

A Practical Guide
To Mindfulness Meditation
THICH VIEN LY

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**A Practical Guide
To Mindfulness Meditation**

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Practice Mindfulness Meditation

Your life is very short but full of suffering. Practice mindfulness meditation to reduce stress and end suffering. You don't waste time and don't waste money, but you will have a truly meaningful, valuable and peaceful life.

The methods of practicing mindfulness meditation in this book are based on the Buddha's teachings and applied to real daily life.

Preparing a regular schedule for formal meditation is a crucial part of developing a routine and being comfortable with the practice of meditation. Even just few minutes of your time each day can make a significant contribution. Mindfulness meditation is not about letting your thoughts wander nor is it about attempting to clear your mind of all thoughts.

On the contrary, the practice is all about paying full attention to the present moment – in particular, to our own thoughts, feelings, and sensations – regardless of what is taking place. Though practicing meditation on your own is an important element of a comprehensive practice, the steady supervision of an experienced teacher may be quite beneficial, particularly when you are just starting started. The firm directions of a coach might assist you in returning to the present moment when the minds wander too far.

What is Meditation

Before jumping into the meditation instruction, it is important to explore what meditation is all about. Meditation, in its most basic element, is a method of training the mind. The majority of the time, our thoughts are roaming – we’re worrying about the future, ruminating on the past, fantasizing, stressing, or wondering, daydreaming, just to name a few activities. When we meditate, we are pull back to the present moment and acquire the abilities we require to be less stressed, calmer, and more compassionate toward ourselves and others.

Meditation, in its most basic definition, is the cultivation of our attention. It makes it possible for us to take a step back from our distracted thoughts and arrive in the present moment in a balanced and clear manner.

A range of meditation practices exist, and there are countless religious as well as secular options for mediation. However, mindfulness meditation has seen resurgence in popularity in recent years. The very simple exercise of focusing on the present moment in a nonjudgmental and welcoming way is what is known as basic mindfulness meditation. The objective is neither to rid one's thoughts of everything, nor to remain calm. It's not to use your experiences to make up stories, but rather to notice the experiences, ideas, and emotions precisely.

To be exact, it's about examining emotions to truly recognize know exactly as it is because emotions are intimately related to body, mind, and all existence. It is the concentration of the mind that will help you to develop samadhi, illuminate your wisdom and, with supreme wisdom, you will fully realize what is happening and the ultimate goal is to be free from all

defilements. suffering and has the ability to help all beings free from all suffering.

Mindfulness meditation is not complicated, but you have to put out some effort to do it well – just concentrate on what’s going on right now and do your best to avoid letting your mind wander. It may not seem obvious at first, but through daily practice, meditation can offer really meaningful results, giving us more power over our behavior, opening up room for us to be more kind and even-keeled, even when things get tough.

Through practice, we will come to better understand what we’re stressed about and what we can do to alleviate it. Though it was conceived as a Buddhist practice, mindfulness meditation is presently available as a secular practice which promotes stress reduction, concentration development, and tranquillity.

Though people frequently use these words interchangeably, it is helpful to understand that there is a difference between mindfulness and psychotherapy. Mindfulness is a trait that everyone may exhibit and is about being aware of one's surroundings in the present and not being judgmental, critical, or off in one's own thoughts. Mindfulness meditation is training to be more conscious throughout the day in many situations, especially challenging ones. It means having a heightened awareness of everything going on right now without judging yourself.

The process of mindfulness meditation is the training of attention. Meditation is not limited to mindfulness meditation. Transcendental Meditation, which uses mantras to produce a relaxed mental state, is also currently gaining in popularity. However, in this guide, we are focusing on mindfulness, which is fast to master and quite fashionable these days.

Lastly, mindfulness meditation can be practiced whenever and wherever you like, depending on convenience. However, listening to basic guided meditations can be beneficial, particularly when first getting started. An expert coach's instructions can help you remember to stay in the present now, let go of distracting ideas, and not be so hard on ourselves.

Getting Started

There are three basic things that you need to do and consider to get you started:

Set a Time Frame

The practice of meditation becomes routine if it's integrated into your life. Decide on a daily routine and maintain it. For most individuals, meditating just as they wake up is the easiest. Even if you get busy a little bit here and there, keep the amount consistent to notice results.

Meditation needs committing to a daily schedule for it to work. Right effort is an important key factor in achieving full success.

Decide on a Location

In addition, meditating in the same place each day might assist in developing a strong connection to the environment. While this is not required, it will help to prevent distractions and aid concentration. It's quite acceptable to sit in a chair when meditating, and it's even okay to fold your legs. You can select a good place to sit and to listen, preferably where you won't be fidgety. The most important thing is to make time to still ourselves and simply pay attention to what is happening in our inner lives.”

Invest in Meditation Apparel and other necessities (Optional)

You don't have to invest a penny on your first project. All you have to do is find a

place to sit and have some determination. But even if that's the case, there are a lot of meditation cushions, stools, and other items available to individuals who wish to purchase everything at once. You just need a comfy chair or soft rug for a relaxing spot. Now that you understand what mindfulness is all about and have the tips and requirements needed, it is time to start your meditation journey.

Before beginning, we shall concentrate on the following two recommendations:

First, find a sitting position that is comfortable enough that you can easily hold it for the duration of the exercise. Avoid sitting in positions that are so comfy that you could fall asleep throughout the practice.

Second, make a decision on what you want: In this scenario, you will practice breath awareness as a sort of meditation for five minutes, counting each breath

while you do so. When your thoughts wander, simply return to counting your breaths from one to ten, starting over at one.

Begin Meditation

- 1- Set your clock timer for 5 minutes and then close your eyes gently.
- 2- Focus on your breath. Feel the expansion and contraction of your lungs while you breathe.
- 3- Don't direct or change the breath, but just observe it.
- 4- Inhale through 10 breaths, then start again from one. If you pay attention, you'll see how the
- 5- Breath moves your entire body.
- 6- Feel how your lungs expand and contract, and feel how your rib cage moves with each breath.
- 7- To avoid getting mixed up, just restart you're counting every time

you lose track. The counting is simply a way of keep you on task.

- 8- Take a deep breath and grab your Meditation Notebook when your timer goes off and you're ready to complete your meditation.
- 9- If you have time to meditate for a few more minutes, press the snooze button or reset your timer continue the meditation.

You might expect your thoughts to wander while you are practicing meditation. You may become aware of other sensations in your body or events taking place around you, or you may simply become immersed in thinking, daydreaming about the past or present and possibly criticizing yourself or others in the process.

The fact is that thinking is as natural as breathing, and it is the mind's natural conditioning to wander is what causes this

behavior to be unavoidable. Whenever this occurs, simply take note of what you were thinking about or what was distracting you, and then take a moment to breathe and regroup. It is not necessary to bring your attention back to the breath immediately. Allow whatever it was that you were thinking about to pass through your mind, reopen your focus, and then slowly bring your awareness back to your breath, being present with each inhalation and exhalation.

Whenever the mind wanders, you shouldn't merely drag the mind back to the breath; instead, reopen the attention, then softly come back to the present moment and land again. Every time you take a few deep breaths, your thoughts will inevitably wander again. Don't be too hard on yourself because of this. It's quite normal. What matters is how you react when this occurs. Simply notice whatever it is that you were thinking about without

attaching too much importance to it or allowing it to carry you away, and then take a minute to return to the present now and continue your meditation session.

The practice of returning to the same place over and over again is where you should develop our skill. You notice that it is, think about it for a moment, and then pause, and then return to the present moment of awareness.

Mentally note your feelings, and then take a time to record your meditation on a piece of paper. This will allow you to keep track of your progress as you work toward your goal of meditating every day for the next 10 days of this program—and possibly more. It is acceptable to quickly scribble down the essentials (date, time, place, and how long you meditated) if you have limited time.

However, having your *Meditation Note book* handy is beneficial when you wish to go deeper or respond to writing

prompts such as: *How did you feel after your meditation? What kinds of thoughts sprung into your head? When you practice this exact meditation technique again, what might you do differently the next time around-posture, mudra, length, etc.? Was there anything unusual about your physical experience that you took note of?*

Mindfulness in and out Breathing

There is the situation in which a monk, after traveling to a remote location, the shade of a tree, or an empty building, sits down, folding his legs across, keeping his body upright, and bringing mindfulness to the fore. As Anapanasati Sutta taught on breathing, *“Every breath is taken in attentively, and every breath is taken out mindfully.”*

Begin Meditation

- 1- Breath in long, and discern:** I am breathing in and breathing out long, discern: I am breathing out long.

- 2- **Breathing in short discern:** I am breathing in short and breathing out short, discern: I am breathing out short.
- 3- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body and I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.
- 4- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication and I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.
- 5- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in sensitive to rapture and I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.
- 6- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure and I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure
- 7- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication and I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.

- 8- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in calming mental fabrication and I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.
- 9- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in sensitive to the mind and I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.
- 10- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in satisfying the mind and I will breathe out satisfying the mind.
- 11- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in steadying the mind and I will breathe out steadying the mind.
- 12- **Train yourself;** I will breathe out releasing the mind and I will breathe out releasing the mind.
- 13- **Train yourself:** I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy and I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy
- 14- **Train yourself;** I will breathe in focusing on dispassion and I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.

15- Train yourself; I will breathe in focusing on cessation and I will breathe out focusing on cessation.

16- Train yourself: I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment and I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.

Using the above steps recommended by Anapanasati Sutta, you should cultivate and pursue mindfulness of in-out breathing in order to bear significant fruit and provide enormous benefit.

Open Awareness Meditation

Open Mindset Meditation, which is known as “*open attention*,” or “*soft focus*,” is a mindfulness meditation technique where you become aware of your sensations and emotions, including your thoughts, while focusing intently on a simple mental process. You permit the

various experiences in your mind (noises, etc.) to arise in your awareness and dissipate naturally. Meditation techniques are useful to everybody since everybody has traits in their life that complement the other qualities.

Practicing checking in with all the sensations and ideas you are experiencing, as you encounter them, is the basic element of a mindfulness meditation. By the end of this lesson, you will have become more used to being aware of several different parts of the moment simultaneously without having any preconceived notions or opinions about what you see.

One thing to keep in mind when practicing Open Awareness Meditation is to accept everything as is. We feel a want to improve things, especially if something makes us uncomfortable in any way. It would be best if you didn't practice meditation that way to get the best results out of it.

By practicing open awareness meditation, you will better comprehend what is going on in your mind. A variety of research finds that the average person thinks somewhere between 30,000 and 70,000 thoughts a day. If you practice open-focus awareness, you make your mind like a big container for your thoughts to flow in and out of. In time, your mindfulness training will provide you with the chance to examine your thoughts and feelings more in-depth.

For this meditation, you'll need a spot to sit undisturbed. Your Meditation Notebook, a timer, pen, and pencil will also be needed. Set yourself up in a position that you can keep comfortable during the practice without moving or adjusting for the time being. Sit or stand with good posture.

The idea that meditation is only for relaxation is entirely wrong, and it actually hinders the extremely beneficial

mind-training effects of meditation. When relaxed, the mind naturally wanders. When sitting or standing, you should keep your spine straight in order to boost your mental attentiveness and focus, making meditation more successful.

You will sense micro changes in your body as you sit. You can be experiencing any number of issues, ranging from muscle stiffness from hearing an unpleasant sound to being able to breathe more deeply in order to be calmer.

To practice a soft focus, you will be required to hold all these different feelings at once. Now set the intention about what you are going to be doing: *“I’m going to meditate for five minutes, tuning into whatever I hear, feel, think, or have feelings about during that time, even if it’s bad, but keeping an open mind and trying to focus on staying calm and relaxed for the five minutes.”* Now you are ready to start meditating.

Begin Meditation

- 1- Start by setting the timer for five minutes.
- 2- Let your eyes close slowly.
- 3- Let air move in and out of your lungs as you feel them expand and constrict.
- 4- Focus on the sense of touch on your skin by feeling the air in the room and paying attention to your skin.
- 5- Notice any sounds or movement happening in the space above your head.
- 6- Now shift your focus and bring your awareness below you to where your body contacts the floor underneath you. Do any slight vibrations from the ground?
- 7- Set your body into a still state, direct your consciousness to the distance you can sense.

- 8- Now focus your awareness to your right side and notice if there is any sound or movement.
- 9- Bring your awareness to the space behind you, filling the room and even extending beyond the room's boundaries. (*Are there any sounds coming from the other side of the walls?*)
- 10- Shift your attention to the left side of your body.
- 11- Visualize your awareness as a bright glow in all directions around you, mentally scanning all directions at the same time—just being present in the moment as it is.
- 12- If your mind begins to wander, bring your consciousness back to the breath as it expands and contracts, and from there, expand your awareness in all directions around you.

It is usually suggested to come to a calm and mindful close to any meditation session. Before opening their eyes, some individuals start to move and flex their bodies in a gradual manner; for others, this involves reciting a quick prayer or stating a goal for their day. Whatever method feels most natural to you for concluding your practice, use it. What key is that you allow yourself enough time to exit the meditation without hurrying it.

Making a conscious transition out of meditation allows you to maintain the relaxing effect that has been formed during your practice, thereby increasing your ability to reap the benefits of tranquility, clarity, and openness for a longer period of time.

For a beginner, I always recommend that you take a moment to jot down the specifics of your meditation in the area provided at the end of this section. If you find yourself meditating for a period of

time greater than the recommended five minutes, please keep track of it. Write down your answers to the following in your Meditation Notebook during the next few minutes:

Were there any specific ideas or recollections that sprang out at you? Did anything surprising happen to you? For example, something like a sound or sensation that had caught you off guard?

You can also go deeper with this meditation by making it a 10-minute meditation instead of five, or any length more than that. Set the timer for 10 minutes and use the preceding meditation, but don't skip the 5-minute breaks. If you would like to continue beyond 10 minutes, do so as long as you desire. For my general recommendation, a regular practice should take between 20 and 40 minutes.

You can also incorporate open awareness meditation in your everyday activities. Take a few moments to consciously experience the workplace from a different location than you are accustomed to. Mentally examine the area around you in all directions.

During your meals, take a moment to check in with yourself. Take note of the scents, noises, and thoughts that arise in your head as you walk around.

When you go to the market, take a time to observe the temperature, the scents, the music, and the conversations taking place in the background. This will help you to be more conscious. Do a conscious check-in wherever you are and whenever it is appropriate, close your eyes and listen in all directions around you for clues about your surroundings. Be present with whatever you're doing, whenever you're actually doing something.

What you get out of Open Awareness Meditation

Open-awareness Meditation is the discipline of opening your mind and allowing oneself to receive all available information before making any decisions or performing any actions. Take note of the word “*allow*.” We don’t have to force ourselves to notice sensory input; awareness develops spontaneously as a result of a practice of calm, relaxed allowing. We have an innate predisposition to “*brace for impact*” when we are opposed to something that is happening, which means we retreat and tense our muscles. The mind then goes into overdrive, imagining all the ways things could or should be different.

When we are open to something, though, we are more intrigued about it and more inclined to embrace it, which puts our minds and bodies at peace. This makes us more receptive to comprehending

and understanding about what we're going through. We tend to perceive more possibilities and numerous viewpoints on things when we keep an open mind.

Open Awareness Meditation will improve your ability to view things for what they are and accept them as they are. You will build the following qualities by practicing Open Awareness Meditation:

Analyzing: Open Consciousness Meditation teaches us to understand the present. The more information we have, the better our decisions will be. Because of our practice in mindfulness, we have a better understanding of the wider picture, including how the current moment links to it. We have a better idea of what thoughts we want to keep, what thoughts we need to get rid of, and which choice will benefit us most right now.

Improved happiness and decreased depression: Mindfulness activities have been demonstrated to be beneficial to

people with depression and have been proven effective to improve depression symptoms like tiredness and bad sleep. Many researches have found heightened pleasure and contentment. It has been seen that following open awareness meditation.

Creativity: Open awareness meditation practices can help you access your creative self, as well as your open-minded, free-thinking abilities.

Better decisions and self-awareness: Each of us has the option of having a specific type of personality. As you grow more accustomed to noting your thoughts, you will realize the nature of your internal voice, the kinds of thoughts you have, and will be able to address situations in the moment before doing anything you may later regret.

Reduced Stress: With open awareness meditation, you will know to combat stress and hence improve your live. It is well accepted by healthcare professionals

that stress causes nearly every ailment and disease to get worse. Your mental health improves because by helping to alleviate the symptoms of stress (such as muscle tightness and excess stress hormones in the blood stream), you minimize the detrimental effects that stress has on our general health.

Perspective: With Open Awareness Meditation, you learn how to hone awareness of your environment, which makes it easier to notice what's around you and have a bigger context for things.

Improvements in your life: You'll discover that you have the potential to alter situations that you're not happy with. By recognizing the thoughts in your mind, you'll be able to figure out what needs to be questioned and reconsidered.

Mindful Observation

In Mahāsakuludāyisutta the Buddha taught: *“Not perceiving form internally, one sees forms externally: this is the second liberation”*

‘This body of mine, made of material form, consisting of the four great elements, procreated by a mother and father, and built up out of boiled rice and porridge, is subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to dissolution and disintegration, and this consciousness of mine is supported by it and bound up with it.’ *(Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi)*

Once you are used to basic meditation, you can then move on to mindful observation. This is a form of meditation that requires you to lock your gaze on an everyday item, and must be done without diverting your eyes. It is both a practice in stillness and in seeing something as if for the first time. You should direct

and focus your eyes, but it shouldn't be uncomfortable or unnatural. You are peacefully paying attention to the object you selected to focus on. You will become more aware of what you are truly looking at as a result of engaging in the practice of mindful observation.

Rather than merely studying an object, this technique involves developing your ability to take the time to look intently at something in front of you while maintaining a calm and comfortable attitude toward it. This aids in the development of the mind's natural curiosity and inquisitiveness.

For this Mindful Observation Meditation, you will adopt a similar approach to the last one. You will direct your gaze directly at the item, and if your eyes start to wander away from it, you will gently move them back to the object.

To do this meditation, you'll need a comfortable chair or cushion where you can sit straight and keep your spine

upright. Additionally, you should be in a quiet location to sit and will need to bring a timer. You will also require your meditation notebook, pen or pencil, and most importantly, a meditation object.

To start, you will first, select your object of meditation. You can pick something like a crystal or figurine, or a simple object, like a jar, candle, or flower. Traditional yogic practice made use of an especially tall candlestick for meditation. As far as we're concerned, you can pick any ordinary object you like; although, in our experience, it's more fun to use beautiful things.

Next, locate an item to put your meditation object on. For example, you can choose a box, table, or dresser. The idea is for the object to be as close to your natural eye line as possible, neither below or above it. The key is to find a gazing point where your eyes are motionless and focused. This allows you to see every

detail. Another option is to hang a little image, piece of art, or post-it on the wall at your seated eye level to enable you to conduct this exercise.

Now find a place to sit or stand that will be comfortable for the whole time, and keep yourself from moving or adjusting too much. When you meditate, make sure you can focus your eyes on your meditation object comfortably.

Finally, make a goal for yourself. It should be something like: *“I will meditate for 10 minutes, effortlessly focusing my attention to this object, allowing myself to view it in new ways while resting in the calm of my body and noticing the thoughts that arise in my mind. For the next 10 minutes, I’ll let everything be as it is.”*

Begin Meditation

- 1- Set the timer for ten minutes
- 2- Rest your eyes on the object comfortably. Your focal point is your anchor.

- 3- Do some deep breathing to release your body tension.
- 4- Allow the body to find relaxed stillness, and gently breathe through any impulse to shift or fidget.
- 5- Think about the size, color, and texture of the object. Imagine how impressive it looks in front of you.
- 6- Imagine how impressive it looks in front of you. When you are evaluating your object, treat it as if you've never seen it before. Imagine you had never seen this before and were completely ignorant as to where it came from or what it was. What impression would you get of it?
- 7- When your eyes wander off the object, simply bring them back to the original gazing point. If you get distracted, redirect your focus back to the breath, and then direct it back to the object in a relaxed manner.

Mindfully exit your meditation by gently stretching your body and taking a few deep breaths. This will help you relax and unwind. It is recommended that you sit for a while with the eyes closed at the end of an open-eye meditation. Allow yourself to take your time to quit the meditation without feeling rushed.

Making a conscious transition out of meditation allows you to maintain the relaxed state that has been formed during your meditation, thereby increasing your ability to reap the benefits of tranquility, clarity, and openness for a longer period of time. Take a moment to jot down the specifics of your meditation.

If you have the opportunity, spend a few minutes writing down your responses to the following questions in your Meditation Notebook:

- What was the object that you chose?

- What were the most distinguishing characteristics of the product?
- Did you find it difficult or simple to keep your sight on your gazing point throughout the exercise?

Describe your open-eye meditation experience and how it differed from closed-eye meditation.

You can also go deeper with this type of meditation by practicing it on a loved one or in front of a mirror. Choose an image of a friend, a family member, or another loved one to use as a focus for your meditation on them.

Use the same meditation technique as before, but this time fix your sight on the eyes of this individual. Keep a record of your thoughts and feelings in your Meditation Notebook.

- What were some of your thoughts?
- What are some of your favorite memories?

Mirror gazing meditation requires you to sit or stand in front of a mirror for 5 to 10 minutes. Set your timer for 5 to 10 minutes.

Follow the Mindful Observation Meditation instructions, focusing your gaze squarely into your own eyes throughout the process. Keep a record of your experiences.

- What kinds of thoughts sprung into your head?
- Did you happen to notice anything unusual about yourself or the thoughts that came up in your head about yourself after you completed the exercise?

Additionally, you can also go deeper by practicing this meditating throughout the day. This practice, teaches us to notice the details of everything we see, and allows us to become gradually aware that there is much more to learn about everything.

Any time the thought pops into your head, be sure to observe as many details as possible about your surroundings. Every time you observe an object, repeat the phrase: “*There is so much more to know about [object]*” Repeat this for whatever object you come across. This should feel natural and natural. Just take a look and quietly accept that “*there is so much more to know.*”

When you’re going about your day, take time to perform this mental exercise: spend a few minutes acknowledging that there’s always more to learn about people, places, and things you’ve grown accustomed to.

What you get out of mindful observation

When you practice mindful observation, you are practicing the same mindful awareness as when you perform the open awareness exercise, only this time your eyes are open and directing attention to a

specific object. The practice of open-eye meditation is prevalent around the world, and it can be found in a variety of forms in many cultures. Some practices include maintaining a fixed gaze on a specific item, such as a candle, sacred letters, or mystical words for an extended period of time. For example, in certain cultures, it is practiced by staring into the eyes of another person as part of an intimate “soul gazing” meditation session.

This form of meditation produces many of the same advantages as other mindfulness techniques, such as increased self-awareness, lower stress, and a reduction in the symptoms of despair and anxiety. It is also currently being investigated in clinical settings, to examine ancient claims of vision healing, enhanced memory, less anxiety, and favorable impacts on confidence and patience, among other benefits.

Studies are also being conducted to determine the effects of the direction in which the eyes glance while meditating.

By engaging in Mindful Observation Meditation, you will build the following qualities: Intensive concentration: Learning to concentrate intensively and without experiencing any strain improves the delicate capacity to maintain focus in various areas of life, such as job and performing tasks that need prolonged attention.

Stronger Willpower: When we recognize the temptation to permit our eyes to stray and then firmly override it, we are demonstrating a silent act of will. This strengthens our mental resilience and perseverance, allowing us to remain committed to the task we are concentrating on or working on.

Cultivating gratitude: If you train yourself to be mindful and observe what

you see, you will become more aware of what you have and how good it is—such as a simple but helpful knife or a lovely flower—and will be able to appreciate what you have. Thankfulness offers several health benefits, and research shows that developing that in oneself is the best option.

Stress management: When you direct your attention to something more specific like staying still in one place, you consciously separate yourself from everything else going on and start to feel calmer. Stress relief can help lessen a variety of health symptoms, such as high blood pressure and trouble sleeping.

Thought awareness: As long as your attention is fixed on the meditation item, your thoughts continue to flow in accordance with their natural cycles. Focusing the mind and growing awareness of the thoughts that run through your mind are two of the most effective techniques

for cultivating awareness. You will notice that your eyes will begin to stray as soon as your thoughts begin to wander.

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation, also known as *kinhin* or mindful walking, is a type of moving meditation that originates in the Buddhist practice of mindfulness. During walking meditation, you keep your eyes open and focus on the sensation of moving as the main focal point of your attention.

Mindful walking meditation, in contrast to certain other types of mindfulness and meditation in which you concentrate on the breathing, teaches you to breathe naturally and effortlessly. When practicing a walking meditation, you may find it simpler to be more conscious of your body than you would during a sitting meditation. It is normal to experience

bodily sensations while you are walking rather than sitting. For example, your feet may be repeatedly contacting the ground, your arms softly swinging back and forth, if you pay attention.

The place you choose to practice walking meditation is entirely up to you. Most beginners like to practice walking meditation in places that are free of distractions, such as hiking trails, parks, seashores, or other places with low levels of noise or busyness.

If you prefer practicing walking meditation indoors, then it is entirely okay so long as you have a hallway or large enough room in which it is possible to walk clear of obstruction. The room should be large enough to let you walk 20 paces or more. Wear clothing that is loose and does not restrict your movement. As you have already known by now, you will also need a timer, your meditation notebook and a pen.

You are now ready to get started. Prior to beginning, I would advise you to take a moment to cultivate a sensation of open relaxation and attentiveness throughout your body. Practicing awareness meditation for a short period of time, as explained previously in the guide, will help you achieve this goal. Following the brief period of time spent being aware of your breathing, you are ready to begin the walking meditation.

Begin Meditation

- 1- Stand with your feet firmly planted on the ground and your hands at your sides in a comfortable position. (Optional) Take a few deep inhalations and exhalations to relax your muscles. Take note of the sensation and feeling of your feet firmly planted in the ground.
- 2- Breath Naturally.
- 3- Allow your eyes to adjust to the distance ahead of you and begin

walking slowly. As your practice progresses, you may discover that you desire to increase your speed. However, start slowly—your version of slowly, that is. Though you can take in as much of your surrounding environment as you want, remember to keep your attention on the fact that you are walking and breathing during the exercise session. You don't have to look at your feet because they know where they're going.

- 4- Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and throughout your body. Maintain a soft body and proper posture with every step, and pay attention to the heel-to-toe rhythm as each foot reaches the ground on each foot. Take note of how your entire body feels, as well as how each breath feels as it enters and exits your lungs.

- 5- Redirect your attention to your steps and your breath as you go on. It's possible that your focus will wander. That's fine with me. Take note of your feelings and thoughts without passing judgment on them. Continue to bring your attention back to the present moment, back to your breath and your movements. Every step you take leads to true happiness, take each step very peacefully, slowly, without haste.

Each step you take should be imbued with the thought of loving kindness, compassion, intrinsic joy and equanimity pervaded in all directions. While walking, you pray for all sentient beings to have a peaceful life and to overcome all suffering.

- 6- Continue walking for a minimum of 5 to 20 minutes. Continue if you have more time and it is comfortable for you to do so. There is no defined length of time in which you must

complete this task. Make a decision based on what is best for you.

- 7- As your exercise draws to a close, bring it to a gentle halt. Feel yourself standing stationary, precisely as you did at the beginning of the experience. Take a few deep breaths, perform a body scan, and pay attention to how you are feeling. Do you have a stronger sense of being grounded, connected, and present?

Many people like to practice walking meditation in the outdoor air and on a natural setting, but you may also include the contemplative practice between activities throughout your day. For instance, you can do a quick meditation as you walk to the supermarket.

Alternatively, in the middle of the workday, you can attempt a one-minute practice and meditation while walking from your desk to go fetch some water or visits the washrooms.

Consider trying walking meditation if you don't have any health issues that would prevent you from going on a walk. You may find that it helps you root down into the present moment and feel a deeper feeling of joy and tranquility overall.

Another way of practicing a more advanced version of meditation is to practice a 20-minute seated meditation then immediately follow it up with a 20-minute walking meditation.

What you get from walking meditation

The act of walking promotes heart health, increases circulation, burns calories, and has a variety of other medical health benefits in itself. However, if you incorporate the practice of meditation into your routine, you will reap a slew of additional health and well-being benefits. The most significant benefit is the ability to reconnect the mind and body to the present moment. Other advantages include:

- 1- Greater connection to the environment:** Many zen masters believes that walking meditation is a good approach to deepen one's connectedness with nature. He does not consider the world to be only a physical place in which to exist. He considers the earth to be a being who embodies compassion, understanding, awakening, and love in its highest form. Every attentive step taken during walking meditation has the potential to produce love.
- 2- Anxiety reduction:** According to research, walking meditation can help to relieve stress and anxiety. In order to benefit from walking meditation, it is necessary to remove yourself from the mental and physical spaces in which you are anxious, to release pent-up energy, and to engage your entire

body in order to redirect yourself away from being focused on your anxiety and toward being present in the place where you are walking. Another study found that meditating before or after walking helped to lower anxiety in adolescents and young adults.

- 3- Support for depression:** Medical studies have found that aerobic walking mixed with meditation reduces depression, especially in the elderly. Walking meditation can also help you change your response to your thoughts and feelings by altering your reaction time. Depression is characterized by the tendency to think excessively about one's negative experience or oneself. Mindful walking teaches you to be conscious of your thoughts and simply allow them to move through your mind without clinging

to them. It is a form of meditation that can be practiced anywhere.

4- Concentration can be improved:

The internet and living in a fast-paced environment may have a negative impact on your capacity to focus and concentrate. A growing body of evidence suggests that practicing mindful movement techniques such as walking meditation, yoga, and tai-chi can have significant effects on attention span.

5- Healing on a general level: Your physical body and mental state are intertwined. If you promote one, you also promote the other. The combination of mindfulness and walking addresses the mind and the body at the same time, promoting the restoration of both.

Advanced Meditation

As you have learned now, you can turn almost every activity into meditation. As you get used to the types of meditation that we have already covered, you can advance to other forms of meditation like mindful.

Mindful Eating

In mindful eating form of meditation, you meditate by eating slowly, enabling yourself to truly enjoy the meal. Eating is something we do frequently, often with little thought put into it. While dining, people frequently get sidetracked, because they're usually multitasking, such as watching TV, listening to music, socializing, emailing, texting, or browsing social media. It's not enough to just chew more slowly or take smaller bits.

Mindful eating is being aware of when, how, and what we eat. Eating mindfully lets you enjoy all of the deliciousness of eating your food in every moment. Mindful eating is the art of appreciating what you're eating, like all the other exercises we have done, which demand the same amount of concentration. During this meditation practice, focus on all that you're doing and everything you're experiencing as pertaining to the eating.

Practicing mindful eating will help you to develop a number of qualities.

First you will be more aware of the amount of food you need to consume. A study from *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* revealed that paying attention to one's food intake allows one to eat less. People who are preoccupied while eating will tend to consume more food at their meal.

Mindful eating also creates an awareness of why you having that meal. Eating with mindfulness means that you'll pay attention to your thoughts and feelings. Many people numb their emotional pain with food, even bingeing in times of emotional distress when they are not hungry. People often enjoy their meals better, and they appreciate them more when they have been conscious of what they have eaten. Eating with little attention is often related to obesity and even diabetes.

Mindful eating also enables us to have more focused attention.

Mindful eating strengthens mindfulness training's cultivation of core mental capacities: Attention, a moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, and proficiency in handling distractions and suppressing the need to think.

Mindful eating also helps in choosing better options for what to eat. When we eat without habit, we have no control over what or how we eat – that is actually the entire nature of the habit. There is a habit to automate behaviors that make the behavior more efficient. Automation, however, also implies no option. If we eat attentively, we can realize the impulse to get back to instinctive behaviors, but our awareness helps us overcome these impulses and make safer and healthier eating choices.

Finally, mindful eating leads to improved digestion and absorption of nutrients thorough chewing and slower eating which makes processing and digesting of meals easier for your body. It is stated also that eating with your hands transmits messages to the whole body regarding what you eat, allowing your stomach to prepare itself for what it receives and helping digestion.

Begin Meditation

- 1- Set 15 minutes of your timer.
- 2- Sit on the table with the fruit in front of you. Don't pick it up immediately.
- 3- Visually take in its size, color, form, details.
- 4- Pick it up after a few moments of viewing it.
- 5- Touch slowly the various portions of the fruit, and notice all the features of this particular fruit, such as texture, weight and temperature.
- 6- Take a few soft deep breaths. Can you just smell the fruit in your hand? How does it smell? Sweet? Musty? Anything else? What else?
- 7- Lift the fruit towards your nose carefully, close your eyes and smell the fruit close up. Notice the qualities of the fruit. Take your time and do not rush .

- 8- Open your eyes and get a bite, making the bite approximately half the size you typically would take then close your eyes again.
- 9- Feel the piece of fruit in your mouth before eating.
- 10- Slowly chewing and notice the different textures.
- 11- Notice different flavors. Are they changing while you chew?
- 12- Notice with each chew, the changes in flavor. Keep your eyes closed to focus in your mouth.
- 13- Swallow the fruit piece. Follow the bite mentally while it slides down your throat and stomach and notice where you feel it.
- 14- Continue to eat the fruit slowly, one mouthful at a time. If your mind wanders away from the eating experience, bring your concentration back to your conscious eating practice.

Slowly and thoughtfully bring your meditation to a close. Consider taking a few moments to create an intention for the day, such as *“Today, I am going to be more attentively aware of what I eat and drink,”* Permit yourself to take a few deep breaths and then depart the meditation without feeling rushed.

Making a conscious transition out of meditation allows you to maintain the relaxed state that has been formed during your practice, thereby increasing your ability to reap the benefits for a longer period of time.

When the timer goes off, take a moment to check in with your body:

- Was the fruit completely devoured, or is there still any in your possession?

Write down your thoughts and feelings in the space provided at the conclusion of the chapter or in your Meditation Journal.

- What were some of the first things you noticed about the fruit before you ate it?
- Did it have a pleasant scent or a gentle taste?
- What did you notice about it while you were eating it, if anything?
- Did you have the urge to eat something quickly?
- If you were unable to feel comfortable savoring each bite, did you find yourself in need of additional stimulation such as music or television?

As you begin to make your way through the rest of your day, pay attention to how you are feeling after eating the fruit. We often eat meals that taste delicious but don't truly provide us with the nutrients we need all too often. This can leave us feeling sluggish and bloated, and in some cases even dehydrated or angry as a result. Foods that are fresh and nutritionally dense,

such as fruits, can provide our bodies with the fuel they require to perform effectively, resulting in an increase in energy and a sense of well-being after eating them.

No matter how delicious the food is, don't be greedy, you should remember to eat to live, not live to eat.

Eat with full gratitude for all the sentient beings who have provided you with pure, nutritious food. With gratitude, try to repay the favor by protecting the environment, planting trees and taking care of the garden. You vow to practice the teachings of the Buddha in order to be virtuous enough to be worthy to receive food. Pray for all sentient beings not to go hungry and have a peaceful life and finally be free from all afflictions and sufferings.

Great Benefits of Meditation

The most important purpose of meditation practice is to get rid of all

suffering, by realizing impermanence, suffering, and not-self. The concept is that an individual can obtain inner calm through this process (known as mental training). Happiness, according to Buddhist doctrine, is the result of the inner peace.

Finding Inner Peace

Meditation is the most common method of mental training. According to studies, meditating has a variety of mental health advantages, including the reduction of stress, anxiety, and sadness. People learn to see unproductive thoughts from a new perspective over time as a result of the program's long-term effectiveness. A person's state of mind is not affected by a single idea since meditation enables them to realize that a thought has no benefit and then to let it go.

Meditation can be achieved in a variety of methods, including deep breathing, yoga, and chanting, and its objective is to

comprehend and regulate the mind in order to achieve enlightenment or nirvana. Deep breathing is one method of meditation, while yoga and chanting are others.

Nirvana is a mental state of complete serenity and contentment, and it is the highest state that a person can experience according to Buddhist teachings.

Developing Relationships and Connections

Basic Buddhist teachings emphasize exercising kindness, humor, and compassion for one's fellow human beings, according to Demers. As a Buddhist, one of the most important precepts is that there should be no other agenda than to serve someone. All people are equal in Buddhism.

Buddhist scholar Jason Henninger highlighted to Health Central that Buddhism offers a person the sensation of being like a wave in the ocean rather than feeling that one's existence is an

isolated phenomena in an interview with the publication. *“A wave is a wave, yet it does not exist in a vacuum apart from the ocean. Buddhism imparts a strong sense of connectivity to its practitioners without causing them to lose their individual identities, and never in terms of superiority or inferiority to others.”*

Taking Responsibility for Our Own Actions

Karma is a Buddhist concept that is frequently misunderstood. When it comes to Buddhism, karma is more than just the concept of *“what goes around comes around.”* It also covers the belief that a person has the potential to influence any situations that they encounter in life. It is intended to be an ideology of personal accountability and empowerment for all members of society.

For a Buddhist, hope is a conscious decision to act.

Overcoming Challenges

Despite looking easy, meditation can be surprisingly challenging. However, you're not failing if you are experiencing some challenges in your mediation journey. The following will help you overcome these challenges.

Have a positive attitude

New meditators should work to foster a positive mindset. Do your best to be curious, calm, and friendly. Maintaining your mindfulness and attentiveness, among other abilities, will be essential as you come across natural difficulties in meditation. If you are pushing yourself too hard or finding yourself critical of yourself, take a few deep breaths and then take the time to relax and allow yourself to go easy.

Don't forget that you're meditating in order to develop better control over your

mind rather than trying to stop thinking altogether. It is important to bring a kind, peaceful, and tolerant approach to any possible situations.

Keep Your Expectations Realistic

Even though it isn't always easy to perform, basic mindfulness meditation is simple, no matter how you look at it. Above all, a commitment is required and merely appreciating the idea of meditation without any dedication is meaningless.

Remember that mindfulness and meditation aren't cures-all solutions. Erasing memories doesn't erase thoughts. Hard emotions may arise. You may have trouble staying concentrated when you first begin meditating, particularly if you are just starting out. However, it will become easier over time.

As a beginner, rather than striving to attain some unnatural state, you should first simply focus on noticing your

surroundings and paying attention to how you're feeling, both mentally and physically.

The finest thing to do is to be in the moment and forget all you think you know about what will happen and ignore your own expectations.

Frequently Experienced Hurdles

Self criticism is the most common challenge for beginners in meditation. As soon as we begin meditating, it is typical for us to criticize ourselves. This is a natural reaction. I'm going about it all wrong! I'm not very good at meditating! I'll never be able to keep track of my breath again! Almost everyone who has attempted to meditate has encountered some degree of self-doubt at some point. Despite the fact that it is a natural impulse, it is not beneficial.

Remember that the goal of meditation is not to achieve a state of joy or to completely eliminate all thoughts. It is just to be present with whatever is happening right now, regardless of its significance. Avoid making any snap decisions about whether your meditation was good or terrible, or if you had achieved anything in your time spent in meditation. All of us have the ability to be clear, to be peaceful, and to be observant of our surroundings.

Another common challenge for beginners is excessive sleepiness. Many people experience excessive sleepiness when attempting to meditate. This could be due to the fact that our minds are just over stimulated, or it could be due to the fact that our bodies are exhausted and need some rest. In either case, there are effective methods for reawakening ourselves so that we can begin meditating. Maintain a straight posture. Open your eyes a little bit.

Try walking meditation to see how it works for you. Instead of focusing on your breath as the focal point of your attention, consider paying attention to sounds instead. Alternatively, create a pattern of feelings to concentrate on, such as the experience of breath moving in and out of your nose, the diaphragm rising and falling, and the slight gust of air above your lips.

A lot of beginners also experience restlessness. Meditation can initially feel uninteresting because we're so used to staying occupied. If you're experiencing this, attempt to concentrate on distinct sensations like the outbreath. You may want to try controlling your breathing by taking in smaller breaths and exhaling for longer. To sum it up, be patient with yourself at the start of your meditation journey.

During your initial practice of meditation, you may experience pain. It could merely be a sharp pain in your legs, or you might be experiencing mild

cramps or soreness in your back. Whether it's something tangible or something more ambiguous, approach it with curiosity. Acknowledge that it's a feeling, like all other feelings, and will pass, just like all other feelings. If you keep experiencing it, focus on some other body region. And if the pain grows to be unbearable, you should shift your posture.

Most people want to start meditation but do not because they say that their schedules are too busy to fix in time for meditation. This barrier can be bypassed in two different ways. Think about this: You don't have to spend a great deal of time meditating (5-15 minutes is sufficient). It is better to meditate for shorter but more frequent amounts of time than for random, extended sessions. Why? You're trying to cultivate a new habit, and that's what makes this hard.

Dr. Lally's research demonstrated that behaviors, such as exercising on a

daily basis, are formed after 66 days of consistency and that days missed make the behavior less likely to form.

Next, add meditation to an already established routine. If you want to start anything new, adding it next to your current routines will make it more accessible to your brain, and thus you are more likely to succeed. If you can make it at your home in the morning before the day begins, that's ideal.

Meditation may be made safer, and you will be more inclined to meditate more often if you choose a meditation location rather than letting chance decide where and when you meditate. Just imagine how easy it could be. All you need to do is go to bed 10 minutes early and then you could get to your favorite chair in just 10 minutes!

There's always a chance that a person will have a bad reaction during mediation.

Even though it is unlikely, you may panic, get emotional or get afraid. In the event of something like this, attempt to redirect attention to things in the external world, such the feeling of the air moving in and out of your nose, or sounds. Don't overthink things, but don't ignore your feelings either. Feel free to close your eyes if you get uncomfortable, or if you need a break, do that as well.

Meditation, as you've now learned is intended to make you feel better. You have to learn to stop thinking about what you're "supposed to" feel during your practice. We all prefer to keep busy, myself included.

We use technology, our hobbies, and our jobs to avoid confronting our personal problems. In a lot of cases, it's because we're attempting to escape something in our past or something in our present. We must allow uncomfortable feelings to rise, and when we do, we get a choice: whether

to allow them to push us to panic and close them off, or accept them and endure. By acting as a caring observer and sticking it through, you'll find that the discomfort naturally fades.

The more you repeat this exercise, the stronger you'll become, and you'll find it simpler to deal with any emotions that get the better of you next time. Make sure you're nice to yourself too, because there's no need to remain in a painful emotion forever if you cannot help it. The point is to gradually work yourself up, little by little, past what you are comfortable with and towards more pain each time.

X. To Conclude

With mindfulness and awareness, you understand the truth of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the way to end suffering.

If you strive to practice the Buddha's teachings, you will surely attain enlightenment, free from all suffering and gain the ability to help the rest of humanity achieve enlightenment, eventually ending the cycle suffering completely.

THICH VIEN LY

CÙNG TÁC GIẢ

Sách Đã Xuất Bản

- Pháp Tu Quan Âm (*dịch*)
- Trung Luận (*dịch*)
- Phật Giáo Và Tâm Lý Học Hiện Đại (*dịch*)
- Bước Vào Thiền Cảnh (*dịch*)
- Đại Cương Triết Học Trung Quán (*dịch*)
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- Cẩm Nạn Nhân Sinh (*dịch*)
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- Thập Nhị Môn Luận (*dịch*)
- Phật Giáo Hướng Dẫn Thế Kỷ 21 (*dịch*)
- Phủ Định Thức & Biện Chứng Pháp Trung Quán (*dịch*)
- Thiền Trong Nghệ Thuật Bản Cung (*dịch*)
- Thơ: Giọt Sương Huyền Hóa
- Thơ: Hoa Nở Trời Tây

- Lược Sử Thời Gian (*dịch*)
- Con Đường Dẫn Tới Hạnh Phúc Đích Thực (*dịch*)
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- Phật Giáo Và Thiên Nhiên
- Lược Sử Phật Giáo Ấn Độ

- Lược Sử Phật Giáo Tại Canada
- Tổng Quan Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Thế Giới -
Cuốn 1
- Tổng Quan Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Thế Giới -
Cuốn 2
- Tổng Quan Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Thế Giới -
Cuốn 3
- Thiền Chánh Niệm
- Thiền Tứ Niệm Xứ
- Cẩm Nang Thành Lập Tổ Chức Phi Lợi
Nhuận hoặc Tự Viện
- The Handbook of Building the Best
Nonprofit Organizations or Temple.
- Pháp Môn Niệm Phật
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- Tổng Quan Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Thế Giới -
Cuốn 4
- Tổng Quan Lịch Sử Phật Giáo Thế Giới -
Cuốn 5
- Phật Giáo Và Chính Trị
- Phật Giáo Và Nữ Giới
- Phật Giáo Và Nghệ Thuật

