

Center Walks



Introduction

Murshid Samuel Lewis taught Walking Meditations using an attunement to various centers, sometimes called chakras. Please refer to his Ten Lessons on the Walk. His students were interested in, among other practices, yoga and the chakra systems so it was a natural vehicle to use.

It is worth repeating many times over that these Walking Practices cannot be 'book-learned.' They must be transmitted in person from a Walks teacher who has embodied them.

The benefits from practicing Center Walks are invaluable. We all have bodies and operate in them in various degrees of consciousness. Stating the obvious, more consciousness is better than less. As we become more 'present' in our bodies, we become more 'present' to the connection we have with the rest of the world and may be able to guide ourselves more harmoniously in our daily lives.

In regards to the Dances of Universal Peace, these Walks are an indispensable foundation to carrying the energy of a Dance appropriately and with maximum attunement. A study of the Center Walks includes learning to focus on the specific center (foot, hara, base of spine, heart, third eye, crown) with proper breathing, use of sacred sounds to deepen the experience, and working with the centers in a spin or turn.

While basic descriptions may be given here or verbally, each person's experience of a body-centered walk will vary. Practicing in the presence of a master Walks teacher allows for individual feedback and guidance. Much can be learned also from the observation of others in group learning. There are few master teachers of these Walks, and one's mentor may recommend a course of study or apprenticeship with one of them (Radha Tereska Buko)

Walks of the Centers

As you learn to feel the whole body as a source of consciousness and breath, you can hone your concentration skills and awaken the energy centers with breath/walking practices. The definition of 'body' may change and expand. For this reason, some Walks teachers refer to 'body' as little as possible, so as not to limit the experience of participants. The following are some attunements that can be used for each of the major centers:

Feet

Walk slowly and firmly, with a developing awareness of the whole foot as it touches the ground. Breath in and out through the soles of the feet, feeling the magnetism of the earth energizing your whole body, from the bottom up. Draw each breath up higher through your legs, torso, and up into the head. Let each exhalation bring the breath back down through the whole body and out the feet. This practice is excellent for combating fatigue, reenergizing through the connection to the earth's magnetic field, and grounding oneself in the moment.

Hara

This center is used in many Japanese practices. The hara is located a few finger-widths below the navel in the center of the belly. This center is felt as the centering place for vitality and power. In Middle Eastern mysticism, it can be the seat of the self, the gathering of consciousness into an 'I.'

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Heart

When you breathe in and out through the heart center, you can begin to feel drawn from the heart forward, as towards a goal or loved one. There are several variations of a Heart-centered Walk, but most important is to actually center the movement actively in the heart rather than the head. Other contemplations include feeling as if you are included in all of creation and as if you contain all of creation within you.

Third Eye

Breathe into and out of a point just between and above your eyebrows. In Sufism, this center is related to the 'jinn,' or genius-like, quality of mind. The Jinn plane of consciousness (like that of the Ghandarva in Eastern mysticism) is related to the creation of art, music, poetry and dance.

Crown

Breathe into and out of the crown chakra with the feeling of a halo of light emanating from it. Like the Neptune Walk, focusing on the crown center can open a feeling for the angelic sphere of devotion and praise.

Other Centers

It is possible to center in any of the spiritual/physical chakras, or other areas of the body, in order to bring more awareness and integration.