

Meditation

RADIANCE YOGA

Creating moments of calm

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Getting Started

Create time and space

Find a regular time that's best for you. Are you an early bird or a night owl? Start small with a few minutes a day

Use a space in the home that feels comfortable and restful – ideally where you won't be disturbed.

Develop a mini ritual

Mini rituals help you to arrive fully in your meditation space.

Maybe begin by lighting a candle, or burn incense, diffuse essential oils, use a special blanket that's saved just for your meditation practice... Can you think of any others?

Healthy Habits

Remember that it takes time to create a new habit or routine, so set an intention to practice for 30 days. A commitment to your own wellbeing.

Don't put it off until tomorrow, the best time to start is now.

Think of all your other healthy habits that you created, and acknowledge how these now seem part of your life (brushing your teeth every day is a healthy habit).

If you fall off the wagon, be gentle and free from judgements – dust yourself off and jump back on.

Settle the body



Choose your posture – listen to your body

Traditionally, meditation is practiced seated in a crossed leg position – perfect for some but this might not be good for your wonderfully unique body.

So, pop yourself in a chair if that's more comfortable. You can even buy meditation cushions or stools which can help support the body during meditation.

Listen to your energy levels

Meditation is different from relaxation in that we intend to remain focussed and stay awake... but if your energy levels are low and you doze off don't worry, maybe that's exactly what your body needs. If this happens regularly though, consider changing the timing of your meditation practice.

And if you need to meditate lying down then do exactly that. Be kind to yourself and to your body.

Obstacles

It's common to come up against obstacles to practice, even for experienced meditators.

We can make every excuse under the sun to skip our meditation – not enough time, the house is too noisy, work is too busy, the housework needs to be done... (I get it, I've used all of these myself!)

As you begin to create your healthy habit, take some time to reflect on what obstacles might hinder your practice or create resistance. And importantly, identify in advance what you might do to prevent it from arising (e.g. get up 10 minutes earlier than everyone else) or have strategies in place to address it when it arises.



Techniques



Keep it simple...

There are many different meditation techniques – the important thing is to choose a practice that resonates with you.

Try to stick with the same technique if you can.... but, listen to your instincts. If you usually practice a particular technique but your intuition is telling you to choose something different then listen to your inner wisdom.

Try not to overthink it – the main thing is that you sit for a few minutes to invite in stillness. So if you're not sure what to do, then simply sit and breathe.

The breath...

The breath is always with you – the backdrop to everything that you do. So take time to connect to your breath throughout the day, helping you feel grounded and returning you to the present moment. Whenever you feel scattered, stressed, overwhelmed – return to the simple flow of breath. Take a deep sigh...



Simple breath awareness

Begin by resting your attention at the tip of the nose and nostrils. Once you feel connected to your breath begin to expand that awareness – follow the journey of the breath into the rest of the body. Feel the expansion of the body with the inhale, release with the exhale. Feel the movement of the breath in the chest, belly, pelvis. In some places obvious, in others much more subtle.

Count the breath 1 – 10

With each inhale and exhale repeat the number silently in your mind:

Inhale: "1" | Exhale: "1"

Inhale: "2" | Exhale: "2"

Continue to 10, then return to 1 and begin again.

If the mind wanders, begin back at 1. Gently notice how often the mind gets involved.

Balancing the length of the breath

Begin by allowing the breath to flow freely.

Once fully settled into the natural rhythm of your breath, for a couple of rounds notice the length of the inhale. Then switch awareness to the length of the exhale.

You can either use a slow, steady count, or a simple felt awareness.

Then see if you can gently encourage the inhale and exhale to be the same length – no force, not trying to reach a certain number. If the breath becomes strained, drop back to your natural breath.

To release the practice, return again to the natural flow of breath. If numbers don't resonate, use the fingers to 'count' the length of the breath.

Noticing the pause...

Connect to the simple flow of the breath, or begin to incorporate your balanced breath count (equal inhale / equal exhale).

Then notice the subtle pause at the top of the inhale and the bottom of the exhale. Not forcing a held breath – instead a simple noticing.

Generate a quality

Settle into your body and your breath. Bring to mind a quality you would like to generate within yourself (maybe peace, joy, vitality). And a quality you would like to release (anger, sadness, worry)

Then silently in your mind repeat these words with the breath.

For example,

Breathe in: "Joy"

Breathe out: "Sadness"

Sensory awareness

Gradually draw the senses inwards

Sight:

Close the eyes – notice the colours, shades, darkness behind the eyelids.

Hearing:

What sounds can you hear outside? Inside the room? Can you hear the sound of your breath?

Smell:

Be aware of the tip of the nose and the nostrils. What scents can you notice?

Taste:

Notice the lips, gums, teeth, tongue. Is there any taste in the mouth?

Touch:

Draw your awareness to your skin – notice the clothes against the skin. Feel the movement of the breath within the nostrils. Notice the movement of the body with the breath.

Now simply breathe and rest...





Connect to your intuition

Release any roles and responsibilities – let go for now.

Settle into your body and breath, following the natural ebb and flow of the inhale and exhale.

Bring your awareness to your heart, eyebrow centre or crown of the head. Ask yourself...

"what do I need to know right now"

See what arises. Trust in your intuition and your inner wisdom.

Grounding

When life feels a little overwhelming and the mind is scattered, simply breathe and be aware of your foundations: feel the soles of the feet connected to the earth.

Even better to do barefoot on grass.

Repeat a mantra

Repeating a mantra with the breath gives the mind a focus. Some mantras you might like to use are...

Inhale: "I am sitting"

Exhale: "I am breathing"

Inhale: "So"

Exhale: "Ham" (pronounced hum)

With each breath...

"I am loving awareness"

Or your choice of word that feels right for you.

Mantras are often repeated 108 times, and mala beads may be used to help count the repetitions.

Loving Kindness

A wonderful practice to generate compassion towards yourself and others.

Begin by settling the breath and body, then rest your awareness on your heart. Imagine this space filled with love, gentleness, compassion.

Repeat the words silently in your mind:

May I be well

May I be happy

May I be at peace

Then bring to mind someone who is very special to you:

May you be well

May you be happy

May you be at peace

Then think of...

Someone who is neutral, who you have no feelings for one way or another

Someone whose behaviour is challenging or you find difficult.

Everyone you have come across during your day.

Everyone in the town or village where you live.

All beings on the planet – people, animals, all creatures.

Be aware now of all people in the world doing the Loving Kindness meditation. Send your compassion to them, and be open to receive their love.

Rest your awareness back to your heart. Be aware of the body. Be aware of the breath.





Meditation on an object

Choose a simple object – it doesn't need to be beautiful or special, the simpler the better.

It could be a pebble, a leaf, a flower, a piece of fruit.

Begin with the eyes closed. Soften the face – the forehead, temples, cheeks, jaw.

Be aware of the eyes resting in the eye sockets. Imagine the bridge of the nose broadening, and a softness at the inner and outer corners of the eyes. Feel a softness in and around the eyes.

Feel the sensation and weight of the object in your hand.

Open the eyes, keeping the gaze soft, with an awareness of your peripheral vision.

Now rest your gaze on the object. Notice its form, its contours and shape. Notice any colours, shades. Notice any fine details. Rest with your attention on your object.

Then close the eyes. Maybe you still see an impression of the object behind the eyelids?

Return your attention to your body and your breath before opening the eyes.

*Take care if you have any condition affecting the eyes. Avoid this practice if you have glaucoma.

Calming a busy mind



As we begin to settle into meditation we often find that the mind begins to wander, chattering away and jumping around like an excitable young puppy. This is entirely normal, and a regular meditation practice can help to bring moments of stillness between the thoughts.

With practice these moments of stillness might expand, leaving you feeling calm and still.

Remember that the thoughts are simply fluctuations in the mind – like waves rippling across the surface of a lake in the breeze. Once the breeze (distractions) settles, the ripples (thoughts) subside revealing a crystal clear surface (your inner peace).

Acknowledge the thoughts, be aware of their presence, and without trying to force them away simply bring your attention back to the breath or the object of your meditation. You may need to do this many times – it's all part of the process.

"The mind's most distinctive attribute is its ability to know its own essence - its pure, pristine, nature" Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

DEEPENING YOUR PRACTICE

How would it feel to release overwhelm and stress?

Do you need a little more stillness and calm in your days?

Would you like some support in establishing your practice?

Radiance Yoga has a number of ways to help...

Online Meditation Portal:

Guided meditations and relaxations to practice at a time that suits you.

Bespoke 1:1 sessions:

30 minute one to one sessions at a frequency that suits you. Creating a practice designed especially for you. I can also be your 'meditation buddy' – regular check ins, and advice if you're facing obstacles to your practice.

Regular Online Group Meditation & Relaxation:

Join others as we come together as a group for live and interactive sessions.





STAY IN TOUCH

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