

Overview: Leaves on a Stream Exercise

During the leaves on a stream exercise you'll visualize yourself resting near a stream. Whenever thoughts enter your mind, you will imagine placing them on a leaf, and watching as they float away. Instead of seeing the world from "inside" your thoughts, you will take a step back and view them floating on top of a leaf. By doing this, you will gain a new perspective on your thoughts and feelings, reducing their power.

Getting Started

Find a quiet place, free of distractions	Sit or lie down in a comfortable position.	Close your eyes. Set your mind at ease.	Start taking slow, deep breaths.
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Instructions

Visualize

Imagine you are resting by the side of a stream. This scene can look however you imagine. Use all your senses while imagining the stream and its surroundings. The sound of the water and other ambiance, the physical sensations, and anything else that comes to mind.

Meditate

Your objective during this exercise is simply to keep your focus on the stream. When distractions enter your mind, such as thoughts or feelings, take a moment to notice them without judgment. For example, if you are distracted by daily tasks, admit and acknowledge to yourself: "I am thinking about my daily task list."

Manage Your Thoughts

After taking a moment to observe a thought or feeling, bring your attention back to the stream. Place your thought upon a leaf. You might imagine placing the thought on the leaf with your fingers or attaching it in some other way. Place the leaf in the water and watch it float down the stream until it disappears in the distance.

Practice

Continue visualizing the stream, simply observing and releasing any thoughts that enter your mind onto a leaf. There is nothing else you need to do. You may set a timer for 10 minutes to know when practice is finished for the day.

Notes

- Treat all of your thoughts and feelings the same, whether comfortable, uncomfortable, or neutral. The idea is to become aware of your experience—not to change or improve it.
- With regular practice, the leaves on a stream exercise will become easier, and its positive effects more powerful.