

Instinct Yoga



Stilling the Ripples of the Mind

Find a position in which you'll be warm and comfortable and free from distractions for a few minutes, either a seated position, or lying on your mat. Settle down, let your eyes gently close and let your breathing begin to slow. Then slowly and systematically work your way up your body from the tip of your toes to the top of your head, checking for tension and letting it go, leaving your body feeling soft, heavy and relaxed. Take your time, you're in no hurry.

Enjoy the sensation of your body becoming ever more relaxed, your breathing gently slowing and your mind becoming ever more quiet and calm. You feel calm, relaxed, safe and at peace and you're ready to start on your meditative journey – a pleasurable, enjoyable journey.

In this quiet relaxed state, let your imagination take your mind to the edge of a lake in a forest. You can feel the softness of fallen leaves underfoot, hear the song of birds and smell the fresh scent of pine. Give yourself a moment to get used to being there and use all of your senses to let the image develop and become ever more real.

A breeze is blowing across the lake, rippling the water. You can hear the wind through the trees and the sound of the rippling water. The movement of the water

means that there are no clear reflections in the lake and you can't see below the surface of the lake into its depths.

As you stand quietly, the wind gradually drops, the ripples subside and slowly but certainly you begin to see reflections of trees across the lake and you begin to see into the depths of the water. As the wind dies away altogether the clarity increases, the reflections become sharper and the water becomes ever clearer.

Our Yoga, relaxation and meditation have the same effect – as you close your eyes, relax your body and slow your breathing, the ripples of the mind gradually subside and you are left with a clearer reflection of the world around you and greater clarity about what is going on in the depths of your mind. By closing your eyes, relaxing your body and slowing your breathing you can still the ripples of your mind in the way that the ripples of the lake are stilled as the wind dies away.

As you stand at the water's edge with the lake clear and calm and the ripples stilled, there is a real clarity - you can see reflections in the lake and you can see into the depths of the water. Enjoy this image for a while, remember the clarity of the reflections and the depths you can observe in the lake.

Remember this place by the lake so that you can return when you need to. Remember that by closing your eyes, relaxing your body and slowing your breathing you can still the ripples of your mind in the way that the ripples of the lake are stilled as the wind dies away.

Store away the image of the lakeside and the lessons you've learned there about stilling the ripples of the mind. When you are ready, and only then, gradually start to bring your consciousness back into the room where you are, back into the here and now. Start to do this by gently moving fingers and toes and deepening your breathing. Take your time, then maybe have a stretch and a yawn like a cat waking up after a nap. When you are ready slowly open your eyes and let them become accustomed to the light, finally have a long stretch, slowly come up into a sitting position and bring your mind back to the present.

Peter Hunter
September 2012
www.instinctyoga.com