

# MEDITATION

When you hear the word “meditate,” what images come to mind? Sitting cross-legged on a pillow, eyes closed, possibly chanting? A religious group engaged in deep and mindful concentration?

**While these are forms of meditation, the practice comes in many other varieties:**

**Prayer/chanting**

**Breathing**

**Ritual/exercise**

**Viewing art/listening to music**



For beginners, the simplest form of meditation is breathing. Breathing can be done each day for only a couple minutes at a time. The goal of a breathing meditation is to allow the mind to rest from thoughts, which means allowing thoughts to pass through, rather than tending to each one as it enters the mind. Learning to “be” with the present is the goal of meditation.

In a breathing meditation, find a comfortable seat and allow the spine to be tall. Simply concentrate on the breathing, both the inhale and exhale, bringing each to the same length. Breathe from the stomach, rather than the chest, and allow the belly to go soft, rising and falling with each breath. If a thought enters into your mind, acknowledge it, and let it go. Allow your mind to grow still.

There really is no right or wrong way to meditate. In the beginning, you may find it difficult to slow your mind and tap into your inner consciousness so it may be beneficial to begin your meditation first thing in the morning, before you’re distracted with the tasks of daily life. Once you’ve strengthened your meditation routine, experiment with practicing at other times, such as at your desk before a long meeting, after a workout, at bedtime – really, whenever it is safe to close your eyes and allow your concentration to move inward.

## **Recommended sources for meditations:**

Deepak Chopra – via iTunes or <http://www.chopra.com/>  
Paul Epstein’s *Happiness Through Meditation* <http://www.wildmind.org/>  
<http://www.mindspace.org.uk/>  
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/meditation/>

**In addition to mental health and emotional benefits, meditation may help with:**

<b>Allergies</b>	<b>Fatigue</b>
<b>Anxiety disorders</b>	<b>Heart disease</b>
<b>Asthma</b>	<b>High blood pressure</b>
<b>Binge eating</b>	<b>Chronic pain</b>
<b>Depression</b>	<b>Sleep problems</b>
	<b>Substance abuse</b>

Meditation works most effectively when practiced every day, so start simple but stay consistent. It is more effective to meditate for just five minutes a day, at the same time every day, than for 20 minutes once or twice a week. As you experience the benefits, experiment with new meditations. Meditation will help to slow your mind from the fast-paced nature of today’s environment, allowing your intuition to show itself more strongly and aligning you more with your intentions.

Dr. Weil’s Breathing Basics <http://geti.in/1bjcAy7>  
and Audio Collection <http://geti.in/18geOGv>  
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine <http://geti.in/17Mos9v>