

The Complete Beginner's Guide to Meditation

Ancient Wisdom · Esoteric Traditions · Modern Wellbeing



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Everything you need to begin, in one box

INTRODUCTION

Why We Meditate

Meditation is one of the oldest human practices for cultivating clarity, peace, and inner awareness. Across cultures and centuries, people have developed many different forms of meditation — some deeply spiritual, others practical and therapeutic. What unites them all is a single intention: training the mind to become calm, clear, and aware.

Today, meditation is widely used for improving mental health, reducing stress, and supporting emotional wellbeing. Modern science has confirmed what ancient traditions always knew — regular meditation reduces anxiety, improves sleep, enhances concentration, and even changes the physical structure of the brain in areas related to attention and emotional regulation.



"Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It is a way of entering into the quiet that is already there."

How to Use This Guide

This guide introduces eight major traditions of meditation. Each chapter covers the history and philosophy behind the practice, a step-by-step technique for beginners, and the specific benefits associated with that tradition. You do not need to master all eight — explore freely and find what resonates.

What You Will Learn

- ◆ The history and philosophy behind different meditation traditions
- ◆ Practical step-by-step techniques suitable for complete beginners
- ◆ Esoteric and symbolic interpretations used in spiritual traditions
- ◆ Modern applications for stress relief and mental clarity
- ◆ How to build a consistent daily practice using ritual and environment

Creating Your Sacred Space

Meditation does not require special beliefs or complicated rituals. All that is needed is a quiet space, a few minutes of time, and a willingness to observe your own thoughts and breath.

Many practitioners find that certain objects help create a calming environment — candles, incense, essential oils, crystals, or a meditation cushion. These are not necessary, but they serve a powerful psychological function: they signal to the nervous system that practice has begun. Over time, the simple act of lighting incense becomes enough to begin the shift into a meditative state.

Creating a dedicated meditation space — even a small corner of a room — deepens the experience and helps establish a consistent habit. The space itself becomes a cue.

STILLNESS

Mindfulness Meditation

Buddhist · Satipatthana tradition · 5th century BCE

Mindfulness meditation is perhaps the most widely practised form in the modern world. It originates from Buddhist Satipatthana teachings — the direct path to liberation through careful, non-judgemental observation of the mind. The word mindfulness refers to the ability to observe one's thoughts, sensations, and emotions without becoming attached to or disturbed by them.

Philosophy & Background

In ancient Buddhist philosophy, mindfulness was seen as a path toward enlightenment. By carefully observing the mind over time, practitioners gradually realised that thoughts and emotions are temporary phenomena — not permanent aspects of identity. This insight, known as *anattā* (non-self), lies at the heart of Buddhist liberation. Modern psychology has embraced mindfulness because it improves emotional resilience, reduces rumination, and trains the brain to respond rather than react to experience.

Benefits

- ◆ Reduces anxiety and stress hormones
- ◆ Improves emotional regulation
- ◆ Increases grey matter density in the prefrontal cortex
- ◆ Enhances focus and working memory
- ◆ Reduces symptoms of depression



How to Practise

01 Find your posture

Sit comfortably with your back straight — on a chair, cushion, or the floor. Rest your hands on your thighs. Gently close your eyes.

02 Arrive in the body

Take three slow, deliberate breaths. Feel the weight of your body against the seat. Let the shoulders drop.

03 Anchor to the breath

Bring your attention to the sensation of breathing — the rise and fall of the chest, or the feeling of air at the nostrils. Let the breath breathe itself; simply observe.

04 Notice, return

When thoughts appear — and they will — simply acknowledge them without judgement ('thinking') and gently return attention to the breath. This is the practice.

05 Close with intention

After your session, take a moment before opening your eyes. Set a simple intention for the day. Carry the quality of awareness with you.

Duration	Begin with 5 minutes · Build to 20 minutes over time
Altar Tools	Cushion or meditation mat · Timer · Optional: incense to mark the start

REPETITION

Mantra Meditation

Vedic tradition · India · 1500 BCE onwards

Mantra meditation involves the repetition of a sacred word, syllable, or phrase. This practice originates from ancient Vedic traditions where sound was believed to carry spiritual power — a concept known as *nāda brahma*, meaning 'the world is sound'. The most universal mantra is Om (or Aum), considered the primordial vibration from which all creation emerged.

Philosophy & Background

In yogic philosophy, every sound creates a specific vibration in the body and mind. Mantras are therefore chosen for their energetic effect, not merely their meaning. The repetition of a mantra gradually quiets the analytical mind and draws awareness inward. Transcendental Meditation, a modern descendant of this tradition, uses personally assigned mantras and has been studied extensively in clinical research, showing significant reductions in cortisol and blood pressure.

Benefits

- ◆ Quiets mental chatter quickly
- ◆ Creates a natural rhythm that calms the nervous system
- ◆ Deepens concentration over time
- ◆ Can be practised anywhere, at any time
- ◆ Reduces cortisol and blood pressure



How to Practise

01 Choose your mantra

Select a word or phrase that resonates. Traditional options: Om, Soham ('I am that'), Shanti (peace), Ram (divine protection). Or simply use: Peace, Still, or Open.

02 Settle in

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes. Take a few natural breaths.

03 Begin repetition

Repeat the mantra silently in your mind, coordinating it loosely with the breath — mantra on the inhale, silence on the exhale, or mantra on both.

04 Surrender to the sound

When thoughts arise, gently return to the mantra. Do not force the repetition; allow it to become subtler and more internal over time.

05 Rest in silence

At the end of your session, let the mantra fade. Sit in the resulting silence for one to two minutes before opening your eyes.

Duration	10–20 minutes · Twice daily is traditional
Altar Tools	Mala beads for counting repetitions · Incense · Candle

EXPANDING

Loving-Kindness Meditation

Buddhist · Metta Sutta · Theravada tradition

Loving-kindness meditation — known in Pali as *mettā bhāvanā* — is a systematic practice of cultivating goodwill toward oneself and all living beings. It originates from the Theravada Buddhist tradition and forms part of the *brahmaviharas* — the four divine abodes of compassion, joy, equanimity, and loving-kindness.

Philosophy & Background

The premise of metta practice is that loving-kindness is not an emotion that arrives randomly but a quality of mind that can be cultivated deliberately, like any other skill. The practice begins with the self — because one cannot genuinely extend warmth to others from a place of self-rejection. It then expands outward in widening circles: from loved ones, to neutral people, to difficult people, and finally to all beings everywhere. Research shows that regular metta practice increases positive emotions, reduces bias, and even slows cellular ageing.

Benefits

- ◆ Reduces self-criticism and inner harshness
- ◆ Increases empathy and social connection
- ◆ Reduces implicit bias toward others
- ◆ Lowers symptoms of PTSD and chronic pain
- ◆ Increases positive emotional baseline



How to Practise

01 Begin with yourself

Sit comfortably, eyes closed. Place a hand on your heart if it helps. Repeat slowly: 'May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I be safe. May I live with ease.'

02 Extend to a loved one

Bring to mind someone you love easily. Visualise their face. Extend the same phrases toward them: 'May you be happy. May you be healthy...'

03 A neutral person

Think of someone you feel neutral toward — a neighbour, shopkeeper, stranger. Extend the same wishes. Notice any resistance and soften around it.

04 A difficult person

Bring to mind someone with whom you have friction. This is the most challenging step. Offer them the phrases without forcing warmth — the intention is enough.

05 All beings

Finally, expand outward to all living beings everywhere: 'May all beings be happy. May all beings be free from suffering.'

Duration	15–20 minutes · Particularly powerful in the morning
Altar Tools	Rose quartz crystal · Sandalwood or rose essential oil

INWARD

Visualisation Meditation

Across traditions · Tibetan Buddhism · Hermetic tradition

Visualisation meditation engages the imagination as a vehicle for deep concentration and inner transformation. Ancient traditions — from Tibetan Buddhist deity yoga to Hermetic and Kabbalistic practices — understood that the mind cannot distinguish between a vividly imagined experience and a real one at the level of the nervous system. This insight forms the foundation of visualisation practice.

Philosophy & Background

In Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism, practitioners visualise complex deity forms in extraordinary detail — as a method of transforming the mind into the qualities those deities represent. In Western esoteric traditions, the creative imagination (or astral light) was considered a genuine vehicle of spiritual perception. Modern sports psychology and neuroscience confirm that mental rehearsal activates the same neural pathways as actual experience — making visualisation one of the most powerful tools available to the mind.

Benefits

- ◆ Deepens concentration rapidly
- ◆ Accesses subconscious material and insight
- ◆ Supports emotional healing through symbolic imagery
- ◆ Enhances creative thinking
- ◆ Activates the same neural pathways as real experience



How to Practise

01 Relax deeply

Begin with five minutes of breath awareness to settle the mind. The more relaxed the body, the more vivid the inner imagery.

02 Choose your image

Select a simple focus: a sphere of golden light, a candle flame, a lotus flower, or a peaceful landscape. Simpler is better for beginners.

03 Build the image

With eyes closed, construct the image in detail — colour, texture, movement, warmth. Engage as many senses as possible. If the image fades, gently rebuild it.

04 Inhabit the scene

For landscape visualisations, step into the scene. Feel the ground beneath your feet. Notice what you hear, smell, and feel. Allow the experience to become as real as possible.

05 Dissolve and integrate

After your practice, gently dissolve the image. Sit with the quality of awareness that remains. Notice what it feels like in the body.

Duration	15–30 minutes · Guided audio can be helpful initially
Altar Tools	Amethyst or clear quartz · Dimmed lighting · Frankincense

ANCHORING

Chakra Meditation

Tantric yoga · Upanishads · India

Chakra meditation comes from the yogic and tantric traditions of India, which describe seven primary energy centres (chakras) arranged along the central axis of the body, from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. The word chakra means 'wheel' in Sanskrit — each centre is envisioned as a spinning disc of light and energy.

Philosophy & Background

Each chakra corresponds to a different dimension of human experience — from survival and belonging at the root to spiritual transcendence at the crown. When energy flows freely through all seven centres, health, clarity, and vitality naturally follow. When a chakra is blocked or imbalanced — through trauma, chronic stress, or suppressed emotion — the associated qualities (confidence, creativity, love, voice) become compromised. Chakra meditation works by bringing conscious awareness to each centre, allowing natural intelligence to restore balance.

Benefits

- ◆ Increases body awareness and somatic intelligence
- ◆ Supports emotional processing and release
- ◆ Enhances sense of energetic vitality
- ◆ Grounds scattered mental energy
- ◆ Connects physical sensations to psychological patterns



How to Practise

01

Ground first

Begin lying down or seated. Take several slow breaths. Feel the weight of your body. Imagine roots extending from the base of your spine into the earth.

02

Root Chakra — Mūlādhāra

Base of spine · Red · Earth element. Breathe into this area. Silently affirm: 'I am safe. I am grounded. I belong here.'

03

Sacral Chakra — Svādhisthāna

Lower abdomen · Orange · Water. 'I feel. I create. I flow.'

04

Solar Plexus — Manipura

Upper abdomen · Yellow · Fire. 'I act. I am confident. I have power.'

05

Heart Chakra — Anāhata

Centre of chest · Green · Air. 'I love. I am open. I forgive.'

06 Throat Chakra — Vishuddha

Throat · Blue · Ether. 'I speak. I am heard. My truth is valid.'

07 Third Eye — ■jñ■

Between the eyebrows · Indigo. 'I see clearly. I trust my intuition.'

08 Crown — Sahasr■ra

Top of head · Violet/White. 'I am connected. I am at peace. I am.'

Duration	20–40 minutes for a full sequence · 5 minutes per chakra
Altar Tools	Crystals placed at corresponding body points · Singing bowl

GAZING

Trataka — Candle Gazing

Hatha Yoga · Shatkarma purification practices

Trataka is one of the shatkarmas — six classical purification practices described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika. The practice involves fixing the gaze upon a single point — traditionally a candle flame — without blinking, until the eyes begin to water. It is one of the most direct methods for developing single-pointed concentration (dharana) and preparing the mind for deeper meditation.

Philosophy & Background

In yogic tradition, the eyes are said to be the external expression of the mind — wherever the eyes wander, the mind wanders. By training the eyes to be perfectly still, the mind becomes still in sympathy. Trataka is also associated with the activation of the **ajñā** chakra (third eye) — the centre of intuition and inner vision. Regular practice is said to improve eyesight, strengthen memory, and develop clairvoyant perception over time.

Benefits

- ◆ Rapidly develops one-pointed concentration
- ◆ Strengthens eye muscles and may improve vision
- ◆ Activates the pineal gland and third eye
- ◆ Clears and purifies the mind of scattered thoughts
- ◆ Develops the capacity for inner visualisation



How to Practise

01 Prepare your space

Place a candle at eye level, approximately 60cm from your face, in a room without draughts. Darken the room. Sit comfortably with a straight spine.

02 Fix the gaze

Without straining, gaze at the tip of the flame — the brightest point just above the wick. Keep the eyes as still as possible. Do not blink consciously.

03 Hold until tears come

Continue gazing until the eyes begin to water naturally. When you can no longer hold the gaze comfortably, gently close your eyes.

04 Inner flame

With eyes closed, hold the after-image of the flame at the point between the eyebrows. As it fades, gently reopen the eyes and repeat the external gaze.

05 Integration

After three to five cycles, keep the eyes closed. Sit in the darkness behind your eyelids. Notice the quality of stillness in the mind.

Duration	10–15 minutes · Best practised in the early morning or evening
Altar Tools	A good quality ritual candle · Darkened room · Eye level table

DISSOLVING

Transcendental Meditation

Vedic tradition · Popularised by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi · 1950s

Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a form of mantra-based meditation derived from the ancient Vedic tradition of India and systematised by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in the 1950s. It is now one of the most extensively researched meditation practices in the world, with over 600 peer-reviewed studies documenting its effects on health, cognition, and wellbeing.

Philosophy & Background

The theory behind TM holds that beneath the surface activity of the conscious mind lies a field of pure awareness — the transcendent — which is the source of all thought, creativity, and vitality. The practice of TM uses a mantra not as a point of concentration but as a vehicle for the mind to effortlessly settle toward this quieter level. Unlike mindfulness, TM requires no effort or control — the technique is entirely passive. When practised correctly, the practitioner experiences what Maharishi called 'transcendence': a state of restful alertness in which thoughts are absent but awareness remains vivid.

Benefits

- ◆ Reduces cortisol and adrenaline significantly
- ◆ Lowers blood pressure and cardiovascular risk
- ◆ Improves academic and cognitive performance
- ◆ Reduces PTSD symptoms (used in veterans' programmes)
- ◆ Produces distinctive brainwave coherence patterns



How to Practise

01 Sit comfortably

Find a comfortable seated position. Close your eyes and sit quietly for one to two minutes before beginning.

02 Introduce the mantra

Begin repeating your chosen mantra silently. Unlike active mantra meditation, here the repetition should be effortless — barely a whisper in the mind.

03 Allow the mind to settle

If the mantra becomes vague or disappears, allow it. If thoughts arise, simply notice them and gently return to the mantra — without forcing.

04 Rest in the gap

Between repetitions of the mantra, there are natural gaps of silence. TM practitioners aim to expand these gaps — the silence is the practice.

05 Emerge slowly

After your session, do not open your eyes immediately. Sit for two to three minutes in the resulting stillness before returning to activity.

Duration	20 minutes · Twice daily (morning and afternoon)
Altar Tools	Comfortable seat · Quiet space · No candles or distractions needed

MOVING

Walking Meditation

Zen Buddhism · Kinhin practice · Theravada Forest tradition

Walking meditation transforms ordinary movement into a contemplative practice. In Zen Buddhism, kinhin (walking meditation) is practised between periods of seated zazen, maintaining the quality of awareness through the transition between postures. In the Theravada forest tradition, walking meditation is considered equally valid to sitting practice — the Buddha himself is said to have walked many thousands of miles in contemplation.

Philosophy & Background

The insight behind walking meditation is that awareness does not require stillness — it is always available, in any activity. Walking meditation trains the practitioner to bring meditative quality into movement, which is ultimately what all meditation is preparing us for: full, continuous awareness in the midst of ordinary life. It is particularly valuable for those who find seated practice difficult, or who wish to extend their practice into daily activity.

Benefits

- ◆ Accessible for those who struggle with seated stillness
- ◆ Grounds the energy after seated practice
- ◆ Integrates meditation into everyday movement
- ◆ Strengthens mind-body connection
- ◆ Effective for managing anxiety and restless energy



How to Practise

01 Choose your path

Find a quiet space — indoors or outdoors — where you can walk a path of about 10–15 paces, back and forth. Remove your shoes if possible.

02 Begin with stillness

Stand at one end of your path. Take three slow breaths. Feel your feet on the ground. Become fully present before moving.

03 Walk with full attention

Begin walking very slowly. Feel each part of the foot — heel, arch, ball, toes — making contact with the ground in sequence. Coordinate breath with steps.

04 When you reach the end

Pause. Stand for a breath. Turn mindfully. Pause again. Resume walking. Each turning is an opportunity to re-anchor attention.

05 Extend to the world

Advanced practitioners extend awareness beyond the feet to sounds, light, temperature, and peripheral vision — maintaining an open, spacious awareness of the whole environment.

Duration	15–30 minutes · Can be practised anywhere at any pace
Altar Tools	Bare feet on grass if possible · A quiet outdoor space

BUILDING YOUR PRACTICE

Consistency Over Perfection

Meditation is not a single technique but a lifelong journey of awareness. The most important principle is consistency. Even ten minutes per day can gradually transform the way the mind responds to stress, distraction, and difficulty. Over time, meditation cultivates clarity, emotional balance, and a deeper sense of connection with the present moment.

The Power of Ritual

Consistency follows ritual, not resolve. When your environment stays the same — the same cushion, the same incense, the same time of day — returning becomes effortless rather than an act of willpower. The brain forms associative pathways: the scent of Nag Champa begins to trigger the meditative state before you have even sat down. This is neurological conditioning working in your favour.

A Simple Daily Ritual

01 Clear the space

Open a window or light a cleansing incense — Palo Santo or white sage. Let the smoke drift through the room.

02 Set your anchor

Light a candle. Watch the flame for ten seconds before you begin. This single act signals to the nervous system that practice has started.

03 Anoint

Apply a grounding essential oil to your wrists or temples. Cedarwood, frankincense, or vetiver. Inhale slowly three times.

04 Sit and set intention

Place a crystal in your non-dominant hand or at the front of your space. Set a single, simple intention — not a goal, but a quality: presence, openness, stillness.

05 Practise

Choose one technique from this guide and practise for a minimum of ten minutes. Longer is better, but ten minutes done consistently beats an hour practised occasionally.

06 Close

End with a moment of gratitude. Place your hands on your heart. Acknowledge yourself for showing up. Blow out the candle intentionally.

"When ritual replaces willpower, you stop needing to convince yourself to begin."

THE MYSTIC MEDITATION KIT

Everything You Need to Begin

The Mystic Meditation Kit has been assembled so that you do not have to search, research, or second-guess your starting point. Every item has been chosen for its energetic resonance, its quality, and its practical function within a daily meditation ritual.



Palo Santo Sticks

Space cleansing. Burn before practice to clear stagnant energy and prepare the atmosphere. The scent alone will become a powerful ritual cue over time.



Ritual Candle

Focus anchor. The flame becomes your first point of attention — and marks the sacred boundary of the practice space.



Grounding Crystal

Intention anchor. Hold in the non-dominant hand or place within your line of sight. Chosen for its energetic quality of grounding and clarity.



Nag Champa Incense

Mind signal. One of the oldest meditation incenses in the world. Repeated use trains the nervous system to shift into stillness at the first breath of smoke.



Grounding Essential Oil

Applied to wrists and temples before practice to deepen body awareness and signal the shift from activity to stillness.



This Beginner's Guide

Your 40-page ritual roadmap. Return to it as your practice deepens — different chapters will resonate at different stages of your journey.



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