

*Making the Most of  
Meditation*



**Created & Published By Thea Westra**

# Making the Most of Meditation

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# Making the Most of Meditation

*"We are so addicted to looking outside ourselves that we have lost access to our inner being almost completely.*

*We are terrified to look inward, because our culture has given us no idea of what we will find.*

*We may even think that if we do, we will be in danger of madness. This is one of the last and most resourceful ploys of ego to prevent us from discovering our real nature.*

*So we make our lives so hectic that we eliminate the slightest risk of looking into ourselves. Even the idea of meditation can scare people. When they hear the words egoless or emptiness, they think that experiencing those states will be like being thrown out the door of a spaceship to float forever in a dark, chilling void.*

*Nothing could be further from the truth. But in a world dedicated to distraction, silence and stillness terrify us; we protect ourselves from them with noise and frantic busyness. Looking into the nature of our mind is the last thing we would dare to do."*

*- from Sogyal Rinpoche's book The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Making the Most of Meditation*

Living in such a hectic world can take its toll on your body, mind, and spirit – but the practice of meditation can help you to focus, have a clear mind, and stay centered. Meditation is a practice of learning to train your mind. There are many purposes and techniques.

What all of the techniques have in common is that they work for some benefit in your life. Meditation can help you reduce the effects of stress on your body and mind. It can help you develop a clear mission and purpose for your life. It can help you connect to a higher power.

If you've never meditated before, it can be hard to imagine how to get started. There's a wide range of meditation techniques. Some are simple, while others require a great deal of discipline and training. In the end, though, there's really no wrong way to do it.

As you consider beginning the practice of meditation, there are factors to consider. The first is determining in what position you'll meditate. There are several options for you – choose the one that makes the most sense for you.



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## *Getting Into Position*

Determining an appropriate position for meditation can set the stage properly. You really don't have to choose one specific way to do it, but getting your body into a different position from the norm can help you to focus your mind in a more effective way.

While many people choose to use specific yoga positions for meditation, trying to get your body to hold a position that's uncomfortable can actually take away from your meditation practice. Choose a position that separates you from outside activities, but is comfortable.

**The Lotus.** The lotus position is the one that most people associate with meditation. This position is a seated position on the floor. For this position, you'll bend your right leg and place your right ankle on your left thigh.

Then you'll place your left ankle on your right thigh. This takes a bit of flexibility. Extend your arms and place your hands on your knees palms up. You'll also want to touch your thumb and index finger.

For this position it's important to maintain proper posture so that your spine is properly aligned. You may also want to lower your head so that your chin is touching your chest.

It may take some time to be able to achieve this position comfortably.

If you're not able to achieve it comfortably, there are positions that are close, but don't require as much flexibility.





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These can allow you to work up to the lotus position that you want to achieve and allow you to meditate.

**The Half-Lotus.** This position is similar to the lotus, but not as difficult. You start in the same way by touching your right ankle to your left thigh. However, when you bend your left leg, you keep it on the floor and rest your left ankle in front of your right knee.

For this position your arm placement will be the same. This will help you to begin experiencing meditation even if you're not quite flexible enough to achieve a full lotus. Many people who want to practice meditation in the lotus position begin with this pose.

**Crossed Legs.** If you're not ready to perform the lotus, you can also sit with your legs crossed on the floor. Make sure to sit straight up and have proper posture. This position is more comfortable if you're not flexible and will still allow you to meditate.

**Lying Down.** There are also positions for meditating where you lie on the floor. Lying down can help you to relax your body and separate yourself from your regular daily life. It's very comfortable, doesn't require flexibility, and keeps your body supported.

When it comes to meditation positions, the most important consideration is your comfort. While meditation positions can help you to focus your mind, the wrong position can actually take away from your experience. If you're new to meditation, you don't need to spend all your time focusing on your body position and trying to contort your body into an uncomfortable pose.

Instead, focus on finding a pose where you can relax and focus on what's important.



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## *Using Yoga to Heal Your Mind and Body*

Whenever the word yoga is mentioned, some people get a mental image. They picture someone sitting on a mat in a cross legged position, fingers pinched, eyes closed silently mouthing an “Om” or two.

But yoga is so much more than postures in a type of meditation. It’s a way that can be used to heal your mind and body. It’s one of the easiest ways that you can gain flexibility and overall well being.

When you use the term yoga, you’re actually referring to several different forms of meditation. Each of these forms will have various exercises including exercises that practice breath control.

Whether the focus is on exercising or breathing will depend on the yoga style that you use. Certain movements within yoga focus on stress while others focus on healing from illnesses, injuries and battling diseases.

Yoga has a holistic basis that addresses all of the pathways that are needed for healing. It focuses on the mental or emotional aspect, the spiritual and the body for healing.

The meditation used in yoga, is the mental therapy you need to achieve solace and peace of mind.

The postures are the physical portion of yoga.

Researchers once believed that emotions weren’t tangible and therefore played no role in how the body healed or didn’t heal.



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Now however, science has shown the link between the mind and the body when it comes to healing.

How yoga can heal the mind and the body is because of the way it approaches healing. First, yoga addresses any issues of stress that a person may have within the body and then follows with movement and breathing. The purpose behind addressing the issue of stress is to get the body to the point that it can let go and relax.

When the body relaxes, it rids itself of the emotional entanglement of stress, which in turn impacts the body. When the body relaxes and lets go of stress, it eases the production of the stress hormones.

Practicing yoga calms the heart and lowers the blood pressure. It eases the fight or flight response that can stand in the way of healing because that can promote anxiety.

When you're stressed, your body reacts by releasing cortisol. This stress hormone then causes your body to react in ways that aren't healthy for you. When you reach a state of relaxation like what's taught in yoga, your body reacts by boosting the immune system.

Yoga also encourages the genes within the body that cause inflammation to stop being as active. The practice has been documented to help heal migraines, joint and muscle pain and insomnia. It's also known to lower high cholesterol levels and to help with emotional disorders such as depression. Heart health is also improved through the use of yoga.

Once you learn meditation, you can pair it with yoga poses and get the best of both mental and physical therapies.





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## *Finding Peace in a Busy Society*

Today it seems as though everyone in society is busy. Who isn't running around trying to juggle careers, schools and home life? This can become a traumatic experience for some. The pressure from your peers and friends to fit in and succeed are enormous. So how do you deal with all of this while still keeping your sanity?

Lately there has been a ton of research conducted on the benefits of meditating on a regular basis. Meditation is nothing new, by any means, it is an art form that has been practised for centuries. So why is it now being looked at as a healing process?

In short we can put it down to our society as a whole. Families today see both parents working and this places added pressure on the entire family. Everyone is always rushed. You go to work to run home and prepare dinner. Then there is homework to be done, laundry that needs doing and there seems like there is never any time for you!

Just look at some of the tools that you use in your life. You probably carry around a Smartphone or an iPad or laptop. This just increases your activity levels. Even on the bus or in the car you are busy doing something. Years ago a bus ride could have been viewed as a restful experience.

When was the last time you turned off all of your devices for 24 hours or even less?

Quite some time ago I expect!



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## *Meditating in Today's World*

The face of meditation has changed to a certain extent today. This has been made possible by the acceptance of meditating in different places and in various ways. The whole purpose of meditating is to allow your mind and body to connect and to discover that inner peace.

**The following ways are simple things that you can do to enjoy the benefits of meditation.**

- ❖ Enjoy sitting back and relaxing while soaking your feet in a tub of warm water with added bath salts. This can help you remove all the stresses from your long, hard day.
- ❖ Use an icepack, wrapped in a washcloth, on the right side of your body while sitting and meditating. This is supposed to help cool your liver. It is thought that people with an overactive liver have more mind chatter than others.
- ❖ Use some type of external aid to assist you with meditating. This could be a phone app to remind you when to meditate. Or you may prefer to use music or listen to motivational tapes.
- ❖ Meditate while walking or jogging. You can listen to motivational tapes or just repeat your favorite quote whilst outside walking. You may wish to focus on just one thing during your walks, such as what a person or thing means to you.



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- ❖ While yoga and Tai Chi have been around for a long time. These are activities that have seen an increase in popularity in recent years. Both are excellent ways for helping you meditate and deal with the stresses of life.
- ❖ Listening to music is another great tool you can incorporate into your life. Binaural beats are extremely popular and effective when it comes to meditating.

Your doctor or health care provider may also have ideas for how you can incorporate meditation into your life. In fact, doctors are recommending meditation to their patients frequently these days. It is extremely cost effective as all it requires is your time to learn the different ways of meditating.

It is important to choose a meditation method that suits your body and your frame of mind. If you are dealing with a health issue you may not have the ability to sit with your legs crossed for longer periods. It may be easier and more soothing to sit in a chair and soak your feet.

When you feel at ease you will find it much easier to meditate and reap the full benefits successfully.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Meditation Can Help You in All Areas of Your Life*

You don't have to be a doctor to know that life can be tough on the body. You experience all sorts of chaos every day when you step outside of your door. You're hit immediately with things like traffic, witnessing stressful incidents, colleagues that rub you the wrong way and often a job that requires you to do sixty hours of work in a forty hour work week. It can be enough to make you feel anxious, irritated, and even depressed. Many people find an outlet for this by sitting in front of the television and engaging in eating junk food to numb what they feel.

That doesn't help. What can help give you an outlet from any mentally tough days, is meditation. Not only is it good to help you release emotions that you shouldn't keep bottled up, but meditation also helps you be more active and stay healthier.

Studies have shown that people who practice meditation are more likely to give their immune system a boost than those that don't practice it. When you engage in any form of meditation, it helps give you confidence and raises your self-esteem.

When you feel better about yourself, you're more likely to go after the things that you want in life. This helps your mental health.

Yet meditation helps your health overall because you're giving both your mind and your body a way to release tension, to let go of negative thoughts and to find the balance that promotes long term health.



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When you have that calmness and you feel better, it reaches every area of your life - including your relationships. It helps your relationships because meditation makes users more aware as a whole.

This shows up in how we think, feel and react toward others. In the past, before meditation, you might have been more apt to treat someone with less patience than they deserve.

That could cause negative feelings in your relationship as the person reacts to your impatience. When we gain awareness of how we feel, we learn how to maintain calmness and objectivity.

That lets us take a step back and act - rather than react. This new center we find without ourselves projects outwardly. It allows us to gain that mindfulness of any destructive areas that we may have been promoting unintentionally.

Many relationships get into trouble because one person is constantly trying to change the other in order to find peace and happiness within themselves. Of course, this isn't possible since we're responsible for our own peace.

With meditation, because we ourselves learn how to gain the necessary space that we need to find balance of peace and happiness, we become far more tolerant of allowing other people in our lives to have that same level of freedom to be who they are.





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## *Benefits of Meditation*

While there can be obvious spiritual benefits of meditation, there are many benefits that may not be so obvious for adopting this practice.

Take a look at some of the benefits you may receive from adding this simple practice to your life.

- ❖ Lowers your heart rate
- ❖ Lowers your blood pressure
- ❖ Increases your ability to sleep through the night and wake feeling rested
- ❖ Relieves tension headaches
- ❖ Prevents migraine headaches
- ❖ Can help with hormonal balance and achieving an appropriate weight
- ❖ Reduces anxiety
- ❖ Alleviates depression
- ❖ Reduces muscle tension and relieves muscle pain
- ❖ Adds greater feeling of peace

Meditation can provide many physical and spiritual benefits when you add it to your life.

It helps to take small steps in the beginning and to increase the amount of meditation and your goals for meditation as you become more experienced.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Top Reasons to Meditate*

Does your mind chatter or talk almost nonstop at you?

This is something that millions of people are dealing with. This chatter can literally drive you crazy and make your stress levels reach new peaks.

One of the best ways to deal with this mind chatter is to start incorporating meditation in your life. Meditation can help different aspects of your life as we will discuss below.

It can help you to overcome issues such as; anxiety, depression, mood swings, and feelings of confusion. Dealing with these feelings is a major problem for thousands of people around the world. Sometimes these thoughts can be detrimental to your life and can have devastating effects of your life. If you are dealing with any of these issues check with your doctor about the benefits of incorporating meditation.

Meditation also helps you build healthy outlooks when it comes to achieving things like losing weight. By meditating you are reinforcing a positive attitude. If you use motivational quotes you can easily improve your mindset. If your goal is to lose weight, congratulate yourself each day on your effects.

Or you may want to focus on how fantastic you will look in those skinny jeans!

Meditation can help boost your creativity streak.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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When you clear your mind and reduce all that chatter your ability to focus and concentrate increases. When your mind is free you can allow it to wander and dream up all types of new things.

Meditating helps you feel re-energized. Your sessions do not have to last that long at all. A 20 minute session can help clear your mind and thoughts and leave you feeling refreshed and re-energized.

It also helps you deal with stress, this is achieved by reinforcing positive thoughts and by allowing you to focus on the tasks at hand. You will develop the skills need to deal with your stress more efficiently.

Meditation helps to improve your focus and your attention span. Participating in activities such as yoga or Tai Chi can help you in these areas. As can repeating motivational quotes or listening and focusing on sounds such as waves crashing against the beach.

Doctors are now recommending meditation to more and more of their patients. This can be a helpful way to deal with many health issues and it really doesn't cost anything!

To date the results that have been seen from meditating are extremely positive, so it is something that is well worth looking into in more depth.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *There Are Different Forms of Meditation*

Though it's one word, there are several different types that you can find under the term "meditation." Some of these forms are easier for beginners to get started with because some are simpler in nature.

However, the many forms of meditation all offer great benefits to those that practice them. Mindful meditation has also been labeled under Vipassana meditation - but they mean the same thing and are practiced in the same way.

In this form, users are taught to be aware of their breathing. Thoughts are allowed to simply pass through the mind regardless of what those thoughts might be. Users are taught to let the thoughts come and not single out any one particular thought.

Spiritual meditation uses some of the same tools that other forms of meditation use. People learn to calm the mind and focus. It's sometimes confused with the Transcendental form, but they aren't the same.

With spiritual meditation, users learn to focus their attention on a belief or faith in something other than themselves. Those with Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism beliefs often practice spiritual meditation.

Transcendental meditation stems from the Hindu meditation practices.

In this form of meditation, the user sits in a specific position and uses a mantra.



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A mantra is a specific word, phrase or sound that the user will say during the meditation period.

The technique involved calls for the users to ignore thoughts that would divert their attention from the stillness. The benefit from this type of meditation is that it's extremely helpful to the body.

It reduces anxiety and blood pressure. It's also the only form of meditation practice that's recognized by the American Heart Association for its heart benefits.

Guided visualization continues to grow in popularity because of the ease of use - even among beginners. With this type of meditation, users are guided to mentally picture a scene that makes them feel relaxed.

Some people refer to this as their "happy place." Mental scenes will often be focused on an outdoor place such as a meadow or a beach. These images lead users to a level of relaxation by centering the balance between the mind, body and spirit.

Users can take courses to learn about guided visualization from a mentor or they can learn themselves through the purchase of meditation tools like CD courses or DVDs.

Qi gong meditation is a Chinese practice meaning to bring the body and the mind into alignment or balance.

This type of meditation is often referred to as a movement meditation because it calls for a pattern of postures.





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## *Meditation Doesn't Have to Take Much Time Out of Your Day*

Thousands of people practice meditation. Some practice it daily - others weekly.

For those who are intrigued at the thought of it and desperately long for some tranquility in their lives, meditation is the perfect outlet.

Yet many of those people shy away from it because they don't want to add anything more to their busy day.

They believe that to engage in meditation means that they'll have to spend hours learning how to do the techniques followed by hours spent sitting and chanting.

That's a mistaken belief about all forms of meditation.

You do not need some, hour upon hour, long practice that will push your schedule over the edge. In fact, many forms of meditation can be completed in as little as fifteen minutes.

The benefits that you'll reap from those fifteen minutes will last for hours or days. It's well worth taking that small slice of time and devoting it to yourself. There is scientific evidence that meditation works to make those who practice it happier and more peaceful.

In a brain wave study performed by a Ph.D at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, people who engaged in meditation over the study period had scans showing a difference in the stress areas of the brain.



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You might think that you can't possibly find fifteen minutes a day for yourself to practice meditation - but the truth is that we all find the time for the things we want to do.

Why not find that time to improve your mental and physical health? You'll get better sleep, you'll have less stress and you'll have more energy. You can start by learning some simple breathing techniques associated with meditation.

You can learn these on your own or you can get the help of someone. You can also take part in guided meditations which will teach you.

At first, your brain might come up with all kinds of other things that you could be doing. Your logical self will try to convince you that you simply have to keep on running forward with your busy schedule.

You can quiet that inner resistance by setting a kitchen timer or an alarm wherever you are for fifteen minutes. Tell yourself that it's only for that time period.

Find a quiet, comfortable place that's as free from outside distractions as you can possibly make it. You'll discover that once you're in the middle of that consciousness state, your mind and body is fully on board as it revels in the peace of those moments.

You'll start to notice that you're not "giving up" fifteen minutes out of your day, but that you're gaining time because your mind will have better clarity enabling you to stay fully focused as you go about the rest of your day.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Finding Space to Meditate*

When life is busy and you have a family, it can be difficult just to find a space to meditate. It's important that you find a place where you can have a few minutes of uninterrupted time to meditate. It's difficult to free your mind when someone is talking to you and distracting you.

Any space can be turned into a meditation space if you prepare. You may want to use your bedroom as a space for meditation. Make sure to tell the members of your household that you'll be meditating and that you'd like some private time to do this.

Some people choose to use an office area or gym area to perform meditation. Still others find that a large closet can provide a quiet, private space to meditate. Have you ever felt like the bathroom is the only place where you can be alone?

It may sound crazy, but many people convert their bathrooms into spiritual places when they need just a few moments alone to refocus and renew their spirit. There's no right or wrong space as long as it's a place where you can clear your mind.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Carving Out Time for Meditation*

The people who are most in need of meditating and relaxing are often those that have the busiest and most demanding lives. It can be hard to think that adding one more thing to your schedule can have benefits, but meditation will give you many benefits.

Don't feel that you have to spend hours meditating each day in order to achieve a benefit from it. In fact, even taking just a minute or two to breathe deeply and clear your mind can be of tremendous value to you.

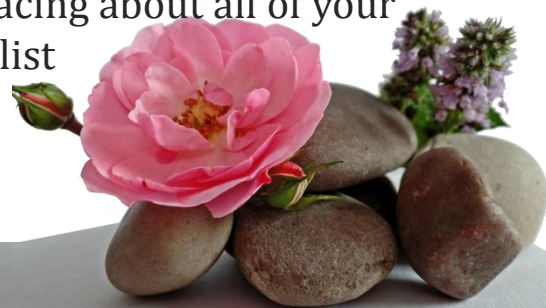
If you have more time, then you can always meditate more. If you only have a few minutes, make the most of them. Building meditation into your schedule is the easiest way to build consistency.

For example, you may want to make it a practice to meditate each morning before you get going for the day. This can help you to face the day with greater focus and purpose.

You'll feel more connected to the world in which you live.

For others, meditating before bed can give the relaxation needed before trying to get a good night's sleep. When the stress of the day has piled onto your shoulders, meditation can help you to relax, unwind, and clear your mind.

Have you ever gone to bed with your mind racing about all of your experiences and all the things on your to do list for tomorrow?



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Meditation can free you from this cycle that can disrupt your sleep patterns and leave you feeling weary.

But you can also build meditation into your day at any time. If you have a lunch break, you can take five minutes to clear your mind and feel more refreshed by meditating. Even just taking one minute throughout the day to breathe deeply and refocus can have great benefits.





# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Overcoming Obstacles That Prevent Meditation*

Like anything you attempt, you'll find that trying to practice meditation will give you some obstacles that you're going to have to learn to deal with. One of the first obstacles that you may encounter will be your mind.

Like most people, your mind is constantly working. It's filled with hundreds of things for you to think about. So much, in fact, that it can be difficult to focus. You need to understand the source behind the busy mind.

**There are several reasons** - but four main reasons that you find it difficult to focus.

- ❖ First, it's because you're overloaded with stuff that you have to get done. Both your work and home life can press in on you.
- ❖ Second, it's because there's too much distraction going on in the background that calls your attention away.
- ❖ Third, a racing mind can be caused by stress or trauma.
- ❖ Fourth, it's because of anxiety, fear or worrying.

You can combat each of those things that cause your mind to race. With the overload, your mind will jump to what you have to get done. It'll tell you that you don't have time to practice meditation because you need to stay on the go.

That's your anxiety talking. What you can do is tell yourself that meditation doesn't take that long and that as soon as you're done, you'll pick right back up with what you need to get done.



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To get rid of distraction, you need to find a place that doesn't have it or that limits it to background noise that you can tune out. For example, it's harder to tune out when your dog is in the same room barking like mad than it is if your neighbor is mowing his grass.

When it comes to dealing with stress or trauma that keeps your mind racing, you can practice a mental exercise before you meditate. Imagine opening a large box and tucking the trauma or stress into it and close the lid.

Tell yourself that when you're done meditating, you'll reexamine the issue. Stress, anxiety and worrying can be dealt with by practicing some deep breathing.

This is also known as mindful breathing and by concentrating on releasing the stress or emotions from your body before you begin to meditate, you can calm the mind.

Another obstacle that you might notice you struggle with is feeling like you don't have enough time to practice meditation. You can find missed time opportunities when you're waiting for a doctor's appointment.

You can practice simple breathing exercises then. You can also do this when you're performing certain household chores that don't require you to do a lot of focus on them. Lack of sticking to it or self-discipline can be another obstacle. It takes twenty-one days to make or break a habit. So give yourself permission to stick with it for twenty-one days. At the end of three weeks, meditating will have become a habit and you'll look forward to it.

It might also be beneficial for you to start out with some helpful guidance.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *The Power of Daily Meditation*

If you ask a group of people what their form of meditation is, you'll get different answers that all have various meanings. But underlying all of the chatter, you'll see that there's a common thread running through them.

You'll learn that the core of meditation means finding that quiet place within yourself where everything comes to a standstill and you're free of stress and mental chaos so that it translates into a physical rest period of sorts.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Meditation Isn't Only for High Stress Moments*

Meditation is often promoted as a great way to deal with high stress moments. Those promoting this belief are correct because meditation can certainly smooth and calm stress whenever you're dealing with a tense situation.

Many of us have a lot more high stress moments than we realize. However, meditation has a lot to offer you - even when you're not in the middle of those chaotic moments. To get the most from the practice, you should use it when you need it.

But you should also use it even when you don't. In other words, you should use it every day if you want it to make a difference in your life. You can't experience daily exposure to meditation and not come away with a lot of positive changes.

You may have noticed when seemingly unflappable people fly off the handle. That's because everyone at some point in their life will reach the place where they're pushed to the limit.

Each of us has those "not one more thing can go wrong" days. But what can happen is that we can start to feel like the problems or situations found in those days are bigger than they actually are.

The reason we feel this way is because the part of our brain that formulates reaction has learned to process situations in a specific manner.

Daily meditation helps you not have a reaction to certain upsetting stimuli.



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You'll stay in control of your emotions. You'll be more peaceful and more centered than you will be without it. By practicing daily, you're giving yourself the tools that you need to handle whatever may come.

It's like having a foundation in place when you need to build on it. But on the other hand, you can still use the tools that you learn in meditation to help you deal with those high stress moments that test every ounce of your emotional and psychological strength.

You can find the peace and calmness through the use of meditation because the practice has been shown to work with the body's parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system. These systems are in control of your physical as well as your psychological reactions to stress.





# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *How Meditation Provides Peace of Mind and Physical Comfort*

There are many good reasons that argue why you should have a daily meditation habit. Two of those reasons are because the practice benefits you mentally and physically.

When you experience stress, it touches your life both mentally and physically. Even when you don't feel like you're dealing with stress, you actually are. Every day, you're hit with the things that you have to think about - both the good and the bad. (Especially the bad.)

This is why you can feel so drained at the end of a day even if your job is not physically taxing. Meditation every day is a barrier to stress overload that can accumulate if it's unchecked.

When you practice meditation every day, you'll notice that your stress levels don't seem as high. Once you've been practicing it every day for awhile, you'll see a big difference in how things get to you.

The things that seemed like such a big deal and activated your stress response in the past, won't do that any longer. This is how meditation works hand in hand with your sympathetic nervous system.

It helps calm the body's response to stress. So helping you handle stress is one of the mental benefits that you'll gain by meditating. Besides impacting your stress level for the better, it also helps you have more focus.

You'll be able to tune out emotional distractions that can affect your mood.



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Meditation helps with anxiety, depression and even fear. Mood swings can also be helped through the practice.

Other mental health benefits include greater ability to focus on tasks at hand, and more patience and compassion for others. Memory and concentration are also improved through meditation.

Meditation is recognized by the medical community for the physical comfort it brings those who practice it. Many health conditions can be exacerbated by stress and meditation helps alleviate that side effect.

Engaging in regular meditation also helps those that use it to sleep better. This is because meditation helps relax the mind. It helps calm racing thoughts and it can help deal with insomnia.

You can also gain relief from muscle and joint pain and increase your energy level. Headaches, especially those that are caused by stress, can also be helped by taking part in a daily meditation routine.

Even migraines can be helped through meditation. When you get a headache, your blood vessels dilate. The reason that the practice of meditation is beneficial in dealing with headaches is because meditating relaxes the blood vessels, relieving the tension and pain you experience.

You'll notice a difference in your blood pressure levels when you meditate. The American Heart Association reasoned that the Transcendental form of meditation was effective as an alternative to lowering blood pressure.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Is Guided Meditation Better Than Self Meditation?*

Life can be a challenge, but there's a great way that you can handle those challenges. That's through the practice of meditation. There are all kinds of meditation that you can practice.

Some people choose to do it on their own through self meditation. Others use what's known as guided meditation. There are many people that have practiced meditation for years and have found a happier way to live their lives.

If you're new to meditation, you might find that you're struggling to know which form is the right one for you to use. For anyone that's new to meditation, the best one to choose is the guided form.

Achieving the consciousness you desire can be difficult for beginning users. However, with guided meditation, the beginner is verbally led into the state of relaxation which will help you to get started on your meditation journey.

While there are many meditation centers where you can participate in guided meditation, you may want to start out in private.

When you're not sure what to do, it can be helpful to have the guidance of someone who knows exactly what steps to take in order to achieve the inner calm that comes with meditation.

What this type of meditation does is to lead the user to imagining tranquil settings. These images can range from a variety of scenes depending on the type of guidance the user chooses to follow.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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The biggest help is that the user won't be left wondering what to do next because guided meditation will take the user from start to finish with clear instructions. The user will learn how to use the power of visualization to promote healing and relaxation to name a few of the benefits.

With this type of meditation, you are not limited to one certain place or any particular time. It can be done any time and any place. Guided meditation tools work with whatever technology items that you have.

Many work with your iPhone or your laptop or even in your vehicle's CD player. This is good because as you grow in the practice, you can use it any time that you need that calming break to center yourself.

You'll be able to find many different types of guided meditation audio recordings that will help you to get started. These meditations will cover everything from positions to breathing. They may also help you with specific chants to enhance your meditation and free your mind.

In addition, they may have background music that will be designed to help you relax. Music can be a very powerful addition to your meditation practice. When you find music that speaks to you, you'll find that meditation goes quickly.

When you learn about this form of meditation, what you'll learn about first is how to relax each of the muscles within your body.

The meditation guides you into slowly releasing any pent up tension that you might unconsciously be holding onto.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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After you go through the stage where you relax your muscles, next, you'll concentrate on the breathing exercises that the guided meditation will walk you through.

As you take part in the meditation, you'll gain calmness, learn to let go of stress, clearer thinking ability and you'll be able to find the connection between the mind and the body.

You may also want to read books that give suggestions for guided meditation. Guided meditation is a tool that can help you to get more out of your meditation time. The more you practice, the easier it will become and you may find that you don't need guided help anymore.





# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Empower Yourself in Life Through Mindful Meditation*

Mindful meditation means that the user is present or aware of the moment he or she is currently in, for example, it can be as simple as being aware of the taste and texture of the food that you eat.

The reason that it's important to practice this form of meditation is because of how it can help your life. It's not meant to cause you to make any huge changes or to turn your life upside down.

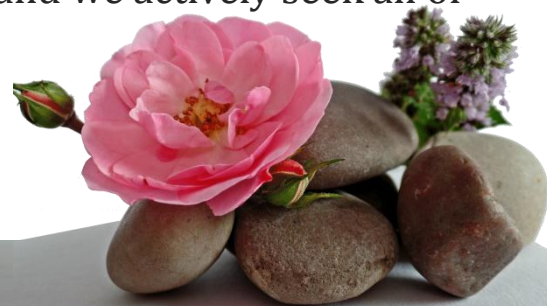
The purpose of this kind of meditation is to get you to see what already exists right then in that very moment. So often, we tend to be looking in the rearview mirror or worrying about what might happen in the future.

Using this form of meditation teaches us not to shrink away from whatever is happening in our life. What mindful meditation does is to teach us to like and accept ourself and our life as it is.

It shows them that they can have peace in that moment instead of looking toward what they'd like themselves or their circumstances to be. Both good and bad things will happen in every single life in every single corner of the world.

There's no escaping circumstances. Of course, we all like the good. We crave it, we embrace it when it happens and we actively seek all of the good that we can find for our lives.

Yet, when the bad things happen, that's another story.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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We don't want it and we want to get as far away as possible, even to the point that we want to run away from ourselves.

What mindful meditation does is to hand us a chance to explore our life in what's going on right now rather than in what we hoped that it would be. Doing this gives us a clarity we wouldn't normally have.

Or, it's what some people call an inner wisdom. By fighting against certain things we'd rather avoid in life, we're robbing ourselves and we can even make it worse. We make it worse because we don't want to accept what is.

So we waste mental and physical energy, draining ourselves to the point of exhaustion to escape what is just a fact of life. With mindful meditation, you can learn to see your life as simply part of life and you gain an acceptance that way.

This kind of meditation allows you to be completely there for your life whether the moments are good or bad. It opens you up to the point that you'll be able to empower yourself to take control of your life.

**Acceptance is the first big key to taking that control.**

You'll find that you'll gain empowerment in all the important areas. You'll be able to find enrichment in your relationships. You'll be able to find better health and you'll be able to have the empowerment to change your financial situation.

Once you have acceptance and clarity, you'll learn to see that there really is no good or bad. There simply is what is - and you can work with what you have.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Breathing for Relaxation*

In addition to finding an appropriate position, meditation requires that you pay attention to your breathing. Breathing is an automatic function you perform thousands of times each day without much thought.

Most people breathe using muscles from their chest and upper body. These breaths are often pretty shallow. In order to breathe properly for the purposes of good health and meditation, you'll need to focus on breathing a different way.

For meditation, we use diaphragmatic breathing. This is breathing that comes from the belly area of the body. As you breathe, think of pushing your belly button out as you inhale and pulling it in as you exhale. This will allow you to take deep, relaxing breaths.

You may also want to try counting when you breathe so that you have consistent, rhythmic breathing that leads to relaxation. Try using a count of five. Breathe in for a count of five and exhale a count of five.

Just as it is with your meditation position, you should make sure that your breathing is comfortable. If you're uncomfortable, you'll be distracted you'll find it more of a challenge to free your mind for meditation.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *The Third Eye*

When it comes to meditation, the concept of the third eye is very important. The idea is that when you meditate you can open a “third eye” that connects you to a spiritual force. Many people meditate with the goal of opening the third eye.

By opening the third eye, you may find that you feel more spiritually connected to the universe. You may also find that your intuition is keener and that you have more psychic sensitivities. It may take time in order to become this connected, so don't be discouraged if your meditation doesn't produce the desired effect.

You may be wondering how you'll know if you open your third eye. People who have achieved this type of spiritual awakening report seeing colors and hearing sounds. The idea is that you're connected to the ultimate source in the universe.

In order to open your third eye, you'll need to be completely relaxed and in a meditative state where our mind is totally at peace. Rather than focusing on issues in your life, you'll need to actually not be thinking consciously. This can take a lot of practice.

If you get too focused on trying to open your third eye and achieve a new level of meditation, you can actually make it more difficult. It's important to free your mind and body and not put pressure on yourself to meditate in a specific way.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Transcendental Meditation*

This method of meditation refers to an actual method that you can easily practice in the comfort of your own home. Transcendental is often used in conjunction with some organizations, in the context of this article we are referring to the method.

The technique associated with transcendental meditation is one that should be practiced twice daily, for twenty minutes at a time. It is best done when in a sitting position with your eyes closed. It is a widely used method for anyone wishing to improve or self-develop any aspect of their life.

Meditation works when you allow your mind to stop racing and thinking different thoughts. Instead you slow your thinking down and start to become aware of your body and your mind.

### **This is known as finding your inner self.**

When you can get your body into the correct state you will find that you are more aware, your body begins to relax and rest more, and that your brain works more sharply.

Transcendental meditation is extremely popular and is practiced by approximately 5 million people around the world. This method of meditating is known as a natural method and is used across all age groups, cultures and religions.

Due to its popularity there have been over 350 research studies done on this method of meditation.





# Making the Most of Meditation

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Even medical schools such as Stanford and Harvard have conducted studies.

While this method of meditation may be new to many people, it actually stems from an ancient Indian method or tradition known as Vedic. This tradition was handed down over the years and was recently introduced as the Transcendental methods by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, about 50 years ago.

The instructors and teachers that teach this method today, still use the same procedures and principles that were used thousands of years ago.

This method is very simple to implement as it requires no major use of concentrating, as other meditation methods do. The only effort that is required is for you to find a comfortable sitting position in a chair.

The process involves you transcending into a state of natural awareness. While your body becomes restful, your mind stays alert. This state is a natural response, which is why it is so easy for people to achieve.

If you have never tried any form of meditation, and would like to, transcendental meditation could be a great starting point for you.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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## *Meditation and Religion*

Meditation can often be associated with religion, although it doesn't have to be religious. People of most faiths have some sort of meditation. For some religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, meditation is actually a formal practice.

In other religions it's less formal. In fact, prayer in Judeo-Christian religions is a form of mediation where you become connected to source.

For some people, meditation is more about spirituality than actual religion.

You'll need to look at meditation in your own life and decide how it fits your personal religious and spiritual beliefs.

Remember that there really aren't any rules when it comes to meditation- it needs to be right for you.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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*Explore further to learn more about meditation*

After learning all of the beneficial ways that medication can impact your life, you'll want to discover all of the opportunities that are available to you for meditation. You'll be able to gain necessary knowledge that can help you in all areas of your life. This knowledge will help you emotionally, physically, in your relationships and in many other ways.

Most importantly, you'll be able to surround yourself with a process of healing that can turn your life around. If you look at the world around you, certain things will jump out at you as you study it.

You'll notice how more people than ever before lack peace, how they're weary, miserable and don't really form connections.

The reason is found in the chaos of life coupled with technology overload. The major thing missing in every person's life today? Stillness. In the midst of stillness is found peace and happiness, the opposite of our busy, stressed out lives.

The more you practice, the more you'll gain faster, deeper and more blissful levels of meditation. It's time you started waking up with a vibrant outlook rather than one of dread and anticipation of what might ruin your day. Meditation is going to help you quiet the chaos and hone in on the beauty that surrounds you day-by-day.

Regular meditation is your first step into living a life full of appreciation and thoughtfulness that helps you achieve success in all areas, and happiness on a regular basis.



# Making the Most of Meditation

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*Explore These Of My Favorite, FREE Meditation Resources*

- ❖ **3 Pre-Made Mind Movies**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/3premademovies>
- ❖ **Secrets Of Meditation**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/SecretsOfMeditation>
- ❖ **Core Meditation Program**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/coremeditationprogram>
- ❖ **Free Guided Meditation**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/freeguidedmeditation>
- ❖ **Meditation Timer Tool**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/meditationtimer>
- ❖ **The Stillness Project**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/stillnessproject>
- ❖ **92 Reasons To Meditate**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/reasonstomeditate>
- ❖ **Enlightened Messages**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/enlightenedmp3free>
- ❖ **Meditation Wind Chime**  
<http://www.forwardsteps.info/meditationchime>

