

STICK ACTION MEDITATION MANUAL

2nd edition

Faster than Yoga, stronger than Tai Chi,
Stick Action Meditation is flexibility, fitness,
and mindfulness meditation all in one.

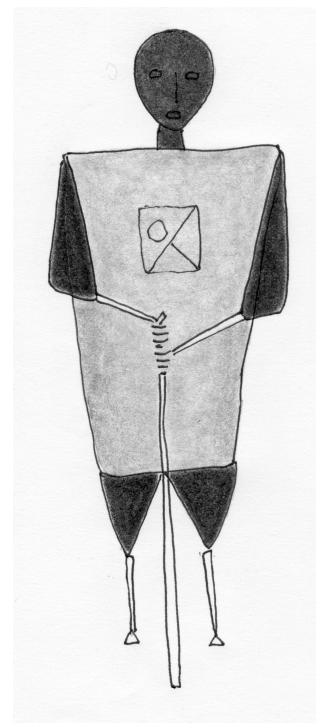
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Standing position

Illustrations by the author after the style
of the Gros Ventre tribal Americans

Stick Action Meditation

Mindfulness, Regeneration, Serenity

Introduction

Faster than Yoga, stronger than Tai Chi, Stick Action Meditation is stretching, strengthening, and meditation all in one. You may have tried Yoga, but became discouraged when you realized it would take years of effort and discomfort to be any good at it. You may have tried Tai Chi, but found that this esoteric dance form was just too strange. Now there's a third and better way, Stick Action Meditation (SAM).

SAM was not written by an exercise or fitness guru. You do not have to be a talented athlete to do it. I'm not. I'm the Headmaster of the College of Stoic Philosophers, an Internet school of ancient philosophy, and I'm more cerebral than athletic. That's probably why it took me twenty-two (22) years to find the perfection of this program and bother with bringing it into the world.

What does Stick Action Meditation mean? You will use a 4-foot stick, 1 3/8 inch, to perform a mindfulness action program in a way that emphasizes both stretching and strengthening in a way that becomes a new form of meditation. When you put it together, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If you want to improve your health, your flexibility, your strength, and your serenity all at the same time, Stick Action Meditation (SAM) is what you're looking for.

There are four parts to Stick Action Meditation:

SAM I emphasizes stretching, toning, and mindfulness. It only takes about 8 minutes, but has nearly all the basic positions and movements of action meditation.

SAM II emphasized stretching, some strengthening, and mindfulness. It only takes about 15 minutes and has All of the basic positions and movements. This is the standard.

SAM III is called Traveling SAM, because this is the adaptation of SAM II to taking care of your stretching, strengthening, and mindfulness even while you are away from home and don't have your Stick.

SAM IV is called the Ultimate SAM, because here is the whole package, and then some. This takes about 60 minutes, during which time you will acquire stretching, strengthening, low-impact aerobics, and mindfulness to the point of true meditation.

As long as there is time, there will be the distractions of past and future, and there will be a need for mindfulness. As long as there is the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, there will be decay, and there will be a need for regeneration. As long as there is the Dynamic Continuum, there will be strife, and there will be a need for serenity. Stick Action Meditation: Mindfulness, Regeneration, Serenity.

*

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2ND EDITION. The changes you will find in this second edition to the *Stick Action Meditation Manual* are mostly confined to SAM III. There are a few more words in the introduction, and there are a few improved instructions here and there, but there are no changes in the basic positions and movements—except in SAM III. That has been completely changed to accommodate those who are traveling or unable to have a Stick on hand. It's very different from the other forms of SAM, but provides essentially the same benefit. Some may actually prefer Traveling SAM to all others.

The Origins: 1989

I had chronic lower back pain and had already gone through three episodes of disability: flat on my back, knees up, for days or weeks at a time. I also had a tendency to get inguinal hernias which started with lifting weights when I was thirteen then came back to trouble me time and again. I'd already had five surgical repairs. I was also just plain weak. A fifteen-pound weight felt heavy to me. I had stiff and painful joints – shoulders, elbows, hips, knees. I was fifty pounds overweight, and I felt old. I was 44.

I tried various exercises. I worked out with the weight lifters at a local athletic club. My aching joints got worse, my hernia repairs felt like they were tearing loose, and my lower back threatened to knock me flat. I thought about taking up aerobic dance (it was fashionable back then), but I wasn't the type to flit about in brightly colored body stockings. I wanted to get in shape, but I didn't even know how to get started. I tried Yoga, but it took up too much of my time. Someone suggested Tai Chi, but I couldn't do it because those movements, those images of old people in the park, always looked really weird and depressing to me.

I fiddled around for months, trying one thing then another. Nothing stuck. Nothing worked. Finally, my frustration inspired some mad impulse, and I grabbed a 4-foot wooden, clothes hanger rod collecting dust in a back bedroom closet. All that day and most of the next, I struggled to combine everything I knew about flexibility and fitness, which wasn't much. I took notes as I went and called the clothes hanger rod I was using, "Stick." That was just the beginning.

Today

When I look back at 1989, I'm surprised at how badly I had neglected my physical strength and health. Today, I'm considerably stronger and don't have to worry about my back, joints, or hernias. It's been more than 25 years since my last episode of paralyzing back pain, the kind that throws you to the floor and pins you there for hours at a time. I know that SAM made the difference. Even if I lost all interest in the meditation aspect of this program, I would continue to do SAM—and will continue SAM for the rest of my life.

Stick Action Meditation evolved through many revisions until it became as close to perfect as I believe it can be. It took twenty-two years. That's why only now after so many years, I'm ready to share it with you. And, the good news is this program can be done in an hour, or a half hour, or 15 minutes, or even less! SAM is an outstanding flexibility and strengthening program, an excellent regeneration program when you're in really bad shape—the way I was. Or, for you athletes, you may want to include it as a vital complement to a more physical routine, the kind I couldn't even begin to think about in 1989. No matter what condition you're in today, whether you are a power lifter or a never lifter of anything heavier than a computer mouse, you can and always should do Stick Action Meditation.

Stretching and Isometrics. Each position is identified by its primary action on the body. Some emphasize stretching (s), some emphasize isometrics (i), and some do both (is). Stretching needs very little discussion because you already know the body needs regular stretching and stressing of the muscles, ligaments, and joints or they become weak and more susceptible to injury from lack of use. Isometrics may be less familiar to you, and I'll save you a trip to the dictionary by giving you what my largest dictionary says about this kind of exercise:

Isometric exercises strengthen specific muscles or shape the figure by pitting one muscle or part of the body against another or against an immovable object in a strong but motionless action, as by pressing the fist of one hand against the palm of another or against a desk.

As you will see, it's also possible to do both stretching and isometrics at the same time, and a number of exercises combine these two types and are identified accordingly.

Getting Started

The Stick I use is common dowel that you can buy at most hardware, home improvement, or building supply stores. I prefer the heft of red oak, but fir dowel is also good. It only costs a few bucks. Get a straight one, 48 inches in length and 1-3/8" *actual* diameter. Lightly sand it with fine grit paper and write your name on it somewhere to identify who it belongs to. You can finish or not finish your stick, but if you do I recommend screwing a fish-eye screw in one end so you can suspend it with string while putting on the finish. I prefer two coats of a water-based flat or satin, clear acrylic finish. Water-based acrylic is easier to use and clean up. With a little preparation your stick will look good for many years. Make sure the finish is completely dry before using. Two or three days drying time is about right.

What to Wear. Loosely fitting clothes. Sweats are ideal in cold weather; swim wear or light gym wear is ideal when it's hot. You can wear any comfortable, flat-soled shoes, or no shoes at all. Personally, I prefer none on a carpet or sandals on a hardwood floor or out doors. Tennis shoes are good, too.

When & How Often. Every day, or every other day, or at least two or three times a week. Once a week is the bare minimum. If you get sick or injured and can't do SAM for more than a week, don't worry about it. You can come back. I once injured myself on a remodeling project around the house and was unable to do two positions comfortably for nearly a year. Eventually, I modified those positions so that I could do them without injuring myself, and I began again. It was great to come back.

I prefer doing SAM first thing in the morning, because that's when I'm most disciplined for such things and because I have an empty stomach. Doing it on a full stomach is not comfortable, especially in the Diogenes' Chair position. Regardless of our level of self discipline or the circumference of our waistline, we are the stiffest and least flexible in the morning. And, if you are already under attack by decrepitude, you may want to start in late afternoon or evening when you're more limber. Then you can switch to the morning if it's more convenient.

Always listen to your body and never force it to continue when injured or in pain. Don't forget this. Ease into each position gradually and hold it for as long as is comfortable. You should not expect to do SAM completely and correctly the very first time you try it unless you happen to be very limber and athletically precocious. If these positions are easy, good. Get started on SAM before the stiffness of decrepitude comes to you. If these positions are difficult, that's OK too. Get started on SAM now. Do what you can while you still can.

The Standing Position. You begin and end SAM in the Standing Position, which is simply standing erect with feet planted shoulder width apart and the Stick positioned vertically in front of you. The end of Stick is on the ground or floor and should be centered and equidistant between your feet so that the end of the stick and the end of each big toe makes an equilateral triangle.

Counting Breaths and Movements. You are going to be counting breaths as you move and assume various positions. It will be easier to keep track of most of these positions if you breathe this way: "and 1, and 2, and 3, and 4." Inhale on the 'and' and exhale on the number 1,2,3, or 4. Except for the transition movements virtually all of the positions of SAM will be done in groups of four (4).

* * * *

A Little Philosophy

MARCUS AURELIUS (121-180) Roman Emperor and Stoic philosopher wrote:

Remember that man lives only in the present, in this fleeting instant: all the rest of his life is either past and gone, or not yet revealed....To see the thing of the present moment is to see all that is now, all that has been since time began, and all that shall be into the world's end; for all things are of one kind and one form.

(Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, Bk 3,10, Bk 6, 37).

PIERRE HADOT (1922-2010) academic philosopher and historian of ancient philosophy wrote:

Attention (prosochē) is the fundamental Stoic spiritual attitude. It is a continuous vigilance and presence of mind....Thanks to this attitude the philosopher is fully aware of what he does at each instant, and he wills his actions fully....Whoever concretely practices this exercise [the attention of mindfulness]...sees the universe with new eyes, as if he were seeing it for the first time. In the enjoyment of the pure present, he discovers the mystery and splendor of existence.

(Philosophy as a Way of Life, Pierre Hadot, trans. Michael Chase, Blackwell, 1995, pp. 84, 212).

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Breathing Gyration

Bow

1. Rolling Head
2. Rolling Pelvis

Sockets

Kayak

1. Stretch
2. Row
3. Infinity
4. Stretch 2

Sockets 2

Diogenes' Chair

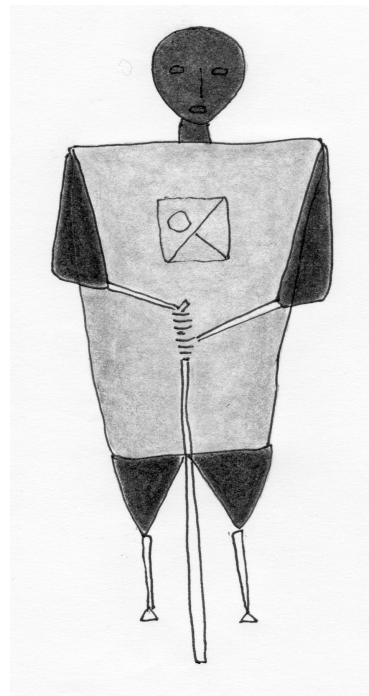
1. Wrist Bend
2. Underhand Press
3. Curl & Roll
4. Overhand Press

Modesty Maneuver

Bridge

1. Moving Qi/Balance
2. Span (the full extent)

Bow



Standing Position

SAM I

SAM I is the short version of Stick Action Meditation. It takes about 8 minutes and can be done when you are in a hurry, when you combine it with Pneuma Will Power Meditation, or when you do SAM twice a day, morning and evening. It's a good way to learn this program because all of the essential elements are here. If you don't have time for any other form of meditation I'm sure you can at least find time to do SAM I. If you don't have time to meditate after, then I recommend following this with being mindful while drinking your morning coffee or tea.

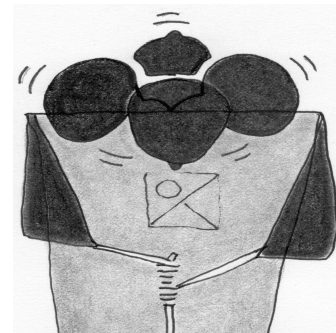
Remember, SAM requires that you pay attention to the detail of every motion and every breath you take. Breathing and action are coordinated and synchronized together. That's why this first exercise is called, "Breathing Gyration," to remind you that the number of breaths are as important as the positions themselves. Each movement and each position throughout SAM I and SAM II has a specific number of breaths associated with it. Yes, that makes it more difficult. And, yes, that requires you to pay closer attention to each moment as it unfolds. That's what it's all about.

Breathing Gyration (s) (20½ breaths)

Bowing at the beginning and end of Stick Action Meditation is done because it focuses the mind, it shows respect to yourself and what you are doing, and because every activity should have a beginning and an end.

Bow and breathe (1½ breaths). In the Standing Position, exhale as you bow, then inhale as you return upright. As you stand there, expand your abdomen and fill the bottom of your lungs with air. Next, fill your chest to maximum capacity. Then, top it off by lifting your shoulders gradually until they are as high as they will go – right under your ears. This breath should be taken all in one fluid motion. Your arms should be straight. With your lungs completely full of fresh air, hold your breath a second, then exhale slowly, letting out all of the "used" air as you lower your head until your chin rests on your chest.

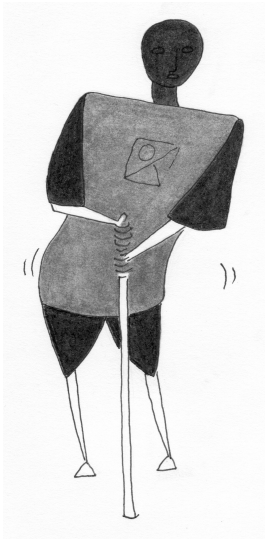
Rolling Head (8 breaths). Throughout exercise your head should feel as if it is a ball attached by a string to your shoulders, a ball that is *s l o w l y*, gently rotating around your upper torso. *Do not strain*. Your face, jaw, and neck muscles should be relaxed at all times. You may hear a lot of clicking or popping noise as the top of your spine is in motion. The sound you hear is the protest of decrepitude as it is being found out and invited to step aside.



Rolling Head

Inhale as you raise your head around your left shoulder. When your head is fully back, begin exhaling as it rolls around your right shoulder. Each time around is a complete breath. Do this slowly 3 more times for a total of 4 times. Reverse direction, inhaling as you start up the right shoulder and exhaling as you come down on the left. Four rotations done slowly as before (4+4=8 breaths).

Transition (1 breath). When you finish your chin will be on your chest. Raise your head and inhale deeply. Pause a second then exhale fully and push your pelvis forward toward the Stick.

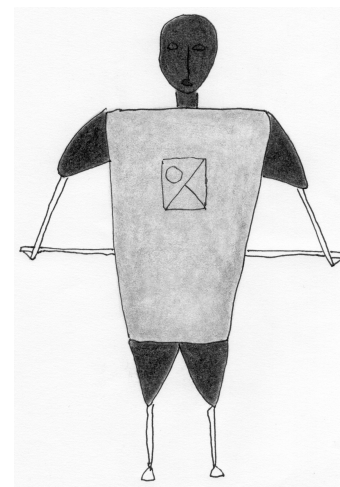
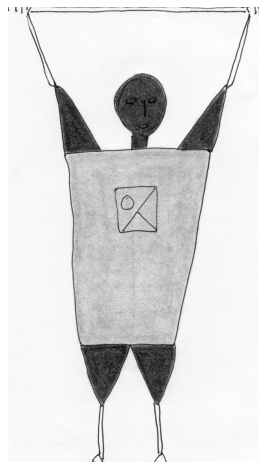


Rolling Pelvis

Rolling Pelvis (8 breaths). Inhale as you begin this rotation around the left. Your left hip should be angled left and your right shoulder should be angled right as you inhale around to the back. When you get to the back your buttocks should be back. Begin inhaling as you move around to the right, reversing the position of hip and shoulders. As you come around right, your hip should be pushed right and your left shoulder angled left. This is one rotation and should be done in a fluid motion without jerking or pause. Continue as before three times more for a total of four times. Then reverse direction, inhaling as you start around the right side, et cetera (4+4=8 breaths).

Sockets. Transition to Kayak (2 breaths). Inhale as you lift Stick up by sliding the left hand along the length of it.

Grasp each end as you bring it up horizontally out in front of you, then straight above your head. Exhale as you bring it down behind your back. Feel the stretch at your wrists, elbows, and shoulders. When the air is entirely exhaled, pause a moment, then inhale as you bring Stick straight back up above your head. Exhale as you bring it down in front, anchoring the *left end in* and against your left side with the *right end out* and cupped in your right hand. The right end of Stick should be gripped primarily by your index and middle finger.

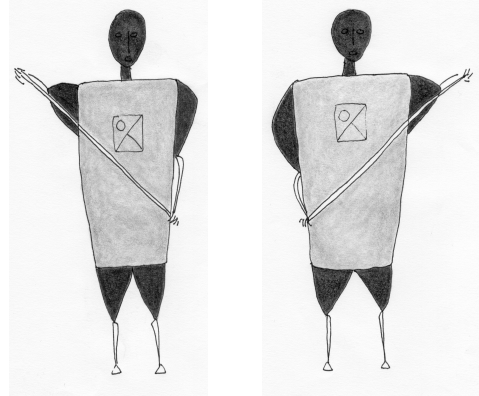


Sockets

Kayak (s) (24 breaths)

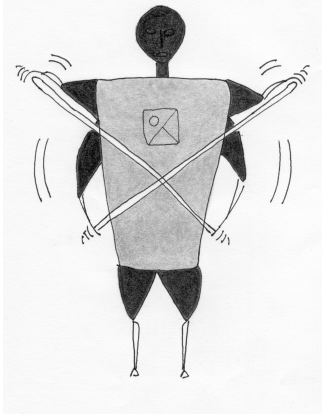
*Isometric strengthening takes place when you pit one muscle or group of muscles against another muscle or muscle group, **or** against an immovable object such as when you attempt to break a stout stick that is virtually unbreakable.*

Stretch (3 breaths). In this position your right arm will be stretched from your fingertips up into your armpit because your left hand is gripping the left end of Stick and pushing against the right end cupped in your right hand. Inhale as you reverse positions, then exhale as you anchor your right hand against your right side and your left hand gripping the end of Stick as before. Reverse again for a total of 4 times, alternating two times on each side.



Stretch >>

Row (4 breaths). Inhale as you bring the Stick up to a horizontal position against your chest. *You will breathe through your mouth while doing this exercise as you start rowing with your right hand. Begin exhaling as you snap the right end of Stick forward, kind of like throwing a ball. After the initial four counts the rest of the rowing is fluid until you come to the very end when you do the four snaps again. This loosens you elbow joints and makes a strong statement about your intentions and completion.*

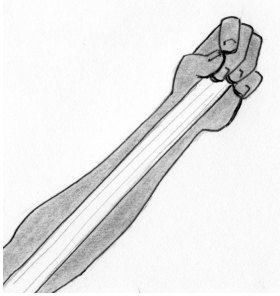


Row

NOTE: as you row, loosely grip the ends of Stick, releasing your grip and allowing it to move in your hands as you go. Remember when you row bending to the right or left both knees should remain straight, not locked but straight.

For the first four movements of the Stick puff out your breath, exhaling with each of 4 snaps: right, left, right, left. Inhale -, -, -, - (one complete inhalation). Exhale 2,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -. Exhale 3,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -. Exhale 4,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -.

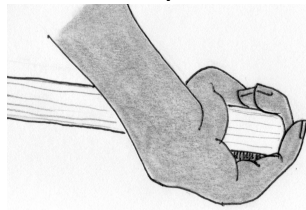
Infinity (4 breaths). When you have completed Row begin a slow, wide sweep of the arms so that the ends of Stick are forming the horizontal 8 of the symbol for infinity (∞). This will stretch out the arms, shoulders, chest, back, and waist. Remember to be slow, graceful and fluid with this motion to prevent straining any of the many muscles, ligaments, and joints. Exhale 1,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -. Exhale 2,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -. Exhale 3,2,3,4. Inhale -, -, -, -. SNAP the Exhale 4,2,3,4.



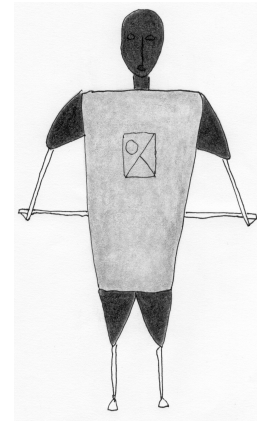
Stretch position detail

Stretch 2 (8 breaths). Inhale as you bring it down in front, this time anchoring the *right end in* and against your right side with the *left end out* and cupped in your left hand. Exhale and feel the stretch from your fingertips to your armpit. Continue holding and stretching in this position as you inhale and exhale a complete breath. Then, inhale as you reverse positions, then exhale as you anchor your left hand against your left side and your right hand grips the end of Stick as before. Remember to take the additional breath while holding and stretching in position. Reverse again for a total of 4 times, alternating two times on each side.

Sockets 2 (3 breaths). Inhale as you raise Stick horizontally above your head. Exhale as you bring it back down behind your back.



Hold in that position while you inhale and exhale for one complete breath. Then, inhale as you raise Stick back up above your head. Exhale as you bring it back down horizontally, moving your hands about 10 inches in from the ends. Your arms should be straight out in front of you, shoulder-width apart, as you bend your knees and ease into a flat-footed squat. Stick is straight out horizontally in front of you at eye level above the floor. You are now in position to do the Diogenes' Chair.



Sockets

Diogenes' Chair (19 breaths)

This position is called Diogenes' Chair in honor of that famous Cynic philosopher who was so obsessed with not having unnecessary possessions. The story is told that he used to have a gourd fastened to a cord around his neck to be used for dipping in water and drinking. One day he happened upon a boy drinking water out of his hand. It was said that Diogenes broke his gourd on the spot and followed the child's example for the rest of his days.

In Japan, I saw many country people sitting in a flat-footed squatting position by the side of the road or fields taking a break and chatting comfortably with each other for long periods of time. If Diogenes' had traveled in Asia I'm sure he too would have been content with such a "chair."

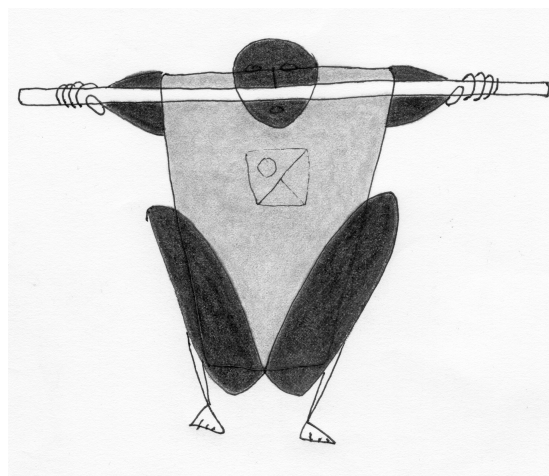
This is the single most important position in the SAM program for eliminating and preventing

lower back pain. It also includes isometric strengthening when you attempt to "break" your Stick. Throughout this exercise the working position is for your hands to be about 10 inches from the ends of the Stick, which is always horizontal, that is, parallel to the floor, except when in transition.

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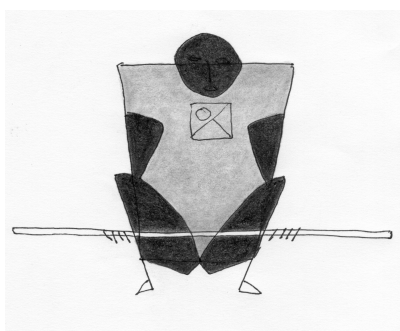
Isometric strengthening takes place when you pit one muscle or group of muscles against another muscle or muscle group, **or** against an immovable object such as when you attempt to break a stout stick that is virtually unbreakable. (s) = Stretching. (is) = isometric + stretching.

(s)**Wrist Bend** (4 breaths). You are now in a flat-footed squat, which means that your feet are flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, knees completely bent as in a seated position. With Stick held overhand, shoulder width apart, horizontal, and straight out in front of you, keep your arms parallel to the floor. As you inhale, bend your wrists down and toward you, pause, then exhale as you bring them back up and out straight. Wrists bent down, wrists straight, bent down, straight, bent down, straight, bent down, straight, for a total of four complete breaths while seated in Diogenes' Chair. This is all about wrist, forearm, and elbow stretching and flexibility.



Wrist bend

Flip the Stick (1 breath). Inhale as you flip Stick over by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it counterclockwise so that you're now holding it underhanded, hands back to shoulder width apart and close to you. Exhale as you place your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.



Underhand press

(is)**Underhand Press** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, hold the Stick firmly but without straining, maintain this position for four complete breaths as you continue to push the backs of your elbows against the inside of your calves and knees. There's just a little tension and strengthening going on here. Be comfortable.

Overhead Snap (1 breath) into the next position by inhaling while bringing the Stick smartly above and behind your head, then bringing it straight out in front of you as you exhale. You're still sitting in the flat-footed squat and will continue to do so for the length of Diogenes' Chair.

(s)**Curl & Roll** (4 breaths). As you bring Stick out roll it in your hand away from you out towards your fingers. As you inhale, role it in your hand back towards your wrists, then exhale

as you roll it back out again towards your fingers. Roll in when you inhale and roll out when you exhale for a total of four complete breaths.

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Flip the Stick (1 breath). As you inhale, flip Stick again by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it clockwise so that you're now holding it in an overhand in position. Again, your hands are moved back to grip Stick shoulder width apart inside your legs. Exhale as you position your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.

(is)**Overhand Press** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, grip the Stick with tension in your wrists and forearms as if you're going to break it. Maintain this tension for four complete breaths as you push your elbows firmly into the calves of your legs.

Pull Up (1 breath). Inhale as you place Stick's left end down on the floor centered in front of you in preparation to resume the Standing Position. Remember, the Standing Position is always an equilateral triangle between the end of Stick and the two big toes of your feet, shoulder width apart. Exhale as you rise, hand over hand, pulling yourself up.

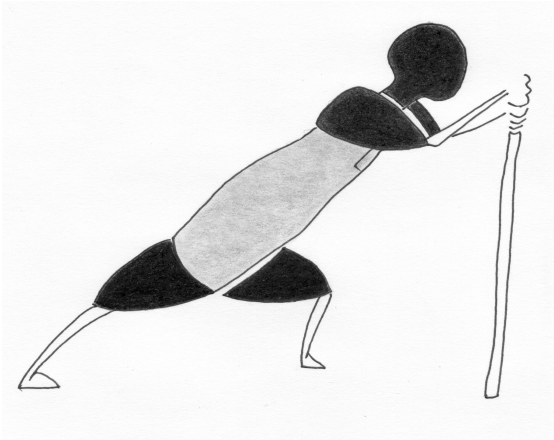
Modesty Maneuver (2 breaths). In the Standing Position, hold your Stick with one hand, then the other, making whatever adjustments are necessary – tucking in the shirt, hitching up the trousers, fussing with sleeves, et cetera – before beginning Bridge, the final position of Stick Action Meditation. When you're finished, bend down and place your right cheekbone into the crook between the end of your right thumb and the first knuckle of your hand holding Stick. (See Bridge, next.)

Bridge

(28½ breaths)

In Oriental medicine, Qi (pronounced 'chee') is the vital energy force of life. When you have a lot of Qi you have a lot of vitality. When your Qi is used up you die. When it becomes stagnant in one body part or another illness and disease can take hold. That's why we are always encouraged to move our Qi by Oriental medicine. Exercise moves Qi, some forms of exercise does it better than others. This first position is a particularly good way to move your Qi, and you should think of it as flowing through the body from your heels to the end of the Stick.

Getting into position (1 breath). With your right cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your right hand inhale as you extend your right foot straight back behind you as far as it will reach, big toe in the lead. The left knee should be bent to accommodate this motion. Set the toe on the floor and exhale as you push your body back so that your right foot is flat with your heel on the floor, stretching out the hamstrings of that leg. Arms are bent at the elbows and held out at a 45° angle. As you move into this position the left leg should be nearly bent at a 90° angle. Stick should be close to vertical, your head should be up, your back straight at an angle to conform to the position, and your eyes should be looking down at the end of Stick on the floor. This aids balance.

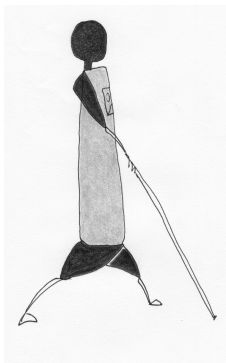


Moving Qi

(is)**Moving Qi** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale four complete breaths as you consciously think of your Qi moving from your heel to your hands. Push down on the Stick as hard as you are able without getting all trembly. You should be particularly aware of the stretch in your leg behind the knee through the calf and down the Achilles tendon.

Transition (1 breath). After your 4 breaths, raise your eyes to your hands at the top of Stick, then move upright and inhale as you pull Stick back to you at about a 45° angle and stand erect. Your head should then be up, chin up, looking straight ahead but slightly down your nose at the

world. Your hands will not be gripping Stick; it will only be resting on your thumbs. There's balance involved here.



Balance

(s)**Balance** (4 breaths). As you hold this position for four complete breaths tighten the muscles of the right buttocks. This will also continue to stretch the hamstring even further. This position is called 'balance' because it may be a little difficult to keep your balance at first. After a little experience you should be able to hold it without difficulty.

Transition (2 breaths). Inhale coming back to the Standing Position. Change hands so that the left hand is now *above* the right, and exhale as you place your left cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your left hand. Inhale as you thrust your left leg back and exhale as you get into position as before.

Repeat **Moving Qi and Balance** (9 breaths) as before with your left leg back and your right leg bent at the knee.

Transition to Bridge Span (1 breath). Inhale as you return to the Standing Position, then exhale as you extend Stick out 2½ to 3 feet in front of you, depending on your arm length.

(is)**Span—the full extent** (4 breaths). A span has several meanings. A bridge span is the distance between two supports. In our case the span is your arms and back supported by your legs and Stick. Span also means the full extent of something, such as the span of a lifetime.

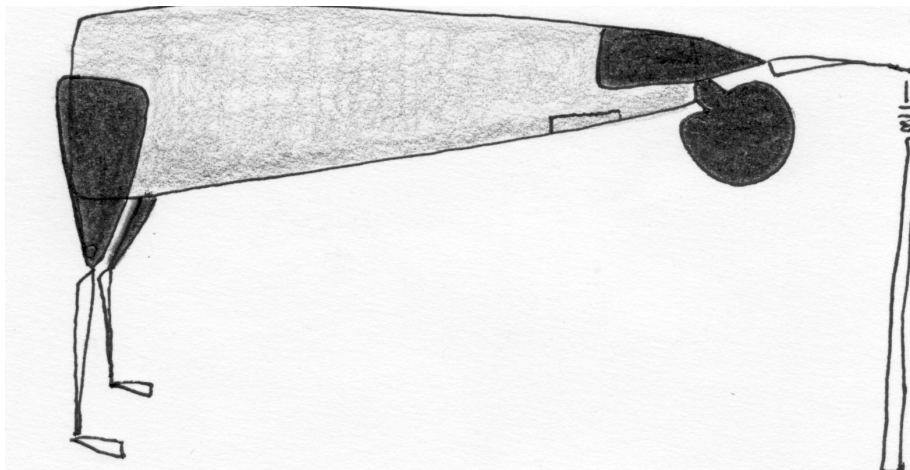
That is also appropriate in that you will be stretching the full extent from your heels to your hands in this position. NOTE: As seen from the side you should resemble a rectangle with your back and arms held straight but your head is hanging down.

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Hold this position for four slow, complete breaths; and, while you're doing it may be helpful to think about what you're doing. Like this:

- First breath: think about straightening your arms as you straighten them.
- Second breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your tail bone as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly forward.
- Third breath: think about stretching everything to your knees as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly further.
- Fourth breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your toes as you stretch by pushing Stick even further.

Transition to Bow (1 breath). Pause a moment, then inhale as you bring Stick back to its proper position. Exhale as you return upright. You are now in the Standing Position.



Span (the full extent)

Bow (1½ breaths). Inhale, then exhale as you bow. Pause, then inhale as you return to standing.

fin

Congratulations! You have just completed 92 breaths and SAM I.

* * * *

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Sockets

Kayak

1. Stretch
2. Row
3. Bend & Row
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5. Stretch 2

Sockets 2

Diogenes' Chair

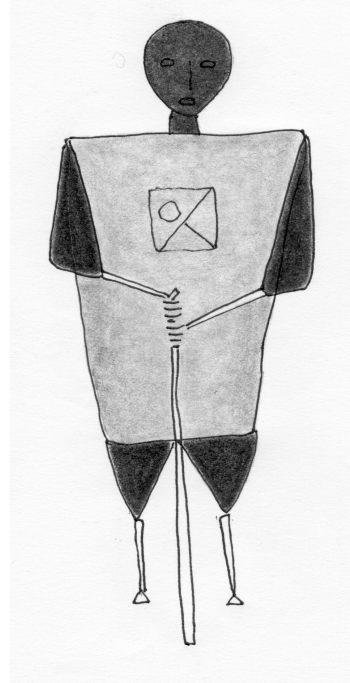
1. Wrist Bend
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Bow



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SAM II

SAM II is the longer and full version of Stick Action Meditation. It takes about 15 minutes and can be done in combination with Pneuma Will Power Meditation or when you only have time to do one form of meditation that day. If you don't have time for any other meditation I'm sure you can at least find time to do SAM II and follow up with being mindful while drinking your morning coffee or tea.

Remember, SAM requires that you pay attention to the detail of every motion and every breath you take. Breathing and action are coordinated and synchronized together. That's why this first exercise is called, "Breathing Gyration," to remind you that the number of breaths are as important as the positions themselves. Each movement and each position throughout SAM I and SAM II has a specific number of breathes associated with it. Yes, that makes it more difficult. And, yes, that requires you to pay closer attention to each moment as it unfolds. That's what mindfulness meditation is all about.

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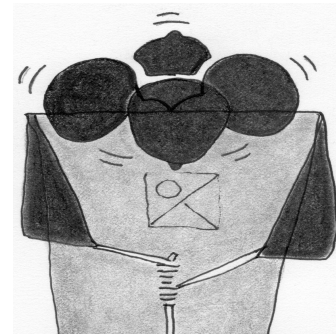
Breathing Gyration (s) (37½ Breaths)

Bowing at the beginning and end of Stick Action Meditation is done because it focuses the mind, it shows respect to yourself and what you are doing, and

because every activity should have a beginning and an end.

Bow and breathe (1½ breaths). In the Standing Position, exhale as you bow, then inhale as you return upright. As you stand there, expand your abdomen and fill the bottom of your lungs with air. Next, fill your chest to maximum capacity. Then, top it off by lifting your shoulders gradually until they are as high as they will go – right under your ears. This breath should be taken all in one fluid motion. Your arms should be straight. With your lungs completely full of fresh air, hold your breath a second, then exhale slowly, letting out all of the “used” air as you lower your head until your chin rests on your chest.

Rolling Head (8 breaths). Throughout exercise your head should feel as if it is a ball attached by a string to your shoulders, a ball that is *s l o w l y*, gently rotating around your upper torso. *Do not strain*. Your face, jaw, and neck muscles should be relaxed at all times. You may hear a lot of clicking or popping noise as the top of your spine is in motion. The sound you hear is the protest of decrepitude as it is being found out and invited to step aside.

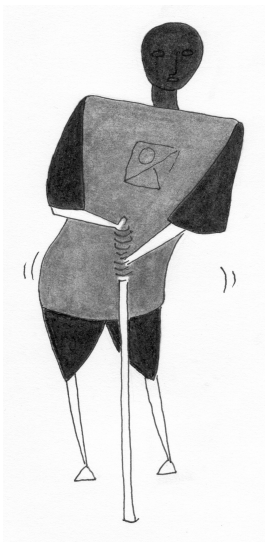


Rolling Head

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Inhale as you raise your head around your left shoulder. When your head is fully back, begin exhaling as it rolls around your right shoulder. Each time around is a complete breath. Do this slowly 3 more times for a total of 4 times. Reverse direction, inhaling as you start up the right shoulder and exhaling as you come down on the left. Four rotations done slowly as before (4+4=8 breaths).

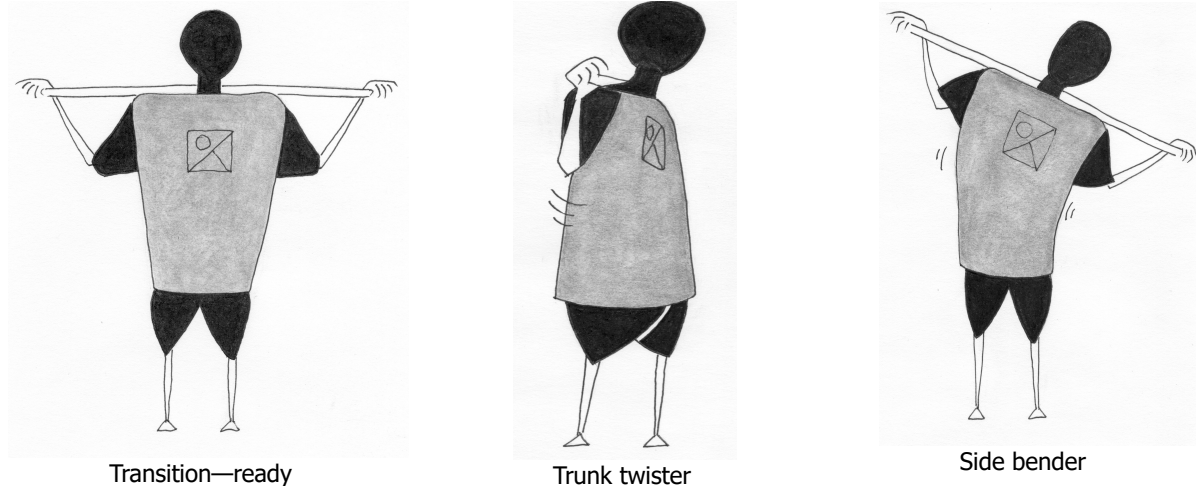
Transition (1 breath). When you finish your chin will be on your chest. Raise your head and inhale deeply. Pause a second then exhale fully and push your pelvis forward toward the Stick.



Rolling Pelvis (8 breaths). Inhale as you begin this rotation around the left. Your left hip should be angled left and your right shoulder should be angled right as you inhale around to the back. When you get to the back your buttocks should be back. Begin inhaling as you move around to the right, reversing the position of hip and shoulders. As you come around right, your hip should be pushed right and your left shoulder angled left. This is one rotation and should be done in a fluid motion without jerking or pause. Continue as before three times more for a total of four times. Then reverse direction, inhaling as you start around the right side, et cetera (4+4=8 breaths).

Sockets. Transition to Kayak (2 breaths). Inhale as you lift Stick up by sliding the left hand along the length of it.

Transition. (1 breath). Inhale as you lift Stick up by sliding the left hand along the length of it. Grasp each end as you bring it up horizontally out in front of you, then straight above your head. Exhale as you set the Stick on your shoulders.



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Trunk Twister short (4 breaths). This is really just a warm up for the long Trunk Twister. It's a *short* one because your breaths can be shallow and your movements brief but smooth. Your hands are now resting on the ends of Stick as you inhale and you twist to the right with your head following the twist and your eyes focused on your right thumb. Exhale as you return to center, then inhale as you twist left and exhale as you return to center again. Repeat for a total of 4 breaths.

Trunk Twister long (4 breaths). This is the *long* one because your breaths are deeper and you are holding to the count of four at each extremity, far right and far left. Again, you inhale and you twist to the right with your head following the twist and your eyes focused on your right thumb. When you have twisted as far as you can comfortably go, hold your breath and hold your position and count: 1,2,3,4. Exhale to center and inhale to the left extremity. To aid your memory it helps to count: 1,2,3,4; 2,2,3,4; 3,2,3,4; and 4,2,3,4. Repeat for a total of 4 breaths.

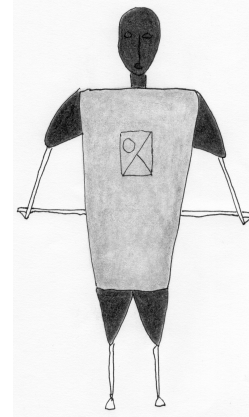
Transition. None

Side Bender short (4 breaths). Again, This is really just a warm up for the long Side Bender. It's a *short* one because your breaths can be shallow and your movements brief but smooth. Your hands are still resting on the ends of Stick as you inhale and bending to the right with your head and eyes straight ahead. Do not twist and bend. Straight bend as you inhale and exhale as you return upright. Repeat for a total of 4 breaths.

Side Bender long (4 breaths). This is the *long* one because your breaths are deeper and you are holding to the count of four at each extremity, far right and far left. Again, you inhale and bend to the right with your head with your head and eyes straight ahead. Do not twist and bend. When you have twisted as far as you can comfortably go, hold your breath and hold your

position and count: 1,2,3,4. Exhale to center and inhale to the left extremity. As above, To aid your memory it helps to count: 1,2,3,4; 2,2,3,4; 3,2,3,4; and 4,2,3,4. Repeat for a total of 4 breaths.

Sockets. Transition to Kayak (2 breaths). Inhale as you lift Stick off of your shoulders and straight above your head. Exhale as you bring it down behind your back. Feel the stretch at your wrists, elbows, and shoulders. When the air is entirely exhaled, pause a moment, then inhale as you bring Stick straight back up above your head. Exhale as you bring it down in front, anchoring the *left end in* and against your left side with the *right end out* and cupped in your right hand. The right end of Stick should be gripped primarily by your index and middle finger.

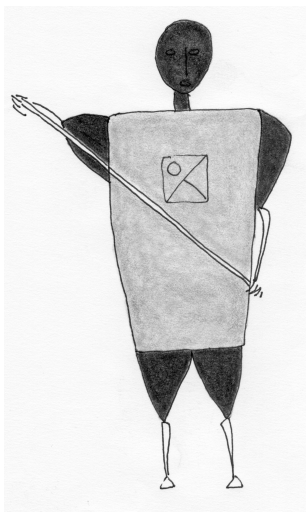


Sockets

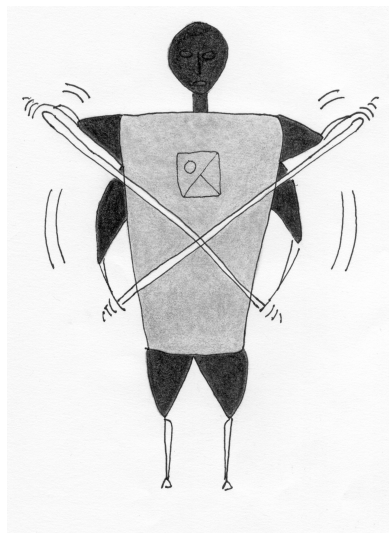
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Kayak (s) (30 breaths)

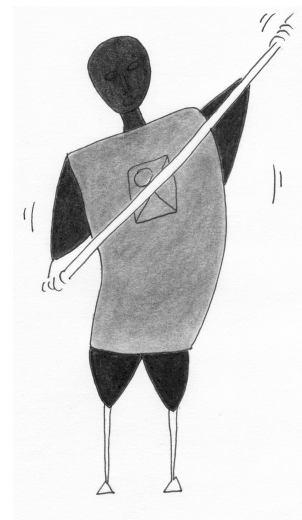
Stretch (3 breaths). In this position your right arm will be stretched from your fingertips up into your armpit because your left hand is gripping the left end of Stick and pushing against the right end cupped in your right hand. Inhale as you reverse positions, then exhale as you anchor your right hand against your right side and your left hand gripping the end of Stick as before. Reverse again for a total of 4 times, alternating two times on each side.



Stretch



Row



Bend & Row

Row (4 breaths). Inhale as you bring the Stick up to a horizontal position against your chest.

You will breathe through your mouth while doing this exercise as you start rowing with your right hand. Begin exhaling as you snap the right end of Stick forward, kind of like throwing a ball. After the initial four counts the rest of the rowing is fluid until you come to the very end when you do the four snaps again. This loosens you elbow joints and makes a strong statement about your intentions and completion.

NOTE: as you row, loosely grip the ends of Stick, releasing your grip and allowing it to move in your hands as you go. Remember when you row bending to the right or left both knees should remain straight, not locked but straight.

For the first four movements of the Stick puff out your breath, exhaling with each of 4 snaps: right, left, right, left. Inhale -,-,- (one complete inhalation). Exhale 2,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 3,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 4,2,3,4. Inhale -,- Begin bending right -,-.

Bend & Row Right (4 breaths). This is particularly excellent for stretching out the erector spinae group of muscles on the back. You will be doing the same fluid rowing motion as above except that the right sweep of the Stick will be more horizontal and cramped while the left

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sweep will be more vertical and open. Again, breath and count as before: Exhale 1,2,3,4,. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 2,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 3,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 4,2,3,4. Inhale -,- Begin bending left -,-.

Bend & Row Left (4 breaths). Exactly the same as Bend & Row Right, except that you are now feeling the erector spinae group of muscles on the right of the spine and the left sweep of the Stick will be more horizontal and cramped while the right sweep will be more vertical and open.

Infinity (4 breaths). As you complete Bend & Row (Left) straighten up and begin a slow, wide sweep of the arms so that the ends of Stick are forming the horizontal 8 of the symbol for infinity (∞). This will stretch out the arms, shoulders, chest, back, and waist. Remember to be slow, graceful and fluid with this motion to prevent straining any of the many muscles, ligaments, and joints. Exhale 1,2,3,4,. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 2,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Exhale 3,2,3,4. Inhale -,-,-. Return to the regular row movement as you SNAP the Exhale 4,2,3,4.

Stretch 2 (8 breaths). Inhale as you bring it down in front, this time anchoring the *right end in* and against your right side with the *left end out* and cupped in your left hand. Exhale and feel the stretch from your fingertips to your armpit. Continue holding and stretching in this position as you inhale and exhale a complete breath. Then, inhale as you reverse positions, then exhale as you anchor your left hand against your left side and your right hand grips the end of Stick as before. Remember to take the additional breath while holding and stretching in position. Reverse again for a total of 4 times, alternating two times on each side.

Sockets 2 (3 breaths). Inhale as you raise Stick horizontally above your head. Exhale as you bring it back down behind your back. Hold in that position while you inhale and exhale for one complete breath. Then, inhale as you raise Stick back up above your head. Exhale as you bring it back down horizontally, moving your hands about 10 inches in from the ends. Your arms

should be straight out in front of you, shoulder-width apart, as you bend your knees and ease into a flat-footed squat. Stick is straight out horizontally in front of you at eye level above the floor. You are now in position to do the Diogenes' Chair.

Diogenes' Chair (41 breaths)

This position is called Diogenes' Chair in honor of that famous Cynic philosopher who was so obsessed with not having unnecessary possessions. The story is told that he used to have a gourd fastened to a cord around his neck to be used for dipping in water and drinking. One day he happened upon a boy drinking water out of his hand. It was said that Diogenes broke his gourd on the spot and followed the child's example for the rest of his days. In Japan, I saw many country people sitting in a flat-footed squatting position by the side of the road or fields taking a break and chatting comfortably with each other for long periods of time. If Diogenes' had traveled in Asia I'm sure he too would have been content with such a "chair."

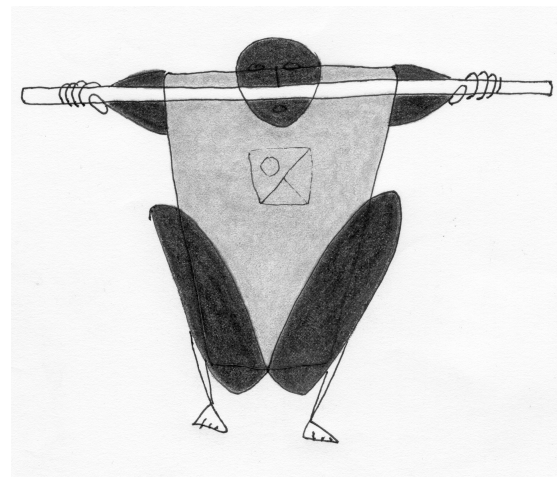
This is the single most important position in the SAM program for eliminating and preventing lower back pain. It also includes isometric strengthening when you attempt to "break" your

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Stick. Throughout this exercise the working position is for your hands to be about 10 inches from the ends of Stick, which is always horizontal, that is, parallel to the floor, except when in transition.

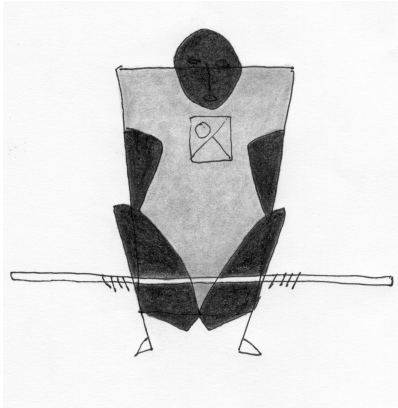
*Isometric strengthening takes place when you pit one muscle or group of muscles against another muscle or muscle group, **or** against an immovable object such as when you attempt to break a stout stick that is virtually unbreakable. (s) = Stretching. (is) = isometric + stretching.*

(s)**Wrist Bend** (4 breaths). You are now in a flat-footed squat, which means that your feet are flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, knees completely bent as in a seated position. With Stick held overhand, shoulder width apart, horizontal, and straight out in front of you, keep your arms parallel to the floor. As you inhale, bend your wrists down and toward you, pause, then exhale as you bring them back up and out straight. Wrists bent down, wrists straight, bent down, straight, bent down, straight, for a total of four complete breaths while seated in Diogenes' Chair. This is all about wrist, forearm, and elbow stretching and flexibility.



Wrist bend

Flip the Stick (1 breath). Inhale as you flip Stick over by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it counterclockwise so that you're now holding it underhanded, hands back to shoulder width apart and close to you. Exhale as you place your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.



Underhand press

(is)**Underhand Press** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, hold the Stick firmly but without straining, maintain this position for four complete breaths as you continue to push the backs of your elbows against the inside of your calves and knees. There's just a little tension and strengthening going on here. Be comfortable.

Overhead Snap (1 breath) into the next position by inhaling while bringing the Stick smartly above and behind your head, then bringing it straight out in front of you as you exhale. You're still sitting in the flat-footed squat and will continue to do so for the length of Diogenes' Chair.

(s)**Curl & Roll** (4 breaths). As you bring Stick out roll it in your hand away from you out towards your fingers. As you inhale, roll it in your hand back towards your wrists, then exhale as you roll it back out again towards your fingers. Roll in when you inhale and roll out when you exhale for a total of four complete breaths.

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Flip the Stick (1 breath). As you inhale, flip Stick again by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it clockwise so that you're now holding it in an overhand in position. Again, your hands are moved back to grip Stick shoulder width apart inside your legs. Exhale as you position your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.

(is)**Overhand Press** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, grip the Stick with tension in your wrists and forearms as if you're going to break it. Maintain this tension for four complete breaths as you push your elbows firmly into the calves of your legs.

Transition, no breath. *This is the only transition movement that is done while actually completing the exhalation of your fourth breath.* As you exhale on the fourth breath, briefly drop your hands with the Stick to touch the floor, then immediately push them out horizontally and straight in front of you as you return to the Wrist Bend action.

(s)**Wrist Bend** (4 breaths). You are now in a flat-footed squat, which means that your feet are flat on the floor, shoulder width apart, knees completely bent as in a seated position. With Stick held overhand, shoulder width apart, horizontal, and straight out in front of you, keep your arms parallel to the floor. As you inhale, bend your wrists down and toward you, pause, then exhale as you bring them back up and out straight. Wrists bent down, wrists straight, bent down, straight, bent down, straight, for a total of four complete breaths while seated in Diogenes' Chair. This is all about wrist, forearm, and elbow stretching and flexibility.

Flip the Stick (1 breath). Inhale as you flip Stick over by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it counterclockwise so that you're now holding it underhanded, hands back to shoulder width apart and close to you. Exhale as you place your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.

(i)**Underhand Break** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, hold the Stick hard as if you were going to break it in the middle. Your wrists will be stressed in this position. Pay attention and don't put too much strain on them until you have built up to it. You will no longer be pushing the backs of your elbows with any force against the inside of your calves and knees. Your entire focus will be on the effort on the Stick.

Overhead Snap (1 breath) into the next position by inhaling while bringing the Stick smartly above and behind your head, then bringing it straight out in front of you as you exhale. You're still sitting in the flat-footed squat and will continue to do so for the length of Diogenes' Chair.

(s)**Curl & Roll** (4 breaths). As you bring Stick out roll it in your hand away from you out towards your fingers. As you inhale, role it in your hand back towards your wrists, then exhale as you roll it back out again towards your fingers. Roll in when you inhale and roll out when you exhale for a total of four complete breaths.

Flip the Stick (1 breath). As you inhale, flip Stick again by placing your left hand about in the middle and turning it clockwise so that you're now holding it in an overhand in position. Again, your hands are moved back to grip Stick shoulder width apart inside your legs.

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Exhale as you position your arms inside your legs with the back of your arms pushed against your calves and knees.

(i)**Overhand Break** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale slowly 4 times. While in this position, hold the Stick hard as if you were going to break it in the middle. Your wrists will be stressed in this position. Pay attention and don't put too much strain on them until you have built up to it. You will no longer be pushing the backs of your elbows with any force against the inside of your calves and knees. Your entire focus will be on the effort on the Stick. At the end of this position you have concluded Diogenes' Chair and are ready to stand upright.

Pull Up (1 breath). Inhale as you place Stick's left end down on the floor centered in front of you in preparation to resume the Standing Position. Remember, the Standing Position is always an equilateral triangle between the end of Stick and the two big toes of your feet, shoulder width apart. Exhale as you rise, hand over hand, pulling yourself up.

Modesty Maneuver (2 breaths). In the Standing Position, hold your Stick with one hand, then the other, making whatever adjustments are necessary – tucking in the shirt, hitching up the trousers, fussing with sleeves, et cetera – before beginning Bridge, the final position of Stick Action Meditation. When you're finished, bend down and place your right cheekbone into the crook between the end of your right thumb and the first knuckle of your hand holding Stick. (See Bridge, next.)

Bridge

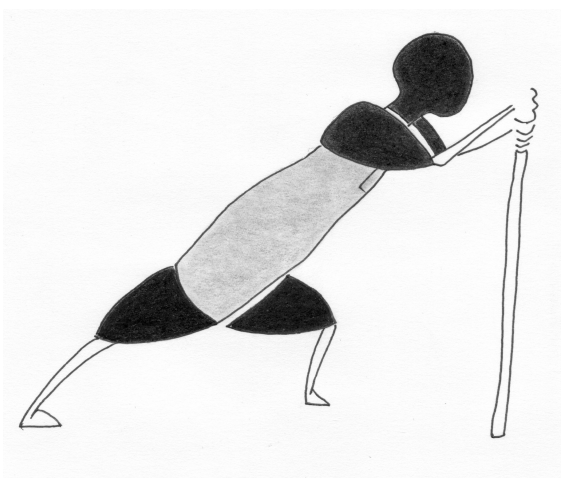
(55½ breaths)

In Oriental medicine, Qi (pronounced 'chee') is the vital energy force of life. When you have a

lot of Qi you have a lot of vitality. When your Qi is used up you die. When it becomes stagnant in one body part or another illness and disease can take hold. That's why we are always encouraged to move our Qi by Oriental medicine. Exercise moves Qi, some forms of exercise does it better than others. This first position is a particularly good way to move your Qi, and you should think of it as flowing through the body from your heels to the end of the Stick.

Getting into position (1 breath). With your right cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your right hand inhale as you extend your right foot straight back behind you as far as it will reach, big toe in the lead. The left knee should be bent to accommodate this motion. Set the toe on the floor and exhale as you push your body back so that your right foot is flat with your heel on the floor, stretching out the hamstrings of that leg. Arms are bent at the elbows and held out at a 45° angle. As you move into this position the left leg should be nearly bent at a 90° angle. Stick should be close to vertical, your head should be up, your back straight at an angle to conform to the position, and your eyes should be looking down at the end of Stick on the floor. This aids balance.

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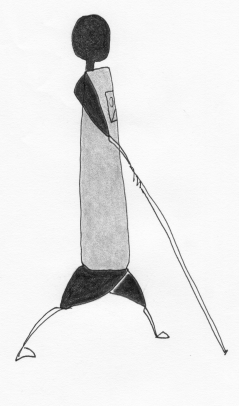


Moving Qi

(is) **Moving Qi** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale four complete breaths as you consciously think of your Qi moving from your heel to your hands. Push down on the Stick as hard as you are able without getting all trembly. You should be particularly aware of the stretch in your leg behind the knee through the calf and down the Achilles tendon.

Transition (1 breath). After your 4 breaths, raise your eyes to your hands at the top of Stick, then move upright and inhale as you pull Stick back to you at about a 45° angle and stand erect. Your head should then be up, chin up, looking straight ahead but slightly down your nose at the

world. Your hands will not be gripping Stick; it will only be resting on your thumbs. There's balance involved here.

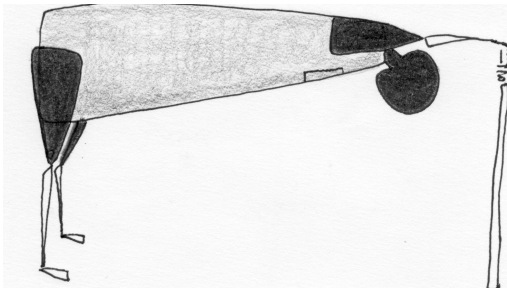


(s)**Balance** (4 breaths). As you hold this position for four complete breaths tighten the muscles of the right buttocks. This will also continue to stretch the hamstring even further. This position is called 'balance' because it may be a little difficult to keep your balance at first. After a little experience you should be able to hold it without difficulty.

Transition (2 breaths). Inhale coming back to the Standing Position. Change hands so that the left hand is now *above* the right, and exhale as you place your left cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your left hand. Inhale as you thrust your left leg back and exhale as you get into position as before.

Repeat **Moving Qi and Balance** (9 breaths) as before with your left leg back and your right leg bent at the knee.

Transition to Bridge Span (1 breath). Inhale as you return to the Standing Position, then exhale as you extend Stick out 2½ to 3 feet in front of you, depending on your arm length.



Span (the full extent)

(is)**Span—the full extent** (4 breaths). A span has several meanings. A bridge span is the distance between two supports. In our case the span is your arms and back supported by your legs and Stick. Span also means the full extent of something, such as the span of a lifetime. That is also appropriate in that you will be stretching the full extent from your heels to your hands in this position.

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NOTE: As seen from the side you should resemble a rectangle with your back and arms held straight but your head is hanging down. Hold this position for four slow, complete breaths; and, while you're doing it may be helpful to think about what you're doing. Like this:

- First breath: think about straightening your arms as you straighten them.
- Second breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your tail bone as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly forward.
- Third breath: think about stretching everything to your knees as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly further.
- Fourth breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your toes as you stretch by pushing Stick even further.

Transition to Standing position (2 breaths). Inhale as you Bring Stick back to its original position, then exhale as you place your left cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your left hand. Inhale as you thrust your left leg back in the same manner as you did before, and exhale as you move in position to repeat the Moving Qi/Balance action in the reverse order.

(is)**Moving Qi** (4 breaths). Inhale and exhale four complete breaths as you consciously think of your Qi moving from your heel to your hands. Push down on the Stick as hard as you are able without getting all trembly. This time you should be less aware of the stretch in your leg and

more aware of moving qi.

Transition (1 breath). After your 4 breaths, raise your eyes to your hands at the top of Stick, then move upright and inhale as you pull Stick back to you at about a 45° angle and stand erect. Your head should then be up, chin up, looking straight ahead but slightly down your nose at the world. Remember, your hands will not be gripping Stick; it will only be resting on your thumbs.

(s)**Balance** (4 breaths). As you hold this position for four complete breaths again tighten the muscles of the buttocks. This will also continue to stretch the hamstring even further.

Transition (2 breaths). Inhale coming back to the Standing Position. Change hands so that once again the right hand is *above* the left, and exhale as you place your right cheek bone in the crook of the thumb of your right hand. Inhale as you thrust your right leg back and exhale as you get into position as before.

Repeat **Moving Qi and Balance** (9 breaths) as before with your right leg back and your left leg bent at the knee.

Transition to Bridge Span (1 breath). Inhale as you return to the Standing Position, then exhale as you extend Stick out 2½ to 3 feet in front of you, depending on your arm length.

(is)**Span** (4 breaths). Again, hold this position for four slow, complete breaths; and, while you're doing it remember to think about what you're doing:

- First breath: think about straightening your arms as you straighten them.
- Second breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your tail bone as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly forward.

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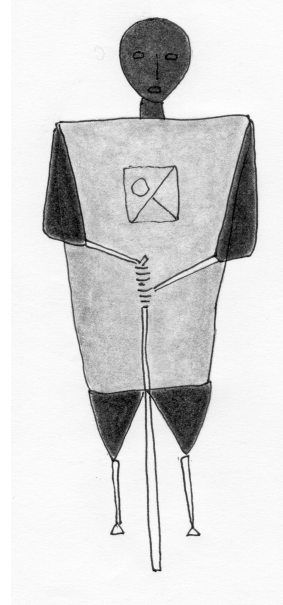
- Third breath: think about stretching everything to your knees as you stretch by pushing Stick slightly further.
- Fourth breath: think about stretching everything from your head to your toes as you stretch by pushing Stick even further.

Transition to Bow (1 breath). Pause a moment, then inhale as you bring Stick back to its proper position. Exhale as you return upright. You are now in the Standing Position.

Bow (1½ breaths). Inhale, then exhale as you bow. Pause, then inhale as you return to standing.

fin

Congratulations! You have just breathed 164
times and completed SAM II.



* * * *

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SAM III: Traveling SAM

[111 Breaths]

INTRODUCTION

Many years ago I worked as a Correctional Deputy at an Honor Camp where I stayed overnight when I was on duty. My room in the staff quarters was too small to accommodate the action of SAM, and I really missed my daily routine. So, I developed Traveling SAM (T-SAM), a program that can be done anywhere, even in the most cramped quarters – and, without a Stick.

When that job ended, so did Traveling SAM. About 15 years later I had to spend some time in Hawaii, and I didn't want to take my Stick and deal with security at the airport, coming and going, so I left it home. Once again I really missed the stretching, toning, and mindfulness. So, every morning in the islands I worked through what I remembered from my Honor Camp days.

Today, it's complete and polished with experience. It takes about 10-12 minutes, just enough to get ready for an active day wherever you are.

*

- I. BREATHING ROTATION (27 Breaths): Only the Rolling Arms movement is new; the rest is done the same as with the Stick, except your hands are on your hips, feet shoulder-width apart.
 1. Deep breath with hands on hips: 1
 2. Rolling Head: 4/4
 - a) transition from Head to Pelvis: inhale – head up; exhale – pelvis forward: 1
 3. Rolling Pelvis: 4/4
 - a) transition from Pelvis to Arms: inhale – pelvis back; exhale – arms up: 1
 4. Rolling Arms (new): 4/4

Rolling Arms: upon completion of Rolling Pelvis immediately lift your arms straight out at the sides, hands flat, fingers together, hands and arms shoulder high and parallel to the floor. Begin rotating arms in a circle backward. For each 4 rotations you inhale, then 4 rotations while exhaling. That's one complete breath, a total of 8 rotations. With 4 complete breaths, then, you will do a total of 32 rotations in the backward motion.

Count this way: As you inhale, begin counting out loud or to yourself: 1, 2, 3, 4 – each count is a rotation of your arms. As you exhale, don't count, just puff out some of the air with each rotation – puff, puff, puff, puff. That's one complete breath. Start again. This time keep track by starting with 2, as in: inhale: 2, 2, 3, 4; exhale: puff, puff, puff, puff. Inhale: 3, 2, 3, 4; exhale: puff, puff, puff, puff. Inhale: 4, 2, 3, 4; exhale: puff, puff, puff, puff.

Now reverse and do 4 complete breaths (32 rotations) in the forward motion. NOTE: as you look out at your hands rotating in a circle, the circle itself will be between 1 and 2 feet in diameter depending on how vigorous you want to do this exercise. The larger the circle, the more the effort.

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- II. SHADOWBOXER (25 Breaths): Without a Stick the Shadowboxer becomes a different motion from the Kayak and requires a new set of skills. It's not difficult once mastered and is arguably as useful as Kayak in stretching and toning.
 1. Bow Back One: 4
 2. Jab/Haymaker One: 4/4
 3. Jab/Haymaker Two: 4/4
 4. Bow Back Two: 4

Bow Back One: When you finish Rolling Arms, inhale as you bring your arms down with your hands clasped behind your back. Try to keep your wrists straight, not bent. Exhale as you push

your clasped hands a few inches away from your back and point your chin straight up. Keep pushing your clasped hands gently back and bow your back a little (depending upon how limber you are), and breathe 3 more complete breaths – for a total of 4 breaths.

Jab/Haymaker One: Then, inhale as you bring your arms up, fists clenched in a boxing position, knees slightly bent. Exhale as you **Jab** 4 times straight to your imaginary opponent's head, alternating right then left (or, left then right if you're left-handed). Continue jabbing 4 times as you inhale. A total of 8 jabs is 1 breath. Continue jabbing for a total of 4 breaths, or 32 jabs. The **Haymaker** is done the same way, except you do a diagonal uppercut straight to your imaginary opponent's chin. NOTE: You don't actually have to imagine an opponent unless you want to :)

Count this way: The counting system here is similar to what you just learned in Rolling Arms, only this time you begin as you exhale. Begin counting out loud or to yourself as you jab: 1, 2, 3, 4 – jabbing with each count. As you inhale, don't count, just suck in a little air with each jab * * * *. (Sorry about the asterisks. I don't know how to spell the sound you make when you suck in air.) That's one complete breath. Start again. This time keep track by starting with 2, as in: exhale: 2, 2, 3, 4; inhale: * * * *. Exhale: 3, 2, 3, 4; inhale: * * * *. Exhale: 4, 2, 3, 4; inhale: * * * *. Now go immediately into the Haymaker, using the same breathing and counting method.

Jab/Haymaker Two: Simply return to jabbing after completing the Haymaker series. When I first began this exercise I only went through one set, but it soon felt inadequate, so I repeated it. If you've had enough after Jab/Haymaker One, stop there and transition to Bow Back Two.

Bow Back Two: When you finish the second Haymaker, Exhale as you bring your arms down to your sides, then inhale as you clasp your hands clasped behind your back and stick your chin up. Try to keep your wrists straight, not bent. Exhale as you push your clasped hands away from your back and with your chin up slightly bow your back. Three more breaths. This is exactly the same as One. (BTW, there is an extra breath in Shadowboxer, one more than you see listed. Can you tell how I got it?)

- III. DIOGENES' CHAIR (33 Breaths): Inhale as you bring your hands back around and up, straight out in front of you, hands flat, fingers together, hands and arms shoulder high, and parallel to the floor. Then, exhale as you go down into a flat-footed squat position. 1
1. Wrist Bend—wall: 4
 2. Palm Press: 4
 3. Wrist Bend—fist: 4
 4. Palm Press: 4
- (Repeat: 16)

Wrist Bend—wall: As you squat flat-footed with your arms straight out in front of you, parallel

to the floor move your hands up as if you were pushing against an imaginary wall in front of you. With each breath push the wall a little forward. This is a great lower back stretching position. Four breaths.

Palm Press. You don't really need a transition breath, just bring your arms back with your elbows pressed against your shins, palms of hands pressing directly against each other. This is true isometric exercise and is as strengthening as you wish to make it by how hard you press your palms together. Four breaths.

Wrist Bend—fist: Again, don't bother with a transition breath, just put your arms out straight in front of you. Only this time. Instead of bending at the wrist up, bend down and make a fist. Hold it for four breaths, then go back to Palm Press as before.

Repeat as many times as you want or need. I do one repetition. Inhale as you stand and adjust your clothing as needed in the Modesty Maneuver.

Modesty Maneuver: You already know how to do this. 2 breaths

- IV. HAMSTRING & SARTORIUS (24 Breaths): This is far and away the most difficult position for balance that you will encounter in Traveling SAM. It will take a little practice, but it's worth it. Take one complete breath in transitioning from MM into the first position. 1
1. Balance Right: 4/4
 - a) transition: 1
 2. Balance Left: 4/4
 - a) transition: 1
 3. Toes: 4
 4. Stand and Breathe: 1
- (Repeat, if desired)

Balance Right: Inhale as you place your hands on your hips and shift your weight to your left leg. Exhale as you step straight back with your right foot, 2-3 feet (whatever comfort and balance will allow). Bend your left knee and lean forward as you lower your torso until you feel the stretch in the hamstrings at the back of your legs. Hold it for 4 breaths, then straighten your left leg and lean slightly backward, tightening the right cheek of your buttocks. Hold for 4 breaths.

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Balance Left: Inhale as you return your right leg and shift your weight to that leg as you exhale and step straight back with your left foot, 2-3 feet (again, whatever comfort and balance will allow). Bend your right knee and lean forward as you lower your torso until you feel the stretch in your hamstrings. Hold it for 4 breaths, then straighten your right leg and lean slightly backward, tightening the left cheek of your buttocks. Hold for 4 breaths.

Toes: Inhale as you return your left leg, then exhale as you go into a toe-touching position. Hold it for 4 breaths, stretching down a little with each breath if you can. Don't worry about actually touching your toes. Don't even think of it as a goal. Just think about the stretching action and how you're taking care of your body, mind, and health.

Fin

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SAM IV: Ultimate SAM

Finally, if you want to focus on increasing both strength *and* serenity, a true *meditation workout*, then increase SAM II by doubling, tripling, or quadrupling it. That's 30, 45, or 60 minutes of Stick Action Meditation, and if you don't get any other exercise today one hour of SAM II is all you will need. When I do this for an hour, that's four successive periods of Action Meditation, and it is truly an extraordinary for both mind and body. Afterwards, I feel tired but strong and serene. When doing SAM for one hour you become much more aware of the meditation aspect of Stick Action Meditation. This is true action meditation and the ultimate SAM.

AND, one hour of SAM IV is the equivalent of *at least* a one-hour workout at the gym – but without all the fees, equipment, waiting, travel time, and physical stress. Personally, I believe SAM IV is better for many of us than lifting weights, and it can replace any form of meditation you will likely encounter. Even better, because in this final step you enter a whole new world of strengthening *and* meditation, and the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Remember, always live in agreement with nature. Some days your inclination will be to do SAM IV lightly with softer, more graceful movements. Other days you will feel more vigorous and dynamic and your movements will be hard and swift. That's exactly as it should be. In fact, some days you may start in one mode and change into another. Listen to what your body wants to do. We are not machines. I do not agree with forcing your body to be something it doesn't want to be. No matter how you do SAM IV it will be an excellent experience and give your body just what it needs on the day that you need it.

Oak or Steel

If you are the kind of person who needs a harder physical challenge, then you may want to switch from oak to steel. This is body building and aerobic conditioning SAM. If you get regular aerobic exercise of any kind, such as walking or jogging, then when you combine that with SAM I or II you are optimally caring for your physical and psychological health and well-being. You don't have to switch from oak to steel, but there are those who are more physical by nature, and your bodies may be craving a more strengthening effort in your program. You don't need to join a gym. Just do what you already know how to do with steel.

With Steel SAM we retire our oak Stick altogether and increase the weight in our workout. There's only so much you can do with an oak Stick, because it is only going to be as heavy as it is – not very. I recommend a 5 or 8-pound capped workout bar. They go by several names, but they are weighted steel workout bars, 48-54 inches in length, that have a rubber cap on the end instead of graduated weights. They closely resemble the Stick you have been using except you may find it a bit awkward at first. Stay with it; you'll get used to it.

As of this writing you can purchase a 5-pound Workout Bar through Walmart (see www.walmart.com) Internet sales. They don't carry them in the stores. BUT, that's OK. Shipping is free and it's fast if you pick it up at a Walmart near you. That's what I did, and the 5 and 8-pound Workout Bars are what I own and use. I prefer the 5-pound bar, but then I'm 67 years old of this writing, and that's more than enough for me.

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As of this writing, you can get 5 pounder for under \$20 USD. I don't get a commission from either Walmart or the Workout Bar manufacturer, but it is convenient if you live any where near one a Walmart to get one and try it to see if you like it. I think there are better ones on the market. I've seen some that cost twice as much and look really good, but you're going to pay for shipping, which will make it even more expensive again, which is OK *after* you know this is for you.

You can do either SAM I or SAM II with the capped workout bar, and you will be amazed at what a great workout it is for both aerobic conditioning and muscle building. But, as stated above, pay attention to your physical condition, live in agreement with nature, and use caution when pushing the envelope.

CAUTION: Use care when first beginning these movements so as not to strain muscles and ligaments that may not be used to such action. The exhilaration you feel in first testing your strength may cause you to ignore good sense. Take it easy to begin and let your body tell you when to increase the effort.

Fin