

INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION

**Connecting the mind and the
body via the breath**



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INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION

It is not just about sitting

Although we will do plenty of that

It's about the Practice

"Light thine own light."

-Buddha

"Try Less, Be More"

MEDITATION AND PRANAYAMA INTRODUCTION

Physiological


Energetic

Spiritual

Physical/physiological and calming aspect, benefits and effect. And Energetic Spiritual and mystical benefits and effects.

Meditation is a state of being. We have to work to reach the state. We don't have to silence the mind, at least initially. We just need to quiet it a little.

The brain is an organ. It has jobs, controlling many bodily functions and sensory processing information. Historically an Active mind was beneficial for survival. Active thoughts are an advantage for problem solving, creativity, and as we originally evolved, to keep us safe from danger. Don't beat yourself up over an active mind. Be proud of it. But work to harness and control it with Practice.

Active mind, monkey mind can show high intelligence. Smart, active brain  = More thoughts. More ways to avoid danger, find food, less time spent on gathering food. However, threats were short-lived, often ending with a physical release - fight, flight, or freeze. An example is how a zebra will rapidly shake after an encounter with danger is over, quickly dissipating the stored energy and adrenaline. However, we rarely genuinely need to fight. Instead, we sit in traffic, or at school, a stressful job, or rushing to get our children to an event, ball practice, get them fed, do homework, etc.

We need to work to re-wire the brain using neural placidity. Then, we can train the brain and body to meditate through repeated Practice.

MEDITATION

- 1) Why meditate?
 - a) Relaxation
 - b) Focus thoughts
 - c) Possible Spiritual connection
 - d) Samadhi?
- 2) Types of meditation
 - a) Sitting traditional cross-legged Lotus - Padmasana
 - b) Walking
 - c) Dynamic
 - d) Mindfulness – Anything can become mediation, making and drinking tea, cleaning, needlepoint, painting, most repetitive tasks
- 3) Posture
 - a) Buddhism considers four Postures or Poses
 - i) Sitting
 - ii) Standing
 - iii) Walking
 - iv) Lying
 - b) Traditional Yoga
 - i) Patanjali in Yoga Sutras states that Asana should be "Steady and comfortable." There is not much more detail in the Sutras, but it has commonly been interpreted in Hatha yoga to include:
 - (1) Sukhasana – Easy Pose
 - (2) Vajrasana – Thunderbolt - Good if meditating after a meal, Said to help control celibacy
 - (3) Siddhasana – Adept Pose
 - (4) Padmasana – Traditional Lotus pose
 - (5) Gomukhasana – Cow Faced Pose with arms on legs, not behind the back or eagle arms
 - ii) In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna that the quality of the Asana should be "Stable and Erect," seated like Padmasana to meditate. Krishna describes the correct posture, seated on a deerskin and a cushion of Kusha grass. He advises Arjuna that Raja

yoga and meditation are the best of all the paths of yoga to self-realization.

iii) Half Smile of contentment

iv) Dristi

(1) Eyes closed or half closed, heavy-lidded, eyes unfocused.

(2) The Drishti or focused gaze is towards the Third Eye in the center of the forehead.

(3) This effect helps work to pull the energy upward

v) Mula Bandha – Lightly – Discuss purpose in meditation and Asana.

Other benefits

vi) Back Straight, shoulder blades back and down

vii) Comfort is queen

viii) Head level or chin slightly down

ix) Rib expansion

x) hand position

xi) Disregard vii as your meditation practice deepens, notice any uncomfortable feelings, pins, and needles, aching, make note "label" it, return to the breath

THE ANCHOR – THE BREATH. Alternatively, we can use a mantra or an item of concentration. Find what works best for you. Then use it, stick with it, and return to your Anchor when you drift away in thought. Especially when starting a meditation practice, an anchor like a mantra may prove beneficial. And even more advanced practitioners will find themselves distracted, lost in thought. Then we can return to our Anchor, the breath, or repeatedly recite a mantra to bring back the mind. "I breathe in, I breathe out." So Hum = I Am That. With that being the Absolute, the ultimate.

During particularly trying times, a mantra and meditation can calm and make manageable perceived stress. Note the "perceived" stress. Much of what "stresses us out" is built up in our minds. It is not an actual stressful situation, fight or flight, that our body is supposed to react. Most of the

demands on us in today's society are self-imposed. Unlike the zebra avoiding being the lion's lunch. That is actual stress.

Meditation helps cultivate Mindfulness. Right thought and right action, or in many cases inaction, reduce day-to-day stressors.

MORNING RITUAL

Meditation in the morning seems to set the tone for the day. The day will seem to go smoother, and things will fall into place. When things don't go perfect, we are calm and better prepared to address the issue head-on and not "stress" over it. If you are not a morning person, then meditate when you can. Meditation in the evening is the perfect way to calm the mind from a hard day of life. Even a few minutes during the day to breathe deeply and clear the mind helps reset and energize. Twenty minutes of meditation has proven to be as "restful" as a twenty-minute nap.

Just Sit - Setting proper expectations. Don't expect to sit down and "drop-in" to perfect meditation. Set aside 5 minutes initially and do not get up until the time is past. Gradually increase the time.

How wonderful to sit and do nothing

Thich Nhat Hanh

BREATH = LIFE

"Life and respiration are complementary," the English physician William Harvey wrote in the seventeenth century. "There is nothing living which does not breathe, nor anything breathing which does not live." (no longer accurate as there are anaerobic organisms near undersea volcanoes.)

Breathing is the only autonomic function that we can control.

Breathe like rolling up a tube of toothpaste from the bottom, squeezing out the breath

Durga pranayama - Three-Part Yogic Breath

Diaphragmatic Breath Lay on back, hands overhead - feel ribs expand

Crocodile pose - crocodile breath

Nadi Shodina - Alternate Nostril Breath

Chandra Behdani Pranayama - Moon Piercing Breath

Bramarhi Breath - Bumblebee breath

Win Hoff Breath – Tummo Breath

THE PRACTICE

Meditation takes Practice, just like Asana or any skill you want to improve. You don't improve your one-mile run or walk time without Practice or learning a musical instrument without Practice. Anything we want to do well generally requires effort. You get back what you put in. Try to set a time every day, even put it on your calendar and commit to 5-10 minutes. Don't get up until the time is over. Insight Timer is a good app with a countdown timer with pleasant bells or chimes, so you don't have to watch the clock.

Requires dedication, but even 5 - 10 - 20 minutes starts to produce tangible results

BASIC GOODNESS - BUDDHA NATURE

WHO AM I?

LABELING

When thoughts impose, don't get upset. Just identify the thought, label it and return to the Anchor. If a thought arises, just label "thinking, thinking,

thinking, I breathe in, I breathe out." If sounds distract, "listening, listening, I breathe in, I breathe out."

Refine the breath. Feel it enter and hit the back of your nose. Find where you can feel it bump, and turn downward, the cool breath of life.

MUDRAS

Common hand mudras for mediation. There are many more.

Anjali mudra

Jnana (Chin) mudra

Dhyana mudra

JAPA MALA – ROSARY

Japa Mala - 108 Beads

Rosary Typically 54 beads. Other varying bead counts in different cultures and religions.

Much more significance and deeper meaning to the beads and hand gestures. For mediation used to count the times a mantra is repeated.

Should be treated with respect. Not intended as decorative jewelry, or for show. Intended to be used as part of a meditation or spiritual practice.

MANTRA/MANTRAM

SECULAR MANTRAS

I breathe in; I breathe out

Be Calm

I am enlightened and peaceful aware of my emotions

I am not the body, I am not even the mind

Four Intentions

- I want a joyful, energetic body.
- I want a loving, compassionate heart.
- I want a restful, alert mind.
- I want lightness of being

CHRISTIAN MANTRAS

Prayer of Saint Francis

Palm 23

Ave Maria or Hail Mary

Lord's Prayer

PASSAGE MEDITATION

Examples of Inspirational Passages

Assembled by [Eknath Easwaran](#).

(God Makes the Rivers to Flow)

[Prayer of Saint Francis](#)^[16]

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace

Where there is hatred let me sow love...

[The Shema \(Torah\)](#)^[17]

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one...

And these words... shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them always to your children...

[Discourse on Good Will \(Sutta Nipata\)](#)^[18]

May all beings be filled with joy and peace...

Just as a mother with her own life protects her child... So within yourself let grow a boundless love for all creatures...

[Let Nothing Upset You \(Teresa of Avila\)](#)^[19]

Let nothing upset you; Let nothing frighten you.

Everything is changing; God alone is changeless...

Sermon on the Mount (New Testament)^{[20][21]}

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted...

Hymn to the Divine Mother (Chandi)^[22]

...O thou the savior of all who take refuge in thee,

The lowly and the distressed – O Mother Divine, we salute thee...

The Deepest Part of Thy Soul (William Law)^[23]

Though God be everywhere present, yet He is only present to thee in the deepest and most central part of thy soul...

This depth is... so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it any rest but the infinity of God.

Let Me Walk in Beauty (Chief Yellow Lark)^[24]

O Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the winds...

I am small and weak. I need your strength and wisdom...

Twin Verses (Dhammapada)^[25]

All that we are is the result of what we have thought:

We are formed and molded by our thoughts...

I Come to Him Running (Mishkat al-Masabih)^[26]

The Prophet said, God Most High has said:

When my worshipper's thoughts turn to Me, there I am with him... and if he come to Me walking, I come to him running...

The Path (Mahatma Gandhi)^[27]

I know the path: it is strait and narrow...

I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: "He who strives never perishes"...

BUDDHIST MANTRA

Om Mani Padme Hum – "Behold! The jewel in the lotus!"

*"It is very good to recite the mantra Om mani Padme hum, but while you are doing it, you should be thinking on its meaning, for the meaning of the six syllables is great and vast The first, OM ... symbolizes the practitioner's impure body, speech, and mind; it also symbolizes the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.... The path is indicated by the next four syllables. MANI, meaning jewel, symbolizes the ... altruistic intention to become enlightened, compassionate and loving.... The two syllables, PADME, meaning lotus, symbolize wisdom.... Purity must be achieved by an indivisible unity of method and wisdom, symbolized by the final syllable HUM, which indicates indivisibility.... **Thus the six syllables, om mani padme hum, mean that in dependence on the Practice of a path which is an indivisible union of method and wisdom, you can transform your impure body, speech, and mind into the pure exalted body, speech, and mind of a Buddha.**— His Holiness the Dalai Lama, www.sacred-texts.com and Wikipedia³*

DP personal thoughts on this....

YOGA MANTRAS

BIJA OR SEED MANTRAS

Each sound has innate power. The sound itself contains the essence of the teaching and power. Like all seeds, a tiny seed contains the knowledge to make a huge tree, from a mere acorn grows the mighty oak

Om Tat Sat

"The Supreme Absolute Truth "
Or "All that is"

Om - The Sound of Brahman the vibration or primordial sound

Tat - translates as That and symbolizes the Universal Consciousness

Sat - Means Truth, represents pure existence or supreme Soul

Sat Nam - True Identity

Nam - Name or identity

Sat - Truth

So Hum

I am That – One with the Universe; We Are One

Ong Namō Guru Dev Namō - I bow to the creative energy of the infinite. I bow to the Divine channel of wisdom.

Ra Ma Da Sa Sa Say So Hung - Sun, Moon, Earth, Infinity, All that is in infinity, I am Thee.

Om Namah Shivaya - I bow to Shiva

Om AIM Namah - Saraswati Bija mantra
Goddess, energy, learning, arts

Om Moksha Ritam

The rhythm of the universe

Moksha is emotional freedom and release. It is your liberation. **Ritam** is the rhythm of the universe. So when you use the mantra **Om Moksha Ritam** you are attuning to your true nature. You are letting go of what you no longer need and feeling the rhythm of the universe.

PRATYAHARA - Withdrawal of the senses

Refine the breath – After some practice, attempt to narrow your Anchor.
Focus on breath on the inside of the nose

MANTRA - OM

AUM

Prana - Energy Locks -

In Closing - Meditation - liken this experience to slipping beneath the surface of the waves while snorkeling. The waves have not disappeared, but they have lost their power to toss and turn you.