

## **Manipura Chakra (Navel, Solar Plexus)**

Located in the area of the solar plexus, navel, and the digestive system, the fiery third chakra is called *Manipura*, the “lustrous gem.” Associated with the color yellow, this chakra is involved in self-esteem, warrior energy, and the power of transformation; it also governs digestion and metabolism. A healthy, spirited third chakra supports us in overcoming inertia, jump-starting our “get-up-and-go” attitude so that we can take risks, assert our will, and assume responsibility for our life. This chakra is also the place of our deep belly laughter, warmth, ease, and the vitality we receive from performing selfless service.

Sensible risk-taking is one way of gaining confidence and flexing your third chakra power muscles. For some people, a risk is dropping back from Tadasana (Mountain Pose) into Urdhva Dhanurasana (upward bow pose); for others, it might simply be getting to their first yoga class. Risks may involve confrontation, setting limits, or asking for what we need—all ways of reclaiming our power.

Digestive problems, eating disorders, feeling like a victim, or experiencing low self-esteem can all be indications of a deficient third chakra. When you feel disempowered or in need of re-energizing, third chakra poses fan the flames of your inner fire and restore vitality so that you can move from the strength of your core. Practice Surya Namaskara (Sun Salutation), abdominal strengtheners like Navasana (boat pose), Ardha Navasana (Half Boat Pose), and Urdhva Prasarita Padasana (Leg Lifts), Warrior poses, twists, and Bhastrika Pranayama (Bellows Breath or Breath of Fire).

Perfectionism, anger, hatred, and too much emphasis on power, status, and recognition reveal an excessive third chakra. In addition, taking in more of anything than you can assimilate and use also indicates excessiveness. Restorative, passive backbends that cool off the belly’s fire act as calming agents for third chakra excess.

We live in a time where there is little encouragement for paying attention to our body’s natural energy levels and giving it what it needs. So often when we are really tired, we ignore our longing for rest and manipulate our bodies with caffeine, sugar, and other stimulants to create a false sense of energy. When we’re overstimulated and want to relax or draw inward, many people turn to overeating, alcohol, or drugs to slow down. Yoga offers us a different choice: to listen to what our body requires and to truly nourish ourselves, using appropriate asanas and pranayama practices to create more energy or relaxation. Once we’ve done that, we can get a taste of our true personal power.