

9 Meditation Methods



So what exactly IS meditation? Meditation often involves an effort to consciously regulate the mind in some way.

Are you intimidated by the concept of meditation? You might find that it's much easier than you think. You don't have to join a particular religion, do yoga, or chant to get the benefits of meditation. This practice has been available to absolutely everyone since antiquity AND just a few minutes per day can drastically improve your life.

"This is universal. You sit and observe your breath. You can't say this is a Hindu breath or a Christian breath or a Muslim breath." ?
Charles Johnson

There are many different types of meditation. Most fall into the categories of loving-kindness meditation or mindfulness meditation. Both types have been proven to change the brain structure and both produce dramatic physical and psychological benefits [[November 2012 issue of Frontiers in Human Neuroscience](#)].

Loving-Kindness Meditation]

Are you sometimes hard on yourself? Are you hard on others? Do you need to improve your relationships?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, loving-kindness meditation might be a good place to start. Loving kindness meditation is beneficial both for selfless and self-centered people. You cannot feel love and fear or love and depression (or love and any other negative feeling) at the same time.

So how do you do Loving-Kindness Meditation? I have components of this practice in my [FREE a.m. and p.m. guided meditations](#) if you'd like to give it a try. You can access the link by clicking on the photo below:



Basically, to practice loving kindness meditation, you are going to sit down in a meditation position, with closed eyes, and generates in your mind and your heart feelings of kindness. Start by developing loving-kindness towards yourself, then progressively towards others and all beings. Imagine sending peace, happiness, love and/or light to others in this order:

- to yourself
- to your neighborhood
- your city
- your country
- out to your world

Some suggest beginning with yourself, then with loved ones, then with people whom you feel neutral about, then to difficult people, to all equally, and ending with sending that love out to the entire universe.

"So what is a good meditator? The one who meditates." ? Allan Lokos

The aim of loving kindness meditation is that of wishing happiness and well-being for all. The more you practice this meditation, the more joy you will personally experience.

"It's like being in love, but instead of this love directed at someone or something, it's directed at everyone and everything." ? Preston Lindsay

Mindfulness Meditation

What is Mindfulness? Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, creator of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program, defines mindfulness as paying particular attention "on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (Kabat-Zinn 1994). Just a few minutes of mindfulness meditation can reduce normal everyday anxiety.

Mindfulness meditation is the practice of intentionally focusing on the present moment. It is about becoming the observer, paying attention to the sensations, thoughts, and emotions that arise, accepting them without judgment, and letting them pass. There is a big difference between being inside the thought/sensation, and simply being aware of the presence of that thought.

How do you do Mindfulness Meditation? I have components of mindfulness in my [FREE a.m. and p.m. guided meditations](#). I suggest you follow the link and give it a try. That being said, there aren't any hard and fast rules here. The key is just to get started.

First, find a quiet spot where you won't be disturbed for at least 10 minutes. You might want to set a timer before you begin. Find a seat either on the floor or in a chair. Close your eyes, and begin to focus on your breath, inhaling and exhaling through the nose. As the day's thoughts enter your mind, acknowledge them as an observer, but don't engage in them. Let your thoughts come and go as you continue to focus on your breath. Try to do this every day. As you practice this more, you will find it gets easier.

And if you prefer not to sit in a room, feel free to take your meditation outside. You might even decide to take your meditation to go, as you take a leisurely walk. Buddhist monks, for example involve meditative awareness in their day-to-day activities to train their minds.

Mindfulness is about awareness of thoughts and emotions.

The point of mindfulness meditation is to not intentionally add anything to our present moment experience, but to be aware of what is going on, without losing ourselves in anything that arises.

You might find it easier to practice mindfulness meditation by focusing your attention on any one object during the whole meditation session. This object may be the breath, a mantra, visualization, a part of the body, a candle flame, etc. Some use prayer beads or other objects to keep track of some aspect of the meditation. The more you practice, the stronger your ability to keep the flow of attention on the chosen object will become; distractions will become less common and short-lived.

Whether you focus on the present experience or an object, mindfulness meditation can take you to a deeper state of consciousness and let you experience pure, joyous presence.

Below are 7 types of mindfulness meditation:

1 - Mindfulness Meditation: Breathing

How do you practice a breath-focused meditation? Sit on a cushion on the floor, or on a chair, with a straight and unsupported back. Pay close attention to the movement of your breath. When you breath in, be aware that you are breathing in, and how it feels. When you breath out, be aware you are breathing out. Do this for the length of your meditation practice. Your mind will drift away, and every time it does, kindly redirect your attention to the breath. Or you can move on to paying attention, non-judgmentally, to the sensations, thoughts and feelings that arise.

"One conscious breathe in and out is a meditation." ? Eckhart Tolle

Pranayama

Pranayama is the practice of regulating your breathing. It's not technically meditation, but it can be a tool for meditation. The simplest and most common method of practicing pranayama is with 4-4-4-4. This means breathing in for 4 counts, holding for 4 counts, breathing out for 4 counts, and holding with your lungs empty for 4 counts. Breathe through your nose, and let the abdomen move. Go through a few cycles like this. This regulation of breathing calms the mind and the body and can be done anywhere.

2 - Mindfulness Meditation During Daily Activities

Meditation must be continuous. The current of meditation must be present in all your activities. ? Annamalai Swami

You can also practice mindfulness meditation during daily activities like walking and eating. How do you do this? By simply paying attention to what is going on in the present moment and being aware of what is happening. Focus on your senses during your activities. For example, while walking, notice the sound of your feet and your breath and the smells you encounter.

3 - Mindfulness Meditation: Mantras

What is a mantra? A mantra is a syllable or word you repeat to help focus your mind. Mantras usually don't have a meaning. The word is usually chosen for the "vibration" created when making the sound.

How do you do mantra meditations? Again, you begin seated with your spine erect and eyes closed. You then repeat your chosen mantra over and over again for a certain number of times or throughout the whole session. Experiment with coordinating it with your breath and also play around with the volume. Try saying it silently, try whispering it, and definitely try saying it out loud.

Here are some of the most well-known mantras for you to experiment with. Those listed here originate from the Hindu & Buddhist traditions:

- om (pronounced with a long o, as in low)
- so-ham
- om namah shivaya
- om mani padme hum
- yam (pronounced yang)
- ham (pronounced hang)

"Mantras can be viewed as ancient power words with subtle intentions that help us connect to spirit, the source of everything in the universe." - Deepak Chopra

Mantra meditation creates a mental vibration that helps your mind reach a meditative state. Repeating the mantra helps you disconnect from the thoughts that creep into your mind, so is a great tool to support your meditation practice, especially when your mind is racing.

4 - Mindfulness Meditation: Sound Meditation

Sound meditation is a way of beginning your meditation by focusing on a calming, ambient music. Chimes, native american flutes, and singing bowls are some suggestions. To practice sound meditation, focus all of your attention just on what you are hearing to help you to quiet your mind.

5 - Mindfulness Meditation: Chakras

Chakra Meditation is currently one of my favorites. If you are part of my [Facebook group](#), you know that we recently completed a series of live videos and posts focused on aligning and awakening all seven chakras. To practice chakra meditation, you focus on one of the seven chakras of the body (?centers of energy?). Each chakra has visualizations and mantras associated with it. If you want to learn more about chakra meditation, keep an eye on our [Good Life 4 U](#) page for a video course that we have in the works.

6 - Mindfulness Meditation: Gazing

Gazing meditation is done by fixing the gaze on an external object like a candle. You focus on the object with your eyes open and your gaze relaxed. Then you close your eyes and visualize the flame. Gazing meditations train your brain to be better at both concentration and visualization.

7 - Mindfulness Meditation: The Gap

This form of mindfulness meditation is about concentrating on the space, or gap, between your thoughts to get you into contact with creative energy. Think about the gap like the silence between musical notes. I read a wonderful book by Wayne Dyer that details this practice. It is called "Getting In the Gap", and I recommend it if you want to learn more (clicking on the title will take you to amazon through my affiliate link).

Guided Meditations

Guided Meditation is a fairly new concept, and an easier way to start a meditation practice. You can find guided meditations based in any of the meditation methods we have discussed. Guided Meditations can be especially helpful to keep you from distractions. Meditation has the power to change any aspect of your life and I recommend you experiment with many methods.

? [The Good Life 4 U](#)

? [Head In The Clouds](#)

? [Headspace app](#)

? [Free Binaural Beats](#)

? [Yoga Nidra](#)

? [UCLA Free Guided Meditations](#)

The best kind of meditation

The hands-down best kind of meditation is the one that works for you. You should enjoy your practice and feel different in body and mind when you're finished.

My suggestion? Meditate every day as if your life depends on it. Click [here](#) for a list of reasons to begin a meditation practice today!

"Meditation is not a means to an end. It is both the means and the end." ? Jiddu Krishnamurti

Click Here for Your Free Meditations!

Marcy Vogler is a lifestyle makeover coach, personal trainer, and mother of three. Marcy is passionate about helping women make over their lives from the inside out. To learn more about the courses Marcy offers, check out our parter website at www.thegoodlife4u.club. For daily inspiration, join Marcy's [Facebook Group: Love Your Day, Love Your Life](#).

