

Meditation Toolkit



Photo 1¹



University of Wisconsin-Madison

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1. What is Meditation?ⁱⁱⁱ

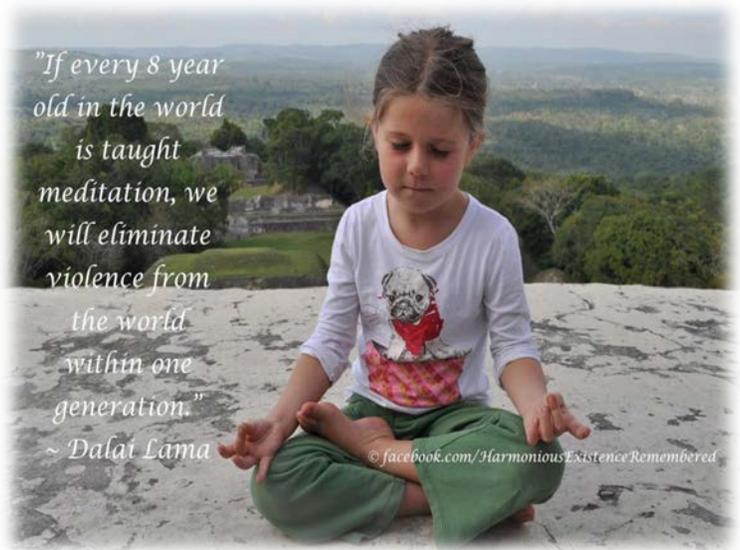
Meditation is a technique used for resting the mind. It can help us take a break in a healthy and productive way.

2. Types of Meditation^{iv}

1. **Mindfulness Meditation:** The most well-known type of meditation, mindfulness meditation, is about being aware of the sounds and activities happening around you. Literally letting your mind flow from one thought to the next, not focusing on one particular thing, but being mindful of the thoughts as they pass.

2. Progressive Muscle

Relaxation^v: Systematically tense a part of your muscles and then relax. As releasing the tension, notice the feeling of your muscles when you relax them. You may practice this with different muscle groups, including foot, hand, stomach, chest, and so on.



3. Guided Imagery:

In your relaxed position, imagine yourself smiling, feeling happy, and having a wonderful time in a beautiful place. Remain in your scene, exploring to invoke different sensory attributes and appreciating the senses.

4. **Focused Meditation:** Focused meditation can be a good choice for you if clearing thoughts out of your mind is uncomfortable. To practice, simply focus on a sound, object (some people use a small rock), mantra, or thought, and stay committed to that one thought or object.

5. **Movement Meditation:** Sitting with your eyes closed, simply focus on your breath and try out different gentle, repetitive flowing movements. Rather than focus on a sound, object, or thought, just turn your attention to your movement. Some people try walking, focusing on each step, the way the ground feels underneath their feet, and the way their arms slowly swing front and back.

6. Mantra Meditation: During mantra meditation, phrases or single words are the focus. Click [this](#) for details of mantra meditation.

7. Spiritual Meditation: Like other meditation styles, you first become calm and quiet then, begin focusing on a question or problem you might have or perhaps spend time practicing gratitude by focusing on positive things for which you are thankful. This type of meditation is commonly thought of as prayer, as it's based on communicating with a higher being.

3. Benefits of Meditation^{vi}



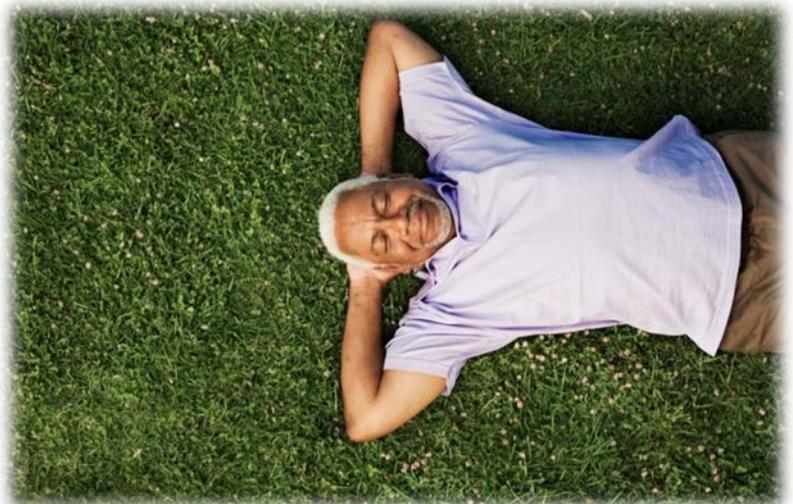
Physical Benefits of Meditation

- Lowers high blood pressure
- Lowers the levels of blood lactate, reducing anxiety attacks
- Decreases any tension-related pain, such as, tension headaches, ulcers, insomnia, muscle and joint problems
- Increases serotonin production that improves mood and behavior
- Improves the immune system
- Increases the energy level, as you gain an inner source of energy

Mental Benefits of Meditation

- Anxiety decreases
- Emotional stability improves
- Creativity increases
- Happiness increases
- Intuition develops
- Gain clarity and peace of mind
- Problems may feel smaller
- Enhanced calmness and relaxation
- Reduced anger and tension

Photo 4^{vii}



4. How to Meditate^{viii}

- a) Sit comfortably.
- b) Close your eyes or gaze downward.
- c) Breathe naturally. Avoid trying to control your breath (unless, of course you are doing a breath-focused meditation). Simply pay attention to it.
- d) As you breathe, notice different parts of your body movement. Observe the movement of your arms, legs, chest, shoulders, and so on.
- e) If some distracting thoughts emerge, acknowledge them and simply return to your meditation.

5. Meditation Tips for Beginner

Photo 5^{ix}



Establish a regular practice.^x

Try to set fixed time at the start of your day to meditate. Practicing meditation is important, but it's when you practice it regularly that it becomes effective!

Start small.^{xi}

Begin with 2-3 minutes and gradually increase the time as you are able and interested.

Practice it informally, too.^{xii}

Once meditation becomes your formal daily practice, you could incorporate it informally into your daily life. One example could be incorporating meditation into eating or walking. For more informal meditation ideas see - [6 Mindfulness Exercises That Each Take Less Than 1 Minute](#).

Do it together.^{xiii}

Two is better than one, and three is even better than two! Group meditation can be more beneficial than doing it alone.

6. Start Your Own Meditation Group^{xiv}

1. Find people to meditate together.

Tell those around you that you'd like to form a meditation group and invite them to join you. Use multiple communication channels to let everyone know, such as email, flyers, announcements at meetings, and so on.

2. Schedule it.

The more often you meditate, the better, but talk to your group members about how often you will meet and how long the meeting will be. Then, find a place, and set up a time.^{xvi} Your group may consider starting with one time per week for up to 15 minutes.



Photo 6^{xv}

3. Lead your meeting.

In the meditation group, you can use the online guided meditation sources below. You can also [download this free starter kit](#) for detailed instructions to leading your meditation group. Another option is to let everyone choose their own meditation style and sit quietly together for an agreed upon time.

7. Helpful Resources

Smartphone Apps

- [1 Giant Mind](#)
 - o The 1 Giant Mind technique is for anyone who wants to feel happier, less stressed and more energized. Our approach to meditation is easy and effortless. No previous experience is needed. Anyone can learn this meditation technique in 12 easy steps.
- [Stop, Breath & Think](#)
 - o A friendly, simple tool to guide people of all ages and backgrounds through meditations for mindfulness and compassion.
- [Buddhify](#)
 - o This award-winning mindfulness app has over 80 guided meditations custom-made for wherever you are and whatever you're doing – traveling, at work, at home, going to sleep and much more. All for the price of a cup of coffee and with no hidden extra charges.

Guided meditation

- [University Health Services \(UHS\)](#)
 - o [Introduction to Meditation](#) (6 min)
 - o [Brief Meditation](#) (5 min)
 - o [Brief Breathing](#) (10 min)
 - o [Loving Kindness](#) (20 min)
 - o [7 Chakra Meditation](#) (25 min)

- [UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center](#)

Title	Length		
Body and Sound Meditation	3 min	Play	iTunes
Body Scan Meditation		Play	iTunes
Breathing Meditation	5 min	Play	iTunes
Meditation for Working with Difficulties	7 min	Play	iTunes
Loving Kindness Meditation	9 min	Play	iTunes
Breath, Sound, Body Meditation	12 min	Play	iTunes
Body Scan for Sleep	12 min	Play	iTunes
Complete Meditation Instructions	19 min	Play	iTunes

- [Fragrant Heart](#)
 - o Meditation for Relaxation & Stress Relief

- [Calming Meditation](#) (1 min)
 - [Inner Peace Meditation](#) (2 min)
 - [Stress Release Meditation](#) (2 min)
 - [The Breath of Life](#) (7 min)
- [The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society](#)
- [Bare Attention Meditation](#) (5 mins)
 - [Breath & Sound Meditation](#) (10 mins)
 - [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#) (10 mins)
 - [The 4-Part Bell Sound Practice](#) (10 mins)

UW-Madison Meditation Classes

Open to faculty, staff, and students at no cost. Check for the most recent [schedule](#) for days and times.

ⁱ (Alamy, 2012)

ⁱⁱ (Miller, 2010)

ⁱⁱⁱ Rama, Swami. "The Real Meaning of Meditation." Yoga International. 3 June 2013. Web. 18 Sept. 2015. <<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/the-real-meaning-of-meditation>>.

^{iv} Dale, Heather. "5 Meditation Styles For Beginners." Pop Sugar. 4 Sept. 2011. Web. 25 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.popsugar.com/fitness/5-Types-Meditation-18949375>>.

^v (AnxietyBC, 2015)

^{vi} "Benefits of Meditation." The Art of Living. Web. 25 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.artofliving.org/meditation/meditation-for-you/benefits-of-meditation>>.

^{vii} (Shapiro, 2013)

^{viii} "Meditation 101: Techniques, Benefits & Beginner's How-to." Gaiam Life. Web. 23 Sept. 2015. <<http://life.gaiam.com/article/meditation-101-techniques-benefits-beginner-s-how>>.

^{ix} (Leclair, 2013)

^x "Meditation Tips for Beginners." Free Meditation. Web. 21 Sept. 2015. <<http://www.freemeditation.com/meditation-basics/meditation-tips-for-beginners/>>.

^{xi} Boyes, Alice. "5 Meditation Tips for Beginners." Psychology Today. 18 Mar. 2013. Web. 21 Sept. 2015. <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201303/5-meditation-tips-beginners>>.

^{xii} Boyes, Alice. "5 Meditation Tips for Beginners." Psychology Today. 18 Mar. 2013. Web. 21 Sept. 2015. <<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-practice/201303/5-meditation-tips-beginners>>.

^{xiii} Goldfarb, Todd. "Meditation for Beginners: 20 Practical Tips for Quieting the Mind." Zen Habits. 7 Nov. 2007. Web. 21 Sept. 2015. <<http://zenhabits.net/meditation-for-beginners-20-practical-tips-for-quieting-the-mind/>>.

^{xiv} Francis, Charles. "10 Steps To Starting A Mindfulness Meditation Group." Mindbodygreen(mbg). 29 Dec. 2014. Web. 25 Aug. 2015. <<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-16712/10-steps-to-starting-a-mindfulness-meditation-group.html>>.

^{xv} (Is this the first Proof that Meditation alters Cellular Activity?, 2014)

^{xvi} Nelson, Betsy. "Setting Up a Mindfulness Meditation Group." Mindful: Taking Time for What Matters. 10 Mar. 2011. Web. 30 Sept. 2015. <<http://www.mindful.org/setting-up-a-mindfulness-meditation-group/>>.