

MtM Meditation Series

FOCUSED MOVEMENT

Warm-up: Simply Being, Mary Maddux (5:00 Insight Timer)

Most meditation is done either sitting (on the floor or in a chair) or lying down. Most people find these positions helpful for relaxation and focus. However, meditation doesn't always need to be done in that way. In the past, we've explored some walking meditation during the summer months. That's a good way to incorporate movement into your meditative focus. Tonight we're going to explore movement with some different approaches, both through guided meditation and some movements borrowed from T'ai Chi and Qigong.

Standing Movements

These simple exercises should be done standing up. We won't walk to do these, but rather stand in place.

Warm-up—Stand with your feet apart at shoulder width. Adjust the width if you feel any discomfort in your ankles, knees or hips. Slowly shift your weight back and forth from left to right, pausing slightly as the weight is fully on one leg or the other. Use this as a warm-up before doing the other movements. (2-3 minutes)

Sandbox—Imagine a rectangular sandbox in front of you at waist height. Place your hands in front of you, fingers down, and imagine that your fingers are playing in the sand. Begin drawing a sideways figure-8 (the infinity symbol) in the sand. Allow your body to shift back and forth as you do this (the same weight shifting from the warm-up exercise). As you draw in the sand, keep your focus on that movement. (2-3 minutes)

Finger Breathing—Stand comfortably. Put your hands at waist height with the tips of the middle fingers touching. As you breathe in, lift the arms and hands (palms facing outward) until they are above your head. Pause momentarily, then begin the out-breath, lowering your hands and arms down to your sides. Take the next breath in and imagine that the breath is entering your body through your fingers. On the out-breath, return your hands to the starting position. Repeat this at a pace that's comfortable for you. (2-3 minutes)

Cloud Hands—Allow your right hand to fall and scoop air past your pelvis area, then moving upward to the left and past your face before falling slowly again to begin the process over. Do this several times, but make the movement slow—DO NOT RUSH THIS. Focus on the palm as it passes your eyes like a cloud. Repeat this process with the other hand and do it several times. Afterwards, combine the movements and use both hands, one after another. This is can be tricky. Just have fun with it and don't beat yourself up. If you wish to practice this further at home , you can find a good instruction on YouTube:

Wave Hands Like Clouds Tips, Rich Marantz, YouTube¹ (1:21)

Sitting Movement

This can actually be done sitting or lying down, whichever you're most comfortable with. Make sure you have plenty of room above your head and to the sides, since most of the movements will be done in those directions with various movements of the arms.

Noticing Body Sensations with Movement, Scott Rogers (10:55 Insight Timer)

Imagined Movement

We often do not give imagination its due. But your imagination can be a powerful thing. For example, people who imagine themselves hiking or walking regularly can reap the benefits of those exercises. With our final meditation this evening, we will listen to a mountain stream. You can imagine yourself walking alongside the stream, wading into it, or even floating on the water. Choose an imagined activity that feels right to you, but be sure that you are moving in your imagination. Imagine yourself moving in a relaxed manner, nothing overly fast or difficult. Listen to the water and move in a peaceful way.

Nature Sounds: Mountain Stream, Owen Jenkins (10:00 Insight Timer)

¹ URL: Introduction https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNyNMz_Qs1s
Detailed explanation of body part movements doing Wave Hands Like Clouds – Tai Chi movements with Rich Marantz:
Part 1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHIf_7HEqTA (12:38 minutes)
Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKD0ZJXITOk> (12:45 minutes)