



How to Meditate ~ a Beginners Guide

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Welcome

Welcome to this Beginners Guide to Meditation; the message is very straightforward:

- ~ Meditation is a simple, natural process
- ~ It really works, with many scientifically proven benefits
- ~ This style is quick, practical and easy to learn

In this Guide you will find:

1. An introduction to meditation, what it is and how it works.
2. Suggestions for getting the best from the meditations on the companion CD.
3. An easy step by step approach to getting started with a simple meditation practice.
4. A meditation practice chart to record your progress.
5. Suggestions for developing your practice and deepening your meditation experience once you get going.

What is meditation?

Meditation means to contemplate, to go within and still the mind. Meditation gives our brain a much needed rest from constant mental activity. In this place of rest we can access our own inner peace, bringing a whole range of health giving benefits.

How does it work?

Meditation slows the brain waves to a lower frequency than those at which they operate in everyday life, which induces feelings of deep relaxation. High frequency brainwave states are associated with stress and hyper states, and too much of this can impact our physical and emotional well being.

There are many scientifically proven benefits which occur as a result of regularly slowing down our brain rhythm, enabling the mind and the body to be recharged and brought back into a more balanced state (for more information, why not read 'The Blissful Brain' by Dr Shanida Nataraja).

'Your mind is your instrument. Learn to be its master and not its slave.'

*Remez Sasson -
Author and teacher*

What are the benefits?

Meditation calms the mind, nourishes and strengthens the body, harmonises relationships (both the one with yourself and the ones with those around you), improves creativity, encourages a more balanced perspective on life, develops greater self-awareness, and so much more. Best of all, by learning to meditate you will more easily find a deep presence of stillness that underlies the 'busyness' of your everyday life.

So let's get started... this is what you need to do now.

1. Read the tips and suggestions on the next page for getting started with your meditation practice.
2. Read through the simple wording that will carry you naturally and effortlessly into a relaxing meditation.
3. Put up your new meditation practice chart (you'll find this on the last page of this guide). This will help you focused and committed while trying a meditation practice out for yourself.

'Meditation is not to escape from society, but to come back to ourselves and see what is going on.'

Thich Nhat Hanh -
Monk, teacher,
author and peace
activist

Meditation practice - getting started

Here is some background information before you begin.

This style of meditation is very easy and quick to learn, because we use everyday things such as sounds, thoughts, feelings and sensations in the body as reasons to relax. I encourage you to welcome all these things and use them as signals to relax, rather than what may be called '*efforting*' to quieten the mind or ignore any discomfort or pain in the body. This is what makes this style of meditation so effective, no forcing or *efforting*, just *allowing* what ever is arising... and this is very relaxing indeed.

You may like to first listen to one of the recorded meditations, this will help your mind and body get used to this style of meditation. Then when you have listened through a number of times, you may find that just by reading the words in the meditation guide, you will begin to relax.

For meditation, where ideally you want to feel very present and yet still (so you can get the full benefits of the increased self-awareness that comes with inner reflection), it is better that you sit in an upright yet comfortable position. For deep relaxation, you may prefer to listen to the recordings lying down, such as before you go to sleep at night.

'Some people think that meditation takes time away from physical accomplishment. Taken to extremes, of course, that is true. Most people, however, find that meditation creates more time than it takes.'

Peter McWilliams -
Author and activist

So let's get started...

1. Choose a place in your home where you are going to feel the most comfortable and be undisturbed. Ideally find somewhere to sit that supports your back in an upright position, and where you will be warm.
2. Turn off your phones and if there are other people around, let everyone know that you are taking some time to be quiet and practise your meditation.
3. Decide how long you are going to sit for. If this is a new experience for you, choose between five and ten minutes to begin with. You can quickly increase this as your practice develops.
4. Before you sit down, or if you prefer, you can do this while sitting down, just gently stretch the body. This helps to release tension stored in the muscles and will help you relax into your meditation more easily.
5. When you have settled yourself in your chair, give your self a few moments to observe your surroundings, listen to any sounds and notice how you and your body are feeling. In the beginning, it is the taking time to stop and be still that is important. Practise just resting, observing and relaxing.
6. Then close your eyes and allow yourself to become aware of your breathing. No need to change it in anyway. Just watch its ebb and flow as it breathes you. Nothing you need to do, just know that every breath you take is carrying you into relaxation.
7. Observe your thoughts, they are all welcome. Sometimes when you stop and become still, your mind can get even busier. This is perfectly normal, just let them be with you, no resisting. Allow them all to come into your mind if they wish. Let every thought just carry you into relaxation.
8. Notice how you are feeling. Sometimes when you stop and become still, you are able to be more in touch with your feelings. What if every feeling was welcome too and just a reason to relax now? A regular meditation helps to balance the emotions and encourages a more centred approach to life. What if every feeling was just a reason to relax too...?

'Through meditation and by giving full attention to one thing at a time, we can learn to direct attention where we choose.'

Ekhnath Easwaran -
Author

9. Bring your awareness to your body, notice any areas that are feeling uncomfortable and just allow them to soften a little. There is nothing you need to do here, just observe how your body is feeling. You may let your mind travel around your body starting with your feet and mentally release any tension... relaxing... releasing... letting go.

So to recap

1. Sit and allow your self to settle
2. Listen to any sounds
3. Observe your breath
4. Welcome all thoughts
5. Welcome all feelings
6. Welcome all physical sensations

10. When your time is up, gently take a few deep breaths and then stretch a little. Open your eyes and take a few moments to observe how you feel. In the early days, this may feel quite subtle but persevere and you will quickly begin to train your body and mind to go deeper.

11. Treat every sitting as a fresh experience. Every meditation is different. Some can be very busy and creative, others silent and peaceful or perhaps nothing in particular. All benefit you in some way. Every time you sit and rest you are adding to your practice. Even if you just toe-dip into a quiet place for a few minutes every day, you will notice the difference this makes to the quality of your life very quickly.

12 When everything is too hectic and you cannot find the time to sit and practice your meditation, then you can always try the one minute meditation.

'Take some time
and be ... with
yourself. If you
don't, you may miss
meeting the most
important person in
your life.'

Innerspace

The 'One minute' meditation

This meditation is designed to help you use everyday things, such as getting into your car or boiling the kettle, as signals to stop... take a breath... and become still.

When you do this consciously and deliberately, you may begin to notice that your body automatically takes a deep breath. Tension naturally releases from your face and shoulders and your mind may momentarily stop. It is as if your body's natural intelligence responds gratefully to your realisation that conscious stopping reconnects you with something deeper inside yourself.

Try to commit to practising your meditation up to three times each week, and I have included a practice chart to help you stay focused, a great place to put it is on the fridge door! Then you can have the satisfaction of ticking off each time you keep your commitment to yourself. After just one month of practising three times a week, you will quickly begin to feel the benefits of taking time to rest and be still.

Congratulate yourself every time you do stop and meditate or relax deeply, knowing that you are taking effective and practical steps to becoming healthier and happier, not only for your self but for everyone around you. Know that over time, a regular practice gets easier and more effective, and then the many amazing benefits of regular meditation begin to seep into your life.

I hope you have enjoyed this Beginner's Guide to this easy and practical style of meditation. I leave you, on the next page, with a verse called 'The Still Point' by Scarlett, which sums up this approach to Meditation.

Marion Howells

*'Meditation is ...
the way to knowing
and beholding the
eternal,
indestructible,
essential centre of
our being.'*

*Rudolf Steiner -
Philosopher, writer,
scholar and artist.*

DISCLAIMER

Please note that this guide is designed to be useful and supportive, but it is not offered as a replacement for qualified medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you are suffering from any physical or mental illness, please ensure that you seek the advice of a qualified medical practitioner. This guide has been carefully designed to support you as you begin a journey of self discovery, however you are asked to take full responsibility for your participation in the meditations. Please also ensure that you do not listen to the recorded meditations while driving or operating machinery.

The Still Point

When there is a still point
in your day,
a time and a place
where you are quiet
and at one with yourself,
you realise
how all the events and happenings
between these still moments
are like a slide show,
valuable and real,
but impermanent.

You are here again
despite it all,
a little bit richer,
a little bit firmer,
in your Self.

If you can practice these moments
in times of peace,
it will be much easier for you
to find them in times of trouble,
for this is where your strength lies,
in the peaceful depths
of yourself.

Scarlett

Meditation Practice Chart

Use this chart to record your progress by putting in a tick or a note each time you sit for meditation.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25
Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30

*Meditation brings wisdom;
lack of mediation leaves ignorance.
Know well what leads you forward
and what holds you back,
and choose the path that leads to wisdom.*

Buddha