

How To Quiet Your Busy Mind

Experience the Stillness Within

This is not a meditation. It is an exercise to help you to observe your mind.

It is an excellent preparation for meditation for it takes your awareness within. The stillness exists in the gap between your thoughts.

Set aside about 15 minutes for this exercise. Find a quiet place and get comfortable, sitting up is the best so you don't fall asleep.

If you do fall asleep, or realize that you have gone off into a trance like state of mind, don't fret about it. Just go back to the exercise and do your best to stay alert – the idea is to master the art of watching your thoughts, which in turn slows them down and reveals the stillness within you.

Please turn off your radio, TV and music of any kind.

By watching thoughts flow through your mind, you will become consciously aware of what is happening in each moment.

Thoughts, in this context, include: sounds like birds singing outside your window; cars going by; sensations in your body such as an itch, a slight pain somewhere in your body; sounds from inside your home, such as a dripping faucet, or the hum of a heater, or a fan, peoples voices.

Recommended time is approximate. Just give yourself enough time to feel comfortable watching what is going on in your mind. Being gently alert is more important than how long you spend. The more alert you become, the more you will notice. Let's begin.

1. Watch your thoughts

Relax and gently close your eyes. For about 1 minute, easily watch thoughts flowing through your mind. Just watch them and observe them, and let them go. If you notice that you are straining, let go and relax.

Now open your eyes. Did you notice how quickly or slowly your thoughts were moving through? What else did you notice? Were there lots of thoughts or a few thoughts?

2. Count your thoughts

Next you will count your thoughts. For example, if you notice the sound of a bird singing outside, count that as thought #1. If you notice a sensation in your body, count that as #2. If you have a thought like, "oh that was a bird

singing should I count that?" Count that as #3. And so on, count as many thoughts as you notice.

Begin by gently closing your eyes. Relax and notice the thoughts moving through your mind. Then easily, effortlessly begin to count each thought that comes into your awareness. Keep alert during this exercise. Continue this for about 2 minutes, then open your eyes

How many thoughts did you count? Were there five? Great! Were there twenty? Great! It doesn't matter how many thoughts you had. Did you find it easy to count them? What else did you notice during the exercise?

If you wish to close your eyes and repeat the exercise of counting, please do so now. Remain alert and observe the movement in your mind.

Now, what did you notice that time? How many thoughts did you count? Did the thoughts begin to slow down? Did you notice where they came from? Where did they go?

3. Stay alert as you watch your thoughts.

Once again, gently close your eyes and watch the thoughts moving through your mind. Do not count. Just watch. Stay alert. Continue for about 2 minutes, then open your eyes.

Did your thoughts begin to slow down? Where did they come from? Where did they go? Did you find yourself getting caught up in a stream of thoughts that went off into a story? And then what happened? Did you notice a space between your thoughts? A short space? A long space? Great!

That space, or gap, between the thoughts is where the stillness lives. That space is what you want to cultivate. Just let go and allow it to happen without controlling, without straining, without trying. With your soft, gentle, awareness on that space, a universe of quiet unbounded peace and joy will open up to you. It has always been there and it will always be there whenever you allow your awareness to be there.

Now that you have had a glimpse of the stillness, and you are able to control your thoughts, you are ready to meditate.

The Ishayas' Ascension consists of four easy, practical techniques that guide you within and help you maintain the stillness in every aspect of your life.

If you wish further guidance with this exercise, please feel free to contact me.