

Your Body for Everyone

Try this.

Wherever you are right now place your attention on your physical body. With your awareness feel all you can of your body. The back of your hands, the curve of your cheeks, the front of your chest, and the tops of your feet. What else can you feel? Do you have any tight, knotted or sore muscles? Any joints that ache? Scan and feel your whole body. Your butt on the seat, the tops of your thighs, your ears and nostrils. Now take a few moments to feel a part of your body very intensely. Place all your attention on one area of your body and experience it fully. Close your eyes and focus on that area for thirty seconds.

Try this.

Wherever you are right now put all your attention on what is going on around you. With your senses become aware of all that you can of your surroundings. How close people physically are, what objects are near you, the air temperature and any smells. What else can you feel? Do you hear any faint sounds? Any thing moving around you? Can you hear conversations? Scan and sense the whole environment. Textures of objects, shades of light, music and voices, things of different colours and temperature. Now take a few moments to sense one part your surroundings very intensely. Place all you attention on one aspect of your environment and experience it fully. Open your eyes and focus on that area for thirty seconds.

Try this.

Wherever you are put all your attention on the space that is around everything. With your entire being, sense and feel all you can of that emptiness. The space immediately around you, over your shoulders, between your legs, the area between this page and your face. What else can you feel? Out beyond the area your are in feel the space over the land, past your country and over the ocean. Do you know where space ends? Where it begins? Become aware of the farthest space you can feel in all directions. Literally press into it. Take a few moments to feel emptiness intensely. Place all your attention on the space that extends from you to infinity. Close your eyes and feel space deeply for thirty seconds.

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Training of all types takes time, patience, and continual practice. If you wish to make any progress all exercise requires a commitment.

You already know this. Whether you exercise consistently or not, you are very aware of the benefits that physical exercise provides to your whole life. Research continues to demonstrate how a healthy physical body contributes to a healthy mental, emotional, psychological, sexual, and relational life. Your family and friends benefit from you being healthy, as does your culture, your community and nation. In fact, the whole planet can prosper when you exercise.

Does that seem far-fetched, hard to believe? It does when you only focus on your own physical body during exercise. Being aware of only your own body when you exercise is a narcissistic endeavour. Regardless of the sport or activity that you are involved in, if you only focus on what is happening with your body, then your training is just about you. No one and no thing else will gain from your efforts. Yes, you will be healthier and you can then use your physically fit body to then help others. But, your exercising itself will still be self-centred, self-fulfilling, and self-promoting. All your physical movements will just be about your finite form.

Being self-centred when you exercise is absolutely fine, there is nothing wrong with that. It is however, more closed than you are capable of being. The full expanse of who you are is reflective of what you experienced above, when asked to feel the subtleties of your immediate environment and then out into the surrounding infinite space. Your being is truly that wide open. You probably just didn't realize it.

You use your physical body to understand and relate *to* the world. It brings you sensory information and allows you to physically interact in the world. The better you train your physical body the better you become at physically being in the world. To relate *with* the world though, requires another body that you possess. Think of it as another layer that extends out from your physical body. This is the part of you that is able to feel into the environment.

Feeling how close somebody is to you, if they are in your personal space, is part of that subtle sensing body. For example, hearing a lilt in a person's voice to know if they are lying, you are capable of this because your subtle body is relating *with* the nuances around you. In this case with the person speaking to you. While parts of your physical body are used to be aware of the environment, it is your subtle body that feels into the surroundings and relates *with* them.

Your subtle body can be strengthened just like your physical body can: with exercise. While you are involved in a sport or activity, instead of focusing on your body, focus on the environment around you. Become acutely aware and very precise with what you are focusing on. If you are playing squash and about to whack the ball, instead of placing your attention on your arm and leg position, spread your awareness out into the court. Feel intensely how close the walls are. The temperature of the air. Your partner's breathing. With as much focus and precision as you are capable of hitting that ball, flex your awareness into the environment.

Next time you go for a run, swim, play tennis, lift weights, shoot hoops instead of focusing on the physical aspect of the activity, practice placing your focus on the environment. Do the motions as you normally would, with good form and intensity. Yet also, strengthen your subtle body by stretching your awareness into specific parts of the environment. The tempo of the music, the texture of the trees around you, the shape of the equipment. The key is to focus and strengthen your ability to feel into a particular aspect of your surroundings with as much intensity as you would focus on a muscle or your breathing.

Exercising your subtle body like this strengthens your ability to relate *with* the world. Two bodies interacting is just two pieces of flesh running into each other. There is no real significance to this, no true connection. Two bodies of tissue moving, bumping along relating *to* each other. If that can be called relating. Yet those bodies, when they extend beyond the limit of their own barriers, can relate *with* each other in the interaction of their subtle bodies. This is where all communication and intimacy exists. It is your capacity to use your subtle body that brings significance to your physical interactions. Whether it be delicious sexual ravishment or a solid intent-full handshake, without interaction of your subtle body, all physical motion is the play of meat puppets.

You've been using your subtle body all your life most likely without knowing it. By purposely exercising it as you would your physical body you can become more acquainted with this indispensable aspect of your self. For thousands of years traditions all over the world have developed and utilized exercises for the subtle body. The fundamentals of such practices have now been untangled from the cultural aesthetics and can be utilized in nearly any form of exercise.

With practice you will be able to focus on both your physical and subtle body at the same time. Switching back and forth, resting astutely in both. Learning how to pinpoint your attention to exquisite detail in openness. The majesty of your physical body is the doorway to the boundless magnificence of your subtle body. Layers upon subtle nuanced layers shifting and weaving together bringing depth, meaning and relation to the limited physically time-bound complexity of cells called your body. Living *with* the world is a choice that extends who you are into the open, beyond merely living as a body *in* the world. It is in this manner that you can exercise for the benefit of all.

Exercising like this moves more energy because you are in conscious contact with more energy. The fibres of your muscles and ligaments will become exhausted from maximum strain far before the oceanic capacity of your subtle body. When fatigue starts to shut down your exercising efforts assess where your focus is. If your attention is on your own body, you have run into the limits of your physical form. Shift your awareness to the ever-reaching expanse of your subtle being and feel free from constraint. Move your attention to the felt sense you possess that is beyond your physical body - opening your capacity wider than ever before.

Of course the habitual recoil of your physical body will pull you back. Strengthening your subtle form can only stretch your physical form so far. Your tissue and organ self will still have limits. With practice, however, that recoil will lessen. Each action you make is as deep in magnitude as you are capable of felt focus. As you exercise, focusing intently on the sensations of your physical body, extending with precision beyond into the awareness of your subtle body, the open intensity you are truly capable of moving with becomes apparent.

In that intensity you will meet the edges of your relationship *with* the world. Discovering the walls you hide behind and what you hold back when the world asks you to engage. Opening wider in your training, greater than your limited self is capable of, requires you to be *with* the world as it is. Holding back in any aspect of your life ripples as an edge in your exercise regime. Going deeper is a choice you are capable of making even when the intensity of training is threatening to rip you apart.

And then, feel the air. There is a calm behind all the intensity. The space that extends from your physical form to infinity holds the immense experience of all beings. Emptiness you feel around you now is the same as the endless expanse that has always been. The capacity

of your subtle body eventually fades out into the forever present reaches of that emptiness. Feeling into that space you *live as the world*.

When the intensity of exercise shudders through you, feel into the space around you. As the heaviness of fast-paced aerobic activity constricts your breathing and burns the fibres of your muscles, feel into the space. When your subtle senses are overwhelmed from the strain of felt focus into the surroundings, feel into the space. Regardless of the amount of distraction or scorch from the burn, feel into the space that is always empty, always still.

Every whack of a ball, every push of a pedal, every lift of a weight, every stroke, posture, and step is immersed in spaciousness. Living *as the world* is living in the fullness of the actions you make and as the space that permeates all actions. All your training is completely drenched in the quiet freedom of emptiness. You are completely capable of feeling this space. The largest layer of your human form is this space. How could you feel it otherwise? How would you be able to perceive the emptiness that surrounds and pervades all things without having some kind of body to do so? Your wide-open body is this spacious body, and with it you live *as everything*.

Here you are connected to all people, all life, all manifestation. Your muscles are only in your body, space is of all bodies. Emptiness out beyond the edges is where all being-ness arises from. You've experienced this awareness before. The quiet within the chaos, the noiseless awe of beauty, that timeless moment when you truly meet somebody's eyes. In fact, your experience of it is the proof that it exists. As it is always there, you can access it at any time. Like every felt awareness your wide-open being can be strengthened.

Your ability to live *in, with* and *as* the world is based on your commitment to opening. To learn about and exercise your three bodies does require the desire to deepen your efforts. It does take work. Training the open focus of your physical, subtle, and spacious bodies demands concentration and an authentic aspiration to live for more than your self. The choice is completely yours - to exercise solely for the sake of your limited self or to also exercise for the benefit of limitless others. The world or your ego. Either way, you lose nothing, you only gain. Still unsure? Feel the space around you. In that nothingness all fullness occurs. A free bountiful healthy strong body, mind, and spirit *in* relation *with* others *as* the world, or, a fit body doing its own thing. How authentically wide-open do you wish to be?