

Class 1 - Meditation for Beginners

Goals

In class 1 you will:

- Start with **meditation for beginners** (what, where, how and when)
- Establish a regular, daily meditation practice
- Practice the basics of concentration and meditative breathing

How meditation works

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us. - Oliver Wendell Holmes

Meditation is an extremely simple process. It follows three distinct steps

1. We start with the *superficial, scattered mind* – (This is the level with which we often carry out our day-to-day chores, 'bring in the newspaper', 'cook the meal' - it is often characterised by lots of thoughts, positive and negative, with very little control or knowledge of how they got there) If we are often in this state of mind, we will find that we are easily distracted, have difficulty concentrating, probably worry about unimportant things and have little understanding of the real 'us'.
2. We then progress by virtue of our *heart's concentration* - to deeper, *analytical thinking*. When our mind is focused completely on one thing, we are the most efficient and purposeful in our thinking. (This is the basis of the rules of 'time-management' -> to be focused absolutely on one task at a time) The analytical level reveals the deepest we can go with thought.
3. From this very deep thinking we enter into *intuitive states, revelations*, "I know this is right" feelings or extremely vivid goals or intense creativity or spiritual dreams. When thinking stops and intuitive experience takes over, this is **meditation**. We call these moments, 'Aah' moments. These moments are where the deepest moments of revelation and intuition are born, and we reveal our real self.

The task of meditation is to enter the very focused thinking of the analytical mind and from there the shift to the intuitive mind or heart takes place automatically.

The highest experience in any endeavour is a meditation experience. Every endeavour goes through similar processes to eventually arrive at meditation experiences.



If, for example, we want to become a pianist, we first have to train the body and the mind to have the correct finger technique etc. For a footballer, the right kicking style; for a rock-climber, the right moves; so we concentrate past the superficial to the analytical mind and learn and practice as efficiently as possible.

At each endeavour's upper echelon, however, there are moments where our consciousness is transported past the analytical to the intuitive or higher mind or what we may call the heart. Examples of these intuitive or 'meditative' moments are typically where a team works as one, a runner experiences the 'runner's high', a bushwalker ceases to be an observer and merges into the feeling of the forest and becomes a participant, a sports person hits a 'zone'.

As we know already these moments are usually;

Memorable - when we look back on our lives these are the moments that we recall.

Fulfilling - they are the reason we spend hours at our endeavours so we can get a few moments of 'meditation'.

Accidental - imagine how much better our lives would be if we could meditate at any time we chose.

The seven keys to meditation

There are several key things you can do that will significantly enhance your meditation. They may seem subtle at first, but remember, meditation itself is all about cultivating the higher, subtler parts of your being. Take it from experience - together these seven keys will make a big difference. So please give them a try!

Key#1: Find a Special Place

Set aside a special place that is used only for meditation. If you have a spare room, great, but it's fine to set aside a corner of your bedroom. This will be your sacred space for self-discovery, so you'll want to make it as inspiring as possible.

You might like to:

- Cover a low table with a clean, light cloth
- Place a candle on a table, and a vase with fresh flowers if possible.
- You may also want to light some incense. Together, these items will help create a meditative atmosphere.



Key#2: Prepare Physically

Your spiritual journey takes place in and through your physical body. Here's how you can help prepare it for meditation:

- Take a shower before meditating. If it isn't possible to take a shower, wash your face and hands.
- Wear clean, light, loose fitting clothes.
- Take your shoes off before meditating. Your feet deserve a break too!



Key#3: Sit Relaxed, Sit Straight

There's no need to sit in a special yogic posture to meditate. If you can sit comfortably on a cushion on the floor, this is best. Otherwise a meditation stool or chair is fine. The important thing is to be still and relaxed, to have your back erect, and to have the flower and candle close to eye level. People often ask if it's okay to meditate while lying down. We don't recommend it; the most likely outcome is you'll fall asleep. Always remember to begin your meditation with six or seven 'power-breaths' – long, slow deep breaths that release the myriad of thoughts and focus your attention within.

Key#4: Slow and Steady Wins the Race

In the beginning, five minutes of meditation a day is enough. Meditation is like an inner muscle that you are slowly but surely making stronger. If you overwork a muscle, it becomes sore; if you meditate for more than five minutes and feel tension in your head or get a headache, you know you've gone beyond your capacity. Try not to be concerned with expectations of what your meditation is going to do for you or what your meditation experience 'should' be. Just steadily, soulfully and sincerely practice and make yourself alert to the messages that will begin to arise from within.

Key#5: Choose the right time

Make an appointment with yourself and practice at the same time each day. Just as you feed your physical body several times a day at certain times, meditation nourishes your inner life so set at least one special time each day for your meditation exercises.

The best time to meditate is early in the morning, before you enter into your daily activities. This way, the peace you get from your meditation will permeate the rest of your day.

"If by giving up small pleasures, great happiness is to be found, the wise should give up small pleasures, seeing the prospect of great happiness" - THE BUDDHA.

Many people also like to meditate when they get home from work, to help wash away the stress of the day. You might also want to meditate just before going to bed. This will help you to sleep more soundly.

We don't suggest meditating right after a big meal. Like a bird, your inner being will be trying to fly higher, but your body will be weighing it down. So wait an hour or two before meditating.



Key#6: The Power of Music

Music is often referred to as the language of the soul. Peaceful music of the heart will create a meditative atmosphere and tremendously enhance the quality of your meditation. Play it softly during your exercises; merely listening to and absorbing the music will help you to feel the deep inner stillness of meditation.

Key#7: You

In the end, the most important ingredient in this whole process is you. It is you, who experiences, you, who is discovered, you, who is the student, you, who is the real teacher and you, finally, who is revealed.

Remind yourself of this often because this is the greatest gift of meditation: faith in oneself.

Highly recommended

A meditation journal is the best aid I have included to my meditation over the years. Verbalising what you are going through and/or what you are currently focusing on by writing down these self-revelations formalises and crystallises the most crucial process of listening to oneself.

Exercise 1

Meditating with a candle flame or object

Please read this information on preparing for your meditation

Imagine the candle as an entrance way to the vast spiritual dimensions permeating everything, imagine it as the doorway to the inner universe. You might see this candle flame standing at the threshold between the physical and spiritual universes.

As you fix your gaze upon it, feel that you are looking at the candle with your heart and that you are travelling through it with infinite peace. Follow the flow of energy with your breath.

Breathe in the infinite peace of the spiritual universe. Feel your heart opening and expanding as that peace flows into your being like a golden light.

On your outward breath feel that your worries and anxieties which give birth to all your mental, emotional and physical tensions, are being gathered up and released.

You might imagine this is as a flow of light. You are breathing in a golden white light that is illumining your being with peace, and the darkness that is your tension in all it's flavours, you are letting go.

Try this for at least 5 minutes. If you want you can meditate in this manner alternatively on love; breathing out and releasing hate or anger or breathing in joy and breathing out depression and melancholy.

To listen to this exercise click here (to save to your computer just right click and select "save target as" or "save link as") any problems click here

[click here for a mirror site to download the same exercise](#)



Summary

During this first class you will have;

- set up a meditation space as explained in the preparation page
- began a regular daily meditation habit