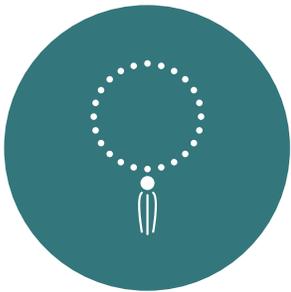


MEDITATION

When you hear the word “meditation,” what images come to mind? Sitting cross-legged on a pillow, eyes closed, possibly chanting? A religious group engaged in deep and mindful concentration?



WHILE THIS IMAGE MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TRADITIONAL MEDITATION, THE PRACTICE COMES IN OTHER FORMS TOO:



**PRAYER/
CHANTING**



BREATHING



RITUAL/EXERCISE



**VIEWING ART/
LISTENING TO MUSIC**

For beginners, the simplest form of meditation is breathing. Deep breathing can easily be done anytime of day. The goal of a breathing meditation is to allow the mind to rest from thoughts, which means allowing thoughts to pass through, rather than tending to each one as it enters the mind. Learning to be present is the goal of meditation.

In a breathing meditation, find a comfortable seat and allow the spine to be tall. Simply concentrate on the breathing, and make inhales and exhales the same length. Breathe from the stomach rather than the chest, and allow the belly to go soft, rising and falling with each breath. If a thought enters your mind, acknowledge it, and let it go. Allow your mind to be still.

There's no right or wrong way to meditate. In the beginning, you may find it difficult to slow your mind and tap into your inner consciousness, so it might be helpful to meditate first thing

in the morning, before you're distracted with your daily tasks. Once you've strengthened your meditation practice, experiment with meditating at other times, like at your desk before a long meeting, after a workout, at bedtime – really, whenever it's possible to close your eyes and allow your focus to move inward.

Meditation works most effectively when practiced daily, so start with short meditations but stay consistent. It's more effective to meditate for just five minutes a day at the same time every day than for 20 minutes once or twice a week.

As you experience the benefits, experiment with new types of meditation. Meditation will help slow your mind, allowing you to tune into your intuition and live in deeper alignment with your intentions.

IN ADDITION TO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH BENEFITS, MEDITATION MAY HELP WITH:

- Allergies
- Anxiety disorders
- Asthma
- Binge eating
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Chronic pain
- Sleep problems
- Substance abuse

RECOMMENDED SOURCES FOR MEDITATIONS:

Deepak Chopra – via iTunes or www.chopra.com

Paul Epstein's Happiness Through Meditation
<http://geti.in/WJT7pr>

www.wildmind.org

www.mindspace.org.uk

www.mayoclinic.org/meditation

Dr. Weil's Breathing Basics <http://geti.in/1bjcAy7>
and Audio Collection <http://geti.in/18ge0Gv>

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine
<http://geti.in/17Mos9v>