

Meditation

Information Sheet

The aim of meditation practice is to bring the mind into the present moment. In the present moment there is no room for thought, and thus peace is experienced. Although this can take a lifetime to accomplish, on the way, meditation can help with feelings of depression, anxiety, craving and stress. Plus meditation can help alleviate stress related disorders such as autoimmune disorders, heart disease, insomnia and cancer.

There are a range of benefits that may be experienced in one's life as a result of meditation, such as a greater sense of happiness and well being, increased confidence and self esteem, improved relationships, and love and compassion for those around us.

When to Meditate

Some simple but very effective techniques are described below. You might like to start a regular meditation practice of once a day (early morning or evening is usually the best), or perhaps once a week might suit you better. You could begin to use the techniques at appropriate times, such as when you feel stressed or depressed.

Just to stop for two minutes and watch the breath, can change how you feel about a situation. Discover what fits in with your daily routine, what works to benefit you and the people around you.

It's best not to practice long periods of meditation after eating. Preferably, leave an hour to half an hour after a meal, as meditation can slow down the digestive process.

Postures for Meditation

Ideally it's best to sit with the spine straight, whether this is achieved by sitting in a Yogic meditation posture or on a chair, it doesn't matter. Some meditation postures are:

- Kneeling
- Cross legged
- Full and Half Lotus

It is common for the legs go to sleep when meditating, however pains in the joints, particularly the knees is not good – move around if this is the case.

Shavasana (lying with legs long) is suitable for meditation, especially if you are looking for the relaxation aspects of meditation.

If you are serious about learning to sit and meditate you will find a back support invaluable. Ask your instructor about the different postures and the back support.



How to Meditate

There are many different techniques for meditation. The following are some simple techniques which calm and focus the mind. Use what works best for you.

Watching the breath

- ⇒ Bring your attention to your breath and begin to watch the natural rise and fall of the breath.
- ⇒ As you breathe in, repeat silently to yourself "I know I am breathing in" and when you breathe out "I know I am breathing out".
- ⇒ Continue to watch the breath and repeat these words. You may prefer to simplify it to just "in" as you breathe in and "out" as you breathe out.

Breathing from navel to throat

- ⇒ Become aware of your breath. Relax the abdomen and allow the belly to expand as you breathe in and then fall as you breathe out.
- ⇒ Then imagine that you have a ball in the navel, that can be any where between the size of a tennis ball or a marble. As you breathe in, imagine that this ball rises from navel up to the level of the throat. As you breathe out the ball returns to the navel.
- ⇒ Once you become comfortable with this you could deepen the experience by constricting the throat to make a soft snoring sound (Ujjay pranayam) - listening to the sound of the breath in the throat as you breathe in from the navel to the throat, and breathe out from throat to navel.

Counting with the breath

The breath and mind reflect one another. You can change the mind by changing the breath. As well as being a meditation this is also a breathing technique. Making the out breath longer than the in breath, very quickly calms the nervous system and quietens the mind. You may like to use this practice for brief moments during the day or as a preparation for a longer meditation session.

Keep the counting regular and not so slow that it is a strain or you find you are gasping for breath.

- ⇒ Start by breathing in for a count of 4, holding the breath in for a count of 4 and breathing out for a count of 4.
- ⇒ Then breathe in for 4, hold for 5 and breathe out for 6
- ⇒ In for 4, hold for 5 and out for 7. Continue for a few more minutes
- ⇒ Then after an out breath, let go of the counting and just let go of any control of your breath. Watch the natural breath. The natural incoming and outgoing breath.

Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra is a deep relaxation technique which involves the systematic awareness of different body parts. Because it is so beneficial, we use it a lot in YogaHealth classes. It is ideally done lying down in Shavasana, and is particularly effective for insomnia and anxiety. YogaHealth CDs are available.

YogaHealth ©

HEAD OFFICE 9252 0043

www.yoga.com.au