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## Seeking Re:pose: Lacking Clarity? Find Your Roots

~Amy Cushing

The day feels sluggish, and your creativity is flowing like molasses.

You're struggling for the right words or wavering over your next brush stroke or perplexed at the missing ingredient from your savory concoction. You feel scattered, like you can't quite catch those artistic elements that come easy most days. With each new attempt your frustration grows, and it seems as though you're fighting against yourself. You begin to feel irritated and annoyed.

Such days ask for a refresher, stepping away from the work for a moment and giving your creative intuition time to breathe. One effective way is to tap into your *muladhara chakra*. A common practice in Kundalini yoga, the chakras are energy points located along the spine, starting at the base, and traveling upward at specific points, up to the crown of the head. The first of the chakras, the *muladhara*, is also known as the *root chakra*. It is located at the base of the spine at the perineum. Considered the first of the chakras, it is the one associated with the seat of consciousness.

It is where human development begins and is the space where our deep-seated needs reside. It is where we search for nurturing, comfort, and security. A blockage in the root chakra can lead to lethargy, decreased confidence, and even a sense of fear.

It can stifle your productivity and make you question your instincts. As Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa explains in her book *The Eight Human Talents*, “we connect to the planet through our first chakra, and it’s where we return ourselves back to the earth beneath us.” Losing that grounded connection can block us from that deep sense of purpose that guides us through our decisions.

Gurmukh adds, “if we don’t feel supported, grounded, comfortable in our own skin, we are likely to be too full of the shadow emotion of this chakra, resentment.” Resentment suffocates the creative process and can make work difficult. Taking time to change your focus can help smooth out your frustrations before they have time to grow into mountains.

A defined yoga practice can help get the root chakra back online and clear the debris holding back your work. Following is a muladhara-based practice that will help reactivate that lost connection.

1. Balasana (Child’s pose)

Starting on your hands and knees, widen the stance with your knees, touch your big toes together, and then press your seat to your heels and your forehead toward the floor. If your seat is still raised a distance from your heels or your forehead doesn’t reach the floor, that’s fine. Maybe consider using a blanket between your seat and heels and/or a blanket under your forehead for support. Stay here for 8 full breaths. As you inhale, let your back ribs inflate as you send the breath to the base of the spine.

2. Janu sirsasana (Head-to-knee)

Make your way to seated. Keep the left leg extended as you draw the right foot on the inside of the left thigh. Adjust your seat as needed so you feel your sitting bones grounded on the mat. Keeping your left leg and foot activated, reach your arms up on your inhale and fold forward on your exhale, resting your hand on the floor, your leg, or your foot if reachable. Make sure to keep a flat back. If you find your ribs are collapsing and your back is rounding, sit on a blanket to elevate the hips. A strap may be used around the ball of the foot to help those with tight hamstrings. Breathe here for 8 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

3. Virabhadrasana II (Warrior II)

Stand at the top of the mat with your hands on your hips. Take a giant step back with your right foot, wide enough that when you bend your front knee, your knee doesn’t bend forward past your ankle. Angle your back foot 90 degrees or slightly more. Your

front foot should line up with the center arch of the back foot (or with the heel of the back foot, whichever is more comfortable). Stand tall, press down through the feet, and draw the energy up through the pelvis. Keep that strong stance and you bend the front knee with the arms extended out to the side shoulder-height, making sure the knee points toward the pinky toe to protect the knee joint. Take a moment to draw the back thigh inward to free up the sacrum. Look past the left fingertips. Breathe deep into your pelvis for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

4. Trikonasana (Triangle)

Starting as you did in Virabhadrasana II, step back with your right foot to the same wide stance. Stand tall, once again activating the feet as you press into the floor. Keep that tall stance as you take your arms out shoulder-height and reach toward the left until you've gain good length in your side body, and then resting your left hand down on the thigh, shin, or the floor (I recommend on the outside of the ankle, with the wrist under the shoulder. Use a block if necessary to keep good alignment). Avoid hyperextending the left knee by pressing down through the ball of the left foot and activating the left thigh before you straighten the left leg. Keep pressing from the inner thigh to the inner ankle. Keep the side waists long. Breathe deeply for 5 breaths. Repeat on the other side.

5. Pachimottanasana (Seated forward bend)

From seated extend legs forward and flex the feet. Adjust your seat until you feel grounded in the seated position. Extend your arms up with an inhale. With your exhale bend forward leading with the heart while keeping a flat back. As with Janu Sirsasana, if you feel your ribs collapsing inward or your back rounding, sit on a blanket and lighten up a bit on the posture. A strap can also be used. Breathe deeply into your back. Once again try to send the breath toward the pelvis. Pause here for 8 breaths.

6. Malasana (Garland pose)

Make your way to a low squat with your feet wider than your hips and your toes angled outward. If your heels want to pull up from the mat, let them. You can use a blanket under your heels to bridge the gap. Once comfortable, sit back on your heels, drop your tailbone down toward the floor and lift your heart. Your hands can rest at your heart in Anjali mudra, or you can keep your hands on the floor for support. If you're able to, lift the heart and reach the crown of the head up to the ceiling as your tailbone drops further toward the floor. Close your eyes and envision the energy being drawn down toward the pelvis. Breathe here for 8 full breaths. If this posture is difficult on your knees or your feet and ankles, please proceed to baddha konasana instead (bound-angle pose).

7. Seated meditation

Find a comfortable seat in sukhasana (crossed-legged pose) or any other seated posture that suits you. For more instructions on how to sit in meditation, refer to this Seeking Re:pose article (see Seeking Re:pose, Recharge Through Stillness). Close your eyes and calm your breath.

8. Return to your creative work and soar!

Namaste.

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