

Excerpted from The Magic Theater II
BODY CENTERED - MIND CLEARED

by Ernest Kinnie, PhD
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A series of five exercises to clear you mind and center your body. They increase energy, and sharpen the clarity and intensity of your awareness of yourself and the world. Do them for at least a week to get a sense of their quiet power.

1. Lie on your back, with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. Don't try to alter your breathing for now. Just notice whether your chest or belly, or both, expand and contract as you breathe in and out. Babies breathe naturally, expanding chest and belly. But most of us have learned to keep our chests out and our bellies in. As a result, many have forgotten how to breathe normally.

Now, breathe in and out deeply and slowly, expanding your chest and belly as you take in air....and then say **RELAX** to yourself as you let the air flow out. Do this several times until the rhythm is slow, steady, and feels comfortable. Always say **RELAX** to yourself or out loud as you let your breath flow out. This begins the very important association of **RELAX** with relaxation that you will use many times in this book and in your life. To further free your chest and diaphragm try this. After inhaling, make the movements of breathing as you hold your breath....first pushing your chest out and pulling your belly in, and then pushing your belly out and your chest inback and forth a few times....get a rocking motion going....and then say **RELAX** as you let the air flow out of your lungs. Your breathing will become deeper and more natural.

As you do the remaining exercises, allow your slow, deep rhythm to continue, and notice when your breathing changes. The places where you change the rhythm, where your breathing becomes shallow or more rapid, or starts and stops, may be places where you are inhibiting the free flow of energy. Stop and consider what might be the cause, and then reestablish the rhythm.

2. Continue to breathe smoothly, deeply, and rhythmically, and place your arms on the floor straight out from your body, with your palms down. Keep your knees bent and slightly apart. Feet on the floor. Now, as you breathe in, rotate your hands until your thumbs are pointing downward. Your shoulders will rotate upward, your chest will push up, and your upper back will rise slightly off the floor. Now, as you breathe out, rotate your hands back the other way until the back of your hands are on the floor. As you do this, your shoulders will come forward, and your neck and head will follow....even up off the floor. This allows you to completely expel the air from your belly and chest. Repeat a few times. Keep a steady breathing rhythm.

3. Put your arms comfortably by your side. As you breathe in slowly and deeply, raise your arms in an arc up over your head, to the floor in back of you. As you breathe out, slowly reverse the arc until your arms are again by your side. Do this a few times. Both this exercise and **#2** loosen up your upper back, shoulders and neck.

4. To release tension in your lower back and pelvic area (a place where many of us store tension, particularly females) try this. While breathing in slowly push your pelvis and buttocks into the floor as the small of your back arches. Then breathing slowly out, rock forward and feel the small of your back settle into the floor, pushing slightly off the floor with your feet. Do this several times until the movement comes easily....don't hurry or force....just keep rocking slowly back and forth.

5. Extend the last exercise if it feels comfortable. It will loosen up the whole back, increase the smoothness of the energy flow, and ground you. Begin by doing what you just did, rocking slowly back and forth as you breathe in and out. Then gradually begin to increase the height you raise your buttocks off the floor as you breathe in. Gradually increase the height, raising one vertebra at a time, until you are resting on your shoulders and feet. Exhale as you roll slowly back down to the floor, one vertebra at a time. Continue up and down until you do it smoothly.

The more aware you are of your sensations and feelings during these exercises, the more grounded and centered you become. If you get drowsy during these exercises, you may be too much in your head....thinking too much....and not really paying attention

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to your body. You can move through these exercises with not much pause between them. Or, you can spend some time after each noticing your changes in awareness. Try each and see which works best for you. These exercises increase energy, and sharpen the clarity and intensity of your awareness of yourself and the world. Do them for at least a week to get a sense of their quiet power.

Taken from [The Magic Theater II \(click here\)](#) available in the Real Psych Solutions Store.

About the Author

I'm a retired PhD clinical psychologist with many years experience as professor, therapist, consultant and supervisor. Wrote [THE MAGIC THEATER \(available in the Real Psych Solutions Store; click here\)](#), the psychology of adjustment, published by Harper and Row, long ago, and now have the time to revise and enlarge, using what I have learned over the years. You are invited to explore the insights, adventures and strategies that have been most useful in my life, and in the lives of friends, students and patients.

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