



10 Key Stoic Exercises

Dichotomy of Control - "Some things are up to us and some are not." Epictetus

Refocus your attention on what is up to you: your attention, decisions, and judgments.

Pay attention to any sensation or thought that arises. Let it come, let it be, and let it go. How you respond is in your power.

The Contemplation of the Sage - "You can never straighten that which is crooked unless you use a ruler." Seneca

Meditate on role models.

Choose a fictional or real role model. Visualize them observing you. Picture how they'd act in your place. Bring to mind the advice they'd give you.

The View from Above - "The universe is transformation, life is opinion." Marcus Aurelius

Enlarge your perspective. You are a part of a much larger whole.

Your life is one among billions. Slowly zoom out - picture yourself from the ceiling, then visualize your neighborhood, city, nation, and planet. Let the trivial fall away and the important stay.

Objective Description - "This Falernian wine is only a little grape juice." Marcus Aurelius

Redescribe the world in an objective way. Decompose it into its parts.

Take an object or phenomenon. Break it into its constituent parts. Ask: are the stories I tell myself about this true?

Refocus on Virtue - "Character is fate." Heraclitus

Meditate on virtues like justice, courage, moderation, and wisdom.

Bring to mind the joy and life force of specific virtuous actions. Mentally rehearse acting with virtue.

Morning Preparation - "Let the mind be prepared to meet everything." Seneca

Ready yourself for the day.

Bring to mind who you will be. Imagine circumstances that will arise. Picture how you will act in detail. Mentally rehearse acting with excellence.

Evening Review - "When the light has been taken away...I examine my entire day." Seneca

Reflect on your day and how you will live tomorrow.

Objectively catalog the events of the day. Note what you did well, where you can improve, and what you will do better tomorrow.

Socratic Dialogue - "The unexamined life is not worth living" Socrates

Hang a question mark next to your assumptions.

Ask why 5 times. Reflect on a philosophical question. Summon a panel of role models and imagine what questions they would ask.

3 Disciplines - "Objective judgment...Unselfish action...Willing acceptance...That's all you need" Marcus Aurelius

Meditate on the three Stoic disciplines of desire, action, and judgment.

Catalog your desires and aversions. Review your judgments. Choose the actions you'll take.

Stoic Mindfulness- "Attention is the fundamental Stoic spiritual attitude." Pierre Hadot

Train your ability to be present and principled.

Rest your attention on the breath. As thoughts arise, note whether they align with your principles. Return to the breath.