

The Art of Meditation



MEDITATION HAS A LONG HISTORY. IN FACT, THE FIRST WRITTEN RECORDS DATE ALL THE WAY BACK TO 1500 BCE, WHEN IT WAS BEING PRACTICED BY HINDUS. MEDITATION IS KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE GLOBE AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ALMOST ALL MAJOR RELIGIONS HAVE ADOPTED SOME FORM OF IT.

Why Meditate?

Meditation is a tried and true method for combating stress, staying relaxed, and finding inner peace. From a neurological point-of-view, meditation increases grey-matter in the brain, and promotes 'divergent thinking'. This relates to a person's creativity, and makes it easier to generate new ideas. It's also been shown to aid in self-control, and focus.

What if I Don't Have Enough Time?

Meditation is about being present. It's about taking the time to enjoy today, rather than worry about the future. You don't have to spend an entire hour each day meditating. You just need to start practicing mindfulness in your day to day lives.

What are Some Meditation Techniques?

Techniques	How to Do Them
<p data-bbox="267 730 600 787">Walking Meditation</p> 	<p data-bbox="857 730 1388 1444">This is a form of meditation which involves watching the movement of your feet and strengthening your connection to the earth. To begin, find a quiet place without any distractions, and take one slow deliberate step. Try to block out everything but the sensation of motion. You should only be moving one foot at any given time. Clear your mind and become completely aware of the movement of your feet hitting the ground.</p>

Red Light Meditation



Red light meditation is done while at a standstill. Are you constantly stuck at red lights? This technique just might be for you. First, sit back and relax. Pick a spot above your navel to focus on, and pay close attention to your abdomen as it rises and falls. Focus only on your breathing, and clear your mind of any distractions (but pay attention to the road). Relax.

Task Related Meditation



This is a lot like red light meditation, but instead involves focusing on repetitive tasks. This could include folding laundry, washing the dishes, or completing any other simple household chores. It's best if you do this somewhere quiet, and while alone. Focus on one thing while you're working, whether it's the motion of your hands or the smell of your laundry detergent or even just your own breathing. Focus on it until it's the only thing in your mind.

Visualization



Visualization involves creating a place in your mind, and fleshing it out until you're calmer. Start by picturing your 'happy place'. This could be anywhere you want it to be, but common choices are: the beach, at a campfire, or in your own home.

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In your mind, explore this place. Focus on the sights, sounds, and smells surrounding you. Continue to flesh this place out until it's almost tangible in your mind. When you're finished, take a deep breath and open your eyes.

Body Scanning



To do a body scan, close your eyes, and pick a starting point on your body. Focus intently on this body part, flexing and unflexing the muscles there, until you feel it's totally relaxed. Next move to a connected body part (so if you chose your toes as the starting point, you'd move on to your calves) and do the same thing. Keep at it until you've thoroughly relaxed every muscle in your body. If you have trouble doing this while sitting, you can try it while lying down.