

# meditation

## *A brief outline of our practice*

### HOW OFTEN & HOW LONG SHOULD I MEDITATE?

Start with 3, 5 or 10 minutes daily, building up to 15, 20, 30 minutes or more. As a beginner, it's important not to 'over practice' as it may put you off meditation. Instead, allow the benefits you experience during meditation to **lead you** to sit for longer. Developing a daily meditation habit is the key.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATING?

As you train your mind and create new pathways, you will be better able to *respond rather than react* to situations you encounter in daily life. Meditation calms the nervous system and helps you to sleep deeper. As you practice being grateful for all you have in your life, you will naturally begin to *feel more contented*. Your sense of clarity and motivation will improve. There are many more benefits that will become evident as you practice.

## OUR MEDITATION PRACTICE

This practice is designed to follow the naturally unfolding states of your body and mind as you sit in stillness and silence. The practice is given in three, 10 minute parts (30 minutes total practice time) however when practicing at home, you can shorten this practice by reducing each of the three parts to 1, 3 or 5 minutes per part. You can also extend the practice by adding minutes to each part.

### before practice

**physical & mental posture** Get comfortable on your cushion or chair, or lay down. Your spine should be straight. Be relaxed, aware, silent and completely still throughout the practice. If you feel any pain, move to avoid injury. **Drop expectations** and be present with what you are experiencing, moment to moment. Be gentle with yourself and allow whatever happens (or does not happen) to be okay. Give yourself permission to let go of the past and let go of future planning, just for now.

**cultivate gratitude** Take a moment before meditating, to be grateful for one thing in your life that comes easily. Like your healthy body, the time & ability to meditate, your comfortable warm bed, a roof over your head, fresh water to drink, your loving pet, etc. Now focus your attention on your heart, and say a deeply heartfelt *'thank-you'*. Stay with this grateful feeling for a moment more and fully experience how it feels in your heart and throughout your body.

## BEGIN THE MEDITATION PRACTICE

### **part 1 Body Sensations**

Take a few slow deep breaths to connect with your body. Feel the weight of the body on the cushion or chair. Scan the body, and become aware of each body part. Relax and let go of tension. Don't worry about what your mind is doing and instead stay present with the sensations of the body. Keep relaxing and letting go.

### **part 2 The Breath is Your Anchor**

Breathe through the nose. Feel the breath as it moves in and out of the nostrils. Do not control the breath, but instead simply observe the natural rhythm of the breath. If you find yourself *thinking*, just say "thinking", and acknowledge the thought, then gently return to observing the breath.

### **part 3 Rest in Peaceful Awareness**

Let go of watching the breath. Turn your attention to the mind. Enjoy this peaceful state. Continue letting go, and relaxing to ever deeper levels.

**note:** If your thoughts are still busy during part 3, just return to practicing part 2 (breath as your anchor) and continue to sit. With practice, you may find that you are able to hold *in the foreground*, your state of peaceful awareness, while at the same time using the breath as your anchor ... *in the background*. Wherever you find yourself during meditation, avoid making judgements that "this is good, or this is bad" simply **allow whatever is happening, to happen** ... because that is the essence of meditation. Continue to practice and be gentle with yourself.

### after practice

**Set your intention for this day** Before you rise from meditation practice, take a moment to set your intention for the day ahead. Think about what your plans are for the day and decide what you will achieve. Break down the big tasks into smaller, more manageable goals, and choose just 2 or 3 goals that you can definitely complete today. Sit for a moment and contemplate your intention.

### **Integrate your practice throughout the day.**

Practice being present in each moment throughout the day. Between activities, take one minute to close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Feel the sensations in your body. Notice the temperature & sounds around you, after one minute, return to your day feeling refreshed!

**Meditate once per week and you will learn to meditate, meditate daily and you will learn to live.**

# meditation postures



buckwheat filled cushion from stretchnow.com \$54 (optional)



## MEDITATION APP

Download the **Insight Timer App** on your phone or computer and choose from thousands of **free** meditations, talks & music. No need to sign up for anything, ever, just use it for free. Set up your own meditation gongs (like we use at morning meditation). Use this app to improve your sleep and during waking up time to improve clarity & motivation.

## useful websites to visit to extend your meditation practice.

[thewayofmeditation.com](http://thewayofmeditation.com) | [wildmind.org](http://wildmind.org) | [findalbany.com.au/meditation-albany](http://findalbany.com.au/meditation-albany)