

FINGER LABYRINTH

A labyrinth is a path that helps people focus and has been used by many cultures throughout history. A labyrinth has a single, winding path from the outside to the center. Labyrinths can be used as metaphors for life with many twists and turns, but no dead ends.

Using a finger labyrinth is a wonderful form of meditation for people who may not enjoy sitting still for traditional meditation. The combination of movement (tracing the path with your finger) with introspection is an integrative activity to connect the body and mind.

You can download and print finger labyrinths from your computer. It may be fun to trace the pattern in glue and attach some yarn so that your labyrinth has a 3-D path. You could also use puffy paint. You can also draw your own labyrinth or create one out of clay.



How to use a Finger Labyrinth

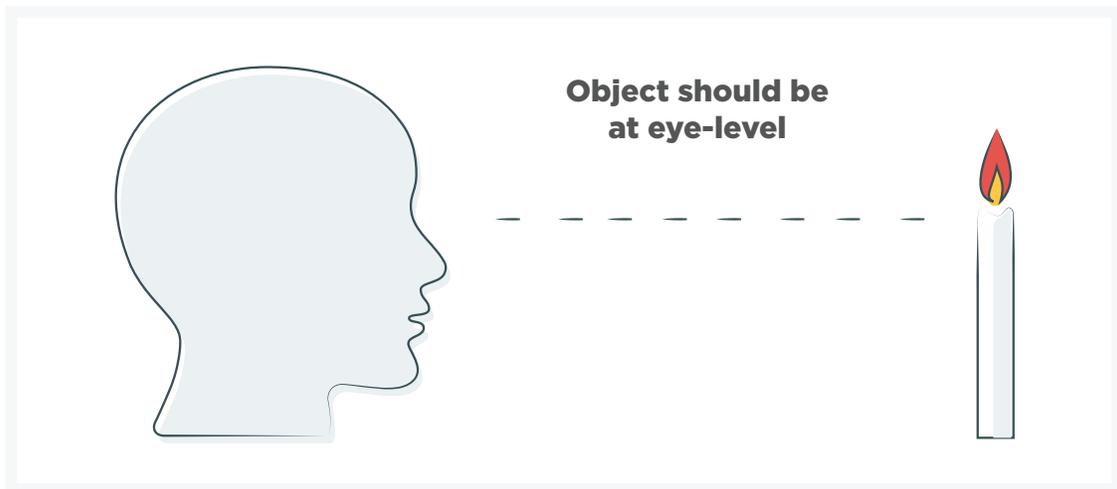
- 1 Choose a “walking finger.” This can be any finger!
- 2 Place your walking finger at the entrance of the labyrinth.
- 3 Slowly trace the path of the labyrinth to the center, and take a deep breath.
- 4 At the center you may think of something you’re grateful for or about someone you love, then trace your way back to the beginning.
- 5 You can trace the labyrinth around and around as many times as you like. See how slow you can go and notice the texture and design of the labyrinth. You can even smile or giggle quietly as you go!
- 6 Keep challenging yourself to take deep breaths all the way into your belly as you trace the path. You know you’re taking a deep breath when your belly puffs up nice and big!
- 7 You can even try closing your eyes and tracing the path, breathing deeply or humming your favorite song.

Trace your “walking finger” through the labyrinth below.



TRATAK (OBJECT MEDITATION)

Tratak is a Sanskrit word that means “to look” or “to gaze.” The practice of trataka boosts concentration and memory and promotes strong, healthy eyes. While the traditional tool used for this meditation is the flame of a candle, any object will work. If you’d like to try a candle, look for one that is battery operated. If your object is a light source, practice just one time before moving on to something else to give your eyes a rest.



How to Practice Tratak

- 1 Sit up tall with your legs crossed.
- 2 Set the object of choice two feet in front of you at eye-level.
- 3 Close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths.
- 4 Then open your eyes wide and stare at the object.
- 5 Try not to blink.
- 6 When you need to, gently close your eyes and look for the “after-image” of the object in your mind’s eye.
- 7 Continue to watch the “after-image” until it disappears.
- 8 Experiment with which objects show up the best after you close your eyes.