



THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO

Meditation

CLEARING YOUR MIND AND IMPROVING YOUR LIFE



Introduction

There is nothing more stressful than having a billion things to do during the day without having even just a second to yourself. The hustle and bustle of everyday life can get to be very overwhelming. There are so many demands placed upon us that it can feel like there is nowhere to turn when we feel like we just need a little bit of breathing room and a chance to relax.

Fortunately, there is a solution. No matter how many demands you have placed upon you during the day, meditation is an option that you can easily make the time for. Even just setting aside five minutes for yourself can make the difference between a frazzled, miserable mess at dinner time and a balanced, calm person who is ready to take the next step, no matter where it leads!

Meditation has become a very popular subject, and for good reason. Everybody is feeling the pressure to succeed and do great in their lives, but the work involved in becoming successful can be enough to make anyone exhausted. We put so much energy into trying to create our best lives that, ironically, we can easily lose sight of the most important part of that; ourselves!

By taking the time to learn about meditation and allowing it to be a part of our lives, we can begin to channel our thoughts into more productive patterns and give ourselves the recharge that we need when it seems like life has gotten to be a little bit too much.

Meditation is a huge part of a healthy lifestyle. Many successful people swear by its effects. It can help us to completely re-map our brains from thinking destructive and negative thoughts to remembering how to see the possibilities in every moment. Not only that, but knowing that we are putting our own mental health first and foremost can be a huge relief. Instead of engaging in negativity, we can take a time out and re-center ourselves to guarantee that no matter what is thrown at us, we are capable of getting where we want to be.

Most people aren't sure whether or not they are even able to meditate. They picture themselves having to go into the Lotus position and holding it for a long time while not thinking about a single thing. That is a lot of pressure! However, the Lotus position is actually a yoga pose that is only meant to enhance the serenity of practitioners of yoga who have utilized it as a training toward a deeper awareness and calm. Beginner meditators do not have to do anything quite that advanced in order to receive the same effects.

Rather, meditation can be made very simple! The more often you do it the easier it becomes. And while it may seem impossible to clear your mind, especially when there is a lot going on in your life, once you get the hang of it, you will be able to recharge in just about any situation. Centering yourself is not as difficult as it sounds. There are not any difficult yoga poses necessary.

So if clearing your mind and improving your life sounds like something you would like to do, then you're in the right place. This guide will show you how! So, let's get started!



Chapter 1

THE HISTORY OF MEDITATION

Meditation is an ancient practice that can be traced to biblical times and beyond. Like many things spiritual in nature, it can be traced back to ancient India, where their healing arts were summarized in texts known as the Vedas. These spiritual books were meant to teach the masses about enlightenment and ways to live your life that can lead to a greater understanding of yourself and the world around you. They were meant to impart wisdom and encourage everybody to live their lives in a peaceful way that benefitted not only themselves, but society as a whole.

This ancient art can be traced back to 1500 BCE, as far as written evidence goes. It had its origins in a system of schooling, where students would follow their teachers out into the world, generally isolated and natural places with dense forest and fresh air, so that they could be guided in the art of meditation. It was a very important spiritual practice, then and still, and is linked to Buddhist teachings. Indian Gurus and their students would study and practice this art of clearing the mind and ultimately passed on the knowledge to the surrounding countries.

Meditation was thought to be incredibly important, and taught around the world because of the positive results it yielded in daily life. It is a practice that has proven so beneficial that it has survived thousands of years and been passed along from culture to culture. It is incorporated in several different religious sects, and continues to be a source of peace and understanding even into the modern age.

Modern day gurus teach classes on meditation all around the world. The best part is that there are several different ways you can meditate, so if one way doesn't work for you, then you can try another and see if that is going to do the trick. Some people meditate in pure silence, others with peaceful music and candlelight. Some people might prefer a guided meditation, where someone helps them to focus their thoughts in a direction that is most beneficial to them, while others may choose to hold certain thoughts or intentions in their minds so that they can attract those energies to themselves almost unconsciously.

However, you choose to use meditation, the implication is clear that it is a practice that works, and it has for a very long time. This art is thousands of years old, and when utilized properly, can really change the way you view yourself and the situations in your life. There is a reason it has survived this long, and that reason is that it is incredibly effective. If it wasn't, it would have died out by now. Are you ready to learn the basics of meditation? This guide will show you how!

Chapter 2

THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

If you're not quite convinced that meditation is the way to go, that's fine. Just because it's been used for thousands of years doesn't mean you should jump on the bandwagon. If it's scientific evidence you're curious about, then there is plenty of that too.

Studies have shown that meditation can not only help to reduce stress and anxiety symptoms, even in people with anxiety disorders, but there is also a correlation between meditation and lower blood pressure. Other scientifically proven benefits of meditation include sounder sleep and even a better memory. And if you are suffering from chronic pain symptoms, or any aches and pains in general, meditation has been shown to help manage these and improve your quality of life.

Not only that, but people who meditate are less prone to low self-image. They tend to gain more insight into themselves that can help them to structure their lives in a productive way and make choices that truly benefit them and their goals. Meditation can increase your level of emotional understanding and help you to healthily compartmentalize your thoughts and emotions in a way that is constructive. If you find that you are often times overwhelmed by the world around you, meditation is a great way to let go of those stressful feelings and take a moment to recharge and get yourself back on track.

Because of the stressful state of the world we live in, a lot of people turn to negative coping mechanisms. It can be very easy to gain access to things that claim to ease our stress, like cigarettes or alcohol or other addictive substances. And a lot of people do turn to these things as their escape. It is easy to do and these negative things are very accessible in our culture. It is unfortunate how easy it can be to become an addict. Even if your addiction is something as innocent seeming as an addiction to unhealthy foods.

However, meditation can prove an even better coping mechanism. And, if you know you or someone you love has an addiction, meditation is actually scientifically proven to help redirect the attention of

an addict from a negative substance to one that is not so harmful. Meditation is a great way to help you change the course of your thinking and reprogram yourself to be more mindful and focused on positive changes rather than negative.

Addiction can be difficult to get through alone or without resources, but utilizing meditation as a resource for recovery is a great tool. It can help you look inwardly, hold yourself accountable for your actions, find insight into why you may act the way you do and the triggers that cause you to reach out to your addiction, and also provide you with a healthy outlet for your stress and anxiety that helps you to feel refreshed and renewed with a better outlook on life without resorting to negative coping strategies like the thing you are addicted to.

It may not be a perfect fix or the one thing that will make it possible to quit your addiction or make your life a hundred percent better, but it is definitely something that you can use to your benefit and help you gain insight into yourself and your behaviors so that you can interrupt the negative patterns and replace them with positive patterns. Anybody can take a time out and focus on the light in your life rather than the darkness, and doing so has many scientific benefits that will help you to keep moving forward, even when there are times that moving backward might feel like an easier choice. We have the power to create the life we want for ourselves. There is nothing more important than figuring out what it is we are doing to make progress toward our goals and maintaining ourselves and our peace of mind, body, and spirit. Meditation is one of those things that can help all three, so utilizing it for yourself is an incredible joy.

But don't just take the word of this guide for it. Instead, consider implementing it for yourself! If you are curious about the ways you can use meditation for your personal progress, the next few chapters will outline the different types of meditations you can use to really get the ball rolling in the right direction so that you can improve your life!

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, is sitting on a rocky ledge overlooking a vast, rugged canyon. She is in a meditative pose with her hands resting on her knees. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, with the sky showing soft clouds and the canyon walls illuminated in shades of orange and red. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Chapter 3

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION AND HOW IT CAN WORK FOR YOU

Mindfulness meditation is a very good practice. If you find that you have any issues with dissociation or staying in the present, then mindfulness meditation is a sure-fired way to help you get where you need to be. When staying in the moment is difficult or anxiety-inducing, mindfulness meditations can help you to re-center yourself and guide your mind back into a place that feels safe and comforting.

People who have suffered from trauma find this method particularly helpful. If you experience triggering events that can be difficult to endure, or have post-traumatic stress disorder, then mindfulness meditations can help to pull you out of the frightening triggers and into a mindset that is much easier to handle. It interrupts bad thought processes and allows you to focus instead on the immediate world around you.

Mindfulness meditation is something that everybody can experience. It doesn't take a special pose or a certain place. Rather, you can perform a mindfulness meditation simply by closing your eyes and inhaling deeply. It is possibly one of the simplest forms of meditation out there, and certainly one of the most beneficial!

To perform a mindfulness meditation, the key concept is simple. You want to make sure that you are focusing on the present and truly aware of the things that are going on around you. Let's say you are having an anxiety attack and having a difficult time grounding yourself afterward. Instead of letting yourself linger in the panic you feel, you can either physically remove yourself from whatever situation you are currently in that may be making your panic worse, or close your eyes and inhale deeply.

While your eyes are closed and you are forcing yourself to take deep, steady breaths, allow yourself to consider every single one of your senses. What are you feeling with your fingertips? Is it your own hand balled up into a fist? Are you holding something? What do you smell? What scent is lingering in the air around you? What do you see? The darkness behind your eyes? Do you notice if there are some spots that may be lighter if you are facing a light source? What do you hear? Is there a machine

somewhere near you making a gentle humming sound? Do you hear birds singing outside, or children off in the distance? Are people speaking near you? What are their tones like? Take in all of this information as objectively as you can. Do not attach any personal significance to anything that you are experiencing. If you have thoughts about them, that's okay too. Just don't hold on too tightly to those thoughts. Acknowledge that they are there and that they exist, then let them leave your mind as you move on to focusing on other senses.

Mindfulness meditation is an incredible tool. It is very calming and it can work almost immediately. One of the best things about it is how it can help us to re-train our brains during times of cyclical thought that is destructive to our well being. If we are focused on negative things and it is causing us to panic or feel upset in any way, slowing things down and focusing on the present moment is a great way for us to begin to stop staying stuck in that cycle and regain some control over our emotional state of mind. It can bring us equilibrium when it seems like it is almost impossible to find.

The best part about it is how simple it is to practice it. There are no advanced body poses involved, no uncomfortable hand gestures or requirements to light candles and listen to calming music, though if those things are at your disposal and you choose to utilize them, then that can also be great. The perks to mindfulness meditation involve accessibility and the fact that all you need to do it successfully is yourself. It can pull you out of difficult or dark thoughts and help to break your mind free from the cages that have been placed on it by bad experiences. Mindfulness meditation is one of the most recommended by therapists, because it truly works to help us to heal from trauma and stay more mindful in our lives.

It can be very easy for us to just zone out and tune out the world around us when things get difficult, or if we are triggered and upset by a situation. This is called disassociation, and it is sometimes a major problem for anyone who has endured a lot of suffering or who is overwhelmed by the world around them. Using mindfulness meditation is a good way to help those people to ground themselves during difficult emotional situations so they can continue to function in the world rather than getting locked up or wanting to shut down and feeling horrible for the rest of the day.

It is also a great option for anybody who experiences panic attacks or major anxiety disorders. When we are in a panic, our brains seem to go a hundred miles a minute in directions that can often prove to be less than productive. It can be debilitating and scary, and going into fight or flight mode is something we generally want to avoid. We want to maintain all of our mind power so that we can make solid, informed decisions, not choices based on fear and emotional overload.

Utilizing mindfulness meditations when you sense yourself being triggered into an anxiety attack or anything else that is similar will help to pull you out of that panicked state and calm your mind so that you are no longer as overwhelmed by the situations you have found yourself in.

Everybody can benefit from mindfulness meditation, not just those who might find themselves overwhelmed at times. It can even just be a nice practice to remember that the world around us exists and we are a part of it. We are all on the same planet, working toward being our best selves and taking the steps we need to take toward achieving our goals. Some of us may be stuck sometimes, but mindfulness meditation is a great way to cut through the things that are holding us back and get ourselves back on track!



Chapter 4

THE BENEFITS OF LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

Have you ever had one of those days where you are just mad at the world? Nothing seems to be going right and you just can't help but feel angry, no matter how much you just wish you could be happy? Do you find yourself prone to irritation or restlessness? Is there someone you may fight with a lot and you just wish for nothing more than to have more peace in your life or home?

We all have days where we feel frustrated and angry and may lose sight of the things we love in lieu of focusing on negativity. Unfortunately, the mind has a negativity bias that can make it very difficult to remain optimistic and often filters out good information while remembering the bad.

Fortunately, loving kindness meditation is an option that can allow you to become more focused on peace and love and gratitude rather than finding yourself overwhelmed by the bad things that may be going on in your life.

Loving kindness meditation is simple, it is all about intention. You have to put the time in to really begin embracing yourself and doing things that will help to promote calmness and peace in your life. Loving kindness meditation provides its participants to engage more with feelings of calmness rather than letting the tumultuous waves of negativity control your interactions.

In order to practice loving kindness meditation, the first thing you will need to do is make some time during the day for it. It doesn't take long to complete this meditation, so begin with just a few minutes set aside for this practice.

The next step is to fake it til you make it. Essentially, what you are going to want to do is to summon thoughts of being surrounded by calm and loving energy. Think of the things that make you the most happy, and bring to mind the memories you may have of feeling those comforting feelings throughout your life. You do not need to think of the people involved, because the key is in learning to summon those loving kindness feelings for yourself no matter what the situation may be. However, if you find

that associating someone or something specific helps you, then feel free to do whatever you feel is necessary to bring those good feelings to blanket you as you meditate.

Once you have made yourself comfortable, in a quiet space, with your eyes closed, then you can begin to try and bring those feelings of loving kindness around you until they have surrounded your body like a warm blanket. If you like to use music during your meditation practices, you can also do this. Whatever you need to summon those thoughts of loving kindness.

Next, think of a few phrases you can use as you meditate and focus on those. Something like, “May I find peace,” or “May I receive love,” will help you to program your mind to receive positive energies. Instead of fixating on bad things or feeling overwhelmed by unpleasant emotions, instead you can begin to focus on healing thoughts that are meant to provide you with comfort and support rather than the difficult void that negative feelings can sometimes leave us in.

Rather than feeling suck in things like resentment and anger, using loving kindness meditations we can begin to tune ourselves in to loving energies any time we need them. This can help us to avoid confrontation and deal with issues that arise with an air of compassion and peace rather than combativeness. Everybody deserves to be heard, and if we are angry there is usually a good reason for it and we should be able to express those things. however, doing so in a way that others will be receptive to is very important, which is why loving kindness meditations can be so productive.

This is another meditation that has been proven to help those who have suffered from depression, anxiety, or even post traumatic stress disorder. Being able to disengage from negative energies and actively summon positive energies is an incredibly useful tool. It can make all the difference between a peaceful life and interaction and one that is full of strife and conflict.

The best part about it is that we begin to feel more compassion for ourselves. Many of us are too hard on ourselves for the things we perceive as faults or flaws or wrong doings. That can lead us into vicious cycles of self-hatred and abuse toward ourselves that can be difficult to get out of and can even sometimes lead to addiction.

By practicing the art of showing compassion to everyone and everything, starting from within, we are giving ourselves a chance to heal from old wounds we may not even realize have been festering for years. This can help us to tackle new projects with a renewed sense of initiative and integrity. It can help us to get the bounce back in our step and believe that we are truly capable of achieving the things we set out to do. Say good bye to depression, and hello to a compassionate mindset that can lead to more productivity than you have managed in years!

A silhouette of a person in a yoga pose, with one arm raised, set against a vibrant sunset background with orange, red, and purple hues. The person's head is tilted back, and their hand is open, reaching towards the sky.

Chapter 5

ACTIVE MEDITATION WITH KUNDALINI YOGA

A lot of people find that the idea of meditation is daunting because they have a hard time with sitting still and clearing their minds. Many of us like to be active and stay busy, and feel that maybe sitting around in silence is a waste of time. While that is arguable, those that truly believe this to be true may find that there are more benefits for them in practicing Kundalini yoga meditations over other types of meditation.

Kundalini yoga meditation does require a bit more training and skill than will be covered in this book, but with the help of resources that are devoted to this particular discipline, you may find that you are able to gain a calmness of mind and spirit while also fueling your need for your body to stay moving and productive.

Even if you aren't the kind of person who thinks meditation is too slow or boring or a waste of time, you can enjoy the benefits of Kundalini yoga meditations for yourself. There is something very uplifting about being able to take time out of the day to focus on important things, like your health and well-being. Putting time aside to exercise is a great way to enhance your mood, and adding mantras that are affirming and healthy is a great way to make sure that your sessions really set a good tone to your day.

Many places offer courses in Kundalini yoga, and you can find videos online to help you begin getting invested in the practice. There are also books and guided meditations available through retail outlets all over the world. If you find yourself interested in Kundalini yoga meditation, you may find that it is incredibly beneficial. There are hundreds of benefits in combining physical practice with mental wellness.

Yoga is another practice that has been around for centuries. It is as old, probably, as meditation itself, and can be learned about in the vedas as well. Kundalini is considered a concentration of "divine energy" that can be harnessed through meditation. It is said to rest at the base of the spine. Whether

you believe in divine energy or not, utilizing Kundalini yoga meditation is great, as it has a tried and true method of breathing, utilizing mantras, and stretching that leaves the practitioner feeling refreshed and ready for a new experience.

While it is impossible to cover the breadth of this very intricate meditation practice in one chapter, it can at least be said that Kundalini yoga meditations are a great way to get in tune with yourself and the world around you. If you find you are receptive to the spiritual teachings of Kundalini yoga, all the better for you. It can help to give you a grounding, guiding force in your life and help you to see value in the world around you through the lens of a yoga practitioner.

Either way, Kundalini yoga meditation is a great option for anybody who is hoping to get themselves centered and focused on positive energies rather than staying in the same slump or routine day in and day out. It is an art that can be utilized in many forms and that can hold a lot of personal value to the practitioner if given the right devotion, so if you choose this style of meditation, it is certain you will find a benefit in it that you can hold on to!

A person is sitting in a meditative lotus position on a sandy beach, facing the ocean. The sun is setting, creating a warm, golden glow over the water and sky. The person's reflection is visible in the shallow water in the foreground. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Chapter 6

THE BENEFITS OF TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Transcendental meditation is another form of meditation that many people attempt to utilize. This particular form of meditation may be the closest to what you may think of as a stereotypical meditation session, where the goal seems to be to clear the mind and hone yourself into a total body awareness of the world around you.

Transcendental meditation has been around for a long time and can be beneficial for anyone who is looking for a way to detach from every day life and focus on the bigger picture in a way that is rejuvenating. The reason it is called transcendental meditation is because the purpose is to transcend the types of thinking patterns you already have so that you can experience the world and your own mind in a totally different way.

This particular form of meditation is performed in a quiet place. You should be in a comfortable position, and should you choose to use a yoga pose like the lotus pose, also known in Sanskrit as Padmasana, then you are free to do so. The most important thing is to be somewhere quiet and in a position that you can hold for a decent period of time while remaining comfortable and attuned with yourself.

Next, it is often helpful to choose a mantra to focus on. A mantra is a word or a phrase that is meaningful to you or something you are aspiring toward. For example, if you are hoping to transcend your awareness and become more highly aware of things that are beautiful, you may want to choose the mantra, “beauty,” as you begin your transcendental meditation. However, you may want to make sure that your mantra is no more than two syllables. Otherwise, it can make it difficult to slip into the trance-like state that transcendental meditation is designed to offer.

Many transcendental meditations may be guided for this purpose. The person guiding the meditation will help you to focus your mind on the mantra and stay on the path to your ultimate goal. Sometimes it can be easy to get distracted during a transcendental meditation, especially when you are new at it. So without guidance you may find that your mind wanders rather than staying focused on the mantra. That may be why, rather than holding the word in your mind and meditating on it yourself, you may opt instead to purchase a guided transcendental meditation. However you choose to do this, you can expect to spend up to twenty minutes daily practicing your meditation. Throughout that time, you should be repeating your mantra to yourself.

This may ultimately bring you to a state of consciousness that is slightly altered from your typical awareness, as you will be transported to a state of calm as you steadily repeat the mantra in your mind. Some people may find it helpful to use a set of Buddhist meditation beads, called a mala, for purposes of transcendental meditation. The Buddhist strategy is to repeat a phrase exactly 108 times, fingering a bead on the mala as they repeat the phrase. With every new word or prayer, they move their fingers to a new bead until the phrase has been repeated 108 times total. Then they complete the meditation.

This form of meditation has been proven to work for everybody, as it does not require an extreme amount of concentration. All you have to do is sit in a comfortable position and repeat your mantra. Whether you have ADHD or you simply have a hard time sitting still, prompting yourself to focus this way is something that may be easier to do than you would think. That is why it is successful.

At the end of the day, the phrases you choose to meditate on will become a part of your conscious. That means that you will “manifest” more evidence of those things in your life, or more scientifically speaking, you will train your mind to pay more attention to the things that you value rather than looking over them or dismissing them the way you might if you were not putting an active effort in to manifesting those particular energies or experiences.

Whether you are interested in the mystical or the scientific aspects of this practice, either way your body and mind benefit from the chance to put your mind at ease and do whatever it is that needs done to begin paying attention to the things that are most important to you and find at least twenty minutes of calm that can last throughout the rest of your day. It is a practice that works, so try it out for yourself!



Chapter 7

THE PRACTICE OF ZEN MEDITATION

Zen meditation is the most commonly considered form of meditation. When someone says meditation, chances are high that you envision somebody sitting with their hands posed in a certain mudra and their eyes closed, chanting “Om.”

While this may sometimes be an accurate depiction of zen meditation, there is still much more to the story than that. Zen meditation may be considered the original form of meditation, considering it has its origins in Buddhism, which is linked to the ancient Vedas in India when meditation first began. Zen meditation is unique in that it may be one of the most difficult forms of meditation to master, but it still happens to be one of the most peaceful variants of meditation once it is done right.

Zen meditation is when you are able to sit in a comfortable position for whatever amount of time you deem necessary as you allow your thoughts to stop having the same importance they do during your conscious life. That doesn’t mean you try not to think. Instead, you acknowledge the thoughts you have as if they were simply the drops of water from a river of consciousness rolling off of your body. They are there, and there is no purpose in stopping them from coming. However, there is also no purpose to linger on them either. So let them pass.

It is through this practice that we are able to sit in silence for extended periods of time without allowing intrusive and negative thoughts or situations to impact us. We are able to carve out a sanctuary where we give ourselves the freedom to feel peace and unity with our surroundings rather than the stress we tend to feel when we are attempting to control them.

This is also a great way to deal with cyclical thoughts. If there is something that you are really having a hard time letting go, zen meditation is a wonderful way to detach yourself from the negative emotional connotations of the thoughts that are holding you hostage. You can regain control over your state of mind and find relief from the crushing weight of a situation that has left you feeling helpless or angry.

As outlined by this guide to meditation, there are several different methods one could use to achieve a peaceful state of mind. If you would like to work on a zen meditation, you will want to set up a space for yourself that you can utilize specifically for meditation. That way, you are already sending signals to your brain that it is time to detach even before you sit down. However, if you do not have a specific space set aside for meditation, that is okay too. It does help to meditate in the same place every day, particularly when you are still getting the hang of clearing your mind, but it does not have to necessarily be the case. As long as you are consistently working on it then there is no harm in meditating in a different space every time. After all, your mind remains the same!

If you would like to light candles or play soothing music, this is another thing that can help you to keep your mind clear. There are some zen meditations you can use by simply looking into the flame of a candle and letting yourself focus on that rather than the thoughts that want to come and go in your head. Music can also prove to be a beneficial distraction from your thoughts, but you do not want it to be so distracting that you are sitting there listening to music rather than meditating, though it can be a similar experience in ways.

Whatever method you choose, a zen meditation's purpose is to help you go above your thoughts and to a place where you are able to see things objectively and with a peaceful air of acceptance. Acceptance can be one of the most difficult things about experiencing our thoughts. If we are upset about something that has happened to us so it keeps cycling in our minds, that means there is something about that situation that we cannot accept. Maybe we cannot accept someone treating us poorly, or maybe we cannot accept that we are experiencing a loss, because acceptance can make it feel more real that we are ultimately have something to grieve.

But when we learn to accept our thoughts objectively and say to ourselves, "yes, this has happened," and let that thought go on its course without letting ourselves stay too attached to it, then we are able to really begin to have a healthy compartmentalization in our lives that allows us to view situations with peace and perspective rather than staying mired in the emotional baggage that we are attached to at any given time.

That isn't to say that our emotions are not important. It can just be counterproductive and stressful to stay emotional about a situation for too long. It can also be dangerous and can lead to depression if we aren't careful. One of the primary benefits of meditation is an enhanced mental health. We are able to handle ourselves better and have a healthier outlook on the situations we find ourselves in. We are better able to focus on goals and plans rather than staying stuck in doubts and hopelessness. Meditation can be a way out.

Anybody can learn to meditate and clear their minds, even if it seems impossible. There is some form of meditation that suits everybody. Even if you think that it's too impossible to turn off your thoughts, in knowing that the key is in accepting the thoughts as you have them and letting them roll off your back like water will help you to give them an acknowledgement, which is enough to let them go. If you are trying desperately not to think about something that is bothering you as you meditate, but the thought creeps up again and again, instead of sinking in to the negative cycle of obsessing over the situation you are hoping to avoid, rather see the whole situation as a whole if you can. Turn it into a little bead in your mind and say, "yes, this has happened. I acknowledge and accept it and I let it go." And continue to keep a clear mind.

Because zen meditation derived from a Buddhist practice, you may also find that learning the different mudras, or hand gestures, that were utilized during meditation in the vedas, may benefit your meditation experience as well. Some hand gestures were used to invoke certain energies or feelings. For example, the one most people think of when they picture someone meditating, Gyan, or putting your thumb and forefinger together to form a circle, is a mudra that is meant to channel energies that will help you to hone your focus and improve your ability to remember things.

Of course, how well these mudras work for you is really going to depend upon your devotion to Buddhist practices and how much stock you put into the ancient texts. Some of the mudras are meant to harness certain elemental energies that are thought to help with different things in our daily lives. For example, another mudra known as Surya is thought to help harness fire energies within us for the purpose of aiding in our digestion.

Whether you are a believer of the vedas or simply an onlooker who is curious about ways to improve zen meditation practices, there are benefits to taking the time out of your day to clear your mind and focus on creating an objective space where you can ultimately train yourself to maintain your inner peace throughout the trials and tribulations of your life.

It can sometimes be difficult to detach ourselves from life. Other times, it can be far too easy and we lose sight of the lessons that we should be learning from every situation, whether positive or negative. In either case, meditation can help us to gain more insight into ourselves and our own motivations, while helping us to deal with emotional overwhelm and provide ourselves with some balance in times of upheaval.



Chapter 8

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR THE MEDITATION BEGINNERS

Because all of us seem to grow up with a very specific idea of what it means to meditate, most of us approach the topic at the beginning with apprehension. We may find ourselves nervous or think that we will never really have what it takes to succeed at meditation. All of the information provided by this guide may also seem a little bit overwhelming to somebody who has never actually practiced meditation before, so here are some tips and tricks that will make meditation seem easy and accessible to anyone!

The first thing to remember is that meditation is all about comfort. Almost every form of meditation can be done just about anywhere, provided you are in a comfortable enough place to allow your mind to do some recharging. Some people meditate on pillows on the floor, some people meditate at their desks, some people meditate in the bathtub or even in bed! You can meditate anywhere as long as you have found a place that you feel is safe and comfortable. Once you have that part down, the rest can come pretty naturally.

It could be argued that meditation is a natural human instinct. Some of us may find ourselves zoning out throughout the day, thinking of nothing in particular as we go through the motions. That could be considered a natural form of meditation. Our minds are recharging and taking a break away from some of the more stressful sensory input that is constantly being fed to it by our environment.

Thousands of years ago when the ancient vedas were made, there weren't as many distractions surrounding humanity. We didn't have as much noise pollution or technology or bustling city streets with thousands of people and cars honking. Even still, without all of those distractions, the gurus found meditation a beneficial and necessary practice in achieving both enlightenment and peace of mind.

Now, it is arguably even more necessary than ever for us to be able to take a break from the overwhelming sensory input of the world around us and find a quiet place to recharge and center ourselves. It is crucial to get away from the hustle and bustle so that we can begin to create a more sustainable way of approaching the world around us. Rather than being overwhelmed as we go from situation to frustrating situation, we can allow ourselves the ability to really process things in a way that will help us to achieve our goals rather than being held back by our emotional attachments. Neutrality is a big theme in Zen Buddhism.

Something that many of us may find ourselves doing during meditation is controlling the way we breathe. It can be difficult to concentrate on anything else, and often times guided meditations or breathing meditations can call on us to breathe a certain way. But this can sometimes be counterintuitive if we are trying to do a zen meditation, for example, and it ends up with us stressing out because all we can do is focus on our breathing.

While it can be a great practice when done correctly, it can be detrimental to someone who is trying to detach from their thoughts and find a state of relaxation and objectivity. If your focus is going entirely on the way you are breathing, then you are probably causing yourself more stress as you attempt to gain control over something that usually works for us automatically. Sometimes, the key to a successful meditation is surrendering control. And attempting to control the way we breathe can make that difficult unless it is done in a constructive way, generally using the guidance of someone who knows a lot about breathing techniques. However, if you are already knowledgeable in breathing techniques and find them to be enhancing to your meditations rather than debilitating, feel free, of course, to use them as needed.

Another good piece of advice for someone who is new to meditation is to start off with small doses. Instead of meditating for large chunks of time before you have a handle on what you are doing or feeling the benefits for yourself, you should ease into it as you would with any other new habit. You don't want to overwhelm yourself and have a counterproductive session. It is important that you are able to gain something out of your meditations, and if they are too long before you are ready then you are probably going to find yourself feeling agitated and restless, which is not a productive and stress-relieving thing to feel.

Keep your initial sessions short. Try not to go over three minutes at first. This will give you plenty of time to get acquainted with yourself and the way that your mind works. Three minutes can feel like a long time when you are embarking upon something that you have never done before, especially when it involves the quiet of your own mind. But it is something you can get used to with practice.

Beginners to meditation often benefit from focusing on different parts of the body during their initial sessions. This helps to cultivate a relationship with the self so that the person meditating is able to really feel integrated and whole. This is also a good way to really get comfortable with the practice of meditation and shutting out the rest of the world to get a sense of balance and calm from focusing the mind intentionally on specific things. It is a great practice for those who think that meditation may be difficult, because it shows just how helpful meditation is in redirecting your thoughts and the power in finding serenity in the simplest of things.

The next thing that makes meditation most beneficial is to do it right after you wake up in the morning. Including meditation in your daily routine is a really amazing way to make sure that you are getting your day off to a great start. If you are hoping to hone a specific intention or energy, then morning meditations can be incredibly helpful in shifting your outlook of the entire day.

Whether you like to do meditations in the morning or the evening, or any time in between, it can also help a lot to make sure that whenever you decide is the best time to meditate, that you are doing it consistently. That way, you will always have it on your schedule and will be able to carve out a specific time in your life that you are dedicating to meditation. Meditation is most effective when it is done consistently, because you are always making yourself a priority. That can be incredibly important. Especially in today's age, when it can seem like even working two jobs isn't enough to fully maintain a comfortable quality of life. Things can get very stressful, and it is always helpful to be able to help keep yourself on track and seek out peace of mind however you may be able to find it.

Some people may find that the stress they are experiencing in daily life simply will not go away. Maybe there is a specific thought that continues to come back to mind. Much of the time, the best course of action to take is to let the thought pass and refocus your attention on your breathing. However, there are times that you may find that it is helpful to let yourself consider the thought that won't leave your mind. When this happens, there are a few things to consider.

Is there some form of insight that you can gain while you are in a calm state of mind that you may not have found when you were busy with the stresses of daily life? Is there some new sense you may have about the situation at hand? When people say they have to meditate on something to find a solution, this is literally the definition of that phrase. Sitting on a problem with a clear mind can sometimes really help us to gain a new perspective on that situation so that we are able to work through it with a more effective outlook. Not only can it help us to change our attitude about the issue, but it can also help us to change our approach, and that is often what is most necessary.

something else that you can do is meditate on specific thoughts or questions you have. This can be especially beneficial if you find that you feel disconnected with yourself and are hoping to develop a more loving and friendly relationship with yourself as a person. Get reconnected with who you are and your thoughts, feelings, and goals. What are the things that you would like to accomplish? If you can't answer that immediately, why not sit down for a while and meditate on that question? What are the things that you can do to begin making progress toward your goals?

Ask yourself questions that can truly help you hone your productivity. If you would like to, you can keep a notebook on hand so that you can immediately begin writing down the most important notes so you don't forget them. Whether you record your insight before the meditation is over or after, it can be helpful to have a solid reference to your state of mind as you process ways to better your relationship with yourself and achieve your plans.

Something silly that a lot of people worry about when they begin meditating is that they are going to be doing it wrong. That is actually impossible. While it is true that there are certain techniques that you can master, such as yogic practices or special forms of transcendental meditation, the truth at heart is that meditation is meant to serve you, no matter how you use it. If you are doing something that makes you feel good, relaxed, and comfortable, then you are doing it right. If you are able to start

to focus on the things that you want to do to make your life better, then you are doing it right. If all you want to do is lay in the bathtub with a clear mind and you have managed to accomplish that, then you are doing it right. There is really no wrong way to find enlightenment or to gain insight into yourself. All you really have to do is put forth the effort to disconnect from the stresses of daily life and give yourself a chance to relax and breathe.

Sometimes, people don't enjoy sitting in silence because it provides insights that can be difficult to cope with. Some people have had very difficult situations happen to them in the past, or they might find that they are making choices they would rather not be making. Meditation can force us to have accountability for our own actions and the mistakes that we are making. This can sometimes be very uncomfortable.

However, this is where loving kindness meditations can be the most rewarding. If we are able to embrace ourselves with compassion and forgive ourselves for the bad choices that we make, then it will be easier for us to begin to take the necessary steps toward correcting the behaviors that are holding us back from having positive, rewarding interactions. When we focus on giving ourselves love and compassion, we are less likely to resort to negative behaviors simply because they might feel good at the time. We are more likely to examine our motivations closely and weigh whether or not those behaviors will benefit us or hurt us in the long run, then make our choices accordingly.

It can take a little while for us to reach that stage of self-love, but it is an important step in the major process of learning ourselves. Meditation is meant to help guide us through life so that we are being as true to ourselves as possible without the limitations of our mistakes. While we may still make things we consider to be mistakes, with meditation, they can also benefit us as we learn more about ourselves. We can turn our foibles into learning experiences that can help us to get to where we want to be in life emotionally, spiritually, and even materially. And this is a great benefit.

When you first begin meditating, you should pay close attention to yourself. What are the things that you are feeling? What emotions are arising? How does your body feel? Is it comfortable? Why do you think you are having the emotional reaction that you are having? See how deep down in the rabbit hole you can go without becoming too emotionally wrapped up to consider the situation with objectivity.

This may be hard to do at first, as we tend to experience our emotions very fully. But with meditation, the benefit is that we are able to use the space we put between ourselves and our emotions to analyze them and address them with an analytical approach that allows us to learn more about the way we operate. With that insight, we are able to find ways to cope with our difficulties and tackle problems head-on, knowing that whatever path we have chosen to take, we have examined it from every angle and have the confidence in knowing that it is the best likely choice. And nobody can determine what is best for us except for us. And meditation can help us to figure out what that is. So always keep that in mind.

If you are having a hard time calming your mind and centering yourself at first, don't be discouraged. You can try to focus on your breathing, as long as you are not trying to control it. Close your eyes and think about the way the air feels as it goes into your lungs and back out of your body. Feel the gentle motion of your body as your chest rises and falls. Consider the peaceful nature of breath. The way it is

always with us, usually silent, always nourishing. You can take the opportunity at this time to do the body scan that was mentioned earlier in this chapter and think about all of your different body parts. From your chest, you could then focus on your shoulders, or your left arm or right. Maybe your fingertips or your torso. However you choose to approach this meditation, focusing on your breathing can be a great way to get yourself acclimated to meditation if you are new to the practice.

If focusing on the way your breathing feels isn't enough, you could always count your breaths. This can be a useful strategy for falling asleep as well. Close your eyes and think about your breaths going in and going out. One, two. In, out. One, two. If you are in need of an easy meditation style that will help you to really relax, this makes for a very simple and very effective way to do so.

This is particularly effective if you are practicing while rested, otherwise you may find yourself having a hard time staying awake. Meditating with a sharp mind is usually a good idea, which is another reason that it may be best to begin your meditations in the morning as part of your routine.

Finally, remember that forcing your meditation is never going to work. If you aren't feeling it, you simply aren't feeling it. You don't have to put a lot of pressure on yourself to do something like this. The whole goal is to get yourself relaxed and re-focused. But if you find yourself fidgeting and restless and agitated, there is no reason to waste that energy sitting around and fighting something you are not fully committed to.

You can meditate when you are in the headspace to meditate. That will help you get a lot more accomplished. And if you find that you are always feeling restless and edgy when you are trying to make time to meditate, perhaps your meditation is lacking something that you would need to feel it is beneficial to your life. You can always look into other people's thoughts on meditation and techniques that they have found work for them. Maybe you are the kind of person who would rather meditate with someone else. You can always speak with your loved ones and see if they might want to join you in a meditation. You can also get in touch with people who are passionate about meditation who may share their secrets and experiences with you and make it a little bit easier for you to succeed the way you are hoping to.

In either case, meditation is always going to take a small amount of effort. That effort is mostly spent in being able to carve out the time to actually sit down and face yourself, good thoughts, bad thoughts, and everything in between. If that is something that is intimidating, then maybe sitting down and meditating on why it is difficult to meditate would help you to find some answers. While it may seem overwhelming to begin meditating, the truth is that it can be far more overwhelming to live your life without meditation as a tool to help you move forward. Everybody can benefit from gaining insight into themselves and learning how to clear their minds and approach problems effectively and objectively. All you really have to do is try!



Conclusion

Meditation has something to offer to everyone. Every single one of us have problems that we are confounded by, or a need to step away from obsessive thoughts or stressful sensory input in order to focus more inwardly and create a more peaceful space for ourselves where we can thrive. And with the power of meditation on our side, it is easier than ever to look at plans and goals realistically and create reasonable guidelines for ourselves to follow in order to truly succeed.

While it may seem daunting at first to begin meditating, there are several tips and tricks, as outlined in this guide, that can help you to overcome those doubts and really find the benefits in your practice. Every one of us is different and finds answers in different ways. However, we are still all humans who require a good amount of serenity in order to find true peace and happiness.

But if our inner world is full of conflict, turmoil, and stress, or we are taking a lot on to our shoulders without taking the time we need to recharge, things can get messy. That is when the benefits of meditation are truly able to shine. When things begin to seem difficult, or we have a plan or goal we want to achieve but we find ourselves hitting a brick wall, it is important to be able to detach ourselves emotionally from the situation and observe it from a distance so that we can find the most effective path forward.

Not only that, but in meditating on ourselves, we will gain the insight we need to work through our weaknesses and begin to build them into strengths. All of us could use improvement in some form or another, and meditation makes self-improvement easy and insightful, rather than difficult and painstaking. We will still have to do the work involved in creating a better situation for ourselves, but with meditation as a tool on our side, introspection is easier than ever and we can start to see a clear path forward rather than being swamped by the negative interference along the way.

No matter how you choose to use meditation, the benefits are endless. We can seek solitude from the hectic outside world and focus on the things that truly matter. We can begin to build up our

relationships with ourselves and learn to love and embrace ourselves even though we may perceive ourselves as flawed. We can acknowledge those flaws with honesty and move forward in finding ways to strengthen them. We can learn from mistakes and see painful situations objectively so that we are able to move through them with productivity rather than being swamped by pain and depression. Meditation is the medicine that so many of us are sorely lacking. But it is a medicine that is free, and one that we can begin to use immediately.

So don't hesitate. Include meditation into your daily life. You can start now, or you can start later. Whenever you decide to embark upon your journey, know that you are doing it for the best possible reasons. Improving your life, and the lives of everyone around you, is essential in promoting a peaceful community. We impact others with our energies and attitude, and if we are doing our best to put nothing but love and productivity out into the world, then that is what we are going to get back, guaranteed.