

Mindful Living Matters

chakra study

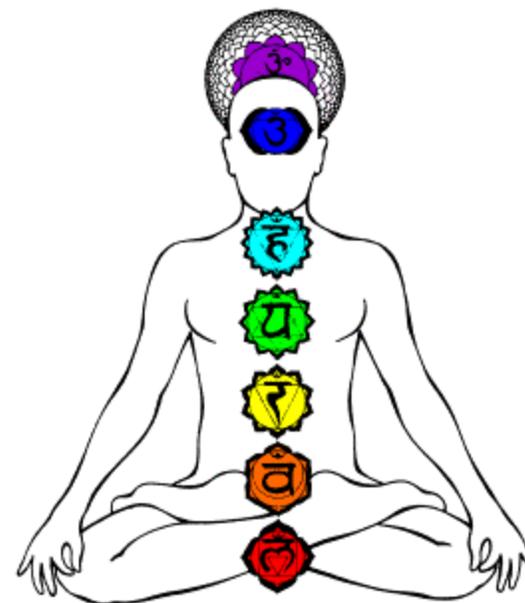
Chakra Point	Chant	Colour	Life Lesson	Related Organ	Emotional Issue	Physical Symptom	Posture
<b>Base (Muladhara)</b> Reconnection with nature important for this chakra Symbols = Elephant / phallus within triangle (both represent balance) Crystals = Carnelian (balance); Emerald (calming);	Lam	Red	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Things of material world</li> </ul>	Rectum Large Intestines Kidneys	Fear (associated with money) Security (this chakra is about survival)	Problems associated with sexual organs (or sexual drive) Hormonal Issues Sacrum (structural problems) Minor chakras associated – Legs/ feet/ knee problems Groin problems Experience varicose veins Rectal problems	Virabhadrasana 1 (Warrior 1) Trikonasana (Triangle)
<b>Sacral (Svadhithana)</b> Dance is important for this Chakra Symbols = Crescent moon, Makara (crocodile) Crystals = Moonstone (balance); Emerald (calming); Carnelian (activation)	Vam	Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Wisdom</li> <li>• Acceptance for simple joys</li> <li>• Sexuality &amp; Physical Desire</li> <li>• Work</li> </ul>	Reproductive Organs Bladder Spleen	Power & Control (sexual / sensual drive – very physical derivation)	Hormonal Issues Menstruation problems Urinary issues Irritable Bowel Syndrome Lower Back pain	Natarajasana (Dancer) Parivrtta Trikonasana (Twisted Triangle pose)
<b>Solar Plexus (Manipura)</b> Symbols=Red downward facing triangle / Ram Crystals = Citrine (balance); Emerald	Ram	Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Power from within (not of ego)</li> <li>• Relates to ego</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Personality</li> </ul>	Liver Stomach	Trust / Fear Confidence (self-esteem)	Digestive problems Diabetes Bloating / Pot belly appearance	Ustrasana (Camel) Gomukasana (Cow face pose)

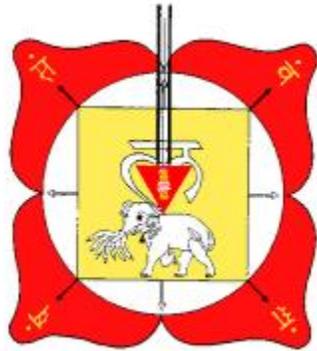
(calming); Topaz (activation)							
<b>Heart (Anahata)</b> Symbol = two superimposed triangles / Deer Crystals = Rose Quartz (balance); rhodonite (calming); peridot (activation)	Yam	Green / Soft Pink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love of Self</li> <li>• Love of all humankind</li> <li>• Existence</li> <li>• Love / forgiveness / compassion</li> </ul>	Heart Circulatory System Blood Thymus gland	Unworthiness Anger Hatred / Resentment Compassion	Aortic disease Heart conditions Blood pressure issues	Matsyasana (Fish Pose) Bhujangasana (Cobra)
<b>Throat (Vishuddha)</b> Sound making good release Symbol = white elephant Crystal = Blue Topaz (activation); Quartz (calming); Turquoise (balance)	Hum	Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Peace</li> <li>• Joy</li> <li>• Divinity</li> <li>• Self expression</li> </ul>	Thyroid Lungs Vocal Cords	Ability to feel like speaking Truth Self-talk / self-expression Ability to make decisions	Laryngitis Thyroid issues Neck pain Sore throats	Simhasana (Lion pose) Dhanurasana (Bow pose)
<b>Third Eye (Ajna)</b> Symbol = white moon / Triangle (downward pointed) Crystal = diamonds (activation); lapis lazuli (balance); Emerald (calming)	Om	Indigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust in own intuition</li> <li>• Intuition / insight / wisdom</li> </ul>	Pituitary Gland Brain	Truthfulness Openness Intelligence	Eye & Ear disorders Headaches	Adhomukha avanasana (Downward facing Dog) Halasana (Plough) Breathing exercises effective
<b>Crown (Sahasrara)</b> Symbol = Lotus Flower	Aum	Violet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oneness with God / Goddess</li> </ul>	Whole Body Pineal Gland (endocrine)	Trust Courage Devotion /	Skin disorders Headaches Epilepsy	Head Stand Shoulder Stand

Crystal = Blue Sapphire (activation); Clear Quartz (balancing); charoite (calming)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spirituality</li></ul>	System)	Spirituality		
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## Significance of Chakra's in Yoga Practice

- ॐ Assists with practice to suit personal circumstance
- ॐ Chakra is Sanskrit for Wheel
- ॐ Aligned from crown of head to base of spine (along spine)
- ॐ Each Chakra is thought of as a spinning vortex of energy – it can spin clockwise or anti-clockwise
- ॐ Speed of spin can indicate energy level within chakra
- ॐ The way we interact with the world, with others and even within ourselves can manifest within the different (or all) chakra points
- ॐ Stresses, tension, problems can cause imbalances – chakras are said to be in deficit or excess (defined by speed of spin and direction of spin). Normally chakras spin clockwise (energy pulled inward). When out of balance chakras may spin counter clockwise (exerting energy outward and not willing to accept energy in thus depleting the body of that energy field). There is varying belief about this and some suggest that a chakra that spins counter clockwise may be working with the natural Kundalini flow.
- ॐ The energy vortex connects and pin points the (foundational) physical, spiritual and mental health of the individual
- ॐ Pranayama exercises, Asana practice, meditation and mantra chanting can be used to bring the chakra's back into balance
- ॐ Yoga is concerned with universal connection of the individual. Spiritual oneness between the universal energies and the individual are the ultimate outcome with Yoga.
- ॐ Kundalini energy (energy of the self / snake / coiled energy) is believed to work with to power / or as powering chakra energy
- ॐ Yoga can be helpful in releasing and harnessing the power of Kundalini Energy
- ॐ Information on Chakras comes from the Upanishads





## Base Chakra – Muladhara

The Base or Root Chakra is the most primeval of all chakra's. It is the connection to earth. Instinct, survival and back to basics resonate with me when I focus on Muladhara.

I am drawn to the lotus seed taking root and connecting into the earth. Energy for this chakra comes from the ground, Mother Nature, deep within the earth. For me a very grounding very focused chakra point. I look at the symbology and immediately balance, stability and strength come to mind.

The symbol presented left is one variation. Others do not depict the Male / female symbology (phallus / triangle) or the elephant. Others focus on the lotus flower petals with the seed mantra 'Lam'. I was drawn to this particular symbol because of the physical nature set within the image.

The four petals represent four psychological states – blissfulness in concentration, greatness of joy, happiness from natural pleasure and delight in controlling passions. To me this is symbolic of complete awareness and self-control.

Literature describes Muladhara in different ways but overall the Base Chakra has a grounding function and provides feelings of security, stability, sensuality and sexuality. Imbalances in this chakra may manifest emotionally as feelings of being out of control, inability to give up material things (addiction to the material world), disorientation with life, lack of self-identity (hence looking for material world to provide identity), and depression associated with 'self' issues can occur. Physical manifestations of blockages with Muladhara include digestive issues and leg /knee / feet problems (legs provide support and act as intermediate grounding). Hemorrhoids and reproductive problems can manifest from Base Chakra.

The practice of mula bandha, contraction of the perineum (point of this chakra) is said to awaken Kundalini energy.

Several yoga asanas will activate Muladhara. Poses that engage the legs, perineum and pelvic area will assist with activating the Base chakra. Standing poses such as Warrior poses (Virabhadrasana) and Triangle pose (Trikonasana) active energy through the legs. Warrior 1 provides

focus through Muladhara and is very grounding. Sitting poses such as Sukhasana places Muladhara close to Mother Earth and through pranayama practice can connect self with earth. Bidalasana (Cat pose) can be used for Bandha work.



## Sacral Chakra – Svadisthana

Svadisthana is another primeval chakra which governs the sexual organs. For me the moon shaped (crescent moon) is very feminine. The use of circular symbology signifies eternal or ongoing life – the circle of life. Females are the carriers of life and this chakra has importance for me as a woman. Connection to this chakra would be about femininity, sensuality and sexiness.

The Sacral Chakra sits just below the navel, at one point. One point is the centre of the body. Balance, movement and posture radiate from this place. I am drawn to the image of a woman dancing provocatively, hips swaying invitingly to her male partner ready to undertake the act of procreation. This becomes an act of love that signifies gratification but also results in the continuation of the human life.

The lotus seed is planted at the sacral chakra ready to grow. The six petals depicted in the image left represent the six states of consciousness – affection, pitilessness, a feeling of destructiveness, delusion, disdain and suspicion.

This chakra is flowing and depicted as water like in some literature. It is this elemental water that makes this a very emotional chakra point (Muladhara was very physical). The moon has a pull or affect on water (I think tides) and possibly why there is a connection in symbology with this chakra.

Earth is dissolves in water and emotions begin to impact on the physical at this chakra point. Self expression, creativity, joy and enthusiasm are represented through the sacral chakra. Sensuality and sexual drive manifest here. Just as water flows, emotions need to flow therefore an attitude of acceptance will help overcome feelings of out of control emotions.

Imbalances with Svadisthana may be reflected emotionally through our sexual desires or lack thereof and sexual insecurity. Jealousy, envy and feelings of dissatisfaction come from imbalances in the sacral chakra. Physical problems such as reproductive issues, impotency and problems associated with the urinary tract can manifest from imbalances with the sacral chakra.

The sacral chakra is said to be an area of great energy storage and pranic exercises that concentrate on abdominal breathing can activate and awaken the flow of energy in this area.

Common yoga asanas for Svadisthana include balance poses such as Natarajasana (Dancer), Parivrtta Trikonasana which draws energy from the base but allows focus in the sacral chakra as you twist and asanas that engage the pelvis. Setu Bandhasana or bridge pose requires focus on lifting the pelvis upward.



## Solar Plexus – Manipura

This chakra screams confidence. I think of a ballerina moving to take their place on stage and the confidence with which they move. A dancer or actor about to take centre stage will stride out with pride, confidence and self-assurance. They know what they are there to do and they are willing to put themselves out there to accomplish the end result. Self-confidence amongst others stands out as being a driving force of Manipura.

Ego and place in society dominate the solar plexus. Balance can be maintained when one is true to their own nature. Power comes from within not from without. Some literature suggest that this chakra is about non-dominating power, radiance, full knowledge and mastery of the body.

Personal observation has seen that people who lack confidence will physically sink in this area causing a pot belly in the region of the sacral chakra. For me this is a person with self-esteem, self-confidence who holds onto fear and anger.

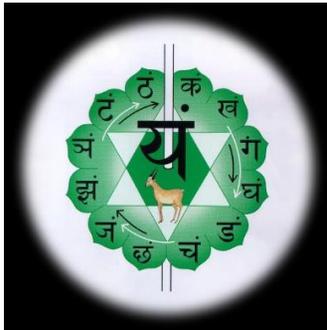
The element for this chakra is fire and therefore governs the metabolism. Healthy people with a healthy outlook emotionally and physically in general move from Manipura.

The 10 petals depicted in the mantra are associated with spiritual ignorance – thirst, jealousy, treachery, shame, fear, disgust, delusion, foolishness and sadness. The ram symbolizes the strength and nature of the person – someone who is strong but charges in head first. The triangle symbolizes movement (of the sun – radiant in many directions).

When Manipura is imbalanced the individual can feel flat, lack drive and feel powerless. Emotionally a person may hold anger, fearful, have low self esteem, lack commitment and be depressive and unhappy with life. Physically imbalances in Manipura manifest as digestive problems, diabetes, Liver complaints and gall bladder issues (gall stones).

Bandha work is beneficial for the Solar Plexus chakra. Uddiyana bandha is a central energy channel held at the diaphragm – near to the Solar plexus.

Yoga asanas that assist in Solar Plexus activation include anything requiring opening of the thoracic spine or chest. Ustrasana (Camel pose) has been a pose I use to open all chakras including moving and opening the Solar Plexus. Abdominal strengthening asana is also considered beneficial. Navasana (boat pose) engages and strengthens the abdominal muscles. Focusing on the abdomen will activate and strengthen the solar plexus.



## Heart Chakra – Anahata

The heart chakra is about love, compassion, giving and receiving. The simple heart-felt words of ‘I love you’ can overcome barriers, undo hurt and anger. The heart connects in many ways. It connects people through loving words, compassionate acts and it connects the lower half of the chakra points to the upper half.

There is a direct connection between the words we say, the sensation of touch and the heart. The heart allows us to be expressive. An open heart is an open mind.

Pink and green express Anahata in colour. Pink for love and green for compassion.

The heart symbolizes the circulatory system and is connected to our lymphatic or immune system.

The 12 petals in the yantra represent lustfulness, fraudulence, indecision, repentance, hope, anxiety, longing, impartiality, arrogance, incompetence, discrimination and an attitude of defiance. The element Air is associated with the Heart chakra and is represented by the jumping deer. Passion, tenderness, devotion, compassion and love creation are represented by the heart chakra.

Signs of emotional imbalance of Anahata include moodiness, crying, sadness or grief, shame and feelings of being closed off from the environment and those around you. Physical imbalance manifests through breast problems, circulatory problems (including high / low blood pressure and heart conditions), chest pain, allergies, hand problems and respiratory problems. Stress and mental anxiety can cause problems with the heart chakra.

Asanas that assist in activating the heart chakra include chest openers. Bhujangasana (cobra) and Matsyasana (fish pose) are great examples of opening Anahata.



## Throat Chakra – Vishuddha

Communication is the key indicator for the Throat chakra. Vishuddha is the ability to express yourself, speak up but also the knowing of when not to say anything and just to listen.

It is considered the point between the physical body, emotional body and the spiritual and acts as the bridge for consciousness and the rising of spirituality from the heart. At the throat we are able to voice our love or speak of our hurt. Negative speech can impact on the energies of both the spiritual chakra and physical and emotional chakra points.

Expressions, communication, thought, independence are characteristics of Vishuddha.

The symbolism of this yantra is fascinating. The white circle within the downward pointing triangle represents psychic powers (the ability to speak what you know is true) and the white elephant is indicative of sound (the trumpeting trunk).

Having the clarity with which to express feelings and emotions is central to the Throat chakra. Imbalances with this chakra often mean a difficulty in expressing emotions and communicating with others. Symptoms of emotional imbalance are nervousness, controlling behaviour and what is said and an appearance of indecisiveness or a passivity (letting others speak for you or making up your mind for you).

Physically Vishuddha governs the vocal cords, ears, throat, thyroid and parathyroid glands. Problems with this chakra can often manifest as problems with the Thyroid including hyperthyroidism, hypothyroidism, ear problems, neck problems and speech problems.

Jalandhara Bandha is engaged at the point of the throat chakra. Holding the bandha at this point activates prana to the head.

Pranayama exercises can assist in opening the throat chakra. Breathing technique is important in mind and body connection. It is helpful to practice regular pranayama to keep energy channels open.

Incorporating chanting or sound making exercises as part of everyday practice can clear energy channels and dispel negative energy. Use of the yantra sounds such as 'Hum' can keep the throat chakra open and active.

Simhasana or Lion pose may look like a strange yoga asana but it will assist in activating Vishuddha. Making a noise (roar) or an audible exhalation as you look towards the third eye helps focus Lion pose. Dhanurasana (bow pose) is an opening asana for all chakras but concentration in the throat chakra will have the benefit of activating this area as energy is released from the lower chakras.



### **Third Eye Chakra – Ajna**

Ajna is ruled by spiritual seeing and intuitive knowing.

Literature reflects that the Third Eye Chakra is the centre of clairvoyance, intuition and understanding of our own subconsciousness.

During meditation the Third Eye is used as a focal point and concentration.

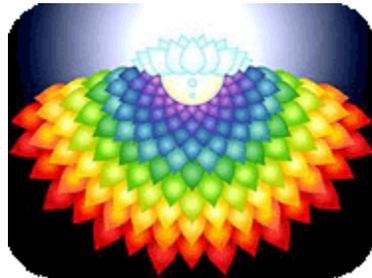
The symbology of the image depicted is beautiful. The connotations of an eye are reflected here with the white circle representing the mind void and the two petals symbolizing the meeting of energies. Overall the yantra is very descriptive of what Ajna represents. The mantra's on the petals form the phrase "I am that I am", the quarter moon indicates energy, the bindu (dot) symbolizes detachment from our body and placed above the inverted triangle demonstrates that attainment of enlightenment at this level requires the ability to rise above our own sexual energies. The 'OM' in the centre connects us to the cosmos and the sound of 'OM' when chanted is said to open the third eye and our higher senses.

Intellect, knowledge, psychic power, clarity and memory are characteristics of the Third Eye Chakra.

Problems with memory, spiritual ignorance, lack of open mindedness and mental illness can occur when Ajna is out of balance. Physically imbalances manifest as headaches, epilepsy, insomnia or sleep disorders, lethargy and chronic fatigue. As with imbalances in any chakra if left unresolved imbalances can lead to tumours or cancerous growths.

Embracing our inner sight can be a wonderful experience. The energy that manifests at our third eye can be humbling and enlightening. The revealing of qualities that lead to greater awareness and a higher sense of consciousness brings a person closer to the inner spirit and is that one step closer to universal connection. Peace, love, joy begins to resonate.

There are several yoga asana which provide focus and activation of the Third Eye Chakra. Meditative practice with concentration in the forehead centre brings direct focus to this chakra point. Physical asanas include Balasana (child pose) – a very restful focusing pose, a forward bend while in any seated pose such as padmasana or Sukhasana and adho mukha avanasana (downward facing dog) with focus at Ajna.



### **Crown Chakra – Sahasrara**

Sahasrara is symbolized through the beautiful, blossoming lotus flower that opens itself to the universe and receives nourishment, goodness and divineness.

Focus of energy at Sahasrara and the flow of kundalini from the crown chakra is said to lead to enlightenment, an all knowing wisdom, connection with God and an opening to the highest vibrational energy.

The symbolism of the Crown Chakra is the balance of duality, our beingness and unity and bliss through transcendental consciousness.

The Sahasrara yantra is depicted in many ways and it was difficult to choose between the two images above. Commonly the crown chakra is shown as a lotus flower with 1000 petals. The lotus is symbolic of the beauty that rises from a single seed planted in the murky muddy waters that blossoms into all knowingness.

The crown chakra is often shown as the colour violet. Red (matter) and blue (spirit) make up the colour violet and the crown chakra is a combination of matter and spirituality to represent the transformation of the self into a transcendental being. Historically purple has signified spiritual attainment.

The shape and colour of the second image depicted is explained by having a bell shape as though it is worn on top of the head while the rainbow colours depict all seven chakra colours moving from red up to violet.

Emotional problems centered at the crown chakra manifest as manic-depression, frustration, loss of joy and happiness in life, lack of inspiration and the need to seek acceptance. Imbalances can manifest as physical symptoms such as concentration problems, lack of energy, fatigue, epilepsy. The crown chakra represents the whole being therefore skin conditions and complaints of the whole body (chronic fatigue) can also represent a disconnection from spirit.

Meditation, pranayama and visualization techniques are important in connecting to the crown chakra.

Asana work leads to focus and concentration to Sahasrara. Shoulder stands (Salamba Sarvangasana), head stands (Salamba sirhasana) and dynamic work such as plough (Halasana) to paschimottanasana (seated forward bend) can free and control the energy flow and provide the practitioner with a different viewpoint.

## Routine for Chakra Balancing

### Pranayama connection

Commence in Sukhasana.

As you breathe focus on each chakra point sending prana to each point – starting at the Base chakra and moving up to crown chakra. Take the time to visualise the connection between each point.

### Physical Practice (Asana work)

Warm up routine to engage muscles

- ॐ Neck rolls
- ॐ Spinal twists
- ॐ Arm circles (can be done seated) / shoulder to wrist flicks

Wide leg seated - bandha paschimottanasana

- ॐ Lift up through perineum to engage base chakra (main focus remains at this chakra point)
- ॐ Engage other chakra points as move forward
- ॐ This technique can move over left and right leg also

Bridge - Setu Bandhasana

- ॐ Focus on sacral chakra

Boat - Navasana

- ॐ Engage the abdominal muscles and focus on Solar plexus

## Fish pose - Matsyasana

- ॐ On your back focus on the heart chakra as you move into Fish pose

## Camel – Ustrasana

- ॐ Move to come to your knees
- ॐ Continue to open the chakra's
- ॐ Engaging all chakra's in this pose – focus moves from base, sacral, solar plexus and heart chakra
- ॐ As you deepen the pose you can open the throat chakra
- ॐ If this is difficult in this pose to open the throat continue focus on other four chakras
- ॐ When you are ready move to next pose

## Lion – Simhasana

- ॐ This is one variation
- ॐ Sitting as though in hero's pose with hands on knee
- ॐ Look up into the third eye chakra, open the mouth, stick the tongue out
- ॐ This can be accompanied by a roar or audible exhalation
- ॐ As you inhale retract the tongue and look forward
- ॐ Repeat

### Cat – Bidhalasana

- ॐ This is another alternative to Lion
- ॐ Also engages bandha work – maha bandha (all bandha's engaged)
- ॐ In cat pose – exhale
- ॐ Commence engaging bandha – start with mula bandha, uddiyana bandha and Jalandhara bandha
- ॐ Release the bandhas in reverse when preparing to inhale
- ॐ As you inhale and look up – look up into the third eye chakra, make an audible inhalation that moves through the nose (as you prepare to exhale you can make the exhalation audible through the mouth (or roar-like) *(please note I am not sure that this is strictly yoga like and would appreciate some feedback here)*)

### Child pose – Balasana

- ॐ Reflective pose
- ॐ Moment to gather breathe
- ॐ Focus third eye

### Shoulder stand - Salamba Sarvangasana

- ॐ Focus on crown chakra

Some dynamic work such as plough (Halasana) to paschimottanasana (seated forward bend) can transition from shoulder stand back to seated and then up to standing.

## Standing poses

- ॐ The asana work can move into standing and focus can still be on chakra activation / opening
- ॐ Below is some suggestions for standing practice

### Virabhadrasana 1 - Warrior 1

- ॐ Focus in base chakra
- ॐ As grounding down with groin – open base chakra

### Trikonasana – Triangle

- ॐ Another base chakra
- ॐ The focus can move through to the sacral and solar plexus
- ॐ Very balancing pose

### Tadasana

- ॐ Transition pose
- ॐ Inhale, arms up and slight back bend – opens chakras through centre

### Uttanasana

- ॐ Use as transition pose ready for runners pose Ashwa Sanchalasana

### Ashwa Sanchalasana – Runner

- ॐ Opens through the solar plexus but focus on opening the heart chakra
- ॐ Repeat on both sides

### Standing Camel – Ustrasana

- ॐ Can be performed
- ॐ Running hands on the back of the thigh – push out the pelvis, open the chest
- ॐ Dropping the head backward and looking up
- ॐ Opens throat chakra

### Balance poses to bring focus and concentration

#### Natarajasana – Dancer

- ॐ Weight moves forward with focus through solar plexus and heart chakra

#### Vrksasana – Tree pose

- ॐ Very grounding while at same time connection with the universe through the crown chakra

## Meditation

Complete the practice with a meditation and visualization.

- ॐ Visualise a lotus seed settling at the sacral chakra
- ॐ Breathing techniques
- ॐ Imagine a ball of light sitting at the solar plexus – energy giving to the lotus seed. With each inhalation the ball of energy grows feeding the seed
- ॐ Lotus seed takes root and travels through the base chakra and moves deep into the earth
- ॐ With each breathe the root of the lotus seed travels to the centre of the earth – as inhale energy from the earth travels up to the see
- ॐ The seed begins to germinate and a stem starts to grow
- ॐ With each breathe earth energy travels up through the root and the stem continues to grow.
- ॐ Leaves begin to form and slowly a lotus bud grows at the heart chakra
- ॐ Energy from the universe starts to feed the leaves and bud
- ॐ With each inhalation white energy light travels through the crown chakra, through the third eye and throat chakra
- ॐ Still through the lotus root, earth energy travels up through the stem into the bud
- ॐ The bud is growing with earth energy and universal energy
- ॐ The bud begins to open and blossoms to reveal the jewel in the lotus flower
- ॐ With each breathe earth energy and universal energy feed the lotus flower and the jewel shines brighter (with each breathe)
- ॐ All chakras are connected, radiating with energy