

# How To Meditate

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## Introduction.

- What is meditation?
  - An ancient technique that has been practiced by billions of people for over 5,000 years to train the mind.
  - Practiced by professional basketball teams, race car drivers, golfers, billions of people over the last 5,000 years, to improve concentration; also, used for health, anger/stress management, learning improvement.
  - Non-sectarian: no religion required or used.
  - No one way: many methods and teachers.
- Why meditate?
  - Reduce stress
  - Control anger
  - Reduce blood pressure
  - Sleep better
  - Build willpower
  - Break habits
- When to practice. In the beginning, practice mini-meditations (described below). Add on 1-5 minute daily morning and/or evening sessions of meditation practice (described below). If necessary, substitute meditation for sleep. Meditation will rest your mind and body to make up for the sleep reduction. Extend the sessions to 30 minutes or more. "Unproductive" time is a good time to do a mini-meditation, e.g., while waiting for something or someone; when you have nothing to do; TV time.

## Meditation while sitting.

Keep your back vertical (ears over the shoulders) to allow natural breathing in and out of your lungs.

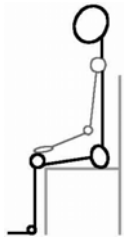


Figure 1

**Chair-sitting.** Keep back straight without leaning on the chair and feet flat on the floor or some solid object so your feet are comfortable. Hands can rest on your knees, or place the right hand (palm up) over the left palm in your lap. Sit on a pillow or folded blanket to keep your knees lower than your hips with your body supported equally over your legs and butt.



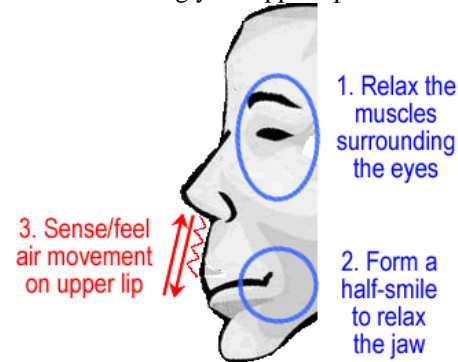
Figure 2

**Alternative: cross-legged sitting.** Sit on a pillow or folded blanket to raise back so knees can rest on the floor. Right foot on left thigh, and left leg on floor in front of, or under, right leg. Place back of left hand on right ankle or lap, and back of right hand on left palm; touch tip of thumbs to each other.

## Basic Instruction

### Part 1. Concentrating on ("guarding") the breath

- Observe the breath through your nose (close mouth): feel (without forcing) the air of the natural in and out breaths touching your upper lip



- Goal: sustain your concentration on your breath. If your mind is "distracted," name it as described in Part 2 below, and gently return to observing your breath.
- Temporary aid to concentration: mentally count, e.g., "one" on the in-breath (count up to 10 then begin again).

### Part 2. Dealing with mental "distractions"

When you notice that your concentration has been interrupted, do the following:

1. Generally observe the distraction,
2. Name the type of distraction,
  - Name noises in your mind: "sound, sound, sound"
  - Name physical sensation in your mind, e.g., pain ("pain, pain, pain" but try not to move) or itch ("itching, itching, itching" but try not to scratch).
  - Name thoughts: "thinking, thinking, thinking" but don't get involved in the thought process.
  - Name any feelings in your mind: "sad, sad, sad" or "happy, happy, happy" or "angry, angry, angry" or "pain, pain, pain."
3. Return to concentrating on your breath.

## Mini-meditation

1. Practice concentrating on ("guarding") your breath for 10 breaths.
2. Do this mini-meditation:
  - once in the morning,
  - once in the afternoon,
  - once in the evening,
  - whenever you feel stress or anger arising

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