

Meditation for General Happiness and Well Being

Happiness is something we all aspire to so let's begin to show you how to brighten up each and every day. It's easy to start all you need is to put aside an hour or so of your time and to find a quiet place where you are least likely to be disturbed. Turn off the radio and TV, turn off your phones and prepare yourself by wearing comfortable clothing, take off your shoes, stretch and relax. For the purpose of this exercise find a comfortable position, lying on your back, arms by your sides, palms turned up, eyes and mouth closed.

During the next few minutes you are going to enjoy the process of physical relaxation which is a prelude to meditation. Spend ten minutes or so allowing your body to become still, relaxing the muscles and releasing any tension you may feel. If you find this difficult tense your muscles purposely and then release them, make a mental note of how the release of tension feels. Now turn your attention to your thoughts and try to clear the clutter. Easier said than done you may say. Take the first step and try. Don't stress if you find you are unable to still your wandering mind, allow your mind to have its way for brief periods, tame the mind by focussing your attention on each individual distraction, for example you may hear a noise outside, focus intently on the noise, stay aware of the noise, keep this awareness going and eventually the mind will become exhausted and you will find you will be able to concentrate on the practice without effort.

You are going to practice taking your awareness to various parts of the body, mentally feeling each part as it is named. Focus on one point at a time and quickly move on to the next. You can continue this process until you feel that your physical body is relaxed, the mind will automatically become focussed as you move your attention from one part of the body to another. This form of relaxation will re-vitalise the physical body, distributing the body's vital energy evenly throughout.

Another aspect of the practice is the use of the imagination and willpower, yes I did say willpower. As you progress and you learn more advanced techniques you will train your mind to visualise and experience the physical sensations you feel during the practice. Focus your mind on each experience to the point where it is as real and intense as possible, you become the experience. As beginners you will need to develop your mind gradually as with everything we learn we need the basics to build solid foundations.

During the process you will practice becoming aware of your breath. Breath is the essential rhythm of life. Becoming aware of the breath can take us into deep states of relaxation bringing us closer to our real self.

By now you have some idea of how to begin to prepare yourself to enter a meditative state. You can practice these techniques at any time, you don't have to feel stressed or anxious to practice, in fact the more you practice the better you will feel and soon you will gain the benefits of peace and contentment.

Let's begin, get comfortable, and lie on your back, arms by your sides, legs slightly apart, eyes closed, and lips gently resting together. Keep your eyes closed and try to keep your body perfectly still. Your

body must become still before your mind can become still. Use your willpower and make a serious effort to keep your body motionless until the meditation is over.

Relax yourself physically and mentally. Let your body become limp, sinking into where you are lying. Let your muscles go limp, just let all the tension in your body dissolve away. Abandon all efforts to support your body, let it rest completely.

Recognise all the parts of your body making sure there is no tension anywhere. Concentrate on the very top of your head, relax your scalp, and relax your head, eyes, ears, neck and shoulders. Notice that your arms feel comfortable and heavy, your right arm, your left arm, your whole body is totally relaxed. Your legs, the right leg, the left leg, your whole body is totally relaxed.

Relax mentally, release all thoughts, worries, anxieties, memories and dreams, and just remain aware. It's no good trying to force your mind to become blank, just allow your thoughts to come and go whilst focussing on your relaxation. Eventually the mind will become calm and settled.

Meditation is an effortless mental process of focussing your awareness on the task at hand. Don't try to rationalise any of what you may be experiencing, just follow the process and most importantly, don't fall asleep. Sleeping will deprive you of the opportunity to achieve deep relaxation. Say to yourself mentally, "I am practicing meditation, I will remain fully aware and concentrate on the practice". Keep repeating this until your awareness is crystal clear.

Become aware of any external sounds, it may be a car driving past or a bird twittering. Forget everything else and focus your whole attention on whatever sounds you can hear, become aware and listen intently, become aware that you are listening. Try not to focus on any one sound keep moving from one to another. Keep your awareness open listening with your mind completely receptive and relaxed. Remain in this state for a few minutes.

Keep in mind that determination is extremely powerful if you remain focussed and consistent. It will only be a matter of time before you see results and achieve the outcome you want.

Turn your attention to your arms, relax your arms completely, feel your arms sinking into where you are lying, relax your right arm totally and now your left arm, relaxing both shoulders as you lie in this comfortable position concentrating on each part of your body as you scan them. Feel the muscles in your neck and shoulders release any tension they may hold, relaxing, free of all stiffness, the muscles are in their normal relaxed position, not tense, just totally relaxed. This feeling of relaxation slowly spreads to adjoining muscles and tendons, notice how relaxed your upper back and shoulder blades are, in fact they are so relaxed that you have to concentrate to notice that they are connected to your body.

This relaxing wave of relaxation flows into your head and through your scalp, your temples, your eyes, cheeks, mouth, chin, all the tension in your head has disappeared completely. Focus on your lower back and your buttocks, as these parts of your body become more relaxed you can feel your body, like a lead weight sinking into where you are lying. Just relaxing and yet still being aware of each part of your body as you visualise them.

Move your focus to your upper chest, your lungs, your diaphragm, relax these parts of your body as you visualise each one separately. Take your time there is no urgency, just calm relaxation, such a

wonderful feeling of peace and contentment. Just relax. You are so comfortable lying there, relaxing, and breathing easily while enjoying the calm peaceful experience.

Focus on your stomach, and release any tension that your stomach muscles may still have, allow this pleasant relaxing feeling to spread down through your pelvic area, into your thighs, knees, legs and feet, right down to your toes.

Allow yourself time to fully relax your physical body without falling asleep, concentrate on each part, one by one, visualise each part as you relax. The practice brings mental relaxation through the focus of the mind. Concentrated focus allows no room for unwanted thoughts and a wandering mind.

Set aside some time each day and practice physical relaxation, this will promote mental relaxation which leads to deep focussed meditation. We hope this introduction is of some help to those of you who are searching for answers in your lives.

Each progression will lead to a meditative state where you will learn to use the practice for beneficial purposes.

Love, Peace and Happiness

**This brief introduction to the meditative process requires some effort on your part but the effort is painless and with perseverance becomes a pleasant, addictive experience. Take the first step to living the life you always wanted.*