

How to do Prostrations

It is common to do 108 prostrations at a time, ideally at least once a day. Depending on your speed, this takes about 15 – 20 minutes.

The movement is continuous. To summarize: Start standing. Bring the arms overhead, with the hands in prayer position. Touch the hands to the crown chakra, throat chakra and heart chakra. Bring the hands to the floor and slide them in front of

you until you are lying prone on the ground, with the hands out-stretched in front. Bring the hands into prayer position again and bend at the elbows, bringing the hands to the head and then back to the floor. Slide hands back across the floor in order to bring yourself to the original starting position. That is one prostration.

Here are more detailed instructions.

Starting position - Activating the Chakras



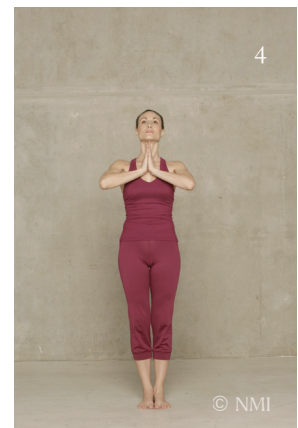
1. Stand straight with feet together and firmly grounded on the floor. The arms hang down at the sides of the body.



2. Lift the arms out to the side to really open the chest, bringing the hands together directly overhead, arms straight up in the air.



3. When the hands are in prayer position, there is a space between the palms and the thumbs are tucked inside that space.



4. Keeping them in the same prayer position, lower the hands and lightly press the wrists to the crown chakra. Next, lightly hit the throat chakra with the hands (using mainly the index fingers). Next, hit the heart chakra with the hands (using mainly the thumbs). Keep your eyes focused directly in front of you.



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Lying Prone



5. Bend at the waist, bringing the hands flat to the floor on either side of the feet. Try to keep the legs straight.



6. - 7. Slide the hands on the floor (Some cloth can aid the sliding - socks work well), until your entire body is lying flat on the ground face down.



8. The hands continue to slide until the arms are completely stretched in front of you. The tops of the feet should also be on the floor.



9. Bring the hands into the same prayer position as before.



10. Bend the elbows to bring the hands to the top of the head and then return them to the floor. The forehead remains on the floor.

Starting position - Activating the Chakras



11. Separate the hands and slide them back until they are on either side of the chest. There are two options for getting up.



12. You can either push the body back so that the hands and knees are on the floor, and stand up from there.



13. Or, you can avoid using the knees and instead try to push the body off the ground into a push-up position while simultaneously sliding the hands.



14. - 15. The hands, flat on the floor, continue to slide back until you resume the earlier position of being bent at the waist, legs straight and hands on the floor.



16. - 17. Then sweep the arms out to the sides of body while straightening up.



18. The hands come together over the head, ready to begin the next prostration.



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Benefits of the Movements

There is a logic behind each detail of these movements. There are benefits happening on many levels with each position and each place that is touched. These benefits are mostly described in terms of the effect on the three main channels, as well as the stimulation of the element that is associated with the various body parts that receive pressure. Here is a brief explanation of some of these.

We know that the central channel is associated with pure wisdom and realizations of our true nature. Anything we can do to bring the winds into the central channel is very beneficial. This also reduces the negative effects of the wind in the side channels. By standing very straight and elongated at the start of the prostration, we emphasize the central channel. Stretching the arms out to the side and up overhead constricts the side channels at the armpits, encouraging the winds to move into the center. The channels are close to the surface of the body at the armpits, so this is an effective place to close them off. In this way, we can balance the side channels, the sun and moon energy, hot and cold, wisdom and method. The same result occurs when you are stretched in this same position lying prone on the floor. And when you bend the elbows to touch the hands to the head, this also closes the side channels. Some more benefits of the starting position are that when we stand with the feet firmly grounded, we connect with the earth element. When we bring the hands together we stimulate the fire element. In the Bön tradition, the palms are pressed together with no space between them and this generates even more fire. In the other Buddhist traditions, it is more common to leave a space between the palms. This is more beneficial on the mental level. The space between the palms represents wisdom, while the thumbs cradled inside the palms represent method. This hand position is symbolic of uniting wisdom and method.

When we hit the hands against the chakras, it activates each one in turn. The crown chakra is connected to the wind element, the throat chakra is connected to the fire element and the heart chakra is connected to the water element. Additionally, this is symbolic of purifying the body (crown), speech (throat) and mind (heart).

When we bend at the waist we put pressure on the navel chakra and when we stretch the arms up and out to the sides we open the heart chakra. We already know the positive effects associated with opening the navel and heart chakras, such as reducing the negative emotions associated with them. The Tibetan medical texts also state that the lower part of the body from the navel down is

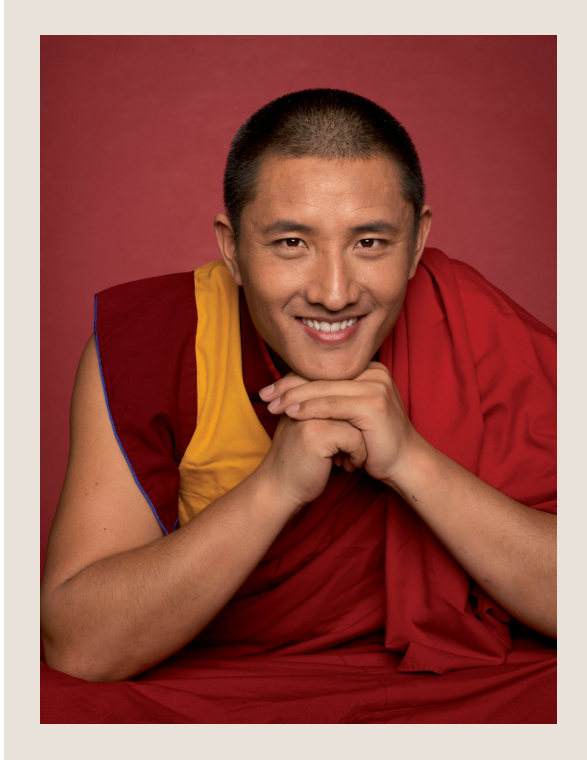
cold in nature and the upper part of the body is naturally warm. Doing prostrations balances the body temperature.

Various parts of the body are connected specifically to one element or another. By putting pressure on these spots, or opening and closing the joints, we can stimulate the element. For example, the palms of the hands and soles of the feet are connected to the fire element. The tops of the hands and feet are connected to the water element. The knees and elbows are connected with the water element, while the inner sides of the knees and elbows are connected to the wind element. The big toes are connected to the heart channel and when we roll on our toes and put pressure on them, this has a very positive effect on our mental state. Therefore, when we put pressure on these parts by bending them or placing them on the ground, we also activate the elements and balance them. Our forehead is connected to the third eye, or wisdom eye. By touching the forehead to the floor, we symbolically open our wisdom eye and become introduced to the nature of the mind. This is why it is traditional for Buddhists to touch holy objects to their foreheads and to greet each other by touching foreheads together. There is a Tibetan saying that refers to “receiving the warm hand of the master.” This is when our spiritual master places his hand on our head and thereby helps us to realize the nature of the mind. Through the warmth of our teacher we experience our own inner warmth.

Having our four limbs and head on the floor symbolizes pushing down the five negative emotions. The five poisons are the same as the five wisdoms; they are just in a deluded state rather than in a purified state. We need to transform the poisons into wisdom. We do this through awareness. We stretch down on the floor in order to help free us from negativities and clear the mind. And when we stand up again, we are able to realize our negative emotions and therefore can transform them into wisdom, and ourselves into Buddha nature. This is the ultimate truth; we are all Buddha nature. We do not fall into the viewpoint of the two extremes and instead realize the true nature of things. Normally we are not able to recognize the conventional truth and the ultimate truth simultaneously. But when we do prostrations, we can join them together in one experience.

This is just a brief explanation of some of the benefits of regularly doing prostrations. I'm sure there are even many more. I hope that this explanation makes sense and motivates you to do prostrations. It is truly a great and precious method for purifying the body, speech and mind. May you find benefit in my words.

Biography of Tulku Lobsang



Tulku Lobsang is a high Buddhist master and renowned doctor of Tibetan Medicine. Born in 1976 in northeastern Tibet, he entered the local Buddhist monastic school at age six and at 13 was recognized as the eighth incarnation of the Nyentse Lama. Already at that time he was impressing people with his healing capacities. Tulku Lobsang received an intense education in the foundational Buddhist practices, Tibetan medicine, astrology, philosophy and in the teachings of Tantrayana. In 1992, Tulku Lobsang left Tibet in order to deepen his knowledge of the classic Buddhist texts at the monastic university Gaden Shartse.

Tulku Lobsang received many teachings in the Gelugpa lineage. Additionally, he also studied Bon, the Jonang Kalachakra secret traditions, and the Mahamudra traditions. Tulku Lobsang received teachings in all major Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and he is a practitioner of all traditions.

The Tibetan medical center Nangten Menlang is under the spiritual guidance of Tulku Lobsang. Nangten Menlang was originally founded in Dharamsala, in northern India. Today, the organization's international headquarters are in Vienna, Austria. Nangten Menlang is dedicated to the preservation and spread of Buddhist knowledge, Tibetan medical science and the healing art of Tantrayana.

Seminars, workshops, retreats and health consultations are offered in numerous countries. Every year, Tulku Lobsang travels throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas to pass on his knowledge.

It is a great wish of Tulku Lobsang to reduce suffering in the world through cultural exchange. The methods he teaches help us to effectively combat disease and to free ourselves from negative emotions such as anger, ignorance and attachment. In this way, we are able to nurture our physical, mental and energetic bodies, and achieve vibrant health.

Tulku Lobsang's teachings are characterized by his warm and charismatic way. With his captivating, humorous, vivid and relevant style of teaching, he succeeds in the delicate task of transmitting the age-old knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism into the present times.