

*Why*  
MEDITATE?



## The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

The benefits of creating a silent mind are endless. It brings a great degree of inner peace, clarity and grace. However, the original purpose of meditation was, and is, to see past our ego identity and replace it with an experience of the truth; a divine experience beyond our worldly comprehension. This is also the deeper meaning of yoga practice.

Meditation is a process of first observing, and accepting, the busy contents of our minds. Then through the process of developing more self-awareness we use several practical techniques to slowly detach and quieten the mind and free it from its tendency to dwell in thoughts and past experiences.

Once the mind is quietened and we have achieved a sense of detachment from every thought projected into our conscious mind, we can explore what lies beyond; this is where meditation really begins.

Committing to a regular meditation practice is unquestionably the most powerful element in Modern Yoga philosophy. It is the glue that holds all the other work together. In the initial stages, it provides you with mental clarity and the consistent ability to be aware of your cognitive behavioural patterns – presence! This awareness is critical as you can assess and control your reactions. Through this constant interruption of our habitual (or “unthinking”) thinking we can establish new tools to bring peace and happiness to our lives.

Being present to our thoughts offers an insight into the stories we tell ourselves, the persistent themes that occupy our thinking and the worn-out belief systems that disguise the truth. Becoming aware of how un-present we are from day-to-day will be a transformative moment and will bring immediate benefits to your life.



# THE ART OF *Meditation*



To change the conditioning of your mind and then go beyond your identification with it, comes down to practice, commitment and surrender – just as yoga asana practice does when it comes to conditioning your body.

Meditation seems very simple – sit still and quiet your mind. You'll likely find this process extremely difficult. Your mind will not stop, words and images will fly around, your thoughts will meander from point to point, things that have happened, things you need to do, things you want to do. Clearing your mind of these day-to-day things will take time and effort. But you need to start somewhere.

The first stage of meditation begins with learning how to concentrate the mind on one thought or object for a period without allowing the senses to drag the mind off like wild horses driving a chariot. We call this process being present, the ability to think about what you are thinking about. Science calls this metacognition but yogis have known this practice for eons as “the eternal witness” (shakshin) or “seer” (drashtu).

Imagine a glass of water – it represents consciousness and your mind. Now imagine a teaspoon of dirt – this represents thought. In your mind, sprinkle the teaspoon of dirt into the water, stir it up and watch it turn murky. This represents the busy mind – repetitive thoughts going around and around. Ninety thousand thoughts a day and 80% repetitive says Eckhart Tolle, one of the greatest spiritual teachers of our time. Sounds draining, right?! The process of learning to observe the thoughts, rather than believing and identifying with them, will settle the dirt; thus, clear water appears. This does not mean we will erase the thoughts, as they are simply projections of our memory into our conscious mind; what it means is that we learn the art of detachment

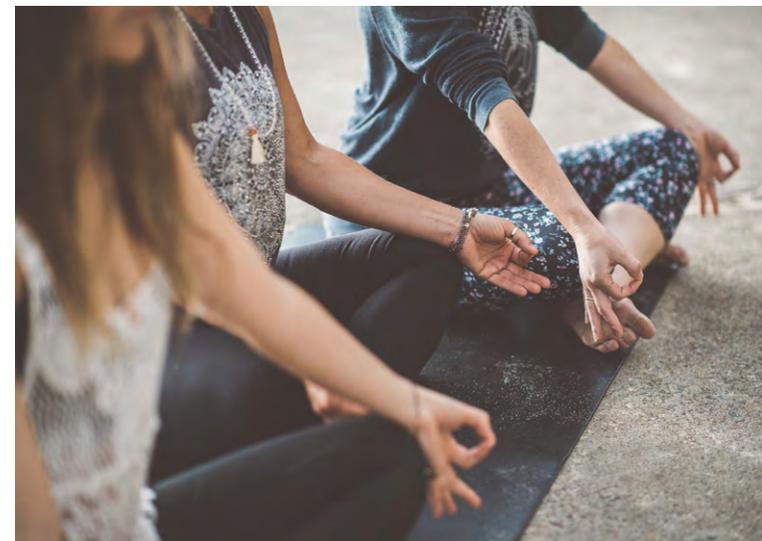
and discernment. Then we can choose the thoughts we want to listen to and act upon from a place of sharp wisdom, letting go of those with no influence on us. Once this is achieved, we can start to go to a new place, we can start to explore the space between our thoughts.

Your initial aim should be to sit quietly for 10-20 minutes a day, twice if possible. It’s not a large time commitment, but it’s one that will bring great results.

*We’re all busy, but we should all be able to find time to meditate daily.*

It really is a matter of priority, not time. Maybe it means a small sacrifice like getting up a little earlier, or finding a place during your lunch break to practice.

Showing up each day and observing your thoughts rather than actively thinking – that should be your first goal. Over time you will notice the dialogue in the mind slows and you will experience space between your thoughts that will be of great peace for you.



# DAILY *Integration* WITH THE WAY WE LIVE



By integrating meditation into our daily routine, we are setting the scene for calm and powerful days free of reaction.

Whether it's business deals or the chores we do around the house, things will be achieved without the tension and anxiety that usually results from attaching too much mental energy to our endeavours. Being present moment to moment teaches us to join – not resist – the natural flow of life and perform at our best so we can take it onto the field of life. The most important thing we can do in each moment is befriend the situation that we have in front of us. Trying to resist what is happening is what creates all the tension and anxiety that plagues us.

# BEGINNING TO *Meditate*

## STEP BY STEP

### 1. Get comfortable

Find a comfortable position with the spine erect, you can use a chair or a wall but make sure you're relaxed and can sit there for a period of time.

### 2. Balance breath

Close your eyes and become aware of your breath moving in and out of your nostrils. Notice which nostril is dominant, left or right, and be sensitive to all the bodily effects of your breath. To balance your nostril breathing place your hand under the armpit on the opposite side to the less dominant nostril, press firmly for 5-60 seconds until you feel more balance in the flow of your nostrils. You have a nerve plexus under your armpit that will make this happen and improve your experience in meditation, only use for meditation time. Don't worry if the breath flow is not balanced, over time you will develop this ability and deeper experiences may come from it.

### 3. Become aware of breath movement

With each inhalation allow your awareness to move with the breath through the middle of your body, from your nostrils to your pelvic floor. On the exhalation allow the awareness to again move with the breath from your pelvic floor out through your nostrils again. Focus on this movement of your awareness until you can feel with total clarity the whole journey of your breath, up and down.

### 4. Become aware of your third eye

Now move your awareness to your third eye, the centre of your forehead, feel the position that is right for you. Do not lift your physical eyes, just your awareness, this may take some practice but you will eventually be able to feel this separation. Rest your awareness there like you are watching a black movie screen. Note: observe when your mind wanders, bring it back, use the following of your breath with your awareness to get you present again, then rest at the third eye.

### 5. Explore the space between breaths

As you exhale see if you can allow the out-breath to remain out for as long as possible (but don't try to hold your breath). Just let the next breath come spontaneously rather than nervously drawing the next breath back in. It's like you're sitting at the bottom of a well, completely empty and waiting for the water to gently pour back in. Give up the desire to take the next breath and start to explore the space between your thoughts and the space between your in- and out-breaths. Let it arise in you again freely, don't do yourself any harm or create tension by forcing suspension of the breath, just simply let go and allow the process to happen for you.

**Try this gentle beginner's process of meditation and aim to sit for 10-20 minutes at a time in deep contemplation. Check out our meditation download if you want to start with a guided meditation.**