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JUDICIAL OFFICER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE HANDBOOK

Session 3: Courtroom Control & Procedural Administration

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Judicial Officer's

SURVIVAL GUIDE

---Handbook---



By Greg Benn for the SI National Judicial Workshop
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Introduction

Judicial Officers are required to function at peak performance in court - all day, everyday! You are required to maintain a calm and balanced mind, total concentration, unlimited patience, complete objectivity, and never get angry, frustrated, or distressed. You are expected to make numerous, rapid, sometimes life changing decisions on a broad range of often complex and confronting matters. This Handbook is designed to help you maintain these seemingly impossible demands regardless of all the stresses of day to day life and generally to help you lead a happier and healthier life outside work. Try these techniques out for yourself, experiment with them, find out which ones work best for you and make them your own go-to tool kit for not only surviving but thriving in your life and responsibilities as a Judicial Officer!

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Chapter 1 – Breathing Techniques

There is a direct connection between the breath and the mind, so by controlling and manipulating our breath we can control and direct what is happening with our mind. The breath has even been described as the “remote control” for your brain (GOH, 16 February 2017.) Through actively controlling our breathing in particular patterns we can calm and relax our mind, clear and focus our mind, and even refresh and energise our mind.

-----Focussing and Balancing the Mind-----

Nadi Shodhana - Alternate Nostril Breathing

STEPS PER ROUND (practice in rounds of 5):

Block your right nostril with your thumb, inhale through your left nostril for a count of five. Block both nostrils and hold your breath for a count of two.

Unblock your right nostril and exhale through your right nostril for a count of 6. At the end of your exhale, block both nostrils and hold your breath for a count of two.

Unblock your right nostril and inhale through your right nostril for a count of five. Block both nostrils and hold your breath for a count of two.

Unblock left nostril and exhale through your left nostril for a count of six. At the end of the exhale, block both nostrils and hold your breath for a count of two.

Unblock left nostril and inhale through your left nostril for a count of five. Block both nostrils and hold breath for a count of two. Repeat this process in rounds of five.

Benefits

Improves mental performance by sharpening your concentration and clearing, focussing and balancing your mind. It also reduces stress and anxiety.

When to Practice

Before going into court, after court, at night, before tackling any difficult mental tasks (such as that reserved decision you've been putting off!) Or even just as a great start to the day!

Interesting Fact

When you breathe through your left nostril, it affects the right side of your brain, and when you breathe through the right nostril, it affects the left side of the brain! (The Art Of Living, 20 February 2018.)

-----*Focussing and Balancing the Mind*-----

Box or Square Breathing

STEPS PER ROUND (practice in rounds of 4):

Inhale through both nostrils to the count of four. At the end of the inhalation, hold your breath for a count of four.

Exhale through both nostrils to the count of four. At the end of the exhalation, hold your breath for a count of four.

Benefits

Increases mental clarity,
energy and focus.

Reduces stress and anxiety

Increases mental wellbeing

When to Practice

Whenever you're feeling stressed,
irritated or anxious. Whenever you
want to give yourself a mental lift.
Before, after or even during court. Or
just to clear and refresh your mind.

-----*Calming and Relaxing the Mind*-----

Yogic Breathing

Yogic breathing uses slow, gentle, full breathing in 3 stages.

Lie down and place your hands on your abdomen to start.

STEPS PER ROUND (practice in rounds of 5):

Inhale slowly by first feeling your abdomen rise and fill with air. Continue inhaling as you feel your lower chest fill with air. Continue inhaling as you feel your upper chest, base of neck and shoulders fill with air. When your inhalation has reached its limit, exhale slowly, gently and fully.

Once you've got the hang of the three stages of inhalation by lying down with your hands on your abdomen you can either continue to practice lying down, or sitting comfortably in a chair or cross - legged on a cushion on the floor. If you're sitting up though, make sure you have a nice straight (but relaxed) back.

Benefits

Deeply calming.
Emotionally soothing.
Reduces stress and anxiety.
Helps with insomnia.
Very relaxing.

When to Practice

Before going to sleep.
Whenever you're feeling stressed and anxious.
Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed emotionally.

-----*Calmíng and Relaxíng the Mínd*-----

Ujjayi Breathing - Victorious breath (Darth Vader breathing!)

HOW TO PRACTICE:

This practice involves inhaling and exhaling slowly and deeply through the nose while gently constricting the throat to make a kind of hissing or Darth Vader sound. You are gently pulling the breath in as you inhale and gently pushing the breath out as you exhale. The sound can also be compared to the ocean tide sweeping up the beach and then back down the beach again.

Benefits

Relaxes the mind and body.
Soothes and calms the mind.
Helps you sleep. Reduces stress and anxiety.

When to Practice

Whenever you're feeling stressed or anxious. Whenever you're feeling overwhelmed. Before or after court. Before going to sleep.

Energising the mind and body

Kapalbhati pranayama – Shining Skull

HOW TO PRACTICE:

This practice involves focussing on forceful exhalations using your abdominal muscles and relaxed “automatic” inhalations that you don’t even really think about.

Focus all your awareness on the forceful exhalation of air. Think of your belly pulling in towards your spine or clenching or contracting. It is a sharp quick movement. Then relax and allow your belly to naturally expand as you inhale. The inhalation is relaxed and passive. The exhalation is forceful and active.

Try to focus on the movement in your abdomen while keeping the rest of your body nice and loose and relaxed, particularly your shoulders and your jaw.

STEPS:

- Take a nice slow deep breath in and then a nice slow deep breath out.
- Take another breath in – then start with your forceful exhalations and relaxed inhalations.
- Repeat this pattern starting at a speed of about one exhalation per one or two seconds. When you feel comfortable at a slower pace, you can gradually increase the speed to a comfortable pace and rhythm you can maintain.
- Practice about three rounds to start with if it feels comfortable – with about 20 - 30 exhalations in the first round, about 30 -50 exhalations in the second round, and about 50 – 70 exhalations in the third round. Always stop if you’re feeling uncomfortable – don’t push yourself!
- Between each round, totally relax your breathing for a couple of minutes before launching into the next round.

Benefits

Clears and energises the mind and body. Improves circulation. Oxygenates the body. Improves the skin
Strengthens your abs and respiratory system.

When to Practice

In the morning, the middle of the day, before and after court – whenever you feel the need for a pick me up and energy boost.

Here is are a couple of YouTube links clearly explaining and demonstrating this practice:

<https://youtu.be/8UURgA8Rf7E>

<https://youtu.be/Y5WCzuM00r0>

Energising the mind and body

Bastrika pranayama – Breath of Fire

How TO PRACTICE:

This practice involves a forceful and active inhalation AND exhalation – using your abdomen muscles like a bellows – contracting as you exhale and expanding as you inhale. Firstly, take a nice slow deep breath in and a slow breath out.

Take another slow breath in and commence the practice with a forceful exhalation then a forceful inhalation and then repeating this pattern – as if you are stoking a fire inside yourself.

Start at a speed of about one breath in and out per second or even a little slower and gradually increase the speed to a pace and rhythm that feels comfortable.

Start with about three rounds – the first round with about 15 – 20 breaths, then second round up to about 50 breaths, then the third round up to about 70 breaths or even more – whatever feels comfortable without pushing yourself.

Benefits

Energising and relaxing.
Focusses the mind.
Improves circulation.
Improves skin. Resets your emotional system.
Burns toxins.

When to Practice

Morning and afternoon
Whenever you feel you need a major energy boost!

Here's a helpful YouTube link:

<https://youtu.be/6PDDe3XuacQ>

Chapter 2 – Meditation Techniques

Why meditate?

Firstly, regular meditation has many amazing benefits which include:

- Reduces stress and anxiety.
- Improves emotional balance and well-being.
- Increases your awareness of what's going on inside you – your thoughts and feelings.
- Develops concentration.
- Improves sleep.

Secondly, you can meditate anywhere you can find a comfortable place to sit – so you can take meditation anywhere!

Thirdly, meditation doesn't cost any money – you don't need any fancy clothes or special equipment!

Finally, meditation is something that is very quick and simple to learn – there are no complicated instructions. (While it is easy to learn though, it can be tricky to do, and like anything, takes regular practice to improve.)

Following are three kinds of meditation. Try each one out and see which works best for you. To really experience the full benefits of meditation, regular, daily practice is the key! Try starting small, 5 minutes, and gradually increase the length of your meditation to around 15 – 20 minutes. *Good luck!*

Vipassana (pronounced “vipashna”) Meditation - Focussing on the Breath

Vipassana is an ancient Buddhist meditation. Don't worry, you don't need to be Buddhist to practice this technique and it doesn't involve any religious content!

You can do this meditation anytime and anywhere really but it's best to start off practicing somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed, maybe first thing in the morning or at the end of the day.

This meditation will leave you feeling calm, relaxed, and refreshed. It's a great way to switch off, for a short time, from everything else happening in your life. You can also practice this meditation when you're feeling worried, stressed or anxious. Or as a great way to start the day!

- Find a comfortable place to sit, keep a straight back and rest your hands in your lap. Make sure your whole body is fully relaxed.
- Close your eyes and take a slow, deep breath through your nose.
- Repeat this slow, deep breathing a few times until you feel settled.
- Then just let your breathing return to its normal, relaxed pattern.
- Now without changing your breathing, focus on your breath.
- Focus your full attention on the passage of the breath as it enters your nostrils, travels through your nose, down your throat and into your lungs and then back up your throat, through your nose and out.
- If your attention wanders from your breath, that is perfectly okay! Simply let go of whatever thought has distracted you and return back to focus your attention on your breath. This might happen a number of times.
- Continue this meditation for however long you need (5 – 20 minutes.)
- To end the meditation, let go of the focus on your breath, take another slow, deep breath and hold it a few seconds before slowly releasing.
- Now take a couple of minutes with your eyes still closed to check how you are feeling now. Notice the feeling of peace, contentment, stillness, space and relaxation you've now created!
- With your eyes still closed, rub your hands together and then hold them over your face and eyes. then take a deep breath in and out and moving your hands away, slowly open your eyes.

- Start the meditation focussing on your breath as in the Vipassana Meditation. When your thoughts wander, bring them back to your breath.
- Now, imagine as you inhale, you are breathing in pure, golden light that enters through your nose and gradually fills your body.
- Imagine every part of your body filling with golden light. Imagine this light is healing and soothing and filling you with a wonderful calm and peace.
- If you have a particular part of your body that is in discomfort or pain, focus on the light going to that part of the body and soothing the pain.
- Now imagine you are breathing out any pain, stress, worries and discomfort you have in the form of mist that dissolves when it leaves your body.
- Focus for a while on breathing in the golden light and breathing out the mist.
You can stop the meditation here or keep going on with the next part.
- Imagine once your whole body is full of golden light, that the light expands. It first fills your room, then your house, your suburb, your city, your country and finally the entire world.
- Imagine this light filling every living being, soothing and healing them.
- You can specifically send this light to anyone in your life who is unwell, or unhappy. Try sending it to someone who's been giving you a hard time!
- Now let this light fill the entire universe! Spend some time with the feeling of a universe filled with pure golden healing light.
- To end the meditation, let go of your attention on the golden light and take a few deep, slow breaths, holding for a bit before you exhale.
- Keep your eyes closed and explore how you are feeling now.

This meditation is a variation on the breath meditation. The first part of the meditation is exactly the same – focussing on the breath. The second and third parts of the meditation give your mind a little more to do by adding some creative visualisations.

Golden Light Meditation

Mantra Meditation

Om Ah
am
Preema
So Hum
Ab
hram Ka
aljayi
Namah

Imya
Arim
Omha
Hirim



Using a mantra is another way to focus your mind for meditation. Most commonly, Sanskrit words are used as mantras. Using a Sanskrit word is helpful because it doesn't have any particular meaning that could become a distraction. You are just giving the mind an activity – the mental repetition of a sound. Really, you could pick any sound or word – here are some suggestions. Try them out and see what you think!

- Find a comfortable place to sit where you won't be disturbed.
- Close your eyes and take a deep breath through your nose. Hold for a few seconds then exhale through your nose. Repeat this a few more times.
- Now let your breathing relax into its normal pattern for a few minutes.
- Gently bring your attention to the mantra. First, imagine it floating up from the depths of your mind like floating up from the ocean. Or imagine the mantra drifting into your awareness like a cloud. Gently start to repeat the mantra in a relaxed and easy way, without being rigid or mechanical.
- Allow your mind to settle into a natural rhythm repeating the mantra. Think of it like you are following the mantra.
- Whenever your mind wanders off and you lose the mantra, getting distracted by a thought, just notice the thought, let it go, gently bring your attention back to the mantra and begin repeating it again.
- Continue anywhere between 5-20 minutes.
- To end the meditation, let go of your focus on the mantra. Take another slow deep breath in, hold for a few seconds, then slowly release the breath.
- Now take a couple of minutes to check how you're feeling. Notice the stillness, peace, relaxation and space you have created.
- With your eyes still closed, finish by rubbing your hands together then placing them over your hands and eyes while taking slow, deep breaths.
- Remove your hands and slowly open your eyes.

Autogenic relaxation is a meditation technique where you imagine the parts of your body becoming warm, heavy and relaxed. It's a kind of self-hypnosis. You can use any kind of visualisation to help imagine this warmth spreading through your body – the warmth of the sun, warm soothing water, a warm breeze, a campfire.

Following is an example “script” for this technique. You can use it in a couple of ways. Firstly, you could record this script, in your own voice, and even add some background music, then meditate by listening to the recording you've made. Secondly, you can just go through the script until you're familiar with each step, then meditate by mentally leading yourself through these steps in your own words. The important steps in the process are saying to yourself:

1. Your right hand and arm are becoming warm, heavy and relaxed.
2. Your left hand and arm are becoming warm, heavy and relaxed.
3. Your feet and legs are becoming warm, heavy and relaxed.
4. Your face and head are becoming warm, heavy and relaxed.
5. **Your forehead is becoming cool. Imagine a soft cool damp cloth on your forehead. (This is the only part of your body you imagine as being cool.)**
6. Your body is becoming warm, heavy and relaxed.
7. Your heartbeat is slow and steady
8. Your breathing is calm and relaxed.

To end the meditation, gently allow your awareness to take you back to the present moment. Become aware of the surface you are lying or sitting on and start to wiggle your fingers and toes. Move your arms and legs a little and give your body a stretch. Slowly open your eyes and give yourself a few moments before getting up.

Before starting this relaxation technique, find a comfortable place to sit or lie down. Close your eyes. Start by doing some slow deep breathing to the following count:
Inhale for a count of 4
Hold for a count of 3
Exhale for a count of 5

Autogenic Relaxation

Chapter 3 – Yoga Techniques

Why do yoga?

Yoga is the perfect activity that combines the mind, the breath and the body – it brings everything together.

Yoga can be done at any level with lots of benefits to even a beginner's practice.

Benefits of Yoga:

Yoga will help you reduce stress, improve your health, increase your immunity, strengthen your body, increase your flexibility, develop your balance and improve your posture.

What you'll need:

Loose comfortable clothing.

A thick towel to use as a yoga.

Some cushions.

Any space that's big enough in length to lie down and big enough in width to stand holding your arms out to your sides.

How to develop a yoga practice:

There are a few different ways to help develop a yoga practice. What you'll really need is someone to carefully explain and demonstrate the different yoga positions or "asanas."

Yoga Resources

Search through YouTube videos.

A 5 minute yoga warm up session with Michael Bijker:

<https://youtu.be/6EiMbIdAWVI>

A 15 minute yoga session with Michael Bijker:

<https://youtu.be/MdWJb5TJxp8>

A 20 minute yoga session for the complete beginner with Adriene:

<https://youtu.be/v7AYKMP6rOE>

Sun Salutation for Beginners

<https://youtu.be/L4Z7Iix6Qao>

Ideally, it's good to learn and practice yoga in a face to face class, but finding a yoga class in Honiara is going to be difficult, and even more limiting for a judicial officer to feel comfortable attending. There are some alternatives though. There are some very good, well illustrated books on yoga and there are numerous online yoga schools - particularly since COVID-19.

Online yoga classes you can do whenever and wherever you like as long as you have an internet connection and a portable device such as an ipad or tablet.

Here are a couple of very good online yoga schools I have done classes from:

YogaDownload.com which you can find here:

<https://www.yogadownload.com>

DoYouYoga.com

Doyouyoga have a great free 30 day beginners yoga program you can find here:

<https://www.doyouyoga.com/programs/the-yoga-for-beginners-starter-kit/>

Chapter 4 – Journaling

Why keep a Gratitude journal?

A Gratitude Journal is one of those activities that requires very little energy for a huge benefit!

There are many benefits to keeping a gratitude journal:

- It is quick and easy to do every day
- Improves your happiness
- Improves your self esteem
- Develops a more positive attitude to your life
- Improves your sleep

Picking a few things that you are grateful for each day helps you to recognise that there are always good things going on in your life to be thankful for, even on your worst day!

Benefits of Morning Pages:

- Morning pages will help you unload whatever's going on in your mind, helping you to then get on with your day – they help to ground you and clear your mind.
- They reduce anxiety.
- They will help you develop your creativity.
- They will help you come up with new ideas.
- They will help you track how you're feeling and give you a better understanding of yourself.
- They will show you that you can write, not matter how you're feeling or what mood you're in.
- They will help to get around and silence your inner critic - you will develop the freedom to write whatever crosses your mind without letting that internal censor restrict you in any way (such as, with thoughts like "don't write that, it's silly or stupid!")
- They will teach you to stop "judging" yourself!!!

Gratitude journal

How to keep a gratitude journal.

Find yourself a note book or set up a document on your laptop and each night, before you go to bed write down:

Three things you are grateful for that day

One thing you are proud of accomplishing that day

One thing you're looking forward to the following day.

They can be anything you are grateful for at all – from a moment when you had a laugh with your friends, a kind act by a friend or family member, a matter successfully resolving in court, finding the energy to get a job done you'd been putting off – it can be anything – just find three!

I've been keeping a gratitude journal for over 12 months now and I can tell you it's something that's quick and easy to do every night, but can help to create a much more positive mind, especially when things are feeling difficult. Start one tonight and try it out for yourself.

Morning Pages

How to do Morning Pages:

Organise an A4 lined spiral notebook specially for Morning Pages.

As soon as you wake up in the morning, grab your journal and a pen and just start writing! They have to be written in long hand – not typed on a computer. And you need to start writing first thing after you wake up.

Write anything that comes into your head but keep up a steady stream of writing for three pages. Don't stop to think, just keep writing whatever is on your mind – it might be how you're feeling today, something you're worried about, something you're angry about, something that's annoying you, something you're happy or excited about, an idea you have about something, what you've got coming up today, what you're looking forward to, what you're not looking forward to, what you're hoping to happen – anything – just keep writing until you've filled three pages.

These pages aren't meant to be clever or funny or good writing. All you're doing is unloading whatever thoughts are going on as soon as you've woken up. You don't even need to read back what you've written. The important part of the technique is in just doing the writing.

Chapter 5 – Plant Based Foods

What we eat is probably the single most important factor in determining our general health, our mood, the function of our brain and our energy levels.

Eating Plant Based Foods

Want to feel healthy, care for the environment and live a compassionate life, then simply add more fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds to your diet and reduce animal products.

Plant based foods are better for your health.

The China Study, a book by Dr Campbell and his son, is the result of data collected for over 20 years throughout China about food, eating and disease. It was one of the biggest and longest studies on human nutrition ever. In summary it found "People who ate the most animal-based foods got the most chronic disease People who ate the most plant-based foods were the healthiest." (Campbell and Campbell 2006 p. 7)

The authors found that a plant-based diet can not only help to prevent cancer and heart disease, but can also reverse these diseases and help to protect you against diabetes, bone, kidney, eye and brain diseases. They found that there "are virtually no nutrients in animal-based foods that are not better provided by plants" including protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals. (Campbell and Campbell 2006 p.230)

Brendan Brazier, a former professional Ironman triathlete, and expert on plant-based performance nutrition for athletes, has written a number of books on plant-based nutrition including "Thrive" in which he details the benefits of a plant-based diet – including health, athletic performance, and the environment.

In their book *The China Study*, the Campbells suggest why not trying to eat only plant-based foods for month and see how you go. Why not even try it out for week – or even one day a week - the benefits are enormous! You may find it's easier than you think!

You don't even need to cut out animal products completely if you think you'd find that too difficult - just start by trying to add more fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds to your daily diet - that change alone will make a huge difference to your overall health and well being.

NOTES

NOTES

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