



Meditation For All

Introduction

Are you one of those people who recognise that the pace of life is getting faster, that there is more uncertainty and change is on the increase. Do you experience a feeling of 'not keeping pace'?

Slowing the pace is probably outside your control but something to produce a calmer approach to things and increase your mental capacity to deal with everything could be the answer.

Meditation is a technique which enables us to take 'time out' or 'switch off' and can be used in a variety of situations, which means it can fit conveniently into a busy life.

Did you know that the parasympathetic nervous system generates the 'rest and renew' response; when the heart slows and breathing deepens allowing tissues to be nourished. The mind calms and there is less likelihood of over reaction. Meditation is one technique which simulates such responses.

So what are the benefits?

Physical: deep regular breathing increases the supply of oxygen through the body, calms the nervous system and the flow of oxygen-rich blood brings down the heart rate; and it has been proven to lower blood pressure.

Mental: it helps clear the mind of 'chatter' which in turn, allows a clearer perspective on situations and does away with the auto-response judgements which are embedded through social conditioning. Calming the mind allows intuition to surface (when the mind is not cluttered by analysis, criticisms, judgements and programmed perceptions).

Regular meditation can:

- ➡ Promote deep relaxation
- ➡ Relieve stress and anxiety
- ➡ Lower blood pressure and heart rate
- ➡ Help treat migraine, insomnia and addictions
- ➡ Lift depression and improve self esteem
- ➡ Boost the immune system
- ➡ Have significant effect on ageing
- ➡ Increase IQ

Those who meditate regularly report increased efficiency, creativity and self-confidence, great self-love and love for others.

How do you meditate?

Step 1 Adopt a relaxed and comfortable posture: sit in a chair with your back and neck supported, or lie down, again with back and neck supported. If you are flexible you might sit comfortably in a crossed leg, upright pose.

Step 2 Focus on your breathing. As you breath in and out, notice how it becomes more gentle and quiet. Become aware of the almost imperceptible pause between taking that breath in and breathing out. A gentle emphasis on the 'out-breath' is often helpful in gaining a meditative state.



You can focus on a helpful word such as: “*calm*”, or “*peaceful*”, or “*relax*”, or “*easy*”, or “*in / out*”. Hear it in your head or say it out aloud in rhythmic time with your breathing. Or, you could use the word “*peace*” when you are breathing in and “*full*” when you are breathing out.

Alternatively you might find it helpful to use visualisation - imagine yourself sitting near a river or on a bridge watching a stream flowing along. Pay attention to the colour of the water and the ripples on the surface, see and hear them. Picture any intrusive thoughts and images that come to you, lying on petals or leaves of various sizes on the surface of the water. Watch as each one passes, floating away, see them as they become smaller and smaller until one by one they disappear.

It's that simple!

Try meditating:

- ➡ First thing in the morning – a great way to start the day in a relaxed manner.
- ➡ In the office - meditating is a very effective way of creating a refreshing break if you have been concentrating for a long period or working intensely on your PC.
- ➡ On the train travelling to/from work appointments – try to leave 20 minutes at the end of the journey to meditate as a way of clearing your mind and feeling relaxed. On the way back it will relieve the stresses of the day so you feel fresh when you get home.
- ➡ Before your next Dentist appointment – a good way to help you feel calm and remove the usual anxiety that goes with this event.
- ➡ In a traffic jam – this will take your focus away from all the problems that are likely to result from being delayed; remember, a traffic jam is something outside of your control.
- ➡ Can't sleep – if your mind is just too busy to let you sleep, try meditating in bed; this is not normally recommended as you may fall asleep but when that is exactly the outcome you need, its great!

Tips for success

As with any new discipline or activity it takes time to master the technique. You must have heard the saying ...practice makes perfect!

Try and find a suitable place to practise your meditating. You will need some space in a simple but appealing environment; it should be warm, not too hot or cold, in a quiet area, and free from any sudden interruptions.

Some people find that music can really help them to relax. Notice which music leaves you feeling calm and refreshed – use this to help in your meditation practice.

When you are busy it's very easy to drop such practices in order to get 'things done'. Diary time on a regular basis to meditate in a controlled way.

Happy Meditating