

Four *Jhānas*

Key points

- The four *jhānas* are a defining feature of Right Concentration in the Buddhist Tradition.
- *Jhānas* are states of deep meditative absorption in which attention is unified with a fixed meditation object, the mind is secluded from sensory engagements, and all unwholesome states have been abandoned.
- Each level of absorption is characterized by a particular cluster of intensifying factors.
- Besides the four *jhānas*, there are two other sets of states commonly related to the four *jhānas*:
 1. Access to *Jhāna*
 - At the threshold to *jhāna* the five hindrances have been abandoned and the five *jhāna* factors have arisen.
 - Access to *jhāna* and first *jhāna* share the same five basic factors, but are more refined and stable in absorption.
 - A meditator in access to *jhāna* may maintain awareness of changing sensory objects.
 2. Four immaterial *jhānas* are commonly listed after the four *jhānas*
 1. The base of infinite space
 2. The base of infinite consciousness
 3. The base of nothingness
 4. The base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

More details and practical instructions are included in *Focused And Fearless: A Meditator's Guide to States of Deep Joy, Calm, And Clarity*, by Shaila Catherine, published by Wisdom Publications, 2008.

<i>Jhānas</i>	Factors abandoned	Factors acquired or intensified	Notes
The first <i>jhāna</i>	Five hindrances: 1. Sloth and torpor 2. Doubt 3. Ill will / aversion 4. Agitation 5. Greed / Sense Desire	Five <i>Jhāna</i> factors: 1. Applied thought 2. Sustained thought 3. Rapture 4. Happiness 5. One-Pointedness of Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five hindrances are opposed to the five <i>jhāna</i> factors. • Characterized by rapture and happiness born of seclusion • Commentarial teachings and just a few <i>suttas</i> specifically list one-pointedness as a feature of first <i>jhāna</i>; <i>many suttas</i> omit explicit reference to the factor one-pointedness.
The second <i>jhāna</i>	1. Applied Attention 2. Sustained Attention	1. Rapture 2. Happiness 3. One-Pointedness of Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappearance of applied and sustained attention • Characterized by delight and happiness born of concentration
The third <i>jhāna</i>	Rapture	1. Subtle Happiness 2. One-Pointedness of Mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapture fades, revealing a quiet, subtle, and pervasive happiness. • Characterized by the subtle enjoyment of a mind that is mindful and equanimous
The fourth <i>jhāna</i>	Happiness	1. One-Pointedness of Mind 2. Equanimity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness is replaced by equanimity. The mind is profoundly stable, still, and equanimous. • Mindfulness is purified by equanimity.