

MEDITATION: AN OVERVIEW

FOCUSED ATTENTION WITH THE INTENTION OF ACHIEVING A RELAXED BODY, A CALM AWARENESS OF THE PRESENT MOMENT, AND A SPIRITUAL CONNECTION TO A GREATER POWER OR TO YOUR HIGHEST SELF

Meditation is mindful, focusing your attention on your experience as it unfolds in the present moment. Meditation techniques take many forms that can be practiced separately or in combination to achieve physical relaxation, calm awareness, and spiritual connectedness.

The following list of meditation techniques is organized by activity. Some are part of a greater belief system, and there are many variations. Some serve simply to help you maintain a single focus without reacting to intruding thoughts. Some focus on effecting change in your thinking or feeling. All can be done alone or with others. There is nothing magical or supernatural about any of these techniques; they are simply tools to help you practice meditation, and with practice you become better at being aware of the now. Meditation is an ancient practice of most religions, but does not assume a religious belief system. Choose one or more that are comfortable for you, and in harmony with your own personal beliefs.

Meditation Techniques

Mindful Listening

Music

Sounds: rain, ocean waves

Rhythms: drums, chants

Mantra, Passage Meditation

Entrainment to alpha and theta waves

Intentional auditory trigger (neurolinguistic programming)

Mindful Looking

Candle flame, lovely picture, religious icon, crystal

Guided imagery: visualize by listening

Mindful Moving

Breathing: abdominal breathing, pranayama techniques

Yoga asanas (postures) with controlled breathing

Qi Gong, T'ai Chi, T'ai Chi Chih

Focused or purposeful movement

Labyrinth (mandala, a walking maze)

Progressive relaxation of muscle groups

TTouch for pets

Mindful Thinking

Intercessory prayer: asking divine intervention for another or for groups

Affirmations

Focused remembering

“Sitting” meditation (Zazen or Vipassana): not thinking of past or future; being in the now

Guided Body scan

Benefits

RELAXED BODY = opposite of physical stress

Expect to feel light, have restful sleep, and energy to engage the day

Expect to heal and resist physical dis-ease

CALM AWARENESS IN PRESENT MOMENT= opposite of worry

Expect to dwell in the “now”... not in the future or in the past... it is always now

Expect to become more aware of beauty in your environment (smell the roses)

CONNECTION TO A GREATER POWER... DIVINE CREATOR or your HIGHEST, MOST PERFECT SELF

Expect to feel joyful and more in tune with your intuition, noticing synchronicities

Expect to cope more easily with stressful events

Practice Tips

1. Select the quietest most comfortable place possible, without preventable distractions
2. Practice regularly, same time and same place when possible
3. Get in a comfortable position: sitting, lying down, standing
4. Take time to settle and get ready, comfortable clothing, take a few deep breaths
5. Center yourself: think/feel gratitude to a higher being or to your highest self
6. Follow the technique precisely, or be flexible and creative... whatever works for you
7. Keep focused (mindful) on your chosen activity, sound, visual object or breathing
8. When distractions come, let them go without judging them; return to the present moment
9. Be still, or move slowly
10. Start with short sessions, work up to 20 to 40 minute
If you can't find 20 minutes, then you need to meditate for an hour!
11. Commit to a lifetime of practice daily... like nutritious meals, the benefits are lasting

Resources

There are many excellent resources available on the internet to guide you in the different meditation techniques

NIH National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health provides evidence based information about effectiveness and safety (www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-in-depth)

Our feelings of stress are reactions to events

We may not be able to control events but...

we can learn to control our reactions to those events