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Head Balance, Shoulder Stand, Meditation – The Journey Inward



by [Garth Hewitt](#)

December 11, 2015



Lately in yoga class, we've been practicing **head balance** a lot.

The head balance helps to stimulate the energy at the sixth chakra, Agnia—the master control center. Stimulating this energy center helps encourage going inward for the practitioner.

"My Guru taught that when you start seeing the light at the space between the eyebrows, that is the first sign that indicates the Sixth Sense (the Pituitary Gland) is awakening. This is the dawn of Divine Perception, the activation of the Psychic Telescope." - Dharma Mittra

Concentration and meditation practices help us to stimulate this area and the head balance is one of the asanas that helps us to stimulate this area as well.

The yogis give special significance to some asanas and positions of the body that have an effect on the subtle body and on the mind and they call them mudras. Swami Satyananda, from the Bihar Yoga School in India, says in his book, *Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha* that, “Mudras have the ability to alter mood, attitude, and perception, and deepen awareness and concentration.”

The head balance and the **Shoulder Stand** are called the king and the queen of the asanas and they fall into a specific category of mudra as well, called **Viparita Karani**, which means ‘reversing the flow’.

Even if you’ve never studied anything about mudras, it becomes clear by studying the different asanas and by contemplating these two asanas, that they must have a purpose beyond the physical benefits of each pose. Neither pose is particularly challenging, physically. They aren’t deep hip openers or shoulder openers. They aren’t big forward or backward bends. They aren’t twisting poses. They are obviously not seated meditation postures and, although not overly challenging, they are not deeply relaxing either, like **Savasana**, the final resting pose. So, why do we do them and why are they considered such important poses in yoga?

The yogis realized that these two inversions were special. Long holds in these two poses helped prepare them for a seated meditation practice and sometimes could lead them into a deep state of meditation on their own, especially when practiced with the help of the bandhas—the energetic locks, kumbhaka—breath retention and shambavi mudra—concentration at the sixth chakra region.

The mind and ego are constantly reaching out through the senses, and are never satisfied. It is an endless roller coaster with the mind only finding moments of happiness that are quickly followed by disappointment, sadness, and depression.

The yogis realized that the only way to find lasting peace was to get off the roller coaster, go inward and realize the true nature of the Self. Once the yogi experienced the true nature of the Self, the mind became peaceful and calm. The yogis called this “Self-realization.” This is the ultimate goal in traditional yoga.

Going Inward With the Chakras

Most yoga systems recognize six main chakras, running from the base of the spine to the top of the head. We are constantly living in the three lower chakras.

The first chakra, **Muladhara**, the root, is located at the base of the spine and is the energy center connected with the physical and tangible world, “I want food on my table, I want a roof over my head, I want money, I want to survive.”

The second chakra, Swadhisthana, the dwelling of the self, is located a few inches higher, at the height of the pubic bone and is the energy center connected to pleasure. “I want to feel good, I want to taste things that taste good, I want to be touched, I want to go get a massage.”

The third chakra, Manipura, the city of jewels, is located at about the height of the navel, but in the spine, and is the energy center connected to power and asserting our power in the world. “I want to control my life, I want to do the things that I want to do, I want it my way.”

This lower energy is very selfish. It's all about "I want and what can you do for me? What is in it for me? What is the world going to offer me?"

A shift occurs when we are able to wake up the energy center at the middle of the eyebrows, the sixth chakra region, Agnia, the master control center. Once we are able to turn inward we can tap into; inspiration, creativity, and Universal love. Our intuitive voice gets louder and we realize our true purpose. Drawing on the energy flowing through us from within, we start to move through the world offering this energy. It's like the Universe is birthing ideas through us, moving through us.

The fifth chakra, **Vishuddha**, purity, is the energy center located at about the height of the throat. This energy center is associated with purity and truth. When we are able to use our psychic telescope to go inward, the truth starts to flow through us, at this chakra, in the form of creative expression; music, poetry, art; inspired ideas and scientific breakthroughs. Where do great ideas come from? They come from within.

I don't know where I got that idea from, it felt like it was just moving through me.

The fourth chakra, Anahata, un-struck, is the energy center located at the heart. When we go inward and experience the true nature of ourselves and find peace, Universal love starts to flow through us through the fourth chakra. We become more compassionate. We want to help others who are suffering. We want to be of service in the world. “How can I make a difference? How can I contribute? How can I help others?”

Notice how you are moving through the world. Are you being led around by the never-ending desires of the mind and the ego? Are you still on the roller coaster? Go inward and find peace and notice the shift in your whole character.

If you're not yet doing seated concentration and meditation practices, poses like the Head Balance and Shoulder Stand can help you start this journey inward. Once you master these poses physically, close your eyes, concentrate at the middle of the eyebrows. Imagine this area lighting up. The color

associated with this area is a deep violet or a dark purple.

"In the beginning, this light at the space between the eyebrows keeps appearing and disappearing. The second step of the process is to hold and maintain its presence when it appears. The third step is to control the light —your focus, your telescope, and come to direct it anywhere you like. Then you can have Divine Perception of anything." -- Sri Dharma Mittra

Go inward. All of the answers are there. They are waiting for you there when you are ready for them. Go inward.

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Garth Hewitt is an E-RYT and teacher trainer who is certified as a yoga therapist, Yogaworks teacher, and DharmaYoga teacher. He is passionate about yoga, sharing the teachings of his teachers, and living a healthy and balanced life. He regularly leads classes, workshops, retreats, and teacher trainings in LA and around the world. Visit his website to find out more at [READ MORE](#)

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