

OPEN THE DOOR TO YOUR HEART

Feeling closed down, agitated, irritated with yourself or others? Stop what you are doing and open your heart.

Heart opening stretches not only release bodily tension, but enable your emotional heart—your heart center, the 4th chakra—to open if it feels tight or closed down. It allows self-awareness through self-love to return.

You can do this exercise anywhere. Simply stand up, stretch your arms out wide to the sides as if you were an airplane. Breathing slowly and evenly, gently arch your body back as if there were an imaginary string connecting your heart to the sky. Stay in this position for at least a minute. Continue to breathe in a relaxed way so you can feel any constriction that is present open up and release.

You may need to repeat this heart-opening practice a few times if you're feeling especially resistant.

This practice can also be done lying on the floor. Lie flat on your back, arms at your side or spread wide like airplane wings. Relax your torso and allow your legs to rest comfortably, feet comfortable so they fall gently to their sides.

Slowly and gently lift and arch your back, lifting your torso just a few inches off the ground. Don't strain or lift too high. Attune your awareness to your heart center so that you can intuitively feel when your chest is beginning to feel less constricted, more open. Hold this position for a few seconds, then release gently back to the floor.

Our thoughts and feelings move in energetic patterns throughout our body and often house themselves in certain regions. They can get “stuck” in one area or another. Thus the phrase, “I feel like my heart is breaking,” when sorrow is present. Discomfort can actually be felt in the heart center. Anger can also be felt in this region by tightness or the discomfiting experience of pressure in the chest. Often simple physical movements can help redistribute the energy and, ultimately, release it.

Sometimes a less formal practice of movement can do the trick, too. Try it yourself and see. Lie down on the floor and very slowly, gently, move your body around. Wiggle, stretch, lift and raise, move from side to side—however your intuition instructs you. Listen to your body and feel where lack of peace may have housed itself. Release it by moving your body.

Anytime you connect with your body and allow it to help to release what's burdening you, honor its trustworthy service. Place your hands in prayer pose, thumbs touching your heart center, and thank it for serving you well.



