

Meditation

The practice of meditation allows you to reach your quiet mind. It is an energising experience, builds confidence and an increased ability to be appropriate and effective.

The technique is simple and natural - We tend to think everything is complex.

It is preferable to meditate for 15 or 20 minutes twice a day. If you can only manage once a day then the best time is in the morning. However if you can only do it in the evening, then by all means do it in the evening.

1. Switch off the telephone and lower the answerphone. General household/background noises will not disturb you.
2. Sit comfortably, without crossing your arms and legs, in your favourite chair.
3. Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and create a feeling of love/well being/calm. You can use your 'peaceful place anchor' to achieve this. Increase this feeling
4. Relax all your body by letting this feeling pervade your body, letting it move down your limbs and body, like a wave of pleasure.
5. Let your mind rest gently on your breathing. Simply begin to breathe through your nose. As you breathe through your nose, just gently let your attention rest on the sensation of the air as it passes through the bridge of your nose inside. As you gently inhale and exhale you are not trying to accomplish anything. You have no other goal other than letting your mind rest gently on your breathing.

Now you will find from time to time that you have been distracted by a thought or an image. When you notice that a distraction has occurred, allow it. Do not be reactive or upset. When you lose that attentiveness, notice it and gently bring your attention back to your breathing.

Understand also, that initially there will be many distracting thoughts and you may think that you are not cut out for meditation, that you cannot do it. This is not the case. As a result of this simple practice blocks of energy are released and almost always, together with this release of blocked energy, there is a stream of thought and images that distract you. The fact that they are happening frequently in the beginning is an indication of the degree of blockage that is being released. So rather than proving that you are not a good meditator it is proof that the meditation is working. So do not be frustrated if at the beginning when most of the 15-20 minutes is spent thinking, rather than letting your mind rest gently on your breathing. You will find that as the first few weeks go by that the distractions will diminish and you will come to have meditation where most of the 20 minutes is spent with your attention resting gently on your breathing. **DO NOT CONCENTRATE** on the breathing. Meditation is to be effortless.

Now you will find that subsequent to your experience of the majority of the 15/20 minutes with your attention resting gently on your breathing, you will begin to realise that your mind is not on your breathing but also not on anything else. You will experience periods of simply being conscious, conscious of everything attached to nothing. That experience epitomises the centredness that meditation helps you to arrive at. The experience of being pure consciousness in which the awareness to the body, chair, clock, etc continues to be fully present but you do not find yourself hooked by or attached to. It is a marvellous experience of freedom.

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Even in the initial stage, when much of the 20 minutes is spent in the flow of distracting thoughts, you will

come to end meditation knowing that you have moved into a significantly more peaceful place. You will begin to experience, relatively near the beginning of your regular meditation, the benefits of meditation. It is a means of going into the stillness where in the silence you have communion with your Self. In silence, in peace and in love. Moments away from the ceaseless chatter of our ego minds.

Meditation is revitalising. If you wish to revitalise yourself after a long day and before commencing your evening, just spend 15 to 20 minutes in meditation.

Continuous Meditation

To get the most benefit from meditation it needs some sort of carry through into your everyday life. These techniques are not a substitute for your regular meditation but they help to maintain your peace and harmony throughout the day.

1. Meditation in Action

Not all meditations are held in the static position. Their goal is simple 'being', being able to centre the attention on the task in hand. In other words living in the moment. After practising meditation for a sometime you will find that you will be able to have meditative moments in places when you are surrounded by people and traffic and you will be able to apply meditation in action throughout your day. eg when walking. Looking just in front of you, arms swinging loosely as you walk, relax your neck your face, your arms and your breath deep and even. Then begin to listen to your footsteps. Be aware only of your walking. Relax into this one activity until you are totally absorbed by it. Feel only the breath in your lungs and the path beneath your feet. In minutes you would have forgotten the distractions; you will be meditating.

2. The Meditation Break

One of the most stressful environments we face is the daily working environment. Occasional two minute meditations during your working day will bring significant benefits. Five minutes is even better. Instead of a coffee break, take a meditation break. A 5 minutes walk or a meditation in a quiet place will give you more energy and enthusiasm for the rest of the day.

Notice any ANTS (automatic negative thoughts). Practice the 'Stop, drop, Go'. Take a meditation break.

"If everyone in your workplace is slowly (or quickly) going mad and cultivating stress related ailments, it is not a 'reality' you should be party to. Besides, you will find that having a sense of order and calm in your work life will not only be more beneficial to you and your work, but it will have a calming influence on all who work with you."(The Calm Technique by Paul Wilson)

3. Live fully in the present by doing your best in the moment. Each thing that you do doing it to best of your ability.

"Life exists only in the present. 'Future' and 'Past' are nothing more than abstract concepts; yet they dominate our lives and are at the root of almost every emotional disorder or discomfort ever experienced.concerns for what has passed and what is yet to happen cause more insecurity, anxiety, fear, frustration and tension than other condition. Meditation helps you to overcome your regrets about the past and your concerns for the future. The way you do this is simply by concentrating your life in the present, by living each moment to its fullest and devoting all your attention and appreciation to that moment."

ie don't eat while watching TV, worry about tomorrow's deadlines while performing today's task. This doesn't mean that we do not make plans, to plan ahead is an activity of the present.