



# Guide to Meditation

by

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## Guide to Meditation

### Introduction

In today's busy world we often feel stressed and anxious, overwhelmed by all that we need to fit in, by our economic climate, by the world's conflicts, and so on.

Many people use meditation to calm the mind and relieve the stresses and strains of life, promoting feelings of wellbeing and control back to their lives.

### Benefits of Meditation

Meditation has been found to benefit the whole being and this has now been scientifically proven. It is used by many successful people to improve performance and results. In addition meditation can help ease feelings of anxiety and stress, sleeplessness, high blood pressure and emotional difficulties, along with managing chronic pain. Interestingly, meditation has also been shown to reduce our inflammatory response by reducing the level of cytokines (inflammatory stress chemicals) which in turn can lessen arthritis, colitis and asthma. Meditation helps to train the mind, improving attention span and the ability to concentrate, in addition to improving memory loss and cognitive decline in older years. There is also current research being undertaken to confirm that meditative practice can also act as a potential therapy for addiction.

Our mind controls so many of our responses and feelings. Meditation calms the mind and helps us to be more in control.

This is illustrated perfectly by the effects of meditation on managing stress levels. Stress is a reaction we feel when under pressure or threatened, or when we find ourselves in a situation we feel we cannot control. A small amount of stress can motivate us to complete a task or to feel energised. However, stress can become an issue when it lasts for a long time or is very intense. It can affect both our physical and mental health. Physically, stress can cause difficulty breathing, panic attacks, sleep issues, chest and other pains, and high blood pressure, fatigue, and the aggravation of existing health conditions. Mentally, stress can cause anxiety and



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depression, along with phobias. Regular meditation promotes feelings of calm and wellbeing.

## Different Meditations

Five of the most common types of meditation are loving-kindness meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness, breath awareness meditation, transcendental meditation, guided meditation. Guided meditation is among the best types of meditation for beginners because it provides assistance with focus. There is no “right way” to meditate, and individuals can explore all types of meditation until they find one that suits them. Some types involve keeping mental focus on a sensation, while other types entail focusing awareness on the present without making judgments.

### Loving-kindness meditation:-

This is also known as Metta meditation. The aim of Metta meditation is to achieve an attitude of kindness towards everything, even a person’s enemies and sources of stress. The technique is to breathe deeply while opening the mind to receive loving kindness. Messages of loving kindness are then sent to the world, specific people, or loved ones. These messages are repeated until a feeling of kindness and love is felt.

### Progressive muscle relaxation:-

When undertaking progressive muscle relaxation people focus on each part of the body, sometimes tensing and releasing each muscle, sometimes visualising a wave drifting over the body, causing each muscle group to relax.

Progressive relaxation can help to produce feelings of calmness and relaxation because it slowly and steadily relaxes the body, this form of meditation can be used to help them sleep, and it is also used to reduce feelings of pain.

### Mindfulness meditation:-

Mindfulness relaxes the mind by encouraging the individual to focus on their present environment, rather than the past or future worries. The aim is to let go of any feelings of judgement, and not be reactive to events happening around us. Mindful meditation can be done anywhere. Some people prefer to sit in a quiet place, close their eyes, and focus on their breathing. But you can choose to be mindful at any point of the day, including while you’re commuting to work or doing chores.



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Transcendental meditation:-

To undertake transcendental meditation, we need to choose a mantra – a word, a phrase, or simply a sound – and repeat it for 15-20 minutes twice a day, preferably when seated with eyes closed to improve focus. This will induce a deep relaxation. It allows the mind to go beyond thoughts and gain access to inner creativity, energy, peace and happiness.

Examples of empowering mantras might include:-

“Today you are perfect” - for building self-confidence.

“Forward progress! Just keep moving!” - for strength and will-power.

“I am attracting all the love I dream of and I deserve” - for manifesting love.

“I am strong. I am beautiful. I am enough”- for building self-esteem.

“I am fulfilled. I am fearless” - for starting the day.

Decide on the changes you wish to make to your subconscious, and write down a mantra to embody those.

## Conclusion

In summary, regular meditation is undoubtedly a very effective tool in calming the mind and in dealing with feelings of stress and overwhelm, helping us to remain composed and peaceful even when life presents us with difficulties . To be effective it needs to be practised consistently and the more frequently, the better. It has the power to change our mindset, and this requires a minimum of 21 days of consistent meditation to achieve. Our attitudes to life are transformed and we perceive situations and people differently. As the great American psychologist and philosopher William James stated over a century ago, “The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind.”



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