



Open-Ended Circle

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Stress Reduction

Meditation & relaxation are practices with profound physical, mental & emotional benefits. But you don't have to be a monk or live in a cave (or sit in those funny positions). And you don't need hours of time to promote calm.

First Step:

Breathe with intention

- Deep breath in through the nose ("Relax")
- Exhale through the mouth ("Release")

The Art of Meditation

Why meditate?

- Physiological & psychological benefits
- Stress reduction, calm, clarity, peace

Who can meditate?

- Anyone! YOU can!

What is meditation?

- A form of relaxation
- Mindfulness – Bringing your attention to the present moment (rather than being focused on past or future)
- Not a religion
- Not prayer
- Meditation is Listening

How to meditate?

- Sitting, standing, walking, eating
- Be in the moment – pay attention to the now
- Conditioning – it takes time to change habits
- Find a focus – breath, music, nature.
- Same time / same place if possible

Developing a Meditation Practice

Developing your practice takes patience but the benefits are worth it!

Choose a time that works with your schedule

- When you get up; before work/school
- When you get home; before bed

Find a comfortable place to sit

- Upright in chair, feet flat on floor (uncross those legs!)
- Sit comfortably anywhere, on a couch, chair or cushion
- On the floor (legs crossed like in the picture is ok)

Meditate same time / same place each day – set a timer

- Just 5 minutes is good!
- 10, 15 or 20 minutes is great!
- Make your intention to relax/to meditate – to just be

Take a few slow deep breaths – in nose/out mouth

- Bring your focus to mind – the breath:
- Breathe in "relax" / breathe out "release"
- If your mind wanders just bring it back to the focus – and relax!
- Be kind to yourself – Everyone's mind wanders in the beginning!

Relaxation Techniques

- Meditation is just one way to promote relaxation. Here are some other techniques to play with.
- Go out in nature – Take a few minutes to see the flowers, trees, rocks; breathe in the fresh air; feel the breeze on your face; breathe deeply.
- Daydream about your “happy place” like being at the beach or in a beautiful garden.
- Take a deep breath in as you think “relax” then imagine all the stress leaving as you exhale and think “release.”
- Move or Stretch – *gently, carefully* – moving your shoulders up & down / back & forth; swinging the arms; turning head, neck, torso.
- Laugh – Watch a funny movie.
- Lie down and imagine your body growing roots into the ground (this is a great way to go to sleep!)
- There’s no right or wrong way – pick a technique that works for you.

Other Tips

- Sitting in the same place and / or at the same time conditions the body to relax more quickly.
- Stretch a bit first – gently.
- Listen to soothing music – Using the same music every time will also help you relax more quickly.
- Pay attention to your thoughts – Shift to positive thoughts.
- Make it a family practice – Have fun!

To sum it up

- Remember one or two of the techniques & begin practicing them.
- Stop for a few mindful, deep breaths – it takes less than a minute but is very balancing and calming.
- These techniques may not change what’s happening in your life, but they will help you be more comfortable as you deal with what life brings.

First Step:
Breathe deeply

Linda Lee Sheldon is a Holistic Health Practitioner and Reiki Master Teacher. She has practiced and taught meditation and relaxation techniques for over 40 years. Visit Linda to learn more at OpenEndedCircle.com.