



Meditation Basics

With a little guidance, anyone can meditate almost anywhere. An ancient Eastern method of gaining self-awareness, meditation can produce real benefits in just 10 to 20 minutes per day—including reducing anxiety and fatigue, increasing self-confidence, and normalizing blood pressure.

People may practice meditation in different forms. But it generally involves carefully focusing your attention in order to alter your state of consciousness. People use meditation to become more connected with themselves and a “higher power” or “guiding presence.” Those who succeed often report feeling more peaceful and happy, meditation experts say.

Reap the short- and long-term benefits

Meditation experts can tick off long lists of the benefits of meditation, both long- and short-term, including:

- Relaxation and reduced stress
- Increased energy
- Normalized blood pressure, heart rate, and cholesterol levels
- Increased mental clarity, concentration, and a sense of emotional balance
- Enhanced creativity
- Ability to handle life situations more effectively
- Feeling more connected and “in the flow” with life
- More harmonious relationships
- New insights and perspective about the meaning and purpose of life
- Increased intuition
- Feeling more supported by a “higher power”

For some people, regular meditation can even lead to other positive lifestyle changes. These changes tend to enhance the process of becoming more conscious, including improving diet, choosing new forms of entertainment and reading selections, eliminating unhealthy habits, and starting new forms of exercise such as tai chi or yoga.

Establish a daily routine

Getting started requires a little effort, but try to establish a daily routine:

- **Find a comfortable place to sit**—in a chair, on a cushion or on the floor.
- **Try to avoid as much noise and distraction as possible.**

- **Sit with your spine relatively straight.** You can lean against a wall or other support.
- **Prepare yourself for meditation by getting centered or by calling on a “higher power” for assistance,** if that corresponds with your spiritual beliefs.
- **Focus your attention on a phrase (or “mantra”), prayer, an object, your breath, or positive thoughts—**whatever works for you.
- **Gently shift your attention back to focus if your thoughts wander.**
- **Don’t worry about “doing it right.”** Avoid trying to force a certain outcome or completely “blank out” your thoughts.

If you’re just getting started, meditate for about 10 to 15 minutes each day. Eventually you can increase this period to about 20 minutes.

Do it anywhere

You can meditate almost anywhere, including at work. It helps to have an office or cubicle, but if you don’t, slipping out to your car, a park or the employee lounge for a meditation break can work.

By Kristen Knight

Looking for additional support? Contact us today.

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