

Mental and Spiritual Exercises

These exercises are intended to help you gain mental clarity, focus and peace of mind.



(1) Meditation

Meditation is probably the single most important spiritual defensive skill you can learn. Once you become skilled at meditative absorption, you'll be more sensitive to spiritual assault from outside forces, more alert to signals and cues people give off (allowing you to distinguish friend from foe) and you'll strengthen the mind's innate abilities to cleanse itself of negative tendencies and influences.

Meditation isn't hard to learn, and there are many, many forms of meditation. You may already know how to meditate. If so, I urge you to practice regularly. If you aren't familiar with meditation, don't worry. It's easy to learn, and all it takes is practice. The more you do it, the better you become.

To begin, find a quiet room, and turn off your cell phone. You need a timer, which I recommend to set for no longer than five minutes to begin with. Gradually increase your time until you mediate three to four days a week, for twenty minutes a sitting. Sit in a comfortable, balanced position, and don't strain to sit ramrod straight.

Close your eyes and say to yourself, "I'm happy, cherished, and loved. I love myself most of all." I know this may be against what we're taught. Often we're taught to love others, but sacrifice our own happiness. This is psychologically unsound.. It isn't possible to love others unless you love yourself. Unhappy people cannot wish happiness for others. You may do so half-heartedly, but if you don't believe it, you'll find sneaky little ways to punish yourself, and eventually everyone else.

Next, reflect on where and how to find this elusive happiness. It doesn't take long to realize you won't find it in the past. The past is a terrible place full of unreliable memories and many of them are bad ones anyway. The future is also unreliable. The only time and place where we have any real power of decision is here and now.

But even in the here and now, you have to practice discernment. Not everything around us is dependable. If we try to base our happiness on things that change — sights, sounds, sensations in general, people and things outside — we're setting ourselves up for disappointment. This is simply repeating the past.

The only logical conclusion is that true happiness has to be sought within ourselves. Meditation then becomes a search to find a place in the mind where you can't be moved; something solid, unchanging, a place where nothing bad can touch you; no hex, jinx or curse can reach you, not even death can touch you.

To find this place we need stepping stones. The first step is to cultivate happiness for ourselves. The second is to *project* that happiness to everyone else. We do this through identification with every living thing. Tell yourself: "Everyone, no matter who you are, no matter what you've done to me in the past, I hope you find true happiness too."

Why is this necessary? Because if you don't cultivate loving-kindness, you'll carry negativity and resentment into meditation, and that's what you'll find when you look inside yourself. You won't be able to locate that solid, peaceful spot you're trying to find.

So first, decide to love yourself. Second, decide to love everyone else. When you have cleared your mind and filled it with loving-kindness, you're ready to begin meditation on the breath. This is the method the Buddha taught, and it's stood the test of time.

All you do is concentrate all your attention on the sensation of breathing. It's so simple and you may think you're doing it wrong. Many people try to make it too complex. Inhale and exhale deeply a couple of times, focusing on any area where the breathing is easy to notice, such as the nostrils or abdomen. Don't become self-conscious with your breathing and hyperventilate, just breathe deeply and naturally. If your mind wanders—and this is natural—don't be frustrated. Bring your attention back to your breathing.

Some people like to experiment with different types of breathing: short breaths, shallow, alternating long and short, and also shifting the focus of their attention to different parts of their body. I've never done this. I've always stayed focused on the breath. Over time you'll find your attention narrows down to a single very tiny spot. And then you can let your attention grow out from that tiny dot to fill your entire body. Over time, your attention can expand to fill the room—and beyond.

When you're ready to come out of meditation, do so gradually and gently. When you're ready, stand and return to the world.



(2) Visualization Exercises

The following exercises make use of a crystal ball. A small crystal ball, 2" or 3" is fine. If you have trouble readily obtaining a crystal ball, a quartz point, or any shiny stone will do, but I strongly urge you to make an effort to find a small ball. You'll fall in love with it.

These exercises can be used in conjunction with the meditation practice described previously.

(1) Crystal Meditation 1

This is a simple, yet challenging exercise that leads into a series of crystal techniques we'll discuss later that can improve many aspects of your life.

For this first exercise, sit comfortably in a quiet room and hold the crystal in your hand. Concentrate your full attention on the crystal for five minutes. It isn't as easy as it sounds. Even your eyes want to wander away. Your mind strays along dozens of different paths. Don't get frustrated. This is difficult. Just keep returning to the crystal. Learn to coordinate your breathing. In. Out. Focus.

Stop if you get tired and come back to it later.

(2) Crystal Meditation 2

Place the crystal on a shelf at eye level. Stand across the room, and point your forefinger at the ball. The trick here is to focus your attention on your fingertip, and keep it in alignment with the crystal. Walk slowly toward the crystal, keeping your attention on your fingertip, and keeping your fingertip in alignment with the crystal, until you're actually touching the crystal. Repeat several times. This exercise develops hand-eye coordination and helps you focus your attention.

(3) Crystal Projection

Hold the crystal in your hand and close your eyes. Imagine yourself strong, successful, happy. Repeat to yourself that you are free of negative influences, filled with love, that people love you, that you can have anything you want. Keep repeating these affirmations until you feel them swell within you, open your eyes and gaze deep within the crystal. Send these thoughts into the crystal with all your strength, and project them out into the world. Pour it out as if it were a stream of water from a fire hose, and sustain it as long as you can.

Projection is a technique pioneered by C. Alexander and if you want to know more I urge you to go to the website of the **Crystal Silence League** (www.crystalsilenceleague.org) and read more.

(4) Candle Meditation with a Crystal

Sit in a dark room and place a candle on a table, or on the floor if you're sitting lotus-style, and hold the crystal ball so that you're watching the flickering flame through the ball. Relax, and let your eyes move in and out of focus as you see various images rise and fall in the ball. The trick is to look through the ball without letting your eyes focus on anything in particular. You can roll and rotate the ball if you like.

Allow your mind to free-associate with these images. Don't try to force meaning on them, or try to link them together in a meaningful pattern. You'll find that after a while, without trying, you'll unconsciously start to construct a narrative from the images you see. If you've never experienced this before, it's quite startling the first time it happens. It's as if the ball is telling you a story.

(5) Sky Meditation with a Crystal

This lovely method was shown to me by a Sioux Shaman, who did it with a quartz crystal. I brought out my small crystal ball and asked him to teach the technique to me. He was intrigued by the idea of using a clear ball and we exchanged crystals, mine for his, and took turns gazing through them for several hours. I loved the new experience of gazing through rutilated quartz, and soon obtained a piece of my own for gazing.

This method is exactly what it says. You go outside on a partly cloudy day and watch the clouds through your crystal ball. As in the previous exercise, you relax your mind, allowing your intuitive processes free reign. You can do this any time day or night, and I especially urge you to gaze at the stars and moon. Gaze at a rainbow if you get the opportunity. I once gazed at a moonbow, and experienced fantastic visions. If you don't know what a moonbow is, this is a rainbow created near a waterfall at night by a full moon. This convergence of events manifests tremendous spiritual opportunities if you watch for them.

(6) *Manifesting Personal Energy*

You need to set aside just five minutes for this entire exercise.

1. Sit comfortably with your sphere in gazing position.
2. Allow your mind to clear as you gaze into the sphere
3. Breathing as you gaze:

- Inhale on a count of four.
- Hold the breath in on a count of two.
- Exhale on a count of four.
- Hold out on a count of two before inhaling again.
- Repeat.

You will maintain this breathing rhythm for the whole exercise. (It becomes second nature with just a little practice.)

4. Once you have found a comfortable rhythm with your breathing, visualize or imagine a white glow of energy in the center of the sphere.
5. Now see that glow of energy begin to radiate out of from the crystal towards you. See it shine out, reaching from your feet to your head, covering and enveloping your whole body.
6. Maintain this for no more than five minutes. Three minutes is optimum.
7. When you are done, immediately stand up and "shake out" your body. Vigorously shake your arms and legs to stimulate energy flow.

This quick method of building personal energy is perfect for those who have busy schedules and are looking for an easy crystal routine.