Five Jhāna Factors
Insight Meditation South Bay
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Key Ideas

- Also called Intensifying Factors, Five Factors of Absorption, or Strength-givers
- They intensify attention to enable absorption in jhāna.
- These five factors arise prior to the attainment of jhāna and characterize the first absorption.
- Progression through the four jhāna states occurs as these jhāna factors are first strongly developed, and then systematically relinquished. This is a process of mental refinement, whereby a meditator is able to attain states of concentration by simply adverting to the object of meditation and maintaining a state of purified equanimity and balance.
- Each jhāna state is distinguished by a particular cluster of jhāna factors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors in English</th>
<th>Factors in Pali</th>
<th>Hindrances it overcomes</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied thought, initial attention</td>
<td>Vitakka</td>
<td>Sloth and torpor</td>
<td>To apply the mind to its object with special clarity</td>
<td>• Application of the mind to its object, directing attention, confronting the object.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustained thought, examination</td>
<td>Vicāra</td>
<td>Doubt</td>
<td>To keep associated mental factors occupied with the object</td>
<td>• The anchoring of the mind on the object, maintaining continuous pressure on the object, examining and discerning its unique qualities.</td>
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| Rapture, delight, pleasure | Pīti | Aversion | To refresh and invigorate consciousness | • Gladdening of mind and joyous interest that arises with the meditation object.  
  • It is not general or sensual rapture, but refers to the specific delight that arises in relationship to a consistent knowing of the meditation object; the mind is enlivened by its facility in the task at hand.  
  • Classified as a mental factor or mental formation, not as a feeling. |
| Happiness, joy, contentment | Sukha | Restlessness | To gratify and intensify associated states | • Signifies the pleasant feeling, joy, or contentment that arises with the knowing of the meditation object.  
  • Classified as a feeling—enjoyment of the taste of what is acquired. |
| One-pointedness, concentration, collectedness | Ekaggatā | Sensual desire | To conglomerate or unify associated factors with the object; to eliminate distractions | • Refers to the single pointed focus on an object, non-distraction, non-wavering.  
  • In the practice of meditation, the mind ceases to seek out new objects of consciousness and becomes unified, resting on one object of consciousness without tendency to move.  
  • Manifests as peace, quiet, and calm. |