

ACU-YOGA FOR THE CHAKRAS

SELF CARE STRETCHES FOR EXPANDING
THE VITAL ENERGY OF THE CENTRAL CHANNEL



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PURPOSE

To provide a self care handout of key Acu-Yoga stretches that focus on stimulating and rebalancing the energy in each Chakra center and expanding the flow of vital energy through the Central Channel.

This tool can assist in cultivating ongoing, daily Acu-Yoga practice to help effectively govern physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. It is hoped that this material will be useful to:

- Acupressure/healing professionals who want to maintain optimal personal health. These Acu-Yoga exercises clear energy blocks and expand the flow of vital energy through the Central Channel so their capability to transmit maximum energy to clients is expanded.
- Practitioners who might offer these stretches as a self care tools to their clients to help facilitate daily practice and/or to address specific chakras of concern.

ACU-YOGA is health maintenance exercise system, that is both preventive and restorative, that integrates traditional Yoga asanas (positions) with the holding of Acupressure points. Both YOGA (originating in India) and ACUPRESSURE (originating in China) produce similar benefits:

- relaxation of muscular tension
- elimination of energy blockages and toxins from the body
- balancing the vital life forces of the body

By intertwining classic Yoga with the power of Acupressure, the benefits each system is optimized and amplified producing maximum benefits for time invested in this self care practice.

ACU-YOGA was created and developed by Michael Reed Gach, founder of the Acupressure Institute in Berkeley, California. For over 30 years, Michael has practiced, taught, and written about this unique form of Yoga. As a result of studying with Michael, I revitalized my personal yoga practice, which I began in 1975. I selected this set of exercises to teach students as the warm-up activity for the CHAKRA APPLICATIONS class I developed and currently teach at the Acupressure Institute.

PRINCIPLES OF ACU-YOGA

DISCIPLINE

- During initial stages of beginning this practice, difficulties in stretching, breathing techniques, and centering the mind are common and to be expected. Motivation and commitment to regular practice are critical.

BODY AWARENESS

- It is important to always trust your intuition: inner voice, feelings, responses, actions, and needs.
- Approach practice with a positive mental attitude.
- Focus on physical awareness when in each position. Listen to your body and respect it's limits.

FLEXIBILITY OF SPINE

- Make sure that you stretch your spine in all 6 directions. A stretch in one direction ideally is followed by a counter stretch in the opposite direction.
- Spinal flexibility is increased by both hold and stretch poses as well as movement stretches.

BREATHING TECHNIQUES

- Breath is a profound tool for purifying and revitalizing the body by oxygenating the blood (inhalations) and discharging toxins from the body (exhalations).
- The five main breathing techniques used in Acu-Yoga:
 - Long Deep Breathing
 - Hara Breathing
 - Breath Visualizations
 - Breath of Fire
 - Holding the Breath

MEDITATION

- Meditation helps transcend the limitations of human consciousness.
- Stillness of meditation slows metabolism, provides a deep state of rest and rejuvenates the entire body--primarily the nervous system.
- The focus of meditation can be the breath, a sound, or circulation of energy or light throughout the body.

DEEP RELAXATION

- After Acu-Yoga positions release tension blocks from the 12 meridian lines, deep relaxation activates the eight extra or regulatory meridians to equalize the streams of energy in the organ meridians. This is the most profound state in which the body can heal itself.

SELECTION OF ACU-YOGA EXERCISES

The Acu-Yoga stretches included in this handout were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Usefulness in flexing, stimulating, or stretching areas of the body associated with each Chakra center. Each of the Acu-Yoga stretches emphasizes specific Acupressure points known to be related to each Chakra.

2. Each of these Acu-Yoga stretches can be practiced by those who have little prior yoga or Acupressure experience as well as those with extensive background and experience in these self care modalities. While the degree of difficulty varies, all of these positions can **eventually** be mastered with committed practice.

PRECAUTIONS TO CONSIDER

- If you have no prior experience with yoga, and/or your body is inflexible and not accustomed to being stretched, it is strongly advised that you begin practice under supervision with the guidance of a skilled yoga practitioner or instructor.
- If you have a prior history of low back problems or previous joint injuries, you must approach Acu-Yoga very gently and avoid (or modify) positions that might aggravate prior injuries or weakness.
- If you have a history of hypertension, caution is urged with the shoulder stand and plow positions as they temporarily increase blood pressure. It is also recommended that a yoga blanket be used to support the neck area in both of these positions.
- If you start to become light headed or experience pain while doing any of these exercises, stop the exercise immediately, assume the deep relaxation position, and begin gentle rhythmic breathing until the dizziness or pain subsides.
- When holding points in the various positions, apply pressure in a slow, rhythmic manner with gentle to moderate finger pressure. Do not press in a forceful, jarring, or abrupt manner.
- Lymph areas (groin, throat below ears, outer breast near armpit) should only be touched lightly and not pressed due to sensitivity.

ACU-YOGA FOR THE CHAKRAS

SELF CARE STRETCHES FOR EXPANDING THE VITAL ENERGY OF THE CENTRAL CHANNEL



1. MEDITATION FOR CENTERING

Key Acu-Points activated: The rhythmic breathing begins to enhance the circulation of chi (life force) along the spine and through all the meridian lines enlivening all the body's organs and glands.

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Sit in a comfortable cross leg position (or on a chair) with spine upright and straight.
2. Close eyes and center in the breath with long, slow deep breaths for two minutes. This is a great time to imagine a

spiral of light moving up the Central Channel from the base of the spine--changing color gradually, as it flows upward into each chakra territory--until it flows out the top of the head. Pause and breathe into each Chakra Center, while visualizing it's specific color, before spiraling up into the next.



1ST CHAKRA

ROOT

(MULADHARA)

COLOR
RED

LOCATION
BASE OF THE SPINE
(S4)

GLAND
ADRENALS

- CONDITIONS
- LOW BACK PAIN
 - SCIATICA
 - VARICOSE VEINS
 - HEMORRHOIDS
 - RECTAL TUMORS
 - OSTEOARTHRITIS



2. BENT KNEE STRETCH WITH ROOT LOCK (Mulabandha)

Key Acu-Points activated:
CV 1 and Acu-points along sciatic nerves

Stretch and breath tips:

1. From a straight leg sitting position on the floor, bend your right knee placing the right heel between the genitals and rectum (CV 1).
2. Take hold of the left leg, inhale, and straighten the spine.
3. As you exhale, lower your torso (with spine straight) as close to the leg as possible. Breathe deeply for 30 seconds. With each exhalation: draw the anal sphincter muscle in, contract the urethral tract, and pull abdomen toward the back (ROOT LOCK). Release as you inhale. This powerful contraction unites the yin and yang meridians and channels dormant energy at the root up to the higher chakras.
4. Reverse legs, bending the left knee, and extend down over the right leg and repeat deep breathing with the Root Lock.



3. MODIFIED BRIDGE POSE (with emphasis on tightening the glutes)

Key Acu-Points activated:
CV 1, SI 10, TW 15, GB 21

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lie on the back, bend both knees, and place soles flat on the floor.
2. Put both arms above the head, inhale and tighten the glute muscles while arching the pelvis up. Hold for several seconds.
3. Exhale as you slowly come down. Continue inhaling up, while tightening the glutes, and exhaling down for one minute.
4. Relax on your back for a few minutes (eyes closed) while the breath returns to normal. Roll your head from side to side to release any tension from the neck.



(NOTE: The Bridge is also a great pose for the Chakra #5.)

2ND CHAKRA

SACRAL

(SWADHISTHANA)

COLOR

ORANGE

LOCATION

BELOW NAVEL /
ABOVE PUBIC
AREA (L1)

GLAND

PROSTRATE

CONDITIONS

- LOW BACK PAIN
- SCIATICA
- GENITAL PROBLEMS
- SEXUAL POTENCY/INFERTILITY
- BLADDER/ PROSTRATE PROBLEMS

4. CAT COW

Key Acu-Points activated:

GV 3, 4, 5 ("The Gates of Life") and
CV 3, 4, 5 ("The Sea of Energy")

Stretch and breath tips:

1. From a starting position on your hands and knees, inhale as you raise the head up and arch your back. (COW)
2. Exhale, as you let the head drop down and you round your back upward. (CAT)
3. Continue with this movement and breath pattern, in a slow, rhythmic manner, for about one minute.
4. Lie on your stomach and relax deeply, with head to one side and palms up, to optimize the benefits of energy circulation.



5. COBRA

Key Acu-Points activated:

All of the Great Central Channel
with focus on GV 4 ("Gate of Life")

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lying face down, place palms flat on the floor under the shoulders and chin on the floor.
2. Inhale as you extend your head out and slowly raise it up and back. Keep the pelvis on the floor as you raise the upper body.
3. Breath for about a minute, directly into the Hara

(below navel), while holding the position with arms as straight as comfortable.

4. Prior to releasing, exhale completely, squeeze the buttocks, stretch up a bit more, and lower the abdominal area to press the naval (GV 4) into the floor.
5. Inhale deeply and slowly exhale as you gradually bend the arms and come down.
6. Lie on your stomach, with head to one side and hands at your side, and relax deeply. Feel the blood and energy circulate as you reap the optimal benefits from consciously opening the Gate of Life.



6. LOCUST

Key Acu-Points activated: Spleen 12 + 13
Stomach 29 + 30

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lying face down on the floor, place both fists in the valleys of the groin, with your chin or forehead on the floor.
2. Inhale and raise the legs up and off the floor with feet together. Breathe deeply for 30 seconds. Gradually extend the time as you practice and become more comfortable in the pose.
3. Slowly, let the legs come down, rest your head to one side, and deeply relax for a couple of minutes to obtain optimal benefit.



3RD CHAKRA POWER CENTER (MANIPURA)



COLOR	LOCATION	GLAND	CONDITIONS
YELLOW	SOLAR PLEXUS (T8)	PANCREAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ULCERS• DIABETES• GALL STONES• DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS• CHRONIC FATIGUE

7. PLOW POSITION

Key Acu-Points activated: Bladder Meridian

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Start by lying on your back (with head and neck supported with a yoga blanket or rolled towel), legs straight, and hands at side.
2. Inhale deeply. As you exhale, raise your legs up and over the head bringing your feet as close to the floor as your body allows.
3. Reach the hands back to grab the toes (or ankles) and let the body relax while breathing deeply for 30 to 60 seconds.
4. Bring the arms back to the floor and support the legs as you slowly return the legs back to the floor, letting each vertebrae touch, one at a time as you unroll.
5. Relax on your back for a few minutes (eyes closed) while the breath returns to normal. Roll your head from side to side to release any tension from the neck.



8. SPINAL FLEXES



Key Acu-Points activated:

Bladder Meridian and CV 12 (Chakra 3) and CV 17 (Chakra 4).

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Sit on your heels with hands on your knees. Slump forward, while tightening the abdominal muscles, allowing the back to curve.
2. Inhale, arch your back, and stretch the chest up and out.
3. Exhale as you slump forward. Continue this rhythmic breath and movement for a minute.

4TH CHAKRA

HEART (ANAHATA)

COLOR

LOCATION

GLAND

CONDITIONS

GREEN

HEART
(T4)

THYMUS

- CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE
- HEART ATTACK
- BREAST CANCER
- HYPERTENSION / STROKE

9. ROCKING AND ROLLING THE BACK

Key Acu-Points activated: Bladder Meridian and



Governing Vessels 1 - 14

Stretch and breath tips:

1. From a position lying on your back (padding suggested!), inhale and raise both arms and legs up toward sky.
2. Exhale and grab your toes (or wherever you can reach).
3. Rock on the spine from buttocks to the shoulders, coordinating the breath with your movement: exhaling as you go back and inhaling as you come up.
4. Rock for about a minute letting your legs bend as you rock.
5. Finish by slowly lowering the legs and relaxing on the back to let the energy circulate and recover the breath.

10. FLAPPING WINGS

Key Acu-Points activated: Inner and outer Bladder

Meridian

points on the back

behind the heart: (B 13, 14, 15, 16 and B 38, 39, 40)

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Stand with arms extended, parallel to the ground, palms facing out.
2. As you inhale, stretch your straight arms back and feel the pressure in the shoulder blades. Raise the chest up and out, and extend the stretch to include bending the wrists back.
3. Exhale and bring your palms together in front of you as you curve the spine forward.
4. Continue to coordinate this breath and movement pattern for one minute.



5TH CHAKRA

THROAT

(VISHUDDHA)

COLOR

LOCATION

GLAND

CONDITIONS

- SORE THROAT
- MOUTH/GUM DIFFICULTIES
- TMJ PROBLEMS
- LARYNGITIS
- SWOLLEN GLANDS
- THYROID
- ASTHMA
- PNEUMONIA

11. SIDE TO SIDE

Key Acu-Points activated: Neck points and Thyroid Gland

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lie on the back in a comfortable position. Exhale as you slowly turn the head to one side and inhale as you return to center. On the following exhalation, slowly turn your head to the opposite side and inhale as you return to center. Continue the breath and movement pattern for about a minute while you gently stretch the neck.

(NOTE: This stretch is a great warm up before Shoulder Stand and Plow as well as useful during relaxation following those positions.)



12. SHOULDER PRESS

Key Acu-Points activated: SI 10, TW 15, GB 21, B 10 and GB 20
(These points are all used in the neck and shoulder release protocol from Acupressure Institute)

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Sit in a comfortable position, on the floor or on a chair, with hands on the knees.
2. Inhale as you raise the shoulders firmly pressing them up toward the ears. Exhale and let the shoulders drop down.
3. Continue this coordinated breath and movement in a rhythmic pattern for one minute. Slowly build up speed.
4. To finish, inhale, press the shoulders up and hold the breath for 10 seconds. Release the shoulders and move to a relaxed position on the back to feel the enhanced energy circulation and discover the benefits.

13. SHOULDER STAND

Key Acu-Points activated: SI 10, TW 15, GB 21, B 10



and GB 20

(These points are all used in the neck and shoulder
release protocol from Acupressure Institute)

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Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lie on the back with head and neck supported with a yoga

blanket (or rolled towel) and your hands at your side.

2. Exhale and lift legs until straight up, then push into the arms to lift the trunk up. Move your hands up to the back for support.

Hold the body as straight as possible and breathe long and deep for one minute. Allow the body to relax so your shoulders melt into the yoga blanket under the neck.

3. Support yourself coming out of the position by putting your arms back on the floor. Go slowly and try to let each vertebrae touch the floor as you come out.

4. Relax on your back for a few minutes (eyes closed) while the breath returns to normal. Roll your head from side to side to release any tension from the neck.



6TH CHAKRA

THIRD EYE (AJNA)



COLOR
INDIGO

LOCATION
FOREHEAD (CI)

GLAND
PITUITARY

CONDITIONS
• HEADACHES
• NEUROLOGICAL ISSUES
• VISION PROBLEMS

14. YOGA MUDRA (with fist to eyes)

Key Acu-Points activated: B 1 + 2, TW 23, and ST 1 + 2

Stretch and breath tips:

1. From a kneeling position (large toes touching/heals apart), inhale deeply and exhale as you slowly bend forward bringing your elbows to the thighs just above the knees.

2. Make fists with your hands and place them, with finger joints touching, so the ridge of the eye (B 1 + 2) rests on the knuckles of the index and middle fingers.

3. Breathe deeply in this position, for a minute or two, consciously relaxing the eyes.

4. Sit quietly or lie down to complete this exercise.



15. EYE ROTATIONS AND CUPPING

Key Acu-Points activated: B 1 + 2, TW 23, and ST 1 + 2

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Sit comfortably with eyes open. Keeping the head still, look up as far as possible then slowly move the eyes in a large circle focusing on the periphery of your vision. Move slowly, smoothly and evenly.
2. After 3 full circles relax the eyes and close them.
3. Open the eyes and complete 3 full circles going the other direction.
4. After the second rotation, close the eye, rub the palms of the hands together briskly until you feel the energy (heat) build. Cup the eyes, breathe deeply and let the energy relax and nourish the eyes.



16. CLEAR MIND

Key Acu-Points activated: GV 17, 18, 19, 24, and 25 and Pituitary Gland

Stretch and breath tips:



1. From a comfortable sitting position on the floor, place palms six inches behind you with fingers pointing away from you.
2. Bring your head back and begin deep breathing while focusing on the third eye. Imagine purple energy flowing in and out of the third eye with each breath, stimulating the Pituitary Gland. Continue for one minute and slowly return to a normal sitting position.

7TH CHAKRA CROWN (SAHASRARA)

COLOR
VIOLET

LOCATION
TOP OF HEAD
(ATLAS/AXIS)

GLAND
PINEAL

CONDITIONS
• PARALYSIS
• GENETIC DISORDERS
• BONE CANCER
• MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
• ALS

17. MEDITATION WITH BREATH



Key Acu-Points activated: The rhythmic breathing begins to enhance the circulation of chi (life force) along the spine and through all the meridian lines enlivening all the body's organs and glands.

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Sit in a comfortable cross leg position (or on a chair) with spine upright and straight
2. Close eyes and center in the breath with long, slow deep breaths for two minutes

18. DEEP RELAXATION

Key Acu-Points activated: CV 6 and the 8 Regulatory Channels

Stretch and breath tips:

1. Lie on your back, eyes closed, for at least 7 - 10 minutes at the end of this series. Use Hara breathing (focusing the breath on CV 6 -- 3 fingers below the naval) to nourish the internal organs. Let the belly expand out on inhalations and draw completely in on exhalations.
2. Let your body and mind totally RELAX to reap the benefits of the potent Acu-Yoga sequence you have just completed.





Tom Sherman, Ph.D, LMT, CHTP (aka Chakraman), holds his Ph.D. in Organization Development, has completed post doctoral study in ecopsychology, is a licensed Massage Therapist, and an Energy Healer with certifications in Healing Touch, Acupressure, and Acu-Yoga. Tom's work integrates his consulting background, personal practice of yoga, experience in various massage and healing practices, eco-psychology, and 25 years of history with AIDS. Tom was diagnosed HIV+ in 1987 and with AIDS in 1994.

He currently thrives in radiant health.

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