

CHAKRA ONE



Mūlādhāra

SURVIVAL AND SECURITY

Location: Near the base of the spine, in the perineum.

Governs: Our understanding of the physical world.

Main issue: Survival and security.

Externalizes: As the adrenal gland.

Element: Earth.

When balanced: We feel grounded.

Color: A harmonic of **RED**.

Key words: Matter, body, home, family, food.

Influences: Our feet, knees, legs, bones, large intestine and rectum.

Deficiencies: Will manifest as an inability to draw to oneself the material things needed for survival.

Imbalances: Will manifest as obesity, hemorrhoids, constipation, sciatica, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, and knee and feet trouble. Our emotions will be dominated by fear, panic and anxiety.

If this center is balanced we will have what is needed, we will feel safe and secure. Until this one is balanced and its issues tackled we will find it hard to focus our attention elsewhere. If we are always in a crisis or survival mode we will have little energy to devote to other areas of our life. It makes little difference whether the threats to our survival are real or just perceived both situations trigger the adrenals to respond.

The adrenal glands lie atop the kidneys and are actually two glands in one, the adrenal medulla and the adrenal cortex. The adrenal medulla is responsible for our ability to respond instantaneously to any stress. This part of the gland releases adrenaline. We have all felt this response upon being frightened, when our heart beat increases, muscles tense, palms sweat, and we become hyper alert and wide awake. At this point we are able and ready to respond to ensure our survival. The adrenal cortex secretes the steroid hormones like cortisol, also called hydrocortisone, aldosterone, and DHEA. These hormones mediate our

longer term response to stress by managing our blood sugar level and fluid balance among other things. The adrenal cortex also produces a little testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone in both men and women.

Recognized Western medical diseases of the adrenals include one called Cushing's syndrome which is an excess of cortisol. The other is Addison's disease, also called adrenal insufficiency, which is a deficiency of both cortisol and aldosterone. Both of these are extensive imbalances of these glands and require prompt medical attention. From the conventional medical standpoint the glands are either perfectly healthy or they present life threatening situations. Western medicine fails to understand that areas exist outside of normal which do not yet constitute medical emergencies. Many people suffer from adrenal exhaustion without complete failure of the gland. Relative adrenal excess also exists which doesn't yet qualify as Cushing's syndrome.

Skipping meals, inadequate protein and too much sugar or junk food, insufficient sleep and relaxation, prolonged infection, trauma, chronic pain, severe allergies, and any ongoing toxic exposure all rely heavily on the adrenals to compensate for these stresses. Symptoms and signs of adrenal dysfunction include fatigue, nervousness, anxiety, unrefreshing sleep, poor recovery from illness or frequent illnesses, hypoglycemia, low blood pressure, low body temperature, progressive exhaustion with physical exertion, low physical reserves in general, and sleep disturbances.

Of course there are other possible causes for all of these problems, but if you are plagued by very many having an exam done to evaluate your adrenals may be helpful. Conventional western medical tests will reveal little unless the condition is extreme. More relevant and progressive tests exist which evaluate the saliva for the adrenal hormones cortisol and DHEA. Many practitioners are starting to use these tests. If your primary care practitioner is unfamiliar but interested in learning about these tests, two companies performing the tests provide excellent information. Diagnos-Techs, Inc. in Seattle (800)878-3787 and Great Smokies Lab in North Carolina (800)522-4762. Treatment can include the use of both DHEA and cortisol but these should be done only with proper guidance since these hormones function within optimal ranges and more is not necessarily better.

Steps you can take at home to balance the adrenal will include addressing all the issues of which relate to the first chakra. Examine the relationship you have with the Earth and your body. Do you view them as prisons from which you will be set free at death. Look around your house. Is it a home? Your adrenals will not rest until you feel safe and secure. Of course a healthy diet which stabilizes the blood sugar through proper balance of protein and carbohydrates is of paramount importance. Minimizing stimulants like caffeine is essential

since these by themselves can create the panic state. A well balanced multivitamin is invaluable to offset the deficiencies created by chronic stress. Additional vitamin C and B5 (pantothenic acid) are especially helpful.

Herbs known as adaptogens play a special role in helping us respond to stress. These include the well known herbs like Panax ginseng and Siberian ginseng. As the name implies adaptogens help us adapt. They are unique in that they can calm an overactive adrenal system or rejuvenate and energize an underactive one. In other words to help us stay in balance. Licorice root is a specific for low adrenal function and contains substances which are very similar to the adrenal hormone aldosterone. Aldosterone acts to help the body retain fluids by retaining sodium. This is why one has to be cautious if high blood pressure is a concern. Chinese medicine has large repertoire of formulas to address adrenal imbalances. These will often include the kidney qi tonics and herbs to strengthen kidney yin or yang. A Chinese medical diagnosis is necessary to use them appropriately.

Additional ideas to reduce stress and balance the first chakra include getting a massage or any body work, planting a garden, taking a yoga class, getting a colonic and exercising. To improve the quality of our terrestrial home, buy organic, recycle. The greatest assistance of all, however, is always available from the Earth herself. A simple exercise to enhance this connection is to walk barefoot outside in contact with the ground. Walk around and really feel that you are always supported. Next let a tree find you and sit with your back against the trunk. Feel how it's anchored, its roots reaching deep into ground. Just being with the tree with a sense of appreciation is enough. Sit back and relax.

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