

Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



THE CONSCIOUS LIFE: MEDITATION FOR BEGINNERS

Meditation for many people is consciously a daily practice that focuses on an inner reflection, contemplation, and developing a spiritual interconnectedness with a higher source. Whilst there are thousands of meditation methods that can be adapted too, ultimately its the benefits that contribute to mind-body-spirit balance that are most important.

The process of developing your practice may change as you gain confidence, experience life transitions, and discover additional meditation practices. Health practitioners, employers, education systems, local yoga or tai chi groups and more now regularly apply various forms of meditative practices. For people new to meditation practise it's not necessary to purchase expensive DVDs, enrol in programs, or purchase 'guru' style books. People with mobility or restrictive physical movement should be encouraged to develop a form of meditation practice as this would greatly benefit physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. The Conscious Life web site provides a valuable entry resource for seekers of Truth who want to begin their meditation practice as easy to follow guidelines are offered. Since the late 1970s Ive practiced various forms of meditation, and encouraged others to begin. "The Conscious Life" website suggestions offering simple meditation guidelines are recommended below.

—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020

*'Ordinary men hate solitude,
But the master makes use of it,
Embracing his aloneness, realizing,
He is one with the whole universe.'
—Lao Tzu, Tao-Te-Ching*

THE CONSCIOUS LIFE: HOW TO MEDITATE... FOR BEGINNERS

'1: CHOOSE A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

Find a nice, quiet place where you won't be disturbed for fifteen minutes or longer. Sit down, relax and rest your hands on your lap. You can sit on the floor cross-legged with the support of a meditation cushion, or on any chair with your feet resting on the ground. It is not necessary to force yourself into a lotus position if you are not used to it. **Regardless of how you sit, it is important to maintain the natural curve of your back.** That means no slouching. People with chronic back problems who cannot sit for a prolonged period of time can explore other meditation positions.

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2: BREATHE SLOWLY AND DEEPLY.

Close your eyes softly. Direct your soft, unfocused gaze downwards. Begin by taking a few slow and deep breaths – inhaling with your nose and exhaling from your mouth. **Don't force your breathing; let it come naturally.** The first few intakes of air are likely to be shallow, but as you allow more air to fill your lungs each time, your breaths will gradually become deeper and fuller. Take as long as you need to breathe slowly and deeply.

THE CONSCIOUS LIFE: MEDITATION TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

3: BE AWARE

When you are breathing deeply, you will begin to feel calmer and more relaxed. That is a good sign. Now, focus your attention on your breathing. Be aware of each breath that you take in through your nose. Be mindful of each breath that you exhale with your mouth. Continue focusing on your breaths for as long as you like. If you find your attention straying away from your breaths, just gently bring it back. It may happen many times. Don't be disheartened. What's important is to realize that you have wandered and bring your attention back to where it should be. As you develop greater focus power, you will find it easier to concentrate.

4: ENDING THE SESSION

When you are ready to end the session, open your eyes and stand up slowly. Stretch yourself and extend your increased awareness to your next activities. Well done! You have done it!

- Aim to have the length of your exhalations as long, if not longer, than your inhalations.** By expelling more used air, you make more room for fresh air to fill your lungs. If your out-breaths are much shorter than the in-breaths, you can help to expel more air by gently contracting your abdominal muscles.
- **If the weather is chilly, keep yourself warm with a blanket or shawl during meditation.**
- Meditating with an empty or full stomach may be distracting or even uncomfortable.** Make sure there is something in your tummy, but not so much that you feel distracted while sitting.



- Some people find it easier to meditate with light music or other relaxing sounds in the background**, while others prefer total silence. If you belong to the first group, choose an appropriate music that helps you to calm down and yet won't distract you from your practice. *One example from native American flute music, is the sound of nature.*

6: HOW OFTEN SHOULD I MEDITATE?

- **Once a day, or more if you wish.** Some people meditate in the morning before breakfast and have another session just before they sleep. Meditation may seem like a chore at first, but learn to enjoy it and look forward to it everyday. See it as an opportunity, rather than an item on your to-do list, to spend some intimate moments with yourself. Cultivate meditation as a habit that you'd do naturally every day, like brushing of your teeth.

7: HOW LONG DO I NEED TO MEDITATE EACH TIME?

- Aim for at least fifteen minutes for each session.** For most people, it will normally take ten minutes or more for the mind to settle down. So if your meditation is too short, you would find the session has ended before you even have a chance to get into it.

8: WHY DO I FIND IT SO HARD TO CONCENTRATE OF SIT STILL DURING MEDITATION

- Many people, including long-time meditators, have experienced occasions when they find their concentration is not as focused as they want it to be.** So, it is important to be patient and compassionate with yourself, especially if you are a beginner.
- Meditation requires your mind to be quiet.** Therefore, anything that stimulates your mind just before your sitting is not going to be very helpful, such as a heated argument with your partner, an exciting computer game, a dramatic movie or a thought-provoking book. If you find yourself often having a hard time sitting still during meditation, try to avoid engaging in any of these activities prior to your session.
- Some people also find a relaxation exercise** or a gentle stretch before meditation helps them to get into a tranquil state faster.
- Alternatively, you can try walking meditation** if you face difficulty with the sitting version, or work on improving your concentration.





Suggested resources:

Meditation for Beginners - The Conscious Life

<https://theconsciouslife.com/how-to-meditate-a-guide-for-beginners.htm>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHdOSMpZ1_w

<https://theconsciouslife.com/meditation-positions-back-friendly.htm>

Native American Flute Music

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHdOSMpZ1_w

<https://mindfulnesshamilton.ca/resources/online>

<https://www.mindfulnesscds.com/>

https://youtu.be/3nwwKbM_vJc

