

HEALTH CLARITY

*In a world full of disinformation, get **Clarity**.*

TRADITION · BREATH · LIFE FORCE

Prana & Breathwork

A Visual Guide



What is prana?

Prana is a Sanskrit word usually translated as “life force” or “breath”. It comes from the yogic and Ayurvedic traditions of India, where it names the vital energy that, in those systems of belief, animates every living thing. Breath is treated as its most tangible expression, which is why the two words are so often used together.

The traditions describe prana moving through a subtle body that sits alongside the physical one. Several ideas recur throughout the images in this guide:

Nadis

A network of fine channels — classical texts speak of 72,000 — through which prana is said to flow. Three are central: *ida* and *pingala* on either side, and *sushumna* running up the spine.

Chakras

“Wheels” of energy imagined along the central channel, most often counted as seven from the base of the spine to the crown of the head.

Pranayama

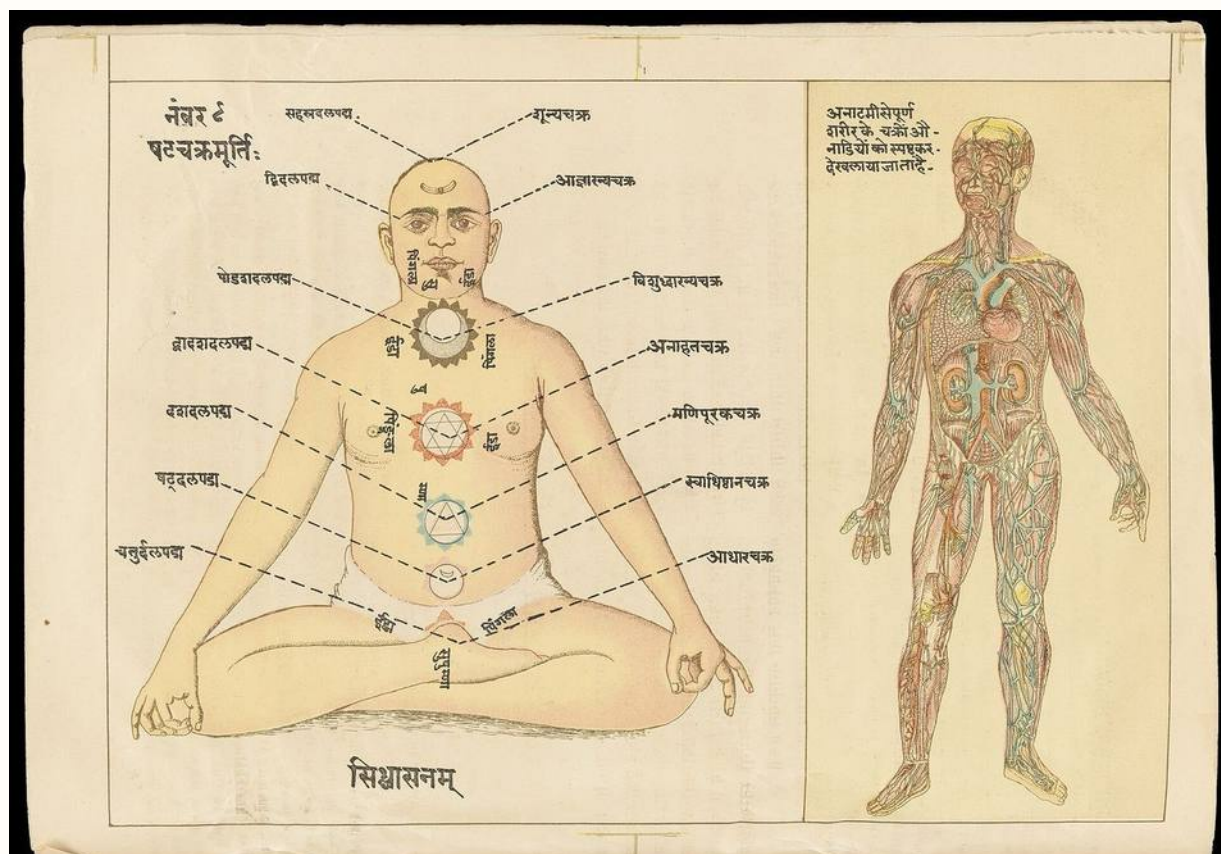
The yogic discipline of breath regulation, understood as a way of gathering and directing prana.

Mudras

Symbolic hand gestures, believed to “seal” and channel prana during meditation and breath practice.

This guide describes traditions and beliefs as they are taught. It makes no health or medical claims, and nothing here is advice or instruction.

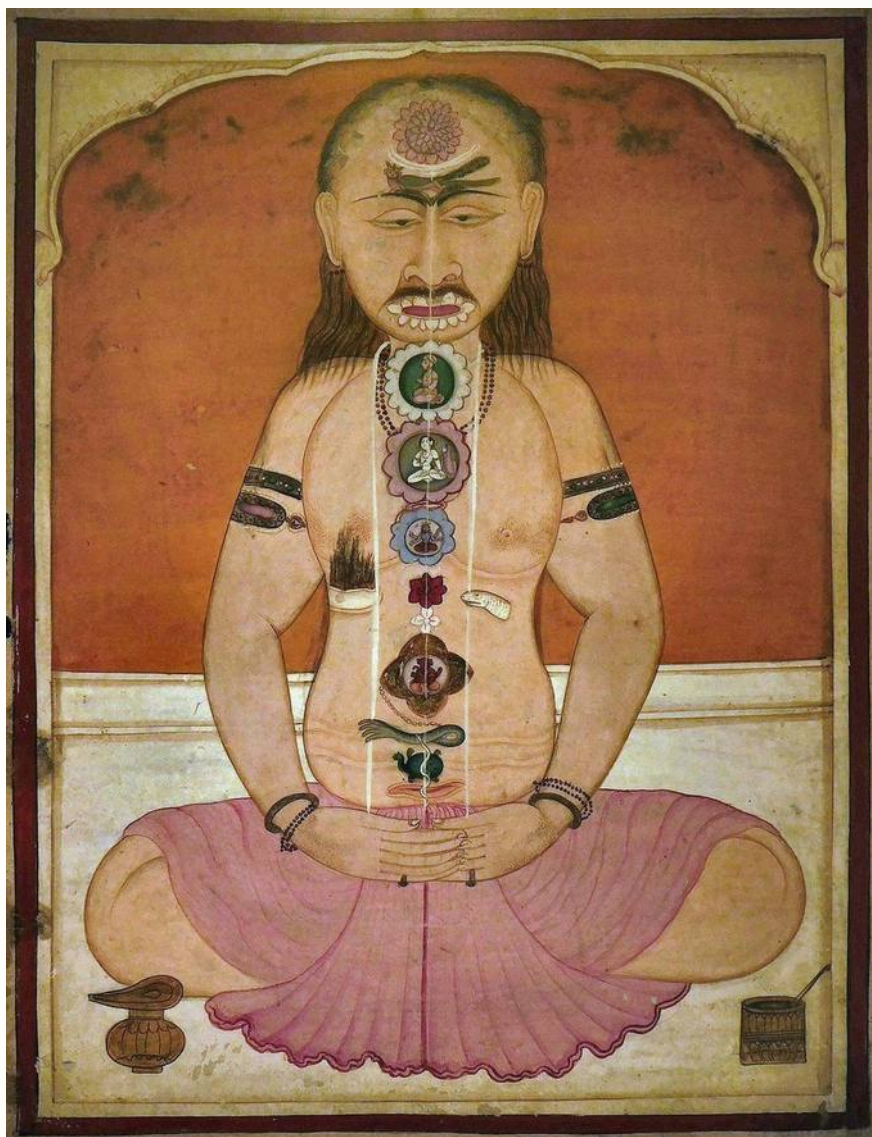
A chart of the six chakras



This printed colour plate comes from an Indian book on the six chakras, made for readers learning pranayama. On the left, a man sits cross-legged in *siddhasana*, his hands resting on his knees in gyan mudra. Dotted lines run from labels in Devanagari script to six lotus-shaped centres along the midline: at the base of the spine, the pelvis, the navel, the heart, the throat and between the eyebrows, with a thousand-petalled lotus said to sit above the crown. Each centre is drawn in its own colour and shape, such as the red downward triangle at the navel and the blue six-pointed star at the heart. The plate on the right shows an anatomical figure with its nerves and organs. The book set the two side by side to suggest that the chakras match nerve centres in the body, an idea popular at the time but not established medicine.

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Chakras and the three main channels



An Indian manuscript painting shows a yogin sitting cross-legged against a burnt-orange wall, hands folded in his lap and eyes half closed. Down the centre of his body runs a column of small painted lotuses, the chakras, each holding a tiny figure of a deity, from a coiled shape at the base to a pink lotus on the crown of the head. Three fine white lines run beside and through them: the central *sushumna* with *ida* and *pingala* on either side, the three main nadis through which, in yogic teaching, prana is said to flow. A small serpent, representing kundalini, climbs the central channel. As in all the charts in this guide, this is a symbolic map of a belief system, not anatomy.

Manuscript painting, Wellcome Collection; public domain via Wikimedia Commons