

My Tips for Beginners

Arrange for 10-15 private, quiet minutes. Mornings are a great way to set the stage for a mindful day. Evenings are self-reflective and may induce sleep. Afternoons, quite effective to combat the chaos and reset for the rest of the day.

Sit either in a chair or on the floor. It is fine to lean against the wall for extra back support. If in a chair, plant your feet squarely on the floor. Back erect, shoulders down and back, opening the chest. Open chest = open heart, able to receive the benefits of this practice. Lower eyes or close, your choice. Shift if you need to. This should not feel restrictive.

Think of breathing as your anchor back to self. Thoughts will arise, acknowledge them, release them. Return to awareness of the breath. Play around with the breath, lengthening, slowing it down, hearing it. The audible breath, called the Ujjiya breath, is useful to cue you into this state of mind. It sounds like the ocean at the back of the throat.

Remain in a state of non-judgement. We always have an opinion on things. Can we try here to not attach to "like" or "dislike" for once? Go with neutral. It is humbling to know we do not have to cast our ego's opinions on every experience. Why do we do that? Notice resistance, or impatience. How powerful it can be to notice feelings and not have to act on them!

People often get mad at themselves for "drifting off" in meditation. Instead, try compassion or humor when you find your attention has wandered; it is normal! Just return. This is the training of attention. Wander > Come back > stay a little longer before the next wandering > come back again. And again. Even experienced meditators encounter this struggle. It is part of the lesson. Meditation is brain training. It is the training of attention, now taught in schools, hospitals, etc. We must manage our attention first, if we want to manage our thoughts and behaviors. It starts here.

Go for neutral if not spiritual. Alert peacefulness, wise silence.
Be in this state of listening with all senses. Watch any reactivity, opinions, judgements. Watch your own indignant struggling. Ego wanting to be. Reinforcing identity. Over and over. Rest this urge. Remain in this state of *receptivity*. Just sit. Be in stillness. Let it internalize.

This is called PRACTICE for a reason. We need to *build up* this inner resource, little by little, day by day, a few moments at a time, whether you feel you "need it" or not. That way when you do need it, you can access it, quite immediately. It is nearly impossible to call upon this in times of anxiety if it has not been developed. Its like building up the immune system. Accumulative.

Get to know this state of being. Intimately!



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