

Beginning Meditation

The following are simple meditation exercises. If you are interested in more complex processes and visualizations, many books and audio tapes are available.

Breathing

Focusing on the breath is one of the most common and fundamental techniques for accessing the meditative state. Breathing is a deep rhythm of the body that connects us intimately with the world around us.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and regularly, and observe your breath as it flows in and out of your body. Give your full attention to the breath as it comes in, and full attention to the breath as it goes out. Whenever you find your attention wandering away from your breath, gently pull it back to the rising and falling of the breath.

Inhale through your nose slowly and deeply, feeling the lower chest and abdomen inflate like a balloon. Hold for five seconds. Exhale deeply, deflating the lower chest and abdomen like a balloon. Hold for five seconds. Do this three or four times, then allow your breathing to return to a normal rhythm.

You will begin to feel a change come over your entire body. Gradually you will become less aware of your breathing, but not captured in your stream of thoughts. You will become more centered inward. You will just "be there."

Listening

Sound entrains us in the busy world, but it also whispers of breeze and birds and children playing.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and regularly, and separate from the chatter of the stream of thoughts which flow through your mind. As your mind quiets and you relax, become aware of the variety of sounds which surround you. There is no need to do anything but listen. Listen with your ears - listen with your heart.

Let your focus gently float among the sounds of the world. Gradually you will flow inward, toward your center. Eventually you will not hear anything.

Deep Centering

This exercise involves going into the very center of your being.

Close your eyes, breathe deeply and regularly, and imagine that you are going deep, deep into a well within your center. Visualize that this beautiful, deep well goes infinitely down and down. Breathe in as you descend, and absorb all the cool, soothing, healing energy that is buried deep in this bountiful well. Breathe out as you descend, and expel all the negative thoughts and energy which you have accumulated during your day.

Your deep inner world has its own essence, its own reality, its own light. Feel the silence, peace, and calm; no noise can reach you here, no words, no sound. Breathe deeply and slowly, experiencing your deepest, most serene essence in the silence of your deep well. Practice centering in the centering page of this section.

Connecting

This exercise provides balance and connection upward and downward.

Close your eyes and breathe deeply and regularly. Visualize clean white light pouring from above down into the top of your head, down through your body, and out your feet into the center of the earth. As the light flows through you, allow it to illuminate and cleanse every cell of your body. Imagine every cell bright and alive with light.

Visualize bright clear emerald light coming up from the earth, into your feet, up your legs, up your back, out the top of your head. Allow it to swirl through every cell, healing and nourishing and connecting you intimately to the very core of the earth of which you are a part.

Now allow both lights to flow through you, white from above and green from below, and combine them in a bright blend throughout your being.

Feel the connection to the earth and the heavens, feel the calm nourishment of the energy, feel that the universe is truly your home.

Your Natural Home

Home is where the heart is, and you will find this home in your heart.

Close your eyes and breathe deeply and regularly. Imagine yourself in a beautiful natural place—amongst the mountain pines, on a deserted beach, in a spring meadow—anywhere you feel surrounded by the glory of nature.

Sit or recline comfortably, feeling absolutely safe and peaceful, and feel the gentle loving strength of the earth beneath your body. Notice the fragrances and the sounds, feel the gentle breeze on your face. Let your eyes wander about, taking in the beauty of the trees, the birds, and the clouds.

Let your attention roam gently, appreciating the wonder of the environment around you. Settle into a deep appreciation that you are a part of all the glory of nature.

This place is your sanctuary, available to you anytime, through meditation or just a thought.

Mantra

Whether spoken or not, words and sounds have vibrations which can be conducive to meditation.

Close your eyes and breathe deeply and regularly. Focus on a word or phrase which has meaning to you. It could be a mantra, a name, or a concept which has special power or significance.

Repeat the word in your mind with each exhalation. When your mind wanders, gently return it to the word as it repeats with your breath.