

Five *Jhāna* Factors

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.

Factors in English	Factors in Pali	Hindrances it overcomes	Function	Notes
Applied thought, initial attention	<i>Vitakka</i>	Sloth and torpor	To apply the mind to its object with special clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of the mind to its object, directing attention, confronting the object.
Sustained thought, examination	<i>Vicāra</i>	Doubt	To keep associated mental factors occupied with the object	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The anchoring of the mind on the object, maintaining continuous pressure on the object, examining and discerning its unique qualities.
Rapture, delight, pleasure	<i>Pīti</i>	Aversion	To refresh and invigorate consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<i>Sukha</i>	Restlessness	To gratify and intensify associated states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<i>Ekaggatā</i>	Sensual desire	To conglomerate or unify associated factors with the object; to eliminate distractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.