

OCEANIC MIND
the
Deeper
Meditation
Training Course



by Tom Von Deck
for Beginning and Advanced Students
of Meditation & Yoga

Oceanic Mind

The Deeper Meditation Training Course

By Tom Von Deck

Monkey Wisdom Meditation and
Workplace Stress Management

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This notice is to prevent plagiarism and unauthorized marketing. It is directed more toward the sharks than the fish. On that note, how about some inner peace? Shall we?

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Toasts

Pour yourself a glass of wine or juice for this.

A toast to the late Ann Martin, a healing arts teacher from Prescott who always knew how to listen to “Creator”. To Arthur, the mime teacher who sees the value of physical training in the theater arts. To Dr. Munz, the philosophy professor who provided me with many tools to use my intellect properly. One cannot “transcend” the intellect until one understands it and learns how to use it properly and skillfully. To William Martino, a former monk, Kung Fu master and meditation master who is a pioneer of integrative approaches to meditation training. To Phyllis, a Hatha Yoga teacher who really knew what she was doing. To Swami Vidyadhishananda, who taught me Kriya Yoga. To Mark and Maya, good friends and fully devoted seekers and teachers (give me a ring). To Swami Paramahansa Prajnanananda who showed me what the unhindered divine presence in a human being actually looks like. To Bill, a high school Latin teacher and former priest who led his classes in meditation every Friday. To Richard, a devoted Bhakta. To the Boulder Kirtan, where I learned many many devotional songs. To Neem Karoli Baba, who showed me Samadhi long after his earthly passing. To my dad and stepmom, John and Fay, two devoted seekers who answer the call of service. To my mom and stepdad, Paula and Art, two highly devoted seekers of Jesus... I’m getting kind of tipsy. Let’s wrap this up... To the Most High, whoever that is, and all its manifestations or children, depending on how one sees it. To atheists, who challenge our mistaken symbolic representations of reality (and hopefully their own as well). For all the atheists reading this book... to Nothing! It brings great joy to say that.

Introduction to the Integrative Tuning Approach

The meditation manual which you are about to read may be considered “unique” by many people. This work revolves around the “Integrative Tuning” (IT) approach to meditation training, sometimes known as “Monkey fusion” depending on mood. In IT, we are tuning ourselves on every level of being in preparation for deep meditation. This is not a specific technique being taught here. You will definitely learn some techniques in this program. However, IT is an “approach” that is compatible with all spiritual and stress reduction techniques. Therefore, IT is for the beginning student of meditation/Yoga who wishes to learn a technique as well as the advanced student who has already found a compatible practice.

The process of IT begins with the “7+1 Tuning Method”, a personalized warm up program which works with all aspects of one’s “matter and energy” - muscles, energy, nature, intellect, imagination, emotions and breath – from gross (physical) to fine (internal activity and breath). The “+1” refers to Spirit, i.e. the stillness behind all energy and form. The exercise associated with Spirit is the meditation itself.

Tuning yourself for deep meditation does not strictly involve warm up workouts just prior to meditation. IT offers a complete method of integrating both this tuning process and meditation into everyday activity for a profound momentum of peace on even the most hectic time schedule.

IT is neither secular nor religious. However, IT is as secular or religious as the individual who practices this strategy. The author

uses the words “spirit”, “God” and “soul” in this book. You do not need to do the same. These words are individual preferences.

In this book, you will learn a structured approach to IT. However, as your intuition develops, the approach may be altered according to your own intuitive wisdom. Everyone’s intuition will guide them in unique ways.

Just because IT has a neat sounding name, that does not make the approach a new invention. All the material has been around for thousands of years. Furthermore, there are other teachers who present similar approaches, to one degree or another, for entering deep states of inner communion. Despite this, IT and similar approaches are still rare in meditation and Yoga training.

One of the reasons for the rarity of IT type approaches is that every lineage, technique and school of thought has its own “pet” set of techniques, ways of teaching, emphasis and warm up exercises (if any). In this age, such protectionism is quickly changing, however.

When we can break through the factionalism, we are then able to see commonalities between traditions. Once we accomplish that, along with regularly plunging into the ocean of consciousness over a long period, we can then extract the gems from each faction and integrate them in new and profound ways.

Such is true for the myriad forms within Qigong (aka Chi Gong, Chi Kung or Taoist Yoga), healing arts, different religions as well as spiritual and stress reduction disciplines of all kinds.

The purpose of this book is not to knock down factionalism. Some people find it necessary to protect the purity of a particular

teaching for future generations of people who connect with that teaching. There is a lot of merit to that.

There are others who practice specific techniques for years and years. They teach what they are most comfortable with. There is much nobility in this.

Another group of people are devoted to factionalism. They are following a tendency of the human ego which desires to overpower other identities with its own sense of identity. Fundamentalism is a prime example of this. The fundamentalist creates an identity through symbols or a practice that he/she is already used to and then attempts to ensure that his/her/their symbols reign supreme. It is the conqueror's approach. A fundamentalist has a hard time seeing the reality beyond their symbols (e.g. a redheaded Irishman named Jesus vs. the reality of pure consciousness). Such a tendency is less noble than the protection of purity of a particular teaching. See the "Symbolitus" section for more on this topic.

Another reason for the relative uniqueness of this text is that most practices do not include work that is specifically directed toward all levels of being – intellect, body, emotions, energy, the "stillness" beyond energy and form, imagination, etc. All effective practices ultimately work on all these levels. However, they don't necessarily do so directly with conscious intent from the start.

Most traditions do have warm up strategies to prepare the mind and body for meditation. They also typically have prescriptions for integrating meditation into daily life. Some prescribe ways to "project" or to share your cultivated meditative peace with the rest of the world, such as in the healing and shamanic practices in Qigong. Oceanic Mind provides you with the resources to develop

the strategies and techniques that you are most compatible with so that you resonate with every aspect of your meditation and mind body training program.

IT is merely an indicator that the world is becoming smaller. Think about this. Factionalism was much easier when there were a billion people (or a few million) on Earth with no telephones, airplanes or internet. Now, we're forced to get to know each other a little better.

If you wish to help this project, then there are some things that you can do. You can tell all of your friends that they can find this training course at www.DeeperMeditation.net. The first 100 out of 193 pages are free in pdf format. Donations for the rest of the book can be sent via Paypal for the rest of the book. You can also tell them, of course, that paperbacks, The Deeper Meditation Audio Course and employee meditation seminars and products for workplaces are available. If one honestly cannot afford these training materials, they can contact the author. No one will be locked out for lack of funds.

Such an approach is much better than the common method of providing you with watered down "teaser" garbage, then asking you to sign up for the "full course" for \$249.95. These are the times to really heal ourselves for the collective good. We should not be locked out of this process because of a lack of funds. Such mentalities invite pirates, probably for good reason.

I'm sounding a little feisty toward folks who tease people and hold their teachings ransom. Keep in mind that the goal of meditation is not to become passive and apparently "nice" from an intellectually conceived perspective. Meditation allows you to become a clearer and clearer vessel of the Supreme Love. The

Supreme Love does not necessarily enlist passive vessels to do its work. Love comes from within the deepest self rather than from an intellectual concept of “being nice”. Love is not necessarily “nice” in the usual sense. Think of the Goddess Kali. She wears the skulls of demons around her neck. Behind her ferocious appearance is the face of pure love. Otherwise, she would not be the “Divine Mother”.

Do not mistake this principle for an excuse to be mean to others. If feistiness truly comes from the heart, inner stillness, nonattachment and intuition, you will know it. Otherwise, “Be nice”, whatever you think that means.

The intent here is not to tell you what to do. Your boss is not me. Your innermost self – your “still soft voice” - is your boss and your job is to develop the stillness of mind to listen to it on deeper and deeper levels until it becomes the only one worth listening to.

Anyway, I’m just kidding. I do understand the fear of not being able to make a living. The feisty talk is just to rattle some cages and make a few good points about what meditation is not. I was designed to work with all types of people – rich, poor and everyone else. It makes sense, then, that I would not keep people who lack funds out of the loop.

If you’re relatively healthy and are not pregnant or menstruating, you may have no issues with any of the exercises in this book. However, if you are pregnant (or recently gave birth), menstruating *, or if you have blood pressure and asthma issues, then you may wish to avoid “hot” exercises that involve dynamic breathing and dynamic body movement.

It is best to consult a doctor before trying any of these exercises if you are unsure. The above mentioned health conditions

(and blessings in one of those cases) are common in the list of contraindications for various mind-body training techniques. Two more that come to mind are Epilepsy and Diabetes.

Exercises discussed here without contraindications include very gentle self massage, soft flowing movement without strain, exercises from the Breathing Preliminaries section, singing, imagination and intellect exercises, sitting meditations and certain forms of gentle energy work. Again, if there is any question, even for these exercises, consult a good doctor. The reader must assume full responsibility for the results of the practices in this book. I've never had problems in the past 2+ decades of meditation practice, but I've always been fairly healthy. Epileptics should be cautious about all the exercises in this book.

It is recommended for prenatal and recently postnatal moms that they attend prenatal and postnatal Yoga classes. The teachers of such classes are well trained to keep your baby safe. Read this book anyway, however. It may greatly enhance any specific techniques that you choose.

Nothing in this book is claiming to cure or prevent any disease or to replace the advice of medical personnel. In other words, I am a puppet of the Food and Drug Administration. Hi Ho the Merry – O!

Another thing: For every mind-body training technique, there are many schools of thought. Be ready for people to tell you that you're doing it wrong. Welcome to the world of meditation!

If you receive any feedback about what you learned here, please send them my way. This book is a work in progress and feedback is welcome. There may be a few revisions of this book over time. Feedback from meditation teachers and students,

doctors and healers is essential for this type of literature. If you personally have questions about the instructions in this book, please ask. The content may be changed accordingly for greater clarity. An email with a relevant subject line works best for this.

A little word about myself: I am an internationally available workplace meditation trainer, stress management speaker, spiritual speaker and author. I also create products for employee wellness programs such as the 400 minute long audio course.

The Deeper Meditation Audio Course features all the exercises in this book plus lots of information on making meditation a much easier and more customized process for people of all religions, temperaments and hectic time schedules. There is less spiritual terminology in the audio course and therefore less cultural distractions. There is also a more secular and wellness oriented edition of this book. A secular approach is often vital when working with a culturally diverse workforce. Visit DeeperMeditation.Net for info on any of these services.

The exercises in Oceanic Mind are carefully chosen for their ability to be transmitted through the written word. They are also thoroughly tested for “user friendly” qualities, so hopefully you’ll find that the exercises are easy to follow and learn.

Enjoy,

Your friendly Monkey Wizard

Tom Von Deck

What is Meditation (and What the Hell is Yoga for that Matter)?

When a wave settles down, then it instantly recognizes that its source in ocean - infinite, silent, and unchanging - was always there.

-**Deepak Chopra, M.D.**

Meditation means to tap into the core of Being. Sounds trippy. We can speculate on this all we wish, perhaps at the nearest coffee shop. It only makes sense, however, when speculation gives way to pure experience. The words “tapping into the core of Being” did not precede Being. Being came first. Meditation is the bridge to understanding this concept from the depths of Being – beyond intellectual concepts.

We can liken our egos to the waves of the ocean. The waves are in constant motion and flux. The ocean beneath the waves, however, is deep and still. Meditation gradually allows us to experience ourselves as the ocean rather than just the waves. The experience of the oceanic mind has been described by yogis as “absolute existence, absolute consciousness and absolute bliss”.

Do we really understand this concept? Do we now know the answer to life, the universe and everything? Not even close. This is all talk. Talk is always in symbolic form. Symbols can only inspire and lead us toward reality. When we confuse the symbols for the reality, we find ourselves in fights and quarrels over whose symbols are better.

Some people describe meditation as a digestive process of the mind. We accumulate experiences. When we don't “digest”

these experiences properly, we get clogged up with indigestion. Our psychological/spiritual digestive system is just as important as our physical one.

To present meditation in another way, one can say that it is perception of perception. When we are fully conscious of our perception, we realize how full of crap we really are. The Big Joker in the sky honks our nose, sprays us in the face with a seltzer bottle, laughs maniacally and tells us how funny we were while repeatedly smacking us on the shoulder and continuing to laugh maniacally, dropping the cigar and choking on the smoke. Then, we pee our shorts in agreement and realize that the Big Joker was within us all along, laughing maniacally.

Maybe this isn't true, or maybe it is. If not, it's pretty close. Perhaps I'm full of crap. Ok, I'm definitely full of crap.

When we fully realize how full of crap we really are, extreme happiness, bliss and love results. That is because we've tapped into the source of all these things. This source goes beyond all conditioning and intellectual definitions of reality.

But don't ask me. Practice meditation and ask yourself.

All this talk about "going beyond intellectual concepts" may lead one to believe that meditation is a "right brain" activity. It is not. Meditation facilitates the integration of all parts of the brain; left/right, top/bottom, center/periphery. Neurons create more synapses (the connectors between brain cells) and impulses gradually travel around the brain and nervous system more efficiently and coherently. The suppression of the "left brain" can only lead to problems. Don't abandon the intellect. When the intellect is truly in sync with the rest of you, it becomes your best friend.

Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word “yog” which literally means “yolk”. The connotation is “union” – union with “God” (who?), union with our deepest self and the union of all parts of ourselves. Pantanjali, in the Yoga Sutras, described Yoga as “the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind”. The more we meditate, the more we understand what he meant.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna described Yoga as the spiritual path. Every yogic practice he mentioned is universal to the mystic path (the path of direct experience and realization) of every religion. Therefore, Yoga, in its purest sense, is not a set of Indian practices for better health, fitness and maybe some spirituality. Yoga is THE spiritual path. Just because the word is in Sanskrit, this does not mean that it must only be associated with cultures affiliated with Sanskrit. Only the symbols and emphases vary in the various cultural and individual manifestations of the one path – Yoga.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna mentions Karma Yoga, one of the fundamental premises of the Bible’s Book of Matthew. Karma Yoga involves selfless service without “blowing your trumpet”. You are offering the credit to the one who gives you life. If you’ve stilled the mind to the point where the “still small voice” leads you, then Karma Yoga means to follow that voice without being attached to the fruits of your actions – reward or punishment. It all begins as “do good without bragging” and becomes more refined from there.

As you advance on the path to paradise, this teaching becomes even more refined. Never read a scripture and say “I get it”. “Getting it” is a process. Stay on the path and, in 10 years, the spiritual readings you are looking at today will take on a whole different meaning.

In light of this, there is a reason why this book may seem to be “talking down” to you at times. We may, to some extent, “get” a spiritual truth such as “listen to your innermost self”. However, do we truly “get it”? “You either get it or you don’t” does not apply here. The unfolding of consciousness is a process. We should leave all or nothing thinking to fundamentalism.

We all think we’re so enlightened, don’t we? Align yourself even more with your truest self. Get it?

Anyway, Bhakti Yoga is the Yoga of devotion. In India, Bhaktas usually practice Bhakti through singing the “names of God”. Some just meditate on God in one or another symbolic form until they transcend that symbolic form and see God directly. For example, If you meditate on a redheaded Irishman named Jesus (Jesus was never his name) long enough, you will gradually begin to see what people mean when they say the word “God” (who is not Irish. Well, not normally.). Bhakti is fundamental in every religion and spiritual path.

The path of meditation was another one mentioned by Krishna. Krishna said that this path is very very important.

Is Meditation Religious?

Meditators come from all religious backgrounds and some have no religious beliefs at all. There is no need for religious beliefs. In fact, the Buddha said not to believe anything until it is directly experienced. This expression was mistaken by many to be a call to atheism. He only said this because people became too caught up in symbolic representations of reality. In other words, they forgot the reality behind such nonsense words as God, Soul, etc. because they were too caught up in words and ideas.

Meditation is an experience that gradually transcends all symbolic belief. However, you may, while meditating, accidentally access the fundamental root of all religious belief systems and symbols. Meditation awakens our consciousness and soul perception (why did he just use those nonsense words again, Claudia?).

What do the terms consciousness and soul perception mean? Nothing until we experience such things directly. Until then, such thoughts are nothing but gibberish.

Keep meditating. The knowing process is cumulative, always unfolding until you “get it”, decide that you know everything, then “get it” again, decide that you now finally know everything and then “get it” yet again.

To be fair, the talk about gibberish words is not exactly true. Don't believe everything this crazy author says. Spiritual concepts can be vehicles leading to the direct experience of the reality behind them if we use them correctly. The Yogis often meditate on a symbol or concept of God until the reality behind the concept is revealed to them through direct experience. The symbol (thought

form), in this case, is used as a tuning device to “tune” into reality like a radio dial. It begins as an approximation of reality and expands from there. There is a positive role for symbols. Otherwise, this book would have no value.

If you’re just looking for no-nonsense health and vitality rather than the mumbojumbo, then go for it. You’ll find improved health and maybe you’ll eventually begin to understand some of the mumbojumbo woowoo stuff.

One thing that can be said of the intellect is that it is only a fragment of your consciousness. Therefore, it will never truly understand the spiritual mumbojumbo, scripture or anything else. Understanding only occurs through the whole being. The intellect always tries to dominate and declare its knowledge superior. Don’t believe it. Integrate the intellect with the rest of your being and declare that you don’t know jack poop.

Oh, and be sure to declare your truth to the world. The world needs it.

Monkey Business

Before concluding this chapter, it may be nice to explain all this monkey business. Buddhists often compare the mind to a monkey (the monkey mind). Monkeys swing from tree to tree picking fruit off each one. One can say that monkeys are “all over the place”. Such is the mind.

How do we tame the monkey? Do we beat it? Do we force it to be still? When we try to force the mind to be still, it will bombard us with even more thoughts. Some describe meditation as the absence of thought. Perhaps there is some truth to that. However,

this is not the starting point. The mind is tamed with love and self compassion, not force.

When our monkeys are tamed, they become Hanuman (Hahn'-oo-mahn) – the monkey god of Hindu lore. Hanuman was single mindedly devoted to Ram (pronounced Rom), a king. Ram symbolized God and sometimes, more specifically, he symbolized God in the aspect of the deepest truth behind all our symbols and concepts. Hanuman is pure devotion. The tamed monkey becomes a tool leading us to the Unfathomable Ultimate Reality – something that can never be found through a coffee shop conversation or a book, but through direct experience over time as stillness of mind is cultivated.

Benefits of Meditation

Meditation allows us to condition ourselves to enter the essence of life itself. We're plunging into the center of it all. When we do this, all aspects of life receive the benefit. Therefore, the answer to the question "what are the benefits of meditation?" is "who cares?" If you need a list of all the aspects of life, you can Google "benefits of meditation" and you will receive a list of all aspects of life.

Preliminaries

Regularity and Consistency

Every book on meditation practice for beginners emphasizes the importance of a regular practice in a particular place (chair, couch, room, Zen garden, etc.) at a particular time of day. Pavlov's experiments with the salivating dogs and the bell confirmed what meditators have always known. If we associate our beds with sleeping, it may not be a good idea to meditate on our beds. Meditating on our beds can lead to drowsiness rather than the calm and alert state that meditation requires. However, if we associate a particular pillow, chair or time of day with meditation practice, then it becomes easier to enter a meditative state on that pillow, chair or during that time of day.

As for times of day to meditate, it is best to devote some time in the morning and some time at night. Sunrise is a wonderful time if you can handle waking up that early without harming the rest of your day. It is true that some folks have tight schedules. Consider every minute spent in meditation a time investment that improves every other activity, including sleep. If you can only do your practice in the morning or at night, then that is ok. Consistency is what is most important.

Another point to make about consistency is that it is better to meditate for one minute seven days per week than it is to meditate for seven minutes one day per week. It is the routine that is important.

That is not to say, however, that you must never skip a day. Just don't screw up your overall habit that you created. If you do, then you can gently recreate the habit without blaming yourself.

One day at a time. Yes, we're all addicts. That's why the AA motto works for everyone.

Speaking of "screwing up" ... When you develop the good habits of consistent meditation practice, it is tempting to become overly attached to it. The mind may associate meditation with "good" and other activities as "not as good", creating a false dichotomy. This association can lead some people to forsake fun, parties, active engagement in the world, etc. Such an association is merely a concept that exists in our minds.

Our intuitive guidance may be whispering to us to go out and have fun at the '80's dance party rather than meditate. However, if we have the false dichotomy in our heads, then we will not listen to such guidance and our spiritual development will suffer.

During one period of intense practice, I was invited to a party. My intuition had been telling me for at least a year that I needed to party more often. I got a little drunk and exchanged good stories with 8-10 others. The next morning, when I woke up, I felt calm and clear like I spent the whole night meditating instead of partying. It was exactly what was needed. I continued to practice the following night.

The moral of the story is this. Do not succumb to asceticism. It is an addiction which can be as damaging as burgers and fries and general "sense slavery" as the yogis call it. Asceticism and "sense slavery" are two sides of the same coin. Avoid such extreme polar opposites. Develop stillness of mind, tap into your intuition and follow it. Then, allow your inner stillness and intuition to deepen over time and follow it some more. Repeat.

Do you believe the last paragraph? Pretty sound, right? You shouldn't believe it. Some people are called, by their innermost selves to become ascetics, at least for awhile. For these folks, asceticism is not a dangerous addiction. It is what these individuals need today for optimum growth in the long run or perhaps to properly dispense an important teaching to the right people.

We are taught by our social institutions that "outward" is the way to be. At some point on the path, we realize that we should be heeding the call to go inward. We must not get stuck in such a rebellious state and remain "inward" all the time, thinking that this is superior. Eventually, it becomes time to integrate the internal with the external. Hermitism may be an intermediary step in this direction for some people.

So, do not believe me when I make a generalization about what everyone needs, ok? Not everyone needs to avoid the ascetic lifestyle just as not everyone needs to become an ascetic. Align yourself with your deepest intuitive self and find out for yourself whether you are being called into hermitism.

This all leads us to another question. Does everyone need to align themselves with their deepest intuitive self? Align yourself with your deepest intuitive self and find out.

Did you see that one coming?

Avoid Spiritual Materialism

Chogyam Trungpa, the Tibetan Rinpoche who cofounded Naropa University (with Allen Ginsberg) and the Shambhala Center in Boulder, Colorado, spoke and wrote extensively about "spiritual materialism" – attachment to "spiritual phenomena" and to the "spiritual experience".

The false dichotomy of spiritual materialism is a concept that flows along the following lines. Visions, ecstatic trance, psychic phenomena, feelings of deep bliss, miraculous healings, etc EQUAL spiritual development. Furthermore, a lack of such wild experiences EQUALS a lack of “spirituality”. This dichotomy causes people to chase after the so-called spiritual experience. Superiority trips sometimes occur if phenomena become frequent.

Phenomena **rise and fall** as you walk the path. If you’re attached to it, it can only hinder you so that you become stuck, unable to walk further on the path. You’re chasing after a sensation like an addict chasing after heroin. In other words, you’re engaging in sense slavery. While meditating, if such extraordinary phenomena happen (and they will when the time is ripe), just **let them rise and fall** like your breath. Appreciate their special purpose in the moment. When you let go of your attachment to these things, then they will become more consistent anyway as your circuitry is gently opened and conditioned over time. If you remain attached, they will either become more elusive or bring you some powerful, perhaps unwelcome, lessons about attachment. **Let it all rise and fall like waves on the ocean.**

The main lesson here is to let go of expectations in your practice. The main reason that many people abandon their practice is that they have too many ideals and expectations about it. Attachment to the ideals brings disappointment and frustration. Give up such attachments and you will realize such ideals in due time. You are probably making progress without knowing it.

None of this means that developing psychic powers and the like is a bad thing. Eshu (Jesus) said “Seek the kingdom first”. When you seek the kingdom, then the king will let you know if your next stage of development involves consciously developing such

“siddhis” or “charisms”. If not, then they may just unfold naturally as you go deeper into the kingdom – or not.

As a side note, it may be worth mentioning that Trungpa was from the “crazy wisdom” tradition. He was a master of meditation who was known for being able to outdrink anyone. A look into his eyes revealed total stillness. It is possible that he did not have any attachment to alcohol. It is the author’s suspicion that he stepped out of the way of his innermost self which became his primary motivator.

When you have truly accomplished this surrendering process, you have permission to do whatever you wish without repercussion (Caution: Do not assume that you have accomplished this already after tasting some of God’s power in meditation. There are too many destructive half-baked gurus out there who have made this assumption about themselves. It is best not to become one of them.). This is because you are acting exactly in accordance with Spirit’s dictates, from the center of being. When you accomplish this, you will probably appear like a hypocrite according to other people’s false belief systems of what “spiritual” means. When you stop caring about APPEARING to follow your principles, then you are one step closer to the perfection of Karma Yoga.

Some people thought that Trungpa was a crazy hypocrite. There’s only one way to know whether that is true, and here’s a hint. It is not through any idea of “spirituality” or of anything Trungpa said versus what he did. Perhaps Trungpa’s shenanigans were tools for teaching people lessons about the false dichotomy of asceticism vs. sense slavery... or maybe he was a crazy hypocrite. In any case, “Spirituality” is one of the biggest nonsense words in history. It’s a hoax, and a very devilish one at that.

Meditation and Food

When you begin your practice, make sure your last meal is at least half digested. This means it's better to wait at least three hours after your last meal before you begin your regular practice. The digestive system uses a lot of energy when processing food. Meditation becomes much harder during this process.

When eating, it is best to be mindful of the whole process – giving thanks for the food, biting, chewing, swallowing and reaching for more. The more mindfully you eat and the better you chew your food, the more nutrients you absorb from the food. A meditative state becomes more available if you practice eating mindfully.

Another point to consider is that yogis say that one should never eat until one is “full”. It is best to stop when you are maybe two thirds full. Meditation becomes more natural when you follow this guideline.

And of course, healthy food is better than unhealthy food, as painful as it is to say it.

Momentum

Each act of consciousness development paves the road for the next. If you sit down to meditate and it feels fruitless - i.e. tongues of fire did not descend from the heavens, Jesus did not pay you a personal visit, you were not thrown into ecstatic flailing and flopping around the room, etc. – it is still fruitful. Your practice paved the way for a deeper practice next time around. You may have experienced profound healing without even knowing it. A lot more happens than meets the eye. Therefore, consistency in practice creates consistency of deep levels of consciousness through a cumulative effect.

The previous paragraph is a repeat of earlier information in this book. These points cannot be stressed often enough. Please read the previous paragraph five times in a row if the need arises. Ask a tattoo artist to, well, never mind.

The Five Minute Intertwine

The “five minute intertwine” is a great way to increase momentum in your practice. There are probably many times in the day when you are able to take two to five minutes to center your mind. Some of the warm-up exercises mentioned later in this book are perfect for this. You can disappear into the bathroom for some exercises or you can take five minutes to practice the “inner smile”, mindful breathing or a mantra at your desk. Breathing into a stretch, shoulder rolls, self massage and pranayama exercises are great as intertwine practices.

The result of the intertwine is to ground meditative practice into everyday life as well as to create a cumulative momentum toward clear consciousness and deep healing. You may or may not be aware of all the immediate profound effects of the intertwine. However, when you get home from work, you will have more energy and a more peaceful mind. Such a state will help you to keep your regular meditation schedule and allow you to slip more deeply and readily into the oceanic depths. The oceanic depths, in turn, will also help you to integrate a wonderful state of mind into daily life through the intertwine. This, also in turn, will enhance your formal practice... and on and on. Again, there is more going on behind the scenes than you may realize.

By the way, just like most of the information in this book, the term “five minute intertwine” was not my invention. I learned about the intertwine from a former monk, William Martino, founder

of The Flow Program, whom I studied with for a couple years. He calls it “interweaving” these days (this guy loves to develop new vocabulary for teaching purposes). You can use either term. It’s the same stuff. Language is just a tool.

It’s impossible to invent anything new in the “inner sciences”. You can only fool people by coming up with new language, trademarks, teaching styles and such.

Posture

Standing Posture

1. *Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Relax and allow gravity to pull you down with equal pressure on the center of both feet. Hands are at your sides.*
2. *Breathe evenly through your nose. Feel the breath initiating in the abdomen (see the Breathing Preliminaries section for a more refined technique. The refined technique is after this section in order to make you come back to this one. Devilish, yes.)*
3. *Allow your hips to sink. At the same time, lift up the chest a little bit while imagining your hips “opening”. Relax into this posture. You are relaxing into a form rather than acting like a jellyfish. You are creating a route for Spirit to enter into form.*
4. *Sink into your center of gravity, the navel center. This is the point about two inches below the navel and about two inches in.*
5. *Tuck in your chin a little bit toward your throat and imagine a string pulling your head up from the baby soft*

spot at the top of the head. Let your vertebrae “stack” one by one from the bottom to the top.

- 6. Smile at your third eye between the eyebrows. Smile at your jaw.*
- 7. Pay attention to your relaxed jaw, your relaxed eyes, your relaxed hands, your center of gravity (2 inches below your navel and 2 inches in). Relax into your center of gravity. You can use the “tense and release” or “clench and release” methods to relax these parts.*
- 8. If your spine needs more relaxing, you can try to stretch it out, one vertebra at a time, making yourself as tall as possible. Don’t move your limbs. Stretch the vertebrae apart. Then, shrink and compress your vertebrae, making yourself as short as possible. Do this a few times and “stack” them again.*
- 9. Stare straight ahead, neither squinting nor widening the eyes. Do not stare intently.*
- 10. Defocus the eyes. Soften the gaze and the eyes, looking outward and inward at the same time. “Feel” inside the body while looking at nothing in particular. Be conscious of the whole field of consciousness.*
- 11. Be conscious of everything without attraction and repulsion – i.e. clinging to comfort and pushing away discomfort. Be present with yourself and the environment.*
- 12. Notice any inner sounds or frequencies you might hear.*

13. *Be mindful of the Earth beneath your feet and the sky above you. Integrate this into steps 9-12.*
14. *Before meditation, place the bottom side of your tongue on your palate (roof of mouth). The tongue should point backwards toward your throat, the tip being as close to your throat as possible without strain. Your tongue, in this position, completes the energy circuit that travels up the back of your spine and down the front of your spine. It is essential for the downward route. When you're COMPLETELY relaxed (perhaps years down the road), your tongue will slip into your nasal cavity.*

Sitting Posture on a Cushion

1. *Sit and cross your legs. It is best if the knees are lower than your butt and pointing slightly downward if that is possible.*
2. *Plant your tailbone in a position that feels just right.*
3. *Let gravity pull you down while you lift your chest and mentally open the hips.*
4. *Tuck in your chin just a little bit toward your neck while imagining an invisible string pulling your head up from the baby soft spot at the top of your head. Stack the vertebrae from the bottom to the top.*
5. *Relax into this position. The back should be as straight as possible without much strain.*
6. *Rest your hands comfortably on your lap. If you wish, you can use the Gyan Mudra. In Gyan, your index finger and thumb are making a circle with the remaining*

fingers as straight as possible but relaxed. The backs of your hands are resting comfortably on your lap, probably near your knees. Gyan creates an energy circuit that aids concentration.

- 7. Smile at your third eye (between the eyebrows) and jaw, relaxing them. You can also “tense and release” and/or “clench and release” to relax them. Tense the hands and relax them.*
- 8. If your spine needs more relaxing, you can try to stretch it out, one vertebra at a time, making yourself as tall as possible. Don’t move your limbs. Stretch the vertebrae apart. Then, shrink and compress your vertebrae, making yourself as short as possible. Do this a few times and “stack” the vertebrae again.*
- 9. Stare straight ahead with eyes neither squinting nor widened. Defocus the eyes. Soften the eyes and the gaze and look at nothing in particular. Be conscious of the environment while “feeling” inside the body. Be conscious of the whole field, internal and external, without attraction and repulsion – i.e. clinging to comfort and pushing away discomfort.*
- 10. If your sitting meditation practice requires it, close your eyes or keep them 9/10 closed (to prevent melatonin from making you drowsy, the 9/10 method allows some light in).*
- 11. Before meditation, place the bottom side of your tongue on palate (roof of mouth). The tongue should point backwards toward your throat, the tip being as close to your throat as possible without strain. Your tongue, in*

this position, completes the downward energy circuit that travels up the back of your spine and down the front of your spine. It is essential for the downward route. When you're COMPLETELY relaxed (perhaps years down the road), your tongue will slip into your nasal cavity.

Sitting Posture on a Chair

Follow the steps for sitting on a cushion. You can cross your legs and rest your hands on your knees. You can also keep your feet flat on the floor and rest the back of the left hand on your lap with the palm of your right hand on top of the left hand and thumbs touching. If you need an “energy circuit” for the legs, you can put the bottoms of your feet together on the floor. Experiment.

Breathing Preliminaries – Two Fundamental Breaths

There are two basic breaths that are prominent in the meditation and Yoga world. Most meditators and yogis use one or the other. The basic breath of the Taoists and Yogis begins with controlled deep breathing with the diaphragm. The basic breath of Theravada (pronounced Tair-uh-vah'-dah) Buddhism begins with watching your natural breathing pattern until it deepens on its own from mindfulness. Some people like to argue that THEIR method is the better one, but don't be fooled. Both of these approaches take you to a deeper place. See which one works for you under varying conditions.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. *Place your index finger at the bottom of your navel.*

2. *Place the middle finger just below it, touching the middle finger and the ring finger below that and the pinky below that. There is no space between your fingers.*
3. *Press hard into your abdomen with equal pressure from all four fingers.*
4. *Exhale completely through the nose.*
5. *Inhale through your nose and allow your abdomen to push out all those fingers.*
6. *You're doing it correctly if all four fingers are being pushed with equal pressure.*
7. *Your belly should feel like it's simultaneously pushing forward, into the back, and up and down and therefore "massaging" the internal organs. You should feel it massaging the spine, including the point on the spine behind the navel, and the genital area.*
8. *Exhale completely through the nose, allowing the diaphragmatic movement to go in reverse. The breath should have roughly the same "force" and sound as the inhale.*

It is important that the inhale and exhale be roughly even with the same force. Evenness of breath is both the cause of and result of a healthy nervous system.

If you can keep this breath going throughout the day, you are in for some greatly improved health and vitality. It is the basis of Qigong and some meditation and Yoga techniques.

Variation on Diaphragmatic Breathing – the Yogic Full Breath

1. *Empty the lungs entirely. You can pull your belly in to facilitate the emptying. Relax the belly, letting it pop out into its normal position again.*
2. *Begin a diaphragmatic inhale. Don't fill it all the way.*
3. *In the same inhale, begin filling the middle of your chest (and back), allowing it to expand. Don't fill up all the way.*
4. *Continue the inhale by breathing into your upper chest (and back) and neck. Allow your shoulders to raise a little bit. Now you can fill up.*
5. *Exhale, allowing everything to move in the exact reverse direction as during the inhale.*
6. *Pull your belly in to completely empty the lungs*
7. *Relax your belly, letting it pop out into normal position again.*
8. *Inhale again and so on.*

The entire inhale is all one continuous flow, as is the exhale. The more you practice, the better it flows. It is one process. The fragments fall away over time.

The Theravada Buddhist breath

1. *However you are breathing, feel it as near as possible to the tip of your nose inside your nostrils where the "cool" sensation of the breath is. You can also focus on the air just under the nostrils where they meet the place above your*

upper lip. Do not follow the breath in and out with your mind. Just focus on the sensation in your nostrils.

- 2. If your mind wanders, **allow your thoughts to rise and fall like the waves on the ocean.** Silently watch your thoughts when they arise. They are not you. They are just happening. That's it. Gently bring your attention back to the air in your nostrils.*

Your breath will naturally deepen as you concentrate and relax into the breath. Even if you begin breathing with your chest, your breath will gradually become more diaphragmatic as you continue the exercise.

Concentrating on your nostrils during mindfulness meditation prevents drowsiness. If your problem is drowsiness during meditation, then this is a good thing to concentrate on. If your problem is too much thinking, then the navel center (a couple inches below your navel and a couple inches inward) may be the place to concentrate. In the Vipassana (Theravada Buddhist meditation) section, a third point of concentration will be revealed. All of this information will be repeated more elaborately in that section.

Detoxification Reactions

Migun Thermanic Jade Massage Beds offers a short video and a brochure explaining “improvement reactions” from use of their healing beds. Symptoms may include runny nose, nausea, swelling, rash, joint pain, dizziness and headaches. These are signs that the body is detoxifying. Meditation and Yoga sometimes produce similar “improvement reactions”. Know that your body and mind are purifying and becoming healthier.

When you meditate, you are facing yourself. Impurities bubble up to the surface as the light of consciousness shines on us. Mentally, this can mean sudden irritability, anger or crying. Physically, it can include the “improvement reaction” symptoms mentioned above.

Mental and physical purification are prerequisites for the higher stages of meditation. When experiencing mental “improvement reactions”, understand that everyone else is just as screwed up and pathetic as you are. It then becomes easier to face all the “demons” that bubble up.

It also helps not to assume that you are above all that dark stuff. Maybe subconsciously you ARE prejudiced against Chinese people, despite your politically correct upbringing. So what? When it comes up, face it and let it go. We pick up a lot of garbage without realizing it.

Through mental detoxification, your outdated versions of reality, i.e. your outdated symbols that no longer serve, are releasing. You are letting go in order to embrace a deeper, more expansive and more refined perception of reality.

When you are angry at someone, it is harder to see the reality of the situation when confronting them. When you finally relax, it is much easier to see clearly. In the same way, when you let go of long held toxins and harmful emotional patterns, you will see much more clearly in the long run. All your chronic anger, jealousy, etc. is based on beliefs and symbolic structures that are not serving you properly. It is just “frozen” energy. Let it melt.

Drink lots of water during detoxification periods. It will help you release the physical toxins from the cells.

It is best not to worry. Annoying and painful reactions won't be the norm and, when they occur, you will become much freer and healthier. **Let them rise and fall like waves on the ocean.**

Fixing Bad Habits

Do you find yourself worrying about whether other people eat unhealthy foods or smoke cigarettes? Judgment is a very bad habit. It leads to the poisoning of both the mind and the body and inevitably leads to an early death. Judgment is certainly not an act to be performed in front of impressionable children.

Work on fixing your own weaknesses instead of other people's weaknesses and meditation will become easier for you. Meditation may also help you to fix your bad habits.

More Preliminaries for Deeper Meditation

Mindfulness and Relaxing into the Flow

Whether we're breathing, stretching, silently witnessing ourselves, praying to Jesus, practicing Tai Chi Chuan, or whatever, it is important to practice mindfulness and relax into the flow. When performing nondynamic yogic breathing, relax into it until the breath seems to be breathing you. While chanting, relax into the vibrations in the body until the chant begins chanting you. Progressively release tension in the jaw, eyes, spine and the rest of the body. Warm-up exercises prepare the road for this.

Mindfulness simply means paying attention to what you are doing in the moment, whether you're breathing, thinking or making a milkshake. All the exercises in this book will benefit you only if you synchronize them with your full attention.

If this is an abstract concept to you, don't worry. You will learn a few methods for accomplishing these things as you read on. For now, just take a little LSD.

LSD – Love Surrender Devotion

What is love? That's a hard one to answer. Love can be an emotion. However, the truest form of Love is so expansive that it contains all the other emotions. It is the pure spaciousness, stillness and bliss that unites all things.

Consciousness in its purest form is Love and vice versa. When you love something or someone, you get to know it/them much more intimately, right?

When you fall in love, you are totally absorbed. You're certainly concentrating. You can develop this type of absorption in everyday life. Loving absorption brings consciousness and stillness. If you have a memory of falling in love, then you can access this memory whenever you wish to concentrate on something.

The way to Union (Yoga) is through this type of intimacy and knowledge.

When there is a union of love, it is accurate to affirm that the beloved lives in the lover and the lover lives in the beloved. Love causes such similarity and transformation in the lovers that one can say that each one is the other and both of them are one. - St. John of the Cross (Spiritual Songs 12:7)

Now, that's concentration!

You can cultivate love and Love. If you don't have feelings of love in this moment, fake it with the "inner smile" exercise mentioned elsewhere in this book. In a nutshell, you are smiling at yourself and your internal organs, beginning with your third eye, physical eyes and jaw. The more you fake it, the more real and genuine the love becomes, leading eventually to Love. How great is our symbolic imagination!

Always use some form of love cultivation exercise in your warm ups. The inner smile, forgiveness and metta (compassion) practices are ideal for this. They are great tuning mechanisms which point us like a radio dial toward the true Love.

Apply this love to your chanting, breathing, meditation, etc.

Surrender is just what was mentioned a few paragraphs ago. It is relaxing into the flow. “The flow” is not the flow of your desires and subconscious programs which make you whimsical. The flow, once entered, destroys whimsical behavior. You are relaxing into your essence. When thoughts come up, you are not clinging to them nor pushing them away. Everything just is.

As time goes on, the surrendering process becomes more and more refined. There are billions, maybe trillions of little pathways that connect us to the universe. The more conscious this process becomes, the more connections we create with the rest of the universe and therefore ourselves. Think of how many pathways the amoeba has for connecting with the universe. How about a computer? Compare this to a human. Humans are developed to the point where they can consciously increase their connection to the rest of the universe. Some people describe the process as “relaxing into the All”.

Surrender takes a little bit of practice to develop as a habit. Cultivating love can help you with this. So can self massage, muscle stretching, chanting, and just about every other exercise in this book.

The following four methods are great for surrendering:

1. Progressively clenching muscles and releasing them during diaphragmatic breathing. You can synchronize this with your breath if that helps: Inhale, hold breath and clench, exhale while gradually releasing.
2. Stretching muscles while “breathing into the stretch”. In other words, instead of mentally following the air into the lungs, imagine the breath is entering the muscles that you’re stretching instead. Hold the stretch for at

least three diaphragmatic breaths. Some people will say that it requires a seven breath minimum for the brain to register the stretch. Whatever the case, this process brings more consciousness to that set of muscles.

3. The “inner smile”
4. Self massage

All of these exercises are in the warm up portion of this book.

Remember these two words with every exercise you do – **softening and deepening.**

It’s funny how you know all this stuff already. In fact, it’s hilarious. Sometimes teaching simply involves rearranging information that is already known.

Devotion is commitment and focus. You are devoted to the soul and that which brings wholeness. A Bhakta will say that it is a commitment to loving thoughts of the Beloved and ultimate oneness with the Beloved through Love. Bhaktas have their eyes on the prize. Devotion can be developed through love and surrender. Devotion is the engine that propels you through your spiritual progress. Devotion can also be synonymous with love in many contexts.

The way I learned deep devotion was through chant – singing to the one God in all God’s forms and aspects.

Meditation is fruitless without LSD. You hear that, Timothy?

Rising and Falling

Everything rises and falls. Birth, decay, death, rebirth. Buddhists pay special attention to this. Vipassana meditation involves watching this process. The breath rises and falls. Sensations in the body rise and fall. Thoughts rise and fall. Desires rise and fall. Psychic phenomena may, in some cases rise and fall. The Vipassana meditator enters the position of the “silent witness”, or the observer, which is the true self. The breath, sensations, desires, thoughts and ecstatic visions are the waves of the ocean. The more you become the silent witness, detached from it all, the closer you are to becoming the ocean.

God (who?) is the deep stillness watching all of the constant flux - the rising and falling. Behind all rising and falling is an infinitely expansive bliss that we can all tap into. This is the transcendent aspect of God. The active principle springs out from this blissful stillness.

Everything that rises and falls is energy. Spirit is that infinite stillness or spaciousness beyond all energy.

Many meditation techniques contain the silent witness element. We can practice being the silent witness in everyday life. Such a skill can be cultivated in meditation and vice versa.

Sensory Orientation

During both warm ups and meditation, it is important to learn how to turn the senses inward. Our eyes should be looking into our body space. Not only does this help with meditation, but it also brings greater humility. We become more focused on healing ourselves and letting that healing spread to others than on trying to save everyone else from themselves. We gradually develop “a mind

like a mirror". The sense of oneness between ourselves and others increases, eventually resulting in unconditional love.

Inner Awareness Exercise

You can do this exercise with your eyes open, closed, or a little of both.

- 1. Relax and take a few diaphragmatic breaths. Relax into the breaths.*
- 2. Clench your jaw, forehead and back of the head. Release and feel the difference.*
- 3. Stretch out your jaw muscles, forehead and back of the head. Breathe into the stretch a few times.*
- 4. Look up at the third eye between your eyebrows. You'll know it when you hit just the right spot. You will feel a gentle strain in the eyes and they will feel still and motionless. Smile at the third eye. Keep breathing diaphragmatically. When your third eye is fully relaxed and filled with love, let that love spread to the jaw. Keep looking into the third eye.*
- 5. When the jaw is relaxed, keep your attention on the third eye. Smile at it some more. Allow the love to flood from the third eye to the rest of the body.*
- 6. If your eyes are not shut by now, shut them for awhile. "See" your whole body with your third eye. If you don't, then just imagine it. Over time, it will become more real.*
- 7. Open your eyes while still watching yourself with your third eye. Notice how it feels the same as when your eyes were closed. Notice how it feels different.*

8. Close your eyes again and feel your whole body with your third eye with the love – which is consciousness - still trickling down. Relax into the sensations in the body. Open your eyes and repeat, noticing any differences and similarities.

Sensory Orientation Exercise: Practicing Presence with Others

This exercise becomes easier as you become more in tune with the feelings in your body. The exercises in the muscles and soft tissues section are very important, partially for this reason.

- 1. Tuck in your chin a little bit toward your throat and imagine a string pulling your head up from the baby soft spot at the top of the head. “Stack” your vertebrae one on top of another from the bottom up.*
- 2. Stare straight ahead, neither squinting nor widening the eyes. Do not stare intently.*
- 3. Smile at your third eye between the eyebrows. Smile at your jaw.*
- 4. Pay attention to your relaxed jaw, your relaxed eyes, your relaxed hands, your center of gravity (2 inches below your navel and 2 inches in). Relax into your center of gravity. You can use the “tense and release” or “clench and release” methods to relax these parts.*
- 5. Defocus the eyes. Soften the gaze and the eyes, looking outward and inward at the same time. “Feel” inside the body while looking at nothing in particular. Be conscious of the whole field of consciousness.*

6. *Be conscious of everything without attraction and repulsion – i.e. clinging to comfort and pushing away discomfort. Be present with yourself and the environment.*
7. *Be mindful of the Earth beneath your feet and the sky above you.*
8. *Now, if there is a person or crowd available, be present with that person, feeling them within your own body. Relax and be present with all the feelings in your body. Don't let any part of the experience obstruct the smooth flow of breath. **Soften** into your breath **and deepen your experience**. Obstructed breath means obstructed consciousness.*

At first, you may feel only your reactions to the person. Over time, you may be able to feel more of their energy. Over more time, your distinctions between the internal world and the external world will gradually fall away. They are not separate. Our symbolic thinking makes them separate. It was a convenient mechanism at one point. Let it go eventually if you haven't already.

Welcome to the present moment. You are moving beyond seeing a person from conditioned consciousness and you're on your way to beginning to see them as they are, beyond the symbols you created... AND you're cultivating inner awareness – the awareness that melts all your unneeded symbols and the chronic emotions that are based on these symbols.

All the warm up exercises in your routine should help you turn your sensory orientation inward. When you chant, you can close your eyes and relax into it, lovingly **softening and deepening** into your body, into yourself, into the chant, as time

goes on. The more you **soften and deepen**, the more inward the sensory orientation becomes. Breathing into a stretch also brings your attention inward.

After a dynamic exercise, close your eyes and take three breaths in the prayer position (hands folded in front of the heart like a statue of Mary). **Soften** into each breath **and deepen** your self awareness.

By the time you begin your meditation practice, your senses should be inwardly oriented.

Going Deeper Yet

Your Magic Portal(s)

Everyone has a unique way of entering that special state of mind. Do you have a favorite song, especially one that speaks to your soul? Do you have a favorite nature spot? A favorite writing that touches your soul? Scriptural passages? Poetry? A favorite dancing style? A chant? A vivid, uplifting memory? A victorious memory? A memory of a very serene state of mind? An entrancing musical instrument? Do you remember what it feels like? What it smells like? What it looks like? Do you like to go on nature walks, including “urban” ones? How do you feel after walking and absorbing nature into yourself?

Think back. You may have some powerful tools to warm up for meditation with. Add them to your routine and your daily life.

Levels of Personhood

We all hear the words “mind, body and spirit”. Some people may describe Yoga as the act of unifying mind, body and spirit. A solid routine should incorporate these three levels of personhood somehow. Warm ups “tune” the mind, body and energy. Meditation is accessing Spirit (stillness, spaciousness). Stillness automatically integrates form and energy, aligning them with itself.

More specifically, a good complete warm up should include the “**7+1 Tuning Method**”:

1. *Muscles and Soft Tissues (stretching, limbering joints, shaking, massage, Yoga postures)*

2. *Energy and Chakras (energy work, soft flowing movement, gathering chi, cultivating chi and physical energy)*
3. *Nature (communing with a real or imagined nature spot, Chi Kung nature exercises)*
4. *Emotions (chant, forgiveness work, gratitude, lovingkindness visualizations, loving memories, inner smile)*
5. *Intellect (reading inspiring words or scripture, thinking about spiritual concepts)*
6. *Imagination (visualization, which includes feeling, hearing, etc.)*
7. *Breath (pranayama or yogic breathing, diaphragmatic breathing, other breathing exercises)*
8. *Spirit (meditation)*

You don't have time for all this? Just pick a few exercises that work best or use your intuition. For tips on the order of the exercises, read on.

The Four Styles of Information Processing

Neurolinguistic Programming is a style of therapy which resulted from detailed research into which therapeutic styles were most effective. One of their biggest gems is their emphasis on "learning styles".

The four learning styles are:

1. Visual

2. Auditory
3. Kinesthetic
4. Auditory Digital

Visual processors tend to think and receive information in pictures. They are likely to acknowledge a point by saying “I see what you’re saying” and may find it helpful to learn something by watching or through an instruction manual.

Audio people think and receive in sounds and verbal information. They are likely to learn by listening.

Kinesthetic people tend to get the feel for things. They are likely to learn by doing.

Auditory Digital people tend to try to “make sense” of the information received, often through internal dialogue. This one is often lumped in with auditory learning.

There are tests on the internet for finding out which learning style is your strongest one if you haven’t figured out where you fit already.

Some techniques can be adapted for different learning styles. If you’re doing a visualization and you’re a kinesthetic processor, then emphasize the feeling element in the visualization (don’t ignore the sounds and sights, however). Chakra meditations can be versatile, too. You can “feel energy” rather than “see light”.

Choose some warm-ups that fit into your learning style. However If you’re visual, don’t neglect the muscles just because you’re visual.

Vipassana meditation is Kinesthetic as is my main meditation technique – the Kriya Yoga of Yogananda and Babaji. I am mainly kinesthetic and would not trade Kriya for anything.

Warm Ups “Tune” the Mind and Body for Meditation

A holistic warm up workout should have a profound effect on your meditation, especially if you have been following all the principles of intertwine, momentum, sensory orientation and consistency.

Some immediate goals for a workout include a slower heart rate (by the end, but not necessarily during the dynamic exercises), a sense of “connection” to the body (grounding), deeper breath, calm and clear nerve energy, slower brainwaves and an inward sensory orientation.

Also pay attention to the possibility of seeing light in the forehead, when your eyes are closed, as well as inner sounds, pulsations and frequencies. In advanced students, a perception of inner light and sound in the forehead or other areas of the body become more pronounced. Such students may benefit from light and sound meditations followed by techniques which allow one to gradually transcend light and sound.

If nothing else, you should aim at experiencing a feeling of “opening”. You will feel like you’re suddenly breaking out of the trance created by the mental programs that run throughout the day. Things that may have bothered you earlier begin to subside or become clearer.

Deep meditation requires “tuning your mental radio” as swami Satchitananda says. Not only that, but it requires tuning your entire being toward an inward state of mind and, eventually, to an

inwardoutwardspringingoutfromtheinward state of mind or something like that.

The Five Minute Intertwine Revisited

You think you read this one enough times? Now, stop reading. Take a few deep breaths. Stretch. That's it. Look up at your third eye and sing Om Shanti Shanti Shanti (Om Divine Peace Divine Peace Divine Peace). Massage your scalp. No one's looking. I won't tell your friends that you massage your scalp. Scratch it hard and briskly if you have to. Now, Hokey Pokey. Sing it Loud!

Developing a Routine

Movement into Stillness, Form into Spirit

Developing a regular routine that works for you may require a little bit of trial and error. Here are some tips for developing a routine.

Some of the warm up exercises in this book are “hot” exercises. This means that they involve either vigorous body movement or breath and they generate heat in the body. The contraindications for such exercises are included in the introduction to this book. Relatively good health is recommended for such exercises.

It is my common practice to begin a routine with hot exercises and work my way into the “cooler” exercises – the ones that are soft, flowing or motionless – and then stationary ones whether it’s morning or evening. However, some like to do this only in the evening and the reverse in the morning. If you need more energizing in the morning and less meditation, then try this method. Experiment a little bit.

Let’s assume it is evening. Begin with hot muscle exercises, shaking, slapping and limbering. Try some hot breathing exercises such as the Breath of Fire. After that, maybe some energy or slow movement exercises. Slip in some self massage and inner smiles here and there throughout the routine. Add a couple things from your magic portals list, including a calming chant. Next, try lovingkindness work. Then, do your more balancing pranayamas and breathing afterward. You’re moving toward stillness at this point. Lovingkindness visualizations can also follow this. Now, you’re ready to meditate.

One thing that should be noted is that many Yoga teachers insist that the nondynamic pranayama breathing exercises must be performed after stretching and movement for the effects to be optimized.

Don't get overwhelmed. This is the long version. You can pick out just three or four things and then meditate for five minutes. It's ok.

Remember the following:

**Dynamic → Slow and Meditative → Mental and Emotional
(less movement) → Breath → Stillness**

And more specifically:

**Gross form → Gross and Subtle Form → Subtle Form →
Breath of Life → Spirit**

Sometimes, during the warm ups, you may end up slipping into a meditative state. You have limbered up your "energy and form" aspects and have entered the "spirit" phase. Flow with it.

You may even encounter spontaneous movement and spontaneous breath exercises. They may resemble Chi Gong, Tai Chi, Yoga stretching, slapping, humming, sounds, singing, etc . Some say that this is only a cleansing process, i.e. the clearing of blockages. However, there is more.

You have engaged in activities that carried you from form (including energy) into stillness (spirit). From spirit, effortless action results, and such action is always the correct action in the moment. You have united the transcendent nature of spirit with the active nature.

The formula: Form → Spirit → Form

The first Form came from an intellectual idea of what to do to find stillness. When you find stillness, you access Spirit. From Spirit, you re-enter Form beyond symbolic intellectual concepts, from a place of transcendence.

This is the “Real Yoga”. It will greatly help you to follow your inner guidance in daily life. Remember what it feels like.

Intuitive living begins with receiving intuitive “hunches” and acting on them. Just like Karma Yoga, the process becomes more refined until you are just following the movement of spirit into form.

In this case, intuition and action become one motion rather than two distinct parts. An “inner marriage” has been realized. The two have become one. There’s no intuitive feeling or concept to listen to. You are just doing it. If you wish to give it a name, call it “intuaction” if you wish. Don’t confuse it with the life coaching term, however.

Let’s look at Shiva. Shiva is the transcendent reality. Out of this transcendent stillness comes Shiva again, in the form of Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. You can also use the imagery of Shiva and Shakti making love if you wish. Sing to Shiva for a while to verify this. You just may become Shiva, who will show you the meaning of this concept.

God always leads us toward this “cleansing process”. The process integrates us where there is a block in the flow – where we are not whole. When we are doing exactly what Spirit instructs, we are “cleansing” aka “burning”. We, as vessels, become clearer as the Divine expresses itself more fully through us. We are learning to

step out of the way and to “let go let God”. Such a learning process does not happen through living passively, but by acting according to our deepest intuition.

Anyway, your entire routine should look something like this:

Dynamic Exercises (gross form) → Calming Movement Exercises (form) → Inner Exercises (subtle form) → Meditation (Spirit) → Projection of Energy (Prayers, Supplication, Healing Work, Manifesting, Action) (Form) → “Bathing”- Basking in the Peace → Integration of Spirit into the Sensory World (Union)

Remember that all form dissolves into Spirit, just as waves dissolve into the ocean, sound dissolves into silence and light dissolves into space. We’re gradually moving toward stillness.

Again, If time is an issue, just pick and choose a short combination of exercises that works best for you, then meditate for five minutes or as long as you can. Choose few enough exercises so that you don’t have to rush or immediately run for the door when you’re finished. Skip Projection and shorten Bathing. Don’t skip Integration.

Projection? Bathing? Is he speaking Greek? These are explained in the next three sections. See? Now you have to come back to this section later. Ha Ha Ha.

After you’ve studied a few of the exercises and begin developing a routine, come back and read this section again.

So far, you’ve learned a structured approach for your warm up and meditation routine. At some point, you may develop a more intuitive approach. You may just stop in the middle of muscle exercises and slip into deep meditation or spontaneous exercises

followed by meditation. Your intuition will increasingly guide you as time goes on. In any type of training, we always start with structure and move into more intuitively guided approaches. Have you ever spent a few years practicing a musical instrument? It's a similar process.

There is always an optimum Magic Portal in each moment. You may be performing a formal practice routine that takes you to a wonderful place most of the time, but today it's just not happening. Perhaps you need to break the routine and find out what really takes you to that special place in this moment. Maybe you just need to be singing or playing your banjo before meditation today.

Projection of Energy – Prayer, Healing, Manifesting, Action

Gary Clyman, Chi Kung master and developer of the Personal Power Training program, insists that real Chi Kung consists of the following process:

1. *Gathering chi*
2. *Cultivating chi*
3. *Circulating chi in the body through the Microcosmic Orbit*
4. *Projecting Chi*

There are many schools of Chi Kung, and many will disagree with Gary. However, a lot of Chi Kung programs do have a method of "projecting energy". Projection usually takes on the form of hands on healing or manifesting your desired life in the form of will development, visualization and destroying negative programming.

There is medical Chi Kung, magical Chi Kung, Shamanic Chi Kung and probably more. Gary practices magical Chi Kung, or “Impregnating the Universe” as he calls it, combined with the development of the will.

Some meditation teachers will say that one must not engage in manifestation work after meditation because it may interfere with the integration and bathing stages in some people. However, it may be the best time to do such things. It is the moment when prayer is most effective. Only you know what works for you.

There are many books on effective prayer, visualization, manifestation and the Law of Attraction. This book is not one of them. However, recommendations may come in handy:

1. *The Secret*
2. *The Abraham-Hicks Collection*
3. *Creative Visualization by Shakti Gawain*
4. *ThetaHealing™ by Vianna Stibal (order at www.thetahealing.com)*
5. *The Isaiah Effect by Greg Braden*
6. *Any book or program by Jose Silva (The Silva Method)*

Both ThetaHealing and The Isaiah Effect reveal the science of effective prayer. Theta Healing combines all the elements of manifestation work with a Theta brainwave state (between 4 and 8 cycles per second), the state of waking dreams in which you watch the Creator answer your prayers instantly. One method for entering a Theta state is included in a chakra exercise in this book. An even

better approach is to enter an Alpha, Alpha/Theta or Theta state by following the steps in this book and then use the Theta method in the chakra clearing exercise before visualization.

Medical Chi Kung is similar to some of the methods of Therapeutic Touch, a form of Laying on of Hands, but it is more developed and based on thousands of years of experience. It begins with self healing and meditation and externalizes into the world in the form of healing others of physical and mental imbalances.

Projecting does not necessarily mean formalized manifestation work or formalized healing work. All meditation practices should have a projecting component whether it is part of your routine or not. When your “cup runneth over”, the rest of the world should benefit somehow. The more you access Spirit, the more you will listen to the outward movement that comes from it. Your intuition is your guide on this.

During a routine, projecting could just mean “Real Yoga”, spontaneous movement which springs out from the stillness. This brings practice for the real projection, which is active engagement in the world (Karma Yoga) – a step toward Heaven on Earth. Manifesting, in its purest form, also brings practice in bringing Heaven to Earth. Formalized healing brings practice of the engagement in our purpose in life - healing ourselves and others. All these things are intertwined and teach us that all appropriate action in the world comes from the stillness within.

Supplicating prayers and visualization are useless without listening to intuitions which both precede them and follow them. We must be clear about what we pray for and align it with our higher purpose.

We must also be ready to follow our “hunches” or guidance which follow prayer and remove whatever weaknesses or blocks that are in the way.

Consider the following story:

A Rabbi was shipwrecked on an uncharted desert island. He prayed and prayed and prayed for God to save him. He conducted the prayer perfectly by commanding that God save him, thanking God for already granting the prayer and actually imagining the prayer being granted with all the good feelings that go along with that. At last, he was certain that God would save him.

Along came a man in a sailboat. “Dude, you need a ride?”

“No,” said the Rabbi. “God will save me.”

“Good luck!”

Along came a woman in a Yacht wearing medallions, shades and fur. “You look like you could use a lift.”

“God will save me,” said the Rabbi. The woman sailed away, sipping on a Pina colada.

Along came George Burns himself, puffing on a cigar in his fishing boat.

The Rabbi thought for a minute: He kind of looks like God. Nah! God would be wearing a yarmulke.

“Can I help you with anything?” asked George.

“No thanks. God will save me.”

After George left, the Rabbi was beginning to feel uneasy. He jumped up and down, angry that God hadn't saved him yet.

Deep, thunderous laughter descended from Heaven. The Rabbi was fuming.

"Why are you laughing?! I'm stuck out here and you haven't saved me!"

A puff of cigar smoke blew out of Heaven, filling the sky. God put his straight face back on and said, "C'mon, dude! I sent three boats for you!" before laughing so hard he fell out of the sky, plunging into the sea.

Remaining "inward" and saying "it will all work out" will not save us. When you pray, be ready to be put to work, no matter what weaknesses and insecurities stand between you and the accomplished task. Complete the projection process by following your hunches while remaining inward at the same time. That is, at least until you achieve "intuaction".

In other words, when you "impregnate the universe", allow it to impregnate you in turn. The Rabbi thought he was separate from the universe when, in fact, he was the center of the universe. Let the universe do its work through you.

Remain detached, letting the hunches come. Don't hold Spirit up at gunpoint demanding intuitions.

Just think. If all of us let go of our fears and truly did these things, the whole "machine" we complain about every day would just fall apart. Destroy the system!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Meditation is very punk.

Realize that your job is not to save the world. Some people burn out and become selfish and cynical after trying to save humanity. Align yourself with the dictates of Spirit and do that.

This whole intuition into action process is also part of the “Integrating” process mentioned below. There is a lot of overlap between all the stages.

“Bathing” – Basking in the Peace

You’ve concluded your formal meditation and now you are bathing in the resulting peace. Hatha Yogis do this in the “corpse pose” (lying on the back) after pranayama. That’s all there is to it. Bask in the peace.

It is best not to immediately “get up and go” after meditation. It is better if that happens in stages. Bathing is one of these stages.

Integration – Integrating Meditation into the Sensory World

Your formal meditation practice made you inward oriented. Now, it’s time to integrate the internal and the external world.

After bathing, open and close your eyes a few times. Next, you can try the last exercise in the Sensory Orientation section or the standing posture exercise in the Posture section. Then, affirm that you will listen to your intuition throughout the day (or evening). Look around and connect with your environment. Afterward, integrate your higher consciousness into every activity.

When your sensory orientation is looking inward and outward at the same time, such as in the standing posture exercise, then you know you are on the right track.

If it is night time, you can go back into bathing after integration if you wish. It will be more integrated.

Authentic Connection Breath or “Integrating Breath”:

Try the following exercise to integrate your internal consciousness with the external world.

1. *Breathe in with a diaphragmatic breath. Breath is consciousness. Be conscious of yourself and honor yourself with a smile.*
2. *Exhale with the same force and volume as the inhale. Be conscious of the external environment and honor everything in it with a smile.*
3. *You can begin by honoring your immediate environment on the exhale and gradually expand to the whole neighborhood, nation, Earth, Planet Vulcan, etc. after many exhales.*
4. *Repeat as long as you wish.*

This section explains the initial stage of integration after formal practice. See the Grounding Meditation into Everyday Life section for tips on the later integration stages.

A Word about the Imagination

“Symbolitus”

In my first symbolic logic class, we studied argument structures such as:

If p then q

p

Therefore q

This can also be represented as:

$p \rightarrow q$

p

$\vdash q$

For those who don't know already, the p 's and q 's can represent any statement that is either true or false, such as “my name is bob”, “it is raining”, etc. The symbolic structure can represent the following statement:

If he asks me out, then I will faint. He is asking me out.
Therefore, I will faint.

Some of the folks in class minded their p 's and q 's too much and got lost in the symbols. The professor would get very frustrated and say “C'mon! We're speaking English! Don't you people speak English?!”

It is too easy to drown in the symbols and forget the reality behind the symbols. The reality behind the symbols, in this case, was actual English sentences that we normally understand with no problem. The professor called this condition “Symbolitus”.

Let’s say you decide to start a commune in the countryside. You have an image of what that looks like. Everyone can do whatever they wish without The Man bringing them down. It should be open to all, etc.

You study other communes and decide that some of them are pretty “stuck up”. They screen people before they let them in. That’s not a free society.

You roll out the red carpet for participants of your new utopia. After a couple of weeks, you discover that almost everyone who shows up has a drinking problem. However, You don’t want to tell them what to do in a miniature free society.

A couple of months pass and you realize that no one’s pulling their own weight. A lot of fighting is going on.

Years pass and people come and go, most of them drunk. Residents find travelling drinking buddies in town and invite them to live on the farm. Everyone who does not share the urge to drink every day tends to stay clear away from the place.

If you keep holding onto the intellectual concept of your ideal society, the whole operation will fall apart. That is one manifestation of Symbolitus.

Our whole life journey is a refining process between theory and reality. Here’s another example:

A nation decides to go “communist”, or at least a few people with a lot of followers who have the means to create this reality make this decision. “The People” finally get everything they need to live their daily lives without worry. The other people are not part of this symbolic group called “The People”.

“The People” are fully aligned with the views and symbolic models of reality of the new powerholders. They certainly receive the goodies in life. They have “freedom” to do anything they want. It is certainly a free country these days.

The other people are not so aligned with the new order. They end up poor or in jail. “The People” cannot understand why these people can be so opposed to a good thing. All they have to do is act more like “The People” and they will be fed. They must just be aligned with the evil order of the past and therefore the embodiment of pure evil.

“The People” become the embodiment of pure evil in the eyes of the other people.

Capitalism does the same thing. Economists create academically sound symbolic structures that usually favor the powerful. The theories clearly demonstrate that what is good for the powerful is also good for everyone else.

Before long you get urban uprisings, 911’s and most of the third world nations spitting on the symbols of the more powerful nation. In the minds of the people on the powerful side of the fence, there’s no problem. We’re helping these ungrateful brats. They must be pure evil. Power always denies that power exists.

The Romans experienced terrorists. The British Empire was a model of “peace” in the world. All their academic theories

“proved” it. Gandhi appeared to the puzzlement of good Englishmen. The founding fathers of the United States were even more puzzling. The situation just did not “compute” within the prevailing British theory.

And on and on it goes... Symbolitus.

Tyrants don't know that they're tyrants because they are stuck in theory which, in turn, is stuck within an ego structure. They may even believe they're saving the world. Unfortunately, their subjects are also stuck in theory.

Symbolitus is the condition of being so caught up in symbolic models of reality that we're blinded to reality.

Symbolitus is universal. Even our perception of a tree in front of us is symbolic. Does an amoeba experience a tree in the same way we do? Are we really at the summit of reality as human beings? Our perception is wrong and so is the amoeba's. Our connection to the universe just happens to be a little more complex.

The entire ego structure is composed of symbols. This includes national and tribal ego structures and those of empires. We mistake these symbol structures for the reality of who we really are.

Meditation is the process of gradually seeing things as they really are.

Are you experiencing Déjà vu? Some things cannot be repeated enough.

The Role of the Imagination in Meditation, Intuitive Development and the Law of Attraction

Beginning remote viewers typically launch their practice by visualizing a room or some place that has verifiable contents, usually from outside the room. The viewer will note every detail in their imaginary model of the selected location before physically checking the room to find out where they were correct and incorrect.

Eventually, the viewer's observations become more and more accurate until they can mentally enter any building and see the contents within. The symbolic imagination was the initial tuning tool which carried the viewer to the reality beyond the tool.

There is one yogic breath called the "short breath". You imagine the breath to begin in the Pituitary gland in the center of the brain and end at the fontanel, the baby soft spot at the top of the head. You follow the breath up with your mind on the inhale, but not on the exhale. It is a love offering to God in the crown – soul consciousness merging with God consciousness.

At first, you need to use your imagination to follow this energy channel. Your imagination provides an approximation of what's really happening. Over time, the approximation becomes more and more real until you are just feeling energy moving along that actual channel.

In some healing arts, a practitioner accesses the presence of Spirit, forms a prayer and then witnesses the healing occurring in the "client". The witnessing occurs in symbolic form. For example, the practitioner may witness light or a feeling of blissful love entering the person's body, a group of plumbers working on the

digestive system or some other symbolic representation of actual healing occurring. It all depends on how the practitioner's brain wishes to interpret the very real changes that are happening. There are no plumbers there. However, behind the plumber symbol is a very real process.

All of our sensory processing is symbolic. It's all an interpretation by our brains. Again, an amoeba will see a different tree than we do. The amoeba connects to the universe through different channels than we do, so the interpretation is much different.

Just as the monkey mind transforms into Hanuman (pure devotion), becoming our ally, so our symbolic structures of reality can become powerful friends rather than the troublemakers they often are.

Every accomplished goal begins in the imagination. The imagination is a tuning tool. Strengthen your imagination and you will accomplish a lot more.

Remember this in your meditations.

The “7+1 Tuning Method” - Some Warm up Exercises

Do you remember the “7+1” tunings?

They are:

1. *Muscles and Soft Tissues (stretching, limbering joints, shaking, massage, Yoga postures)*
2. *Energy and Chakras (energy work, soft flowing movements, chi gathering and cultivation)*
3. *Nature (communing with a real or imagined nature spot, Chi Kung nature exercises)*
4. *Emotions (chant, forgiveness work, lovingkindness visualizations, loving memories, inner smile)*
5. *Intellect (reading inspiring words or scripture, pondering spiritual concepts)*
6. *Imagination (visualization, which includes feeling, hearing, smelling, etc.)*
7. *Breath (pranayama or yogic breathing, diaphragmatic breathing, other breathing exercises)*
8. *Spirit (meditation)*

Here’s a tip for proceeding. Experiment for a while. Get a good feel for what works for you. Stick with a good routine. Some of the exercises offer their greatest treasures after much daily practice, especially the inner power and energy cultivation exercises.

Some of the exercises in the warm up section are actually great meditation practices in themselves. If you slip into a deep meditative state during one of them, perhaps you found your compatible method. In such cases, slip into meditation with detachment, following the flow of breath, etc, and just allow things to **rise and fall like waves on the ocean**. Don't get excited. Just experience.

“The Inner Smile” – Qigong’s Most Obvious Secret

The inner smile is a technique that is taught by Mantak Chia, a Qigong master and author as well as Ken Cohen, another Qigong master and author, and by Thich Nhat Hanh, a Mahayana Buddhist author.

When you smile at another person, you are filling them with chi and allowing them to relax. Defenses drop. Their day becomes brighter.

We can do the same thing to ourselves. Our minds and internal organs will thank us for it by functioning more efficiently with greater health. If you just wish to relax your muscles, the inner smile is one method you can use.

If you have diabetes, then the focusing on the adrenal glands at the top of each kidney might prove beneficial. It will at least stimulate the pancreas. You don't have to pinpoint where they are exactly. You only have to have the intent to smile at your adrenals and the approximate location to do so. You may eventually pinpoint them in time as the awareness grows with regular practice.

You can perform the smile exercise any way you wish. If you wish for a formalized approach, then read the following instructions.

Instructions for the Inner Smile

1. *Smile at the third eye between the eyebrows and a little bit inside the forehead. Allow the forehead to relax.*
2. *Smile at your two physical eyes and allow them to relax.*
3. *Smile at your jaw and allow it to relax.*
4. *Proceed with the neck, shoulders, arms, hands, internal organs in the upper torso, internal organs in the lower torso, all the way down. Be as elaborate as you wish.*
5. *Mantak Chia recommends concluding this exercise by circling back up toward the Tan Tien, your center of gravity, which is 2 inches below the navel and an inch or two inward, and ending there. The navel Tan Tien is the best place to store energy. Some practices end their circuits in the upper chakras which can lead to overheating of the brain. The brain is not good at storing chi. See “Gathering Chi into your Navel Tan Tien” in the Muscles and Soft Tissues Section to learn a good method to return chi to its origin (the navel).*

Clench and Release – A Gem from Hatha Yoga

The learning of relaxation often comes from deliberate tension. Therefore, use tension to loosen tension.

Clench and Release

1. *Tighten the muscles in your left foot and ankle. Release. Breathe diaphragmatically into the foot and feel the difference. Repeat if necessary. Repeat this step for the right foot.*

- 2. Repeat for the left and right calf. Then the thighs, butt and genitals, lower abdomen, upper abdomen, arms, shoulders and hands, neck, jaw, entire head.*

All this should take a few minutes the first time. It becomes quicker over time.

Stretch and Release

This exercise combines muscles and breath. Breath is awareness, which brings relaxation. If you ever feel the urge to do this exercise spontaneously, do so.

Stretch and Release

- 1. Breathe diaphragmatically and pay attention to where you are tense in the body.*
- 2. Stretch wherever it feels right to do so.*
- 3. Breathe into that stretch three to seven times (experiment with both numbers of breaths to determine which works for you).*
- 4. Release the stretch and feel the difference.*

Note: If you stretch one arm then, after release, pay attention to both arms while noticing the differences in how both of them feel. Then, stretch the other arm.

Now you have three methods for relaxing any or all parts of the body. You can use these methods with any other exercise to enhance the benefits. Check yourself periodically for tension in the body.

The fourth method of relaxation is self massage. One method of self massage is in the Muscles and Soft Tissues section.

Exercises for the Muscles and Soft Tissues

Warm ups for the muscles have the effect of grounding and clearing. They disperse stagnant energy and bring us out of the clouds and into our bodies. The sexual/physical energy, known in Chinese as “jing”, becomes more balanced as do our “lower chakras” – the perineum and tailbone energy center, the sexual energy center behind the pubic bone in the spine, the navel energy center (or “Navel Tan Tien”) and the solar plexus.

Anything that instills feeling and awareness in the body is a grounding exercise. Grounding is a very important part of any meditation program, especially for people who are spacey, overly discursive, anxious or get easily overwhelmed.

Incorporating muscle exercises and self massage brings a suppleness to the body and therefore to the mind. The more supple we are, the more versatile we become as vessels of Spirit.

Without proper conditioning of the whole body in spiritual work, the circuitry may get overloaded, resulting in pain in the third eye, itching, numbness, tingling, excessive muscle spasms, a feeling of going crazy, general damage of the higher centers among other symptoms. Neglect of the “lower centers” can sometimes result in these unwanted symptoms if kundalini energy is prematurely aroused in the lower spine. People are sometimes misdiagnosed with schizophrenia and other disorders as a result of such ungrounded awakening of the circuitry.

Neglect or repression of jing can also lead to “fire and brimstone” mentalities, objectification of women (in men) as distracters of men, fundamentalist thinking and other unhealthy mindsets that are the polar opposite to the overindulgence of the

senses. This is another false dichotomy that can plague monasteries, religious orders and entire societies. All these sexual perversions can be summed up in one word: Patriarchy.

Therefore, don't be "above" your lower centers or anything else. Your genitals are not "down there". They are not separate from you. If you are above physical and sexual energy, then you will also place yourself above and separate from other people, leading to thoughts of superiority.

Often, in the meditation world, we try to appear "holy" and set an example. It's all hogwash. Pure poppycock! It comes from a desire to exhibit a pre-determined "image" to others. This can only hinder you in your quest to surrender to the flow which comes from the inner stillness. That's no example to anyone. Let go of such crazy images, or at least work in that direction.

Stretching and Compressing the Spine

You can do this one in any position, including standing. As your spine loosens, you may feel inclined to do some other stretches or head and shoulder rolls. Go with the flow.

1. *Without moving your limbs, stretch your spine vertically as much as possible, making yourself as tall as possible. Do this one vertebra at a time. Keep arms at sides the whole time.*
2. *Shrink your spine, making yourself as short as possible (don't move your legs). Feel each vertebra. Feel the vertebrae stacking together, condensing.*
3. *Repeat this a few times.*
4. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and***

***deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Shake up

1. *Stand with feet about a shoulder width apart.*
2. *Lift your left foot and shake it. Let your breath run wild.*
3. *Lift your right foot and shake it.*
4. *Shake your hips side to side.*
5. *Shake your torso.*
6. *Shake your arms.*
7. *Inhale diaphragmatically through the nose. Exhale through your mouth, making a continuous 'h' sound, while shaking your head from side to side. Let the sound from your mouth wobble with you. Make sure that your cheeks are wobbling. Shake out any distracting thoughts from your head.*
8. *Repeat step 7 at least four times.*
9. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Twist up

Twist up is for limbering the joints and spine.

1. *Stand with feet about a shoulder width apart.*
2. *Place all your weight on the center of your right foot. Bend your right knee, but keep your balance.*
3. *Place your left foot a little bit behind you. Only the big toe is touching the ground. Place no weight on the big toe.*

4. *Rotate your left foot in a big circle three times without moving your big toe. First counterclockwise. Repeat clockwise.*
5. *Switch feet and repeat the whole process.*
6. *Place your feet and knees together (very important for injury prevention). Grab your knees with your hands. Make circles with your knees – counterclockwise three times, then clockwise three times. Put your hips into it.*
7. *Place feet a shoulder width apart again.*
8. *Grab your hips with your hands. Rotate your hips in big circles counterclockwise three times, then clockwise three times. Make a wide enough circle so that you feel it afterward.*
9. *Keep your hands on your hips. Without moving your hips, rotate your whole torso counterclockwise three times, then clockwise three times. While you're doing this, make sure that your shoulders and head are following your movements. If you're facing forward, in the "North" of the circle, your shoulders and upper back should point forward. When you arrive at "East", let your shoulders point to the right. You should really feel this in the lower back.*
10. *Do the backstroke a few times with your arms. Then reverse the direction of your arms like you're an Olympic swimmer. Afterward, you can rotate your hands by the wrist if you like.*
11. *Roll your shoulders backwards a few times, then forward a few times.*
12. *Roll your head counterclockwise a few times (from a helicopter's point of view), then clockwise a few times.*
13. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three*

*diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

If you need to spend extra time on any of these parts, do so. This exercise limbers up the spine. Limbering the spine enhances everything else.

Wait a minute. Your eyes did not get a workout.

Eye Exercise

1. *Look up. Widen the eyes a little bit. Notice you can see the shadow of your eye sockets and maybe part of your nose. Don't strain too much. Just a little bit.*
2. *Rotate your eyes to the left in a counterclockwise circle. Go slowly enough so that you are always looking at the eye sockets wherever you are at in the circle. Be fully attentive of the eye sockets.*
3. *Make three circles with your eyes. Then reverse direction and do three more circles.*
4. *You may be tempted to breathe erratically during this exercise. Keep the breath smooth and diaphragmatic.*
5. *When finished, relax into the eye between the eyebrows while enjoying the sensations in the eyes.*
6. *Rub your hands together briskly, generating a lot of heat in your palms. Place your palms over your eyes and absorb the energy, magnetism and heat.*
7. *Massage your eyes around the sockets in a circular manner. Shake your hands and fingers briskly like you're shaking off stagnant energy.*
8. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three*

*diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Toe Touching, Spinal Bounce

This is another good one for loosening the hips and the spine.

1. *Stand with your feet a shoulder width apart.*
2. *Bend down and touch your toes. Don't bend the knees. You should feel the stretch in the backs of your legs.*
3. *Breathe into the stretch seven times.*
4. *Bounce up and down a little bit with arms dangling.*
5. *Keep your body and head where they are. Fold your arms like you're Bruno the doorman at the night club. Your hands are folded under your head. Gravity is pulling your arms down.*
6. *Bounce up and down, shaking your spine loose. Do this for awhile.*
7. *Starting with your tailbone, lift your body up, slowly stacking one vertebra on top of the other as you lift your body. Stop when you've stacked the highest vertebra in your neck onto the second highest.*
8. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Spinal Twist

Further limbering of the spine. You may do this in sitting or standing posture.

1. *Put your hands on their corresponding shoulders. Thumbs are on the back of the shoulders. Elbows are pointing perfectly to the right and left respectively and parallel with the floor.*
2. *Inhale and twist your upper body to the left. Your nose is following your torso, pointing straight ahead in relation to the torso.*
3. *Exhale and twist to the right as far as possible.*

Yoga Stretch

Here's one from Hatha Yoga.

1. *Lie down on the floor on your back. Take a long inhale through the nose and hold.*
2. *Lift your legs. Tuck your chin into your chest and lift up your head and chest. Only your butt is touching the floor. Your hands are resting on top of your thighs.*
3. *Exhale through the nose while pulling your toes back toward you, pointing your toes as much as you can toward your head. You'll feel the stretch in the ankles.*
4. *Inhale diaphragmatically while stretching your toes outward so that they point in the same direction that your legs do.*
5. *Repeat 3 and 4 as much as desired. You should feel a wonderful massage in your ankles.*

6. *Lie down with arms to the side. Breathe through the nose. Relax and process the feelings in your body.*

Heat Massage

1. *Place hands in prayer position, palms facing each other in front of your chest. Rub palms together as hard and as fast as possible. Generate a lot of heat in your hands.*
2. *Place the palms over the eyes. Relax your hands, “merging” them with your eyes. Relax into the heat and magnetism from your hands, absorbing it into your eyes. You are breathing with the diaphragm through the nose. If you see “inner light” in the forehead, then relax into it, embracing it.*
3. *Massage around your eye sockets. Work your massage toward the back of your head. Massage all this energy all the way down your body; neck, torso, butt, legs, ankles and finally into the Earth. Feel or see the energy entering the Earth. Make sure you feel the “buzz” in your body by massaging with a lot of pressure.*
4. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*
5. *Repeat step 1. Then, place palms over your ears. Listen to your pulse, breath and any inner sounds you may hear. Absorb the energy and massage downward, into the Earth.*
6. *Repeat step 4.*
7. *Repeat the whole process, but place your hands on the top of your head, right hand first and left hand on top of*

that. Whatever your “giving” hand is, that is the one that is touching your head.

8. *Repeat step 4.*
9. *Do the same with hands on your heart, right hand on heart with left palm on the back of your other hand.*
10. *Repeat step 4.*

You can make this one a “hot” exercise. Take a long, fast inhale when you’re rubbing your hands together. Imagine looking straight ahead at a candle an arm’s length in front of you. Blow out your candle like you have one birthday wish and only one blow to get that wish. The exhale should be complete, loud, extremely fast and coming from your mouth. Do this three times while rubbing the hands together before placing your hands on your body for the rest of the process.

You are getting your stagnant energy moving while generating heat. All contraindications from the introduction apply to the “hot” version of this exercise.

Core Awareness Exercise

Awareness of our “core” is a wonderful grounding element in any routine. The core is also essential for orienting ourselves to the rest of the world and establishing our unique identities.

1. *Lie down on your back with arms at your sides.*
2. *Lift your legs so that they point straight up. You can bend your knees first and do it in stages if you wish.*
3. *Point your toes straight up. Pull your heels toward your head and your toes forward.*

4. *Inhale diaphragmatically while performing step three. Also at the same time, contract your perineum (the area between the anus and genitals) and sphincter muscles by pulling them back toward the spine. Males will feel like they're holding back a pee.*
5. *Swallow with a loud gulp and exhale through the nose while lowering the legs to the ground and gradually relaxing your perineum. You are back in your original position.*
6. *Repeat a few times, remain on back, breathe and process the feelings in your body.*

Breath of Fire

The Breath of Fire is a “hot” pranayama exercise. All contraindications apply. This would be added to the breath section if it did not fit better with the muscle exercises in a warm up sequence.

The Breath of Fire quickly oxygenates all the organs of the body while synchronizing them all. It will enhance any other exercise that you do it with. For example, if you do the Breath of Fire before Tai Chi Chuan, it will enhance the benefits of Tai Chi Chuan.

You will feel this exercise very strongly at the point on the spine directly in back of the Navel Tan Tien. The breath should be very loud.

1. *Place your dominant hand on your chest and your nondominant hand on your belly. This is to make sure that your belly moves and your chest does not.*

2. *This breath is going to rate about one second per cycle. That is, a complete inhale and a complete exhale combined should take about one second.*
3. *Without moving your chest, inhale completely, puffing your belly out. Exhale completely, emptying your lungs. One second has passed. Repeat this 10 million times (or as many as comfortable). The inhale and exhale should be “equal” in force, volume and length. Filling up and emptying are both as quick as possible, like a pump or a toilet plunger.*
4. *Your belly is like a “pump”. It will feel like your belly is pumping itself. Remember, your chest is not moving.*
5. *You fill feel your breath closer to the spine and lower neck than the inside of the nose. This is not a nasal sounding breath. The sound may come from the back of the nasal cavity, but pretend it’s coming from the lower neck. You will be even more conscious of the breath in your belly, your center of focus.*
6. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Belly Bounce

The belly bounce is a hot exercise.

1. *Stand with feet about a shoulder width apart.*
2. *Place your fingers and palms of both hands on your Navel Tan Tien, about 2 inches below the navel. The fingers of both hands are pointing to each other.*

3. *Bounce up and down without lifting your feet. Let your fingers and palms bounce up and down, too, massaging your belly. Your legs are like a spring with feet firmly on the ground. Exhale however you wish and as loud as you wish. It is best to inhale through your nose.*
4. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening and deepening** into each breath while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

The Belly Bounce stirs up the belly chi and gathers chi to your belly.

Slapping and Wiping

This is another hot exercise.

1. *Briskly wipe your arms on the top and bottom so that you feel the buzz afterwards. Rapidly do the same for the tops of each hand and wrist.*
2. *Slap your chest rapidly near the thalamus. Slap your heart chakra rapidly between the nipples. While doing this, exhale through the mouth as if you're whispering "haaaaaa". Inhale through the nose.*
3. *Slap your whole body all the way down the legs. Do not slap your kidneys (under and below the ribs in the back). Kidney injuries are not fun. Finish by wiping your legs.*
4. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Ploughing the Thighs

Ploughing the Thighs is great for grounding and sudden concentration.

1. *Sit with your back straight and vertebrae stacked all the way up. Eyes look straight ahead.*
2. *Inhale diaphragmatically. Be mindful of the river of air as it enters your body. Enjoy the feelings of your body. You can close your eyes for the inhale if that helps. The heels of your hands are at the very top of your thighs at the pelvis end.*
3. *Exhale with a powerful but whispered “Ha” sound while “ploughing” the tops of your thighs all the way to knee and past it using the heel of your hand. You are pushing very hard so that your thighs tingle afterward from increased blood flow. The forward push is very fast to produce heat and friction.*
4. *Repeat the plow 6 or 7 times during this exhale. Feel the burn.*
5. *Place the heels of the hands in their original position and repeat the whole process.*
6. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

Gather Chi into your Navel Tan Tien

This exercise re-centers your energy to where it is safely stored. Some meditations involving the upper chakras can overheat the brain. This gift from Taoism is great after any meditation practice session and/or as a grounding warm up. Try it especially after working with meditations involving your upper chakras or when you feel spacey (if you feel spacey, try performing this exercise after massaging your head and neck and scratching your scalp).

As long as the pressure is light, there are no contraindications for this.

- 1. Place a palm (men left palm and women right palm) on the Tan Tien with the other palm on top of that hand. Circle counterclockwise with very small circles. Counterclockwise in this case means that you are moving to the left at the bottom of the circle and to the right at the top of the circle). Do not push hard. Do this just enough to warm the skin. Don't worry. The grounding feeling will linger even with a very light pressure.*
- 2. Gradually enlarge the circles. The circumference of the 18th circle should go through the solar plexus (soft spot just below junction of bottom two ribs in front of body).*
- 3. Stop at the solar plexus. Reverse direction. Circles will gradually get smaller.*
- 4. The 18th circle will be the smallest.*

5. *Relax and enter yourself in the navel Tan Tien, your center of gravity. Feel the sensations in your body and pay attention to how you're breathing. Feel where you are still tense. Relax the tension using any method you wish. You may benefit by just breathing into the tense areas and relaxing them.*

Self Massage

The massage exercise is a long version. You can shorten it as much as you wish. Massage is a wonderful and loving part of every warm up. It is an excellent grounding exercise. Qigong practitioners often massage after meditating to disperse stagnant energy in the body and to get it flowing properly.

1. *Begin with the Heat Massage exercise above.*
2. *Vigorously scratch your whole scalp.*
3. *Point your index fingers or thumbs, near the corners of your eyes by the nose. Make circles around the eyes in both directions, massaging the eye sockets.*
4. *Come to the temples from the outer corners of the eyes. Massage the temples in circles.*
5. *Place your index fingers at the center of your forehead. Push hard and pull your fingers apart toward the temples.*
6. *Massage your temples in circles using your fingers again.*

7. *Massage all the soft indents around the ears. Pull on your ears with index finger and thumb until your whole ear is massaged.*
8. *Press hard on your cheek bones with your palms. Push along the cheek bones toward your ears.*
9. *Put fingers on each side of the nose. Push hard and pull down toward your mouth.*
10. *Place your fingers just under the flap between the nostrils. Find the pressure point and push into it. Pull toward your cheeks. It is like drawing a mustache.*
11. *Do the same in the indent between the lips and the chin.*
12. *Massage with circular movements all along the jaw bones.*
13. *Massage with circular movements the indents at the top of the neck where it meets the head. Avoid the spine, but get around the spine.*
14. *Put a thumb on either side of the spine at the top of the neck. Pull down, loosening the spine while avoiding the spine. Push hard.*
15. *Knead, with both hands and fingers, the muscles in the shoulders and upper back.*
16. *Knead all the muscles in the upper and lower arms.*
17. *Pull each finger of one hand with the fingers of the other hand. From the center of the palm, run your thumbs along each groove, following the groove toward the space between the fingers.*

18. *Massage the center of each palm with your thumb.*
19. *Place fingers on either side of spine. Run your fingers along the spine without pushing on the spine itself. Do this for as much of the spine as possible.*
20. *Place fingers between the ribs at the top of the chest. Push hard and bring them toward the heart chakra.*
21. *Run your fingers down the grooves between the ribs, starting from the center of the chest.*
22. *Use any part of your hands for this. Inhale. Place fingers of both hands just under the ribs. While exhaling, massage along the bottom of the bottom ribs by pulling your hands apart, ending at your sides.*
23. *Do the same thing an inch below the last one.*
24. *A little lower.*
25. *A little lower.*
26. *Massage the waistline.*
27. *Make fists. Massage your kidneys with circular motions using the thumb and forefinger end of each fist. Make circles in both directions.*
28. *With your thumbs, massage your lower back from just next to the spine to the sides. You are pulling horizontally from your spine to your sides. Push hard. Begin as close as possible to your spine without pushing on it.*

29. *Use your thumbs in circular motions to massage the entire groin and upper thigh area.*
30. *Work your way down to your knees. Knead the legs.*
31. *Circle, with your thumbs, inside the kneecap. Try to massage underneath the kneecap as much as possible without hurting it.*
32. *Massage behind the knee.*
33. *Work your way down the calves, shins and ankles.*
34. *Work the pressure points at the top of your foot. Run your thumbs down the grooves and toward the toes.*
35. *Gently pull each toe.*
36. *Hold a foot with both hands. Massage the bottoms of the feet with your thumbs.*
37. *If you wish to gather chi into your navel, you can try that exercise at the end.*
38. *Enjoy the relaxed throbbing feeling.*

Energy and Nature Exercises

Gathering Chi

This chi gathering technique is very similar to some Qigong practices for “gathering chi from heaven and Earth”. Most Qigong versions of this use more continuous movements. This one uses massage for grounding the gathered energy.

1. *Begin in standing posture. Retain the inward awareness from the standing posture in this exercise. Be mindful of the Earth below you and the sky above you.*
2. *Place hands in prayer position. Take three breaths while relaxing and centering into each breath.*
3. *Point fingers down. Bring them to just above the ground with palms still together and knees slightly bent.*
4. *Move your hands away from and toward each other while relaxing the hands into Mother Earth. Try to feel the Earth’s energy as you go along. Gather energy from the Earth. You may visualize this if you haven’t developed your sensitivity yet.*
5. *Scoop up the Earth’s magma into your hands.*
6. *Face your palms up with the back of your right hand resting on your left palm like you’re holding a precious gift.*
7. *Return to standing position and put the magma to your heart. Relax and absorb the Earth’s magma.*

8. *Massage your chest and back. Massage all the way down to your legs and feet with the intent of bringing the energy all the way down into the Earth.*
9. *Return to standing and take three breaths in prayer position while checking the feelings in your body. Relax into each breath.*
10. *Point fingers forward and extend your arms forward with palms still together.*
11. *Pull your hands apart and push them back together again with the intent of gathering energy from the natural world in front of you. Perhaps it is a tree or a mountain or something you can't directly see because you are indoors. You may do this a few times.*
12. *Cup the energy with the back of your right hand resting against your left palm. Bring it to your heart. Relax and absorb.*
13. *Massage it down into the Earth.*
14. *Prayer position. Three breaths.*
15. *Push hands straight upwards above the head. They are still together with fingers pointing upward.*
16. *Look up. Gather chi from the sky.*
17. *Bring it to the top of your head. Right palm is on your head with left hand on top.*
18. *Relax and absorb.*
19. *Massage it all the way down into the Earth.*

20. *Prayer position. Three breaths.*
21. *Bring hands up again, over the head, while keeping palms together and fingers pointing up.*
22. *Turn your hands so that the backs of the hands are touching each other.*
23. *Push your hands out to your sides in a big circle. You are gathering chi from infinite galaxies. When they are outstretched to the sides (perpendicular to the ground), you are gathering chi from nature.*
24. *Bend down, completing the circle near the Earth. Now, you are gathering energy from the Earth again. There is a big soup of galaxy essence, nature essence and Earth essence in your hands. Grab the Earth's magma again and bring it back up to your heart.*
25. *Absorb this mixture of energy and massage it downward.*
26. *Prayer position.*

If you would like to synchronize this exercise with your breath, then remember the following principle:

The inhale corresponds to upward, outward, outstretching and expanding movements. The exhale corresponds to inward, downward, returning and contracting movements. For example, palms separate on the inhale and return together on the exhale.

Glowing Skeleton

This exercise helps to increase internal power. Try to imagine yourself feeling and seeing the energy and light. Over time,

the visualization aspect of this will sharpen until you know you're working with real energy.

As you build your internal power, be careful not to confuse this with spiritual progress as many often do. Power trips can result from this. Remember that Darth Vader was also successful in cultivating his inner power. We can recklessly play with energy all we want, but always remember this: **Spirit is not energy.**

1. *Perform the standing posture exercise from the posture section. Connect with the natural environment. If you're indoors, "extend" your consciousness into the outdoors as well as the Earth and sky. Connect with love and smiles.*
2. *Inhale fully (always through your nose) and breathe light and energy from the elements into your feet and ankles. Just imagine this if you don't feel it yet.*
3. *Hold your breath. Clench your feet and ankles. Compress the light into the center of the bones in your feet and ankles.*
4. *Exhale while gradually releasing the muscles. Feel the difference.*
5. *Repeat the process for the legs. Clench first the calves and then the thighs. Compress that energy into the center of the bones.*
6. *Repeat for the hips.*
7. *Repeat for the torso. When clenching, first clench the lower abdomen, then the upper abdomen. Remember the spine and ribs.*
8. *Repeat for the arms and hands.*
9. *Repeat for the shoulders.*
10. *You're remembering the spine, right?*
11. *Repeat for the neck.*

12. *Repeat for the head. Clench those jaw muscles and forehead.*
13. *Place your hands in prayer position and bow to the elements.*
14. *Lovingly thank the elements for providing you with healing energy.*
15. *Close your eyes. Continue to breathe diaphragmatically while imagining your whole skeleton to be glowing. Using your inner vision, start your scan with your feet and legs and work your way up to the skull. Remember the spine. It's glowing, too. Then, jump out of yourself and look at your whole skeleton.*

Condensing Breath

The Condensing Breath is another gift from the Taoists. Condensing Breath cultivates internal power. It is not in the Pranayama section because it is better in the energy cultivation portion of a sequence. Notice the similarities to Glowing Skeleton.

1. *Perform the entire standing posture or the sitting posture exercise.*
2. *Breathe diaphragmatically, paying particular attention to your navel center.*
3. *Inhale and imagine the breath going into the bones of your arms. Pay no attention to the muscles and tissues. They don't exist. On each inhale, imagine the breath entering the arms from all directions and compressing the bones inward toward the marrow.*

4. *Do the same for the hands and fingers, then for the whole body one part at a time.*
5. *Place hands in prayer position. Take three long breaths, relaxing into each breath. Process the new feelings in the body.*

Inner Fire

Need fire in the belly? The inner fire ignites internal power. It is very energizing and recommended for the first phase of a warm-up. The breath should be deep, steady and through the nose. Keep the inhale and exhale even in “force”, volume and length.

1. *Have a good belly laugh. Visualize the late Michael Jackson’s monkey. That’s the spirit. Laugh! Ha Ha Ha! What’s the monkey wearing?*
2. *Rub your belly in a circular manner with one palm.*
3. *Imagine a small fire with hot embers in your belly.*
4. *Inhale. Imagine the breath blowing on the embers in your belly when it enters. Imagine what that sounds like.*
5. *Exhale a roaring fire to all the extremities of your body from the belly. The fire originates in your belly. Let the fire burn all your impurities.*
6. *Repeat.*
7. *Place your hands in prayer position, just like Mother Mary – palms together in front of the chest. Take three diaphragmatic breaths, **softening** into each breath **and deepening** your experience while feeling the new sensations in the body. Process these feelings fully.*

That was the first half of Oceanic Mind – The Deeper Meditation Training Course by Tom Von Deck.

You can find the entire book in print, Kindle and NookBook formats by searching for “Oceanic Mind” at Amazon and Barnes and Noble. The book in all its forms is available internationally.

You can also find it, of course, by visiting

www.DeeperMeditation.net

Also at deepermeditation.net you will find the 400 minute long MP3 course called The Deeper Meditation Audio Course, also by Tom Von Deck. You will also find The Ultimate Stress Blog which features life changing multidisciplinary stress advice from many people in the helping professions.

Tom Von Deck is an internationally available corporate meditation trainer and speaker. He can do trainings at your company, organization, college or anywhere else. Visit the website for details.