCED CHARACTERISTICS	EXCESS	Examine belief systems
Immanence	Ability to perceive, analyze, and assimilate information	Overintellectualization	Develop inner witness
Belief systems	Intelligent, thoughtful, aware	Spiritual addiction	Work with higher power
Higher Power	Open-minded, able to question	Confusion	
Divinity	Spiritually connected	Dissociation from body	AFFIRMATIONS
Union	Wisdom and mastery, broad understanding		Divinity resides within.
Vision			I am open to new ideas.
COLOR	TRAUMAS AND ABUSES		Information I need comes to me.
Violet	Withheld information	PHYSICAL MALFUNCTIONS	The world is my teacher
LOCATION	Education that thwarts curiosity	Coma	I am guided by higher power.
Cerebral cortex	Forced religiosity	Migraines	I am guided by inner wisdom.
IDENTITY	Invalidation of one's beliefs	Brain tumors	
Universal	Blind obedience (no right to question or think for oneself)	Amnesia	
ORIENTATION	Misinformation, lies	Cognitive delusions	
Self-knowledge	Spiritual abuse		
DEMON			
Attachment			

Ardha Sirsasana – Half headstand/Dolphin pose

This asana is primarily used as preparation for the full headstand but it has its own benefits. The starting position is exactly the same for sirasana. First we get a symmetrical base of support by creating an equilateral triangle with our forearms. From a kneeling position place the elbows on the floor grasping the opposite upper arm and without moving the elbows from that spot bring the hands to interlace the fingers together. Place the forehead on the ground inside of the interlocked hands so the hands cup the back of the head. Very important that the head rest on the floor on the hairline. With firmly locked hands pressing into the ground and supporting the back of the head straighten the legs and walk the feet closer with small steps. Bring the feet in until the spine is straight and as vertical as possible. Feet should be hip-width apart and the legs can either work to bring the hips vertical over head or to press through the heels lengthening the back of the legs. It is important to remain with the head on the floor for 90 seconds once you come out of this asana to avoid dizziness.

Concentrate on the streams of telluric(earth) energy running through the legs and trunk to sahasrara. Some cosmic energies will also be channeled from the tip of the spine to sahasrara. Note the arousing of Sahasrara, the elevation of consciousness, inner perceptions, transcendence and detachment to inferior levels of manifestation.

Benefits:

This pose may be performed by those who cannot practice the full pose and can constitute great training for the next and back in training for it. Ardha sirasana grants all the same benefits of full sirasana but to a lesser extent. It has its own special benefits like increase straightness of the spine, toning and stretching the back, nape and legs.

Sirasana – Headstand

The king of all asanas! Cosmic energies are collected by the lower limbs and brought to the crown of the head. If there is adequate concentration (resonance with sahasrara) the energies will go beyond the physical body to the subtle body of sahasrara galvanizing and amplifying the latent superior mental potential. Kundalini and energies of the lower chakras are sublimed to sahasrara. To perform undertake the same position as ardha sirasana (initially with the hands close to a wall for balance) ensuring the head is contacting the ground at the hairline and not the top of the head. Walk the feet in as much as possible so the hips come vertical over the head, you can try to draw one knee then other into the chest then slowly work on bringing the legs straight up or you can straighten one leg and use the other to hop and push the lower body up. Once up try to maintain balance with equal distribution of weight between the head and forearms. Relax unnecessary muscles, keep the feet slightly apart and relaxed to allow the flow of energy down them. Ensure the head rests on the ground for at least 90 seconds once coming out of the asana. Begin gradually with only a minute or two and when comfortable in the practice discontinue use of a wall for support. Once you are capable of doing an extended practice sirasana can be done without the warming exercises. The original texts recommend performing for one hour daily and taking a long relaxation after. While performing sirasana concentrate on the cosmic energies coming down the legs to sahasrara. Note the intense arousing of sahasrara, refinement of the sense of perception, elevation of the consciousness and spiritual lucidity. Forbiddances: If there is sclerosis or aneurism of brain vessels, acute sinusitis, conjunctivitis, glaucoma, severe infections of the ear or detachment of the retina sirasana is not recommended. Extreme hyper or hypotension is another case where sirasana is not recommended. The body will communicate substantial warnings if you should not practice it. Immediate violent headache, buzzing in the ears then caution should be taken and practice should be very gradual. If there is a strong overall sensation of heat practice should be immediately halted.

Benefits of Sirsasana

Volumes could be written about the effects of this king of all asanas. It is deemed the most important pose in all of yoga. If you are to only practice one asana, practice sirsasana. As it is the most effective and significant asana in arousing Sahasrara chakra and brings the energy from the lower chakras up.

The texts state there is almost no ailment which cannot be cured by its performance. It combines all the beneficial effects of the 84 classic asanas. Among the diseases that can be cured we can list colds, coughs, tonsillitis, halitosis (foul breath), palpitations, constipation, skin diseases, menstrual dysfunctions, hemorrhoids and other anal-rectal diseases, vertigo, neuralgia, reproductive issues, liver and spleen diseases, asthma, diabetes, gonorrhoea, syphilis, inner ear dysfunction, backache, vision issues and generally all diseases of the eye, nose, head, throat, stomach, genito-urinary system, liver, spleen, lungs and skin.

Its steady practice disciplines the mind and has good effects in psychiatric patients. Improved posture, improved brain function, mental power, intellect and stamina of the nervous system. The entire being is invigorated, energized and revitalized. Blood circulation of the entire body is improved, especially the head. Balding and graying can be stopped and hair can be regrown or return to its natural colour. Blood flow to the face rejuvenates and regenerates the skin stopping and repairing wrinkles. It is important to remember that steady work is needed for great achievement in benefits from sirsasana. Noticeable effects should be noticed in 3 months of practice the classic text Hatha yoga pradiipika recommends 1 hour daily though great effects can be seen with only 30 minutes of practice per day.

Practice Order of Asanas



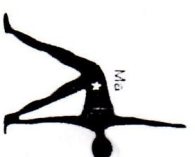
Padahasthasana



Talasana



Sahaja Agnisara
Dhauti



Trikonasana



Uddiyana
Bandha



Garudasana



Bhujangasana



Paschimottasana



Shalabhasana



Dhanurasana



Pavanamuktasana



Svastikasana



Gomukasana



Ardha Matsyendrasana



Cakrasana



Sarvangasana



Halasana



Vajrasana



Ardha Sirsasana



Sirsasana