

Meditation for Beginners – A simple guide

Included in this workshop:

- Introduction
- Getting comfy and setting the scene
- Basic Breathing Meditation
- A Mindful Eating Meditation
- A body scan Meditation
- A Mantra Meditation
- A Focus Meditation
- Frequently asked questions

- Meditation habits – a 21 days audio guide



Introduction

Who I am and what I do - My name is Sharon Cole, and I am passionate about supporting your wellness through natural healing. I believe that the Mind, Body and Soul are all connected, and finding a balance keeps us healthy and our positive energy flowing. I believe there are simple steps we can take to balance our mind, body and soul to achieve better health, wellbeing and inner peace.

In my physical practice, I support your health and wellbeing with holistic therapy; reflexology, massage, fertility and maternity treatments, and relaxation packages to naturally connect your mind, body and soul.

All of my treatments are designed to help you to de-stress, feel better, sleep better, and relieve anything from headaches to backache so you can enjoy life's journey with zest, but I also coach self-care techniques so you can do all of this at home.

In this guide, we aim to explore that mind/body connection with meditation and mindfulness. Often, when you feel overwhelmed by the crush of life, meditation can be an oasis. It helps you create some space from the chaos in your head. It enables you to relax and refresh your perspective. The benefits of this easy to learn self-care technique are:

Physical:

- Lower blood pressure
- Improve blood circulation
- Lower heart rate
- Lower blood cortisol levels

- Aids relaxation and promotes sleep

Emotional:

- Feel calmer and more relaxed
- More feelings of well-being
- Just a few days of training improves concentration and attention
- Meditation reduces anxiety — and social anxiety
- Decreases feelings of stress and overwhelm

Meditation and mindfulness

When you allow yourself time and space to sit still, in a relaxed but alert position and focus on one thing, you are in fact meditating. This focus can be on the breath, a mantra (repeated word or phrase), or an object.

Whenever you do this, your mind will wander, and your thoughts will flow. It's natural for the brain to do this and you will never stop it, but you can bring your attention back to your chosen focus point. You may have to do this a hundred times, but that's ok. Your job in meditation is to do just that, bring your attention back to its present focus while staying relaxed and alert.

Mindfulness, according to Buddhist practice is "the intentional accepting and non-judgemental focus of one's attention on the emotions, thoughts, feelings and sensations occurring in the present moment". The difference is we come at this with kindness and curiosity, and watch the thoughts as they come and go. You can also bring the mindfulness approach to all aspects of your life, from washing the dishes to taking a long walk. Learning this art grounds you in the present moment, and stops the anxiety caused by trying to live in the past or the future.

Therefore, remember that mindfulness and meditation are two sides of the same coin. Another way to define mindfulness is meditation in action. You can bring the calm and focused attention you cultivate in meditation to everything you do—and that's mindfulness. A strong meditation practice will fill your attention and your actions with mindful presence.

Here are some techniques you may have heard of:

Mantra Meditation: In this focused awareness practice you silently repeat a word or a phrase over and over again, keeping your mind trained on that one word.

Moving Meditation: Tai Chi and Qigong are two of the most popular forms of moving meditation. In these focused awareness practices, you use a combination of visualisation, movement, and focus to draw chi or life force into your body and mind. For many people who easily get into The Zone, running is a form of moving meditation. Yoga and walking can also be forms of moving meditation when you practice them with mindful awareness.

Counting Your Breath: One of the simplest and most effective focused awareness techniques, this practice requires you to basically count each cycle of your breath. You simply stay focused and relaxed while you count each breath to 10, 50, or 100, and then start over again.



Guided Meditations: Guided meditations are a popular way to start learning meditation. These come in all shapes and sizes—from peaceful music and chanting, to visualisations and gentle relaxation instructions. Guided meditations are a great way to kick start your practice and get used to the experience of meditation, especially if you are short on time.

When Should You Practice & For How Long?

Technically, you can practice meditation at any time of day. It mostly depends on why you want to meditate. For example, if you have trouble sleeping, it might make sense to meditate just before bedtime. If you struggle with stress and anxiety during the day, you might try several short meditations throughout the day.

But in general, most experts and teachers agree that the best time of day to meditate is in the morning. After meditating for a few years, I wholeheartedly agree with this. I feel like meditating in the morning, ideally at the same time every day, grounds and centres me for the rest of the day.

After a few weeks, then you can start to evaluate the impact and results of the meditation. Because we are all different, there isn't the right amount of time to meditate. But it's also like learning any new skill or practising an instrument. The more time you invest in practice, the more results you're going to see.

Tops tips for Meditation success

1. **Have a beginner's mindset** – this will allow you to start practising meditation with an open mind, and gentle curiosity. In the beginning, it can be uncomfortable and unfamiliar to you. You may initially get frustrated, but be patient with yourself. Just sit with these feelings, and over time you will start to notice they become less prominent.
2. **You are not doing it wrong** – most people give up because they feel they are doing something wrong, or it's too difficult, or it should feel a particular way. Meditation doesn't require you to be that perfect enlightened being we have seen in movies or read in books. In fact, it's just a process of letting go and accepting things as they are, whatever that may be, and not fighting against it.
3. **Make it a habit** – it takes 21 days to make something a habit, so incorporate this into your daily routine. Practice at the same time and place every day, and you will soon start to reap the benefits.
4. **It's important to feel like you are making progress** - so start a journal and note your experiences. It doesn't have to be long, just a line or two, or a few words after each practice will show you how far you have come.