

Chapter 22

Mantric Exercises

These mantric exercises strengthen the body-mind-spirit and set the groundwork for a happy life! They're based on the *Five Tibetan* yogic rites (which are believed to have been around for some 2,500 years) and *isometrics* (which are controversial), and they integrate mantras (affirmations) that lift the spirit. There's also controlled breathing throughout all the exercises. There are 12 exercise routines done in sets of five. They take about 20 minutes and are best done as close to daily as possible.

If you decide to do these exercises, as always, it's good to follow your inner voice about how often and how intensively to do them. What I offer are only suggestions. If you have any heart, lung, or blood pressure conditions, or any muscle irregularities, it's *real important* to get your physician's approval. Otherwise...enjoy!

About the isometrics: They build and tone the muscles, but they don't produce overall strength. If your aim in life is along the lines of arm-wrestling tournaments or stopping locomotives with your bare hands ☺, and if you have the time and inclination for long, grueling workouts, then you might prefer weightlifting. If you have the time and dedication for pure yoga, that's even better! But if your future involves normal activity—a job, a family, and no lifting of automobiles—and you want toned muscles and ligaments with minimal effort, isometrics are a good option. I like isometrics because they're fast and painless and can be done anywhere.

Between the two types of exercises—yogic (y) and isometric (i)—your heart and lungs get only a modest workout, so doing some swimming or hiking or biking or running from time to time can round things out.

Although I assume here that most people will do the routines first thing in the morning while lying on the floor, the isometrics (exercises 4-10) can easily be done almost anytime, anywhere—at a desk, in an airport terminal, and so on—without being too conspicuous. Instead of lying down, you can do some while sitting, others while standing.

Caution: During isometrics, flex gently the first few weeks to avoid strain...and keep breathing. Don't hold your breath.

Now let's try the mantras. Each is in 5 beats. Go ahead and recite the following mantras while breathing slowly, as indicated. (The underlines indicate accented syllables that come on the beat.) I like to recite them silently in my head so that spoken words don't get in the way of my breathing. If you prefer trying to talk while breathing, go for it! Silently (or aloud if you prefer) recite each of the three mantras

below a few times, just to get a feel for them. Notice that for the yogic exercises (black figures) you exhale and inhale with every beat, while you cut your breathing in half during the isometrics (gray figures)—exhaling on one beat, inhaling on the next.

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Mantra 1 (y)	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happi</u> ness.

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Mantra 2 (i)	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u> .
Beats (breaths)	6 (in)	7 (out)	8 (in)	9 (out)	10 (in)
Mantra 3 (i)	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>others</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>today</u> .

The simple mantras contain important spiritual messages. By incorporating them into the exercises we plant the messages in our cells and tissues, deep within our carnal self, strengthening our noble side in a big way.

Exercises—Week One

Now let's combine the exercises and mantras. **Suggestion:** Do the following exercises everyday, or close to everyday, during the first week. If you're overweight or otherwise challenged in certain physical motions, adjust the exercises to something comfortable in style and amount.

Some of the isometric exercises concentrate on two different sets of muscles at the same time. If it seems difficult at first, it gets easier as weeks pass. If certain muscles, for example the calves, don't feel they're getting a good workout at first, just do the best you can and don't worry about it; the muscles will gradually get used to the exercises and will start to "kick in," so to speak.

1 – Big stretch (y): Stand up straight, hands dropped to your side, shoulders relaxed. Move your hands behind you and grasp the first two fingers of one hand with the other hand. Then do the following exercise routine while reciting the mantra below...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Think this while doing this...	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happiness</u> .
	Chest out, head back, push hands back.		Bend forward, relax arms and head, touch the floor with your fingertips.		



2 – Fast-breath spinner (y): Stand up, arms outstretched, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Think this while doing this...	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happiness</u> .
	Spin 5 times to the right, 1 full circle every beat. Caution: If you feel dizzy, breathe more slowly or more shallowly.				



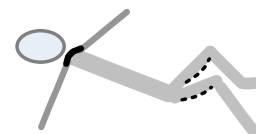
3 – Leg lifts (y): Lie on your back, legs straight, hands beside you or under your tush, palms down, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Think this while doing this...	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happiness</u> .
	Raise your feet above your head, then lower them to the ground. Lift and lower your head at the same time. Do that 5 times, once per beat.				



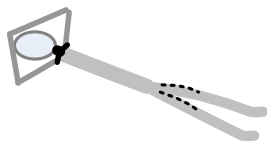
4 – Leg-bicep, shoulder flex (i): Stay on your back and raise the knees so that the feet are flat on the floor. Stretch your arms across the floor straight out from the body, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	Flex: 1) the muscles in the shoulders and 2) the leg biceps. Hold it for the duration of the mantra.				



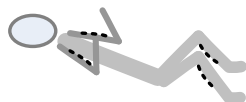
5 – Lap, shoulder flex (i): Still on your back, extend your legs together on the floor, put your hands on top of your head, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	<i>Flex: 1) the shoulder and neck muscles, and 2) the lap muscles (front of the upper legs). Hold it for the duration of the mantra.</i>				



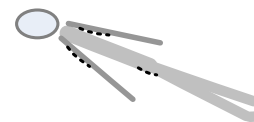
6 – Bicep, calf flex (i): Still on your back, raise your knees again with your feet flat on the floor, bend your elbows, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	<i>Flex: 1) the biceps (the front of the upper arms), and 2) the calves. Hold it for the duration of the mantra.</i>				



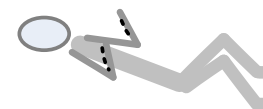
7 – Tricep, tush flex (i): Still on your back, extend your legs and relax your arms on the floor again, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	<i>Flex: 1) the triceps (back of the upper arms) and 2) the tush. Hold it for the duration of the mantra.</i>				



8 – Forearm flex (i): Still on your back...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	<i>Bend the wrists forward, fists clenched.</i>		<i>Bend the wrists backward, fists still clenched. Feel the forearms flex.</i>		



9 – Neck, shoulder, lower-calf flex (i): On your back, knees up and feet on the floor, clasp your hands above the groin, then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I cherish	myself,	cherish	myself	today
	Flex: 1) Shoulders and neck, and 2) the small area between the ankles and calves. Raise your back off the floor so the weight is on your head, tush, and feet. Hold it for the duration of the mantra.				



10 – Back-arch, belly, ankle flex (i): Lying on your back, put your hands palms down under your tush. Then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I cherish	myself,	cherish	myself	today
	Arch your back and lift your feet six inches off the floor so that only your head, forearms, hands, and tush are touching the floor. Feel the pressure in the back and stomach while flexing your ankles. Hold it for the duration of the mantra.				



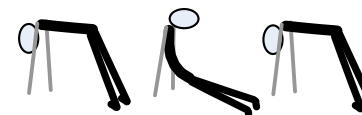
11 - Crab (y): Sit up with your legs together on the floor in front of you, put your palms down on the floor beside you, and look down at your navel. Then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Think this while doing this...	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happiness</u> .
	Raise your torso toward the sky and bend your head back so you're looking behind you. Then return to the sitting position looking down. Do that 5 times, once per beat.				



12 – Straight-arm pushups (y): Roll over onto your stomach. With your hands palms-down next to your chest, straighten your arms, pushing your torso up off the ground, pushing your tush straight into the air so your body's an inverted "V," and look back under your body. Then...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out-in)	2 (out-in)	3 (out-in)	4 (out-in)	5 (out-in)
Think this while doing this...	We're <u>all</u>	<u>one</u> , We	<u>all</u> want	<u>love</u> and	<u>happiness</u> .
	Keeping your arms straight, lower your body to the "cobra" position with knees and toes touching the floor and your eyes looking up at the ceiling, then return to the inverted "V" position. Do that 5 times, once per beat.				



Exercises—Week Two

Now we'll double up. Again, do the following exercises everyday, or close to everyday, adjusting the style and repetitions according to your weight and other physical characteristics.

Exercises 1 through 3: Do each set twice.

Exercises 4 through 7: Do each set twice, but the second time through change the mantra to, "I cherish others, cherish others today," as shown below in the table for Exercise 8.

Exercise 8 (I): The second time through, change not just the mantra, but also open your hands and extend the fingers, as described...

Beats (breaths)	1 (out)	2 (in)	3 (out)	4 (in)	5 (out)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>myself</u>	<u>today</u>
	Bend the wrists forward, fists clenched.		Bend the wrists backward with fists still clenched. Feel the forearms flex.		
Beats (breaths)	6 (in)	7 (out)	8 (in)	9 (out)	10 (in)
Think this while doing this...	I <u>cherish</u>	<u>others</u> ,	<u>cherish</u>	<u>others</u>	<u>today</u> .
	Bend the wrists forward, hands open .		Bend the wrists backward, hands open . Feel the forearms flex.		

Exercises 9 and 10: Do each set twice, but the second time through change the mantra to, "I cherish others, cherish others today," as with the other isometrics above.

Exercises 11 and 12: Do each set twice.

Exercises—Week Three

Now we'll add another set. (Again, adjust the routines according to your physique.)

Exercises 1 through 3: Do each set three times.

Exercises 4 through 10: For each exercise, follow the regimen for Week Two then the regimen for Week One.

Exercises 11 and 12: Do each set three times.

Exercises—Week Four

Now we'll add the fourth set. (Again, adjust as necessary.)

Exercises 1 through 3: Do each set four times.

Exercises 4 through 10: For each exercise, follow the regimen for Week Two twice.

Exercises 11 and 12: Do each set four times.

Exercises—Week Five and Beyond

Now we'll add the fifth set. (Adjust the routines as necessary.)

Exercises 1 through 3: Do each set five times.

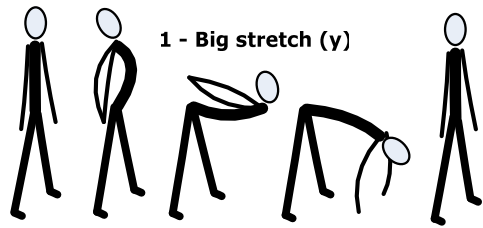
Exercises 4 through 10: For each exercise, follow the regimen for Week Two twice, then follow the regimen for Week One.

Exercises 11 and 12: Do each set five times.

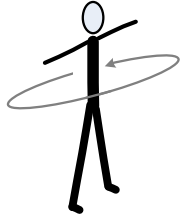
Doing these exercises daily, or at least several times a week, will keep your body fit, while the mantras will program your mind to be blissful. Do these mantric exercises regularly, and you'll have no choice but to be fit and happy.

Note: The human body comes in a wide assortment of shapes and sizes. If these exercises don't quite work for you, feel free to tailor them in a way that does work. For a complete exercise system, do some occasional walking, running, biking, dancing, swimming...whatever aerobics you enjoy.

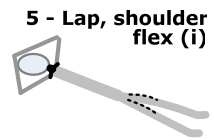
Exercises—Quick-Reference Guide



2 - Fast-breath spinner (y)



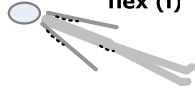
4 - Leg-bicep, shoulder flex (i)



6 - Bicep, calf flex (i)



7 - Tricep, tush flex (i)



8 - Forearm flex (i)



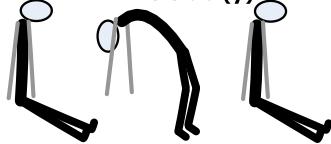
9 - Shoulder, neck, lower-calf flex (i)



10 - Back-arch, ankle flex (i)



11 - The crab (y)



12 - Straight-arm push-ups (y)

