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# Chakra and awe

Testing out high-end spas' 'energy rebalancing' treatments

BY MAURA KUTNER TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2012



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Feel like you're spinning your wheels at work or in your relationship? Maybe the mystical wheels inside of you are not.

It may be high on your list of New Age Hooey or Things Sting Probably Talks About at Dinner Parties, but proponents believe that our chakras — the ancient Hindu “energy forces” said to govern our physical and mental well-being — need maintenance like the rest of our many parts.

The theory is simple: Chakras are swirling vortexes that regulate energy flow throughout our bodies, and open and close depending on what we're thinking and feeling. Negative energy, stress and disorder can block chakras and leave them unbalanced, which in turn manifests itself as illness and general malaise.

## New age wake-up call

7 areas of the body, ruling different qualities, respond to varied herbs, gems



**SAHASRARA OR CROWN CHAKRA:** Said to govern empathy and wisdom, the crown chakra — located at the top of the head — is awakened by cinnamon and peppermint and balanced by amethysts, tourmaline and diamonds.



**AJNA OR THIRD EYE CHAKRA:** Situated on the forehead, this chakra is the seat of the mystical third eye. Intuition, memory loss and epilepsy can all be addressed here. The third eye is receptive to basil, eucalyptus and blueberries and balanced by sapphire, quartz and mother-of-pearl stones.



**VISHUDDHA OR THROAT CHAKRA:** Parallel to the thyroid, this chakra rules our abilities to listen and communicate and is believed to play an important role in dream cycles. It's stimulated by tangy fruits and balanced by aquamarine and turquoise.



**ANAHATA OR HEART CHAKRA:** Considered the most important chakra, the Anahata is our emotional center, and governs love and passion. It is believed to be the balance point between the three higher (spiritual) and lower (physical) chakras. The heart chakra is awakened by dark, leafy greens like kale and unblocked with emerald, citrine and peridot stones.



**MANIPURA OR SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA:** The solar plexus presides over willpower and digestive systems. When it's off-balance, say, because of repressed emotions, it is said to cause high cholesterol, diabetes and ulcers. Whole grains and ginger, as well as citrine, amber and agate can help clear this chakra.



**SVADHISTHANA OR SACRAL CHAKRA:** Resting above the pubic bone, the sacral chakra rules sexuality, emotions, relationships and addictions. It's awakened by sweet fruits, nuts and vanilla and balanced by rubies, orange calcite and coral.



**MULADHARA OR ROOT CHAKRA:** The root chakra, located at the base of the spine, governs the physical body — specifically the legs, feet and kidneys — and is the foundation of our identity. It's stimulated by protein-rich foods and root vegetables, and balanced by onyx, garnet and obsidian.

Rey's [Creative Chakra](#), owner Sandie West uses pressure-point massages and house-blended elixirs to realign chakras (members of Green Day are clients), while practitioners at Chicago's [Luminere Spa](#) unblock chakras through Reiki, the Japanese art of energy healing and guided meditation.

Recently, New York City's swanky Paul Labrecque Salon & Spa added chakra rebalancing (running \$285 a session) to its menu of probiotic facials and paraffin manicures. After a brief chat with resident wellness practitioner Pirkko Vaisanen about areas of stress and unease, clients slip into a candlelit room and receive a custom aromatherapy session to clear the mind. Vaisanen dabs clients' temples and wrists with lemon and peppermint oils to awaken creative energy, then scans seven chakra centers with crystal wands. “The crystals literally heat up at areas that are irritated, so I can immediately target where energy is off-balance,” Vaisanen explained. Women typically experience tension in the Solar Plexus chakra, which governs digestion and gut instincts, she noted.

After troubled chakras are identified, Vaisanen covers them with various healing stones — in my case, citrine to calm my sensitive stomach, rose quartz to invigorate the light in my heart and turquoise on my throat to open communication channels. She then used Reiki over my Third Eye and Sacral chakras to boost memory and cure my writer's block.

After honing in on off-kilter energies, Vaisanen treats clients to stimulating scalp massages and foot reflexology using a custom blend of sage and rosemary oils to improve circulation. “Our heads and feet are the most neglected body parts,” Vaisanen said. “But that's where we receive most of our energy. We need to keep them free-flowing.”

Did my headaches and stress evaporate? Not entirely, but I felt more clearheaded and slept better than I have in weeks. Whatever was troubling me seemed to be lifted by Vaisanen's skilled hands. Once my session concluded, she sent me on my way with a black tourmaline stone thought to protect against negative energy.

Chakra rebalancing is, at the very least, a relaxing way to spend an hour and a half. And even if you're not ready to eschew antibiotics (or even Advil) after a session, it's nice to feel that, when it comes to your health, the universe has your back.