THE 7-DAY MEDITATION CHALLENGE
An Easy, Effortless Guide to Revive Your Mind • Body
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Introduction

This 7 Day Meditation Challenge trains your mind to increase your feelings of joy and inner peace. Even if you’ve never meditated before, this guide makes it simple and easy to meditate like a pro!

When we first start meditating, we think it’s necessary to try hard to focus. On the contrary, letting go of all straining and effort is key in doing it right. Instead of trying to create an experience, let go of all your notions of achieving something, and just be. What is happening in the present moment may become more fascinating and colorful than any movie or TV show.

In our culture, we’re taught to achieve and always do more. Brands like Nike tell us to “Just Do It!” and our parents, teachers and role models reinforce striving as a way of life. However, striving isn’t the right approach for everything.

Take falling asleep for example. If you’ve ever tried hard to force yourself to fall asleep, it just doesn’t work. You can’t force it. The more you try, the more awake you become. Sleep only happens when you relax your mind and body enough to drift away naturally on its own. Meditation works in the same way. If you try to force your mind to empty all thoughts and be still, you’ll only be met with resistance and more thoughts.

Once you relax, welcome all thoughts, emotions and sensations — you’ll find your mind and body begin to calm naturally. The space between thoughts will increase little by little and, eventually, you’ll be left with spaces of stillness and pure bliss.
How to get started:

**Step 1: Set a time** to do your meditations for 10 minutes a day this week. The more you make it a routine, the easier it will be for you. Morning is a great time for most as it sets you up for a nice day, but any time will work. Set a timer for how long you would like to meditate before every sitting.

**Step 2: Find a place where you can sit comfortably** — either in a chair with your legs uncrossed and feet flat on the floor, or sitting on a cushion on the floor. If you are sitting on the floor, it can help to have back support and a cushion beneath your seat so that your hips are a bit higher than your knees. The key is to be comfortable and not experience any pain.

**Step 3: Let yourself sit back and relax.** Easy!

Now that you have the most difficult part behind you (getting started), here are the daily meditations and instructions below. By the end of this week, you can call yourself a meditator!
THE 7 DAY Meditation CHALLENGE
DAY 1
BE THE Observer
Observing your mind with an attitude of curiosity helps you to respond to the difficult situations in life with ease instead of stress.

Once we let the thoughts, emotions and sensations pass along freely, the space between them becomes wider and wider until we feel a sense of calm and peace.

Let’s give it a try!

- Once you’re comfortable, begin sitting with your eyes open. Without focusing on anything in particular, allow your eyes to have a soft gaze. Become aware of what is in the room and in your peripheral vision.
- Take a few long breaths and enjoy the feeling of air passing through your nostrils and filling your chest. Notice how the body loves to release and relax with the exhale. Don’t try to control it, just enjoy how your breath moves to its own rhythm.
- Begin to notice the sounds from inside and outside the room. For the next 30 seconds, become aware of how sound is spherical in nature. You can hear sounds from the sides, from the front, behind, above, and below. Notice the distance between yourself and each sound.
- Begin to notice gravity pulling you towards the earth. Allow your body to surrender to it and relax.
- Take your attention inward for a little check-in. If your eyes wish to close, allow them to. Slowly scan your attention downward from the top of your head to your toes and take notice of any sensations present.
- When the mind starts to journey, gently bring it back to your body’s sensations.
- For the last moment, let go of any focusing. Let your mind do whatever it likes. No straining or resisting anything.
- Invite a deep inhale and slowly begin to open your eyes.
If you had thoughts, don’t worry, it’s totally normal. When you relax and welcome all thoughts, sounds and sensations, you’ll relax the mind enough to allow space between your thoughts. A clear mind arises as a gift from simply relaxing and allowing your natural experience to occur without straining against yourself. With a little practice, this becomes easier and easier.
DAY 2
BE PRESENT WITH
The Breath
Here’s a not-so-secret: Meditation isn’t about stopping your thoughts or keeping your mind blank. It’s about giving your mind something to do — so you can train it to be happier, healthier and at peace. In meditation, thoughts are your body’s way of releasing old stress and tension that’s been stored away.

Think of it like cleaning out your desk or your closet. You have to take everything out of the drawers and make a bigger mess before you can tidy up. The same is true for your mind. Each time you meditate, the body releases tension while the mind starts to review and reorganize its thoughts. This is normal. This is your brain cleaning house.

In this meditation, we’ll pay attention to our breath. When thoughts or sensations arise, gently pivot your focus back to your breathing. You can do this with your eyes open or if you feel like it, let them close.

Let’s practice!

- Start with your eyes open with a soft gaze. Sit in a comfortable seated position with your spine upright and body relaxed.
- Take a few long breaths and notice how your body breathes. Allow the inhale to expand and the exhale to relax you.
- Notice gravity attracting your body to the chair and your feet to the floor. You’re completely supported by the earth.
- Notice the sounds around you. Get a sense of the space you’re in. Feel the air pressing against your skin.
- Allow sounds to flow around you without straining to hear them. We use sounds in this meditation so that nothing is a distraction.
- Bring your attention to the body breathing. Start to notice the rise and fall of your chest and belly.
- Allow any thoughts to pass through freely. When you notice thoughts, let your mind journey back to your breath again.
- Notice the rhythm of your breath. Is it fast or slow, short, shallow, long or deep?
- Slowly begin to count your breath from one to ten. Counting “one”
with the rise and "two" with the fall. When you get to ten, you can stop counting.

- Remember, thoughts are perfectly normal. Gently bring your attention back to the breath.
- For the last few minutes, let your mind do whatever it pleases. Not straining or resisting anything.
- Start to bring your awareness back to your body. Take a deep breath.

Do you feel different now to how you felt before the meditation? If you had many thoughts, that’s okay. You can’t stop the brain from thinking any more than you can stop your heart from beating. You’re simply training the mind to return again to a center of focus.
DAY 3
BE IN
Acceptance
By now, you may realize that meditation isn’t what you expected it to be. It has more to do with welcoming thoughts and emotions than trying to rid yourself of them. You might start reviewing your past or your to-do list, or even forget you’re meditating! This is expected! With practice, you’ll find it easier and easier to stay present.

It may be helpful to imagine you’re sitting on the side of a busy road watching cars go by. It should be quite easy and relaxing to just let the cars pass. This is just like meditation — your thoughts and emotions are the cars passing by.

What happens to many of us, however, is that we become agitated by the passing cars. In our distress, we try to stop the cars or grab hold of them, letting them drag us along. Instead, let go of these passing cars and welcome the flow of traffic until all that’s left is a sense of peace.

In this meditation, instead of judging your experience as right or wrong, practice allowing yourself to simply be.

- Get into a comfortable position and take a few long breaths.
- When you feel ready, let your eyes close. Notice the sense of relief you feel. Let the soles of your feet rest against the floor, and the palms relax on your lap. Silently repeat to yourself, “I welcome all parts of me.”
- Become aware of the space around you. Notice the sounds in the room, allowing them to flow around you.
- Bring your attention to your body — notice what areas feel good and what areas you can relax deeper. Allow the body to do a little less work.
- If the mind starts to journey, gently bring your attention back to your body — feeling that rise and fall of breath. Notice its rhythm.
- See if you can have a neutral or positive attitude towards your experience right now. Thoughts, sounds, sensations and emotions.
- Rest for as long as you can in a state of acceptance. Doing nothing. Not trying to meditate. Not straining. Let go of any focus or effort. Just be aware of everything.
- Close the sitting by taking a long breath.
How do you feel after this meditation? Notice any changes in your mind, mood or energy level? Did you have many thoughts? How did you treat yourself? Did you give yourself the space and ease to just be?
DAY 4
BE WITH YOUR
Emotions
You might have noticed yesterday that when a thought comes — it’s so easy to chase the thought into the past or future. Don’t be hard on yourself — this is normal for everyone at first.

Think of your meditation like looking into the open blue sky. If you were to lie down on a field and stare into the sky, you’d see clouds. Imagine the clouds are your thoughts, emotions and sensations, while the sky is the space between them. Most of us begin our meditation journey with a sky full of clouds — perhaps even dark, stormy, ominous clouds! We become stressed over the clouds, trying to shoo them away or hold them in place — forgetting they’re only temporary. All we need is to sit back and let the clouds be seen and felt. They will eventually pass along. When we let ourselves feel our emotions with an attitude of curiosity and love, healing can occur.

Let’s give it a try!

- Allow your body to relax in an upright seated position. Rest your palms on the lap and take a few deep breaths.
- With the next breath, gently let your eyelids close and feel gravity attracting you to the earth. Feel the contact your body makes with the chair and the floor. Feel your arms and hands resting on your legs.
- Notice the sounds inside the room and outside.
- Let your mind become aware of your body and how you feel inside.
- Notice if there’s any sense of lightness or density in the body. If you notice activity or an emotion present — pay attention to where it’s felt the most. See if you can allow it the space to arise and be felt.
- Notice if any thoughts accompany this emotion. Allow any tension to be released with your exhale.
- Rest your awareness back into your body — and notice the physical sensation again. What emotion is present? Excitement, restlessness, happiness, joy, gratitude? No matter what it is, just notice it.
- See what happens if you welcome it and rest with it for a moment. Give this emotion a little love and acceptance. Give yourself support in allowing this.
- You may notice your emotion soften, release or transform. You may
notice a little more stillness and ease arise, or not. Just notice.

- Now, allow the mind to do whatever it wishes for this last moment. Not resisting anything.
- Let your awareness come back to your body, take a deep breath and return.

How do you feel after this meditation? Do you feel a little more aware of your body? What changes did you notice once you welcomed yourself to feel your emotion with love and acceptance?
DAY 5
NAME IT
To Tame It
In meditation, we're focusing — but we're doing it with a deep sense of relaxation and allowance. Research shows that happiness is directly correlated with keeping our attention in the present moment. However, often we find our minds time traveling in the past and future. One of the best ways to be present is a meditation technique I call “name it to tame it.” When you become skilled at observing and identifying your thoughts, it’s much easier to let them pass and for your mind to remain in the now.

There are three main categories of thoughts — past, present and future thoughts. Amongst them you can have pleasant, unpleasant and neutral variations. Now, it’s important to remember we’re practicing acceptance — so none of these thoughts are “right” or “wrong.” These categories are meant to simply help us easily identify the types of thoughts.

Most of our thoughts fall under the following:

**Past-Pleasant:** Reminiscing

**Past-Unpleasant:** Regretting/resenting

**Past-Neutral:** Remembering

**Present-Pleasant:** Desiring

**Present-Unpleasant:** Judging

**Present-Neutral:** Observing

**Future-Pleasant:** Fantasizing

**Future-Unpleasant:** Worrying

**Future-Neutral:** Planning

Usually, your mind will sway towards a few types of thought. It’s enlightening to become aware of the trend your mind takes. This awareness can even cause new pleasant trends of thinking to occur!

- Take a few deep breaths while sitting upright and relaxed. Let your body soften and release your back. Let your shoulders drop. Let your jaw and forehead relax.
• Gently close your eyes. Notice any relief you feel. Allow a sense of peace to expand within you.

• You’ll notice sounds coming and going. Bring your attention to how you feel in this moment — the emotional quality in your body and mind.

• Allow the mind to do whatever it pleases without any effort or control.

• Notice if a thought arises in your mind — is it in the past, present or future? Is the thought pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?

• Are you reminiscing, regretting or remembering?

• Are you desiring, judging or observing?

• Are you fantasizing, worrying or planning?

• Now, identify the thought as it arises, “This is just my mind planning.”

• Don’t chase the thought or hold onto it. Observe it and let it pass by.

• If another thought arises — notice it, recognize it, and let it go. Continue this for the next several minutes.

• Do not resist the space between thoughts. Lean into the silence.

• Slowly bring your attention back to your breath. Take a deep breath and return.

How do you feel after this meditation? Did you notice a trend in the types of thoughts your mind goes towards? Notice if identifying them allowed the thoughts to pass more easily. Notice if you feel more relaxed now.
DAY 6
SCAN
Your Body
Don’t be hard on yourself if this doesn’t feel like second nature yet. Eventually it will! Let go of analyzing or trying to get it right. Just enjoy the few moments of rest you allow yourself.

If you feel any unpleasant sensations, discomfort or any annoying thoughts, try not to repress them. Notice each sensation with curiosity and adjust yourself if you need to. With practice this technique will help you to relax, release tension and become more sensitive to your body’s energy. The yogis call it Prana or Shakti, and the martial arts masters call it Qi.

Ask yourself, what would happen if I allowed my body to do a little less work?

- Rest in a comfortable seated position. Take a few deep breaths.
- When you’re ready to, let your eyelids close. Become aware of the feeling of gravity, and the contact you make with the seat beneath you. Notice your feet on the floor and your hands on your knees.
- Take notice of the sounds around you and allow them to come and go without reacting to them.
- Become aware of how your body is feeling.
- Begin to scan down your body starting from the top of the head, noticing the subtle sensations in each area.
- Start with the feeling of the hair on your scalp. Then notice the sensations in the forehead, temples, and area around the eyes. Sense the nose and the air passing through each nostril.
- Relax the jaw and begin to feel the sensations around your mouth, tongue and lips.
- Notice the neck area, and relax the back of the neck, the shoulders and upper back.
- Relax the middle back and lower back. Feel the spine decompress.
- Relax the chest. Feel the rise and fall of each breath.
- Let the arms fall loose and feel the palms relax on the lap. Notice any tingling sensations in your fingers or any heat releasing from the palms.
- Allow the belly to relax and notice the sensations in the center of your body.
• Notice your hips and let them relax. Bring attention to your upper legs, feeling the bones, the muscles of your quads and hamstrings. Scan down to your knees, calves and shin bones.

• Relax the ankles and soles of your feet.

• Now focus on the sensations in the entire right side of your body — face, arm, torso, and right leg.

• Now switch your focus to the sensations in the left side of your body — face, arm, torso, and left leg.

• Now notice the entire body as a whole. Feel all the sensations, circulation, heartbeat and breath.

• Now, let your focus go completely and allow your mind to do whatever it wants for a minute. No straining or controlling anything. Simply let yourself be.

How do you feel after this meditation? Were you able to feel more subtle sensations in your body than usual? Did you discover areas that had been holding tension?
DAY 7
USE A
Mantra
In meditation, we sometimes use focus points called “Mantras” to guide the mind into a relaxed state. Mantra means “tool of thought” and is generally a sound or phrase. There are different mantras but for this meditation, let’s try the mantra “ahem.” Pronounced “ah-huumm.” It combines natural sounds the body makes when we see, taste or feel something good — “ahhh” and “mmm.” So, naturally, repeating these words will bring you into a feel-good place!

Here’s how to do it. Set the intention to let the mantra “ahem” repeat in your mind silently. Don’t worry if thoughts, emotions or sensations arise. We practice the same attitude of welcoming as we’ve done all week. Don’t “rush back” to the mantra or shoo the thoughts away. Simply notice and pivot your attention back to the mantra, “ahem.” Letting it repeat for a while.

Learn to ride through your mind wandering and then wander back into your mantra. Let the “ahem” flow easily at its own rhythm. There’s no way to do it incorrectly unless you’re straining!

Eventually, you may forget the mantra or it may drift into such a soft whisper it disappears, leaving you with a moment of stillness. This is a good sign! Eventually, another thought will arise and then you can return to the mantra again, “ahem.” This type of meditation is exceptional for increasing creativity and feelings of calm.

Let’s try it!

- In a comfortable seated position, set a timer for how long you would like to meditate. Rest your palms on your lap and feet against the floor. Take a few deep breaths.
- When it feels right, let your eyes gently close and notice a sense of peace expand within you.
- Now, begin to silently repeat the mantra, “ah-huumm.” Feel the vibration of it resound in your mind and body.
- Let the mantra repeat in a way that feels natural and easy. No forcing or controlling it. Allow the vibrations to soothe you.
- When thoughts arise, simply notice them without judgment and return your attention to the mantra, “ahem.”
- Easy, gently, “ahem.”
• For a few moments, let the space between the repetitions widen. Don’t resist the silence.
• Repeat the mantra as much as it feels good to. If it drifts away, allow it.
• When you’re ready to, release the mantra and return awareness to your body. Take a deep breath and gently come back.

How was this meditation for you? Do you feel more clear and calm now?

**Congrats! You’re officially a meditator!!!**
Remember that every day is different, and every meditation will feel different. Some days it will be easier and some days more challenging — but the key is to keep going. Consistency is what will give you the benefits!