

THE ONE YOU FEED PODCAST



12 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDITATION

(AND HOW TO KNOW WHICH IS
RIGHT FOR YOU)

A NOTE FROM ERIC

Well done. You've done a really good thing for yourself.

By downloading this guide, you have taken a great step in the direction of establishing deeper roots for your meditation practice, thereby moving you along the path towards an experience with life that is rich in wisdom, strength, steadiness, a deep sense of inner peace and inner calm.

As you read on, you will discover 12 different types of meditation as well as some guidance surrounding which might be right for you. Keep in mind, many meditation practices are comprised of several different types of meditation so don't limit yourself to just one.

Before we dive into this content, let's discuss the most important part of engaging in any type of meditation, the purpose and the context - as well as what meditation is NOT.

One of the biggest misconceptions about meditation is the belief that the point of meditating is to somehow control your thoughts or feelings or to stop your thoughts or feelings from happening. Many people think they are "bad at meditating" because they can't seem to attain a quiet mind or heart.

Not only is that not true - it's not possible to do so for more than small bits of time. As your heart beats or your eyes blink or your lungs breathe, so your brain creates thoughts and stories. It's what the brain does. From our thoughts and stories come our feelings. They just happen. We don't judge our other organs for doing what they do naturally, and we are well served not to judge our brain in this way.



What meditation DOES do is give us the ability to interact differently, more skillfully and more intentionally with our thoughts and feelings thereby completely changing the way we experience them. We begin to suffer less at their hands, gain some internal space and connect to a deep well of inner strength and calm amidst the chaos of life - within us and around us. And that is a game-changer.

Though deeply spiritual, the practice of meditation isn't necessarily religious. In fact, many types of meditation are secular and you can practice meditation in addition to any deeply held religious faith or tradition.

The purpose of meditation is to connect you with non-judgemental awareness in the present moment, giving you access to your direct experience of what's happening. Meditation is a path to discovery of true nature - both your own and the world surrounding you. Importantly, cultivating kindness with yourself will serve you well as you practice meditation.

The fruits of a meditation practice are truly incalculable. It's not an exaggeration to say that a meditation practice done consistently will change your life as well as how you experience it.



HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE GIFTS OF PRACTICING MEDITATION

- You gain space between you and your thoughts and feelings. When you realize you are not your thoughts, rather, you are the **thinker** of your thoughts, you discover that you can choose different thoughts, perspectives, and stories and the way you experience your life then changes in really profound ways.
- You gain access to your *direct experience* with the present moment by discovering all of the filters that stand in between you and the present moment. You get to question their absolute truth and decide whether or not they serve you. If they don't, you are able to release them and that is truly liberating.
- You become skillful in how you experience your feelings and as a result, you're less gripped by them and more aware of their transient nature. You are capable of moving through even the most difficult ones with ease, strength, and wisdom.
- You connect with your deepest, wisest, strongest source of life energy. You realize what truly grounds you, and you have access to it during meditation and also as you go about your day and throughout your life.



12 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDITATION

The following are 12 different types of meditation practices. Think of them as 12 different paths that all lead to the same place: the place of non-judgemental awareness of your direct experience in the present moment.

Some meditation paths lead to deep relaxation and stillness, while others help you to look inside, and other types help you strengthen your focus and concentration. They all connect you with awareness, and ultimately, they help you to observe your thoughts, feelings, and sensations with greater internal space and they connect you with the present moment - bringing you into direct experience with what is happening within you and around you.

Don't mistake the practice for the end goal, though. All of these practices are vehicles to get you to greater awareness and presence, connecting you with your true nature. As the great Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh said:

"The teaching is merely a vehicle to describe the truth. Don't mistake it for the truth itself. A finger pointing at the moon is not the moon. The finger is needed to know where to look for the moon, but if you mistake the finger for the moon itself, you will never know the real moon."

Different types of meditation will suit different people - and different types of meditation will suit you at different points in your life. I encourage you to try different types and see what your experience is like. Also, sometimes we don't know if something is right for us until we try it. You may want to try all 12 to see what feels most helpful for you.

Very often there are guided versions of each type of meditation. Following a guided meditation can be very helpful as you acquaint yourself with a practice. You'll find some guided meditations in the resources linked to each type of meditation and a simple Google search will also give you plenty to choose from.

Alright, let's dive in.

01

VIPASSANA MEDITATION (MINDFULNESS MEDITATION)



image: stock.adobe.com

WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in becoming more skillful in the way you experience your thoughts and feelings. If you often feel gripped by them, this type of meditation can teach you how to get curious about what's going on inside of you and work with these strong sensations with more ease and skill. In Vipassana Meditation, you practice the skills of insight, non-judgemental awareness, and letting go.

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation posture, begin with the sensation of the breath and then move on to sensations in the body, thoughts in the mind and emotions as they present themselves and for each, take on the role of the curious observer, noticing what your experience is like (pleasant, unpleasant, neutral, where do you feel sensations etc) as well as the nature of impermanence of the sensations that arise and pass. Each time the mind wanders, bring it gently back to the area of focus and gently re-relax into the role of the curious observer.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This [video](#) is a little slow to start but it is a very thorough overview and guided practice of Vipassana.

02

KINHIN (WALKING MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in a more active meditation technique. Some days, sitting still is particularly challenging and a busy brain can really benefit from connecting with a moving body. Even slow movement, like the exaggerated slow walking often practiced in this type of meditation, can channel the energy through the body and give it somewhere to go. A walking meditation can also be a nice break between extended periods of sitting meditation. Kinhin practices the skill of focused concentration on connecting your breath with your steps and it focuses your attention on the experience of your feet touching the ground with each step.

HOW TO DO IT

Standing in an alert yet relaxed posture, begin by drawing your attention to the sensations of your feet touching the ground. Inhale and with each exhale, take a step forward with one foot, paying particular attention to the sensation of lifting your foot from the ground and then placing it slowly - heel to toe - back on the ground. Inhale again and repeat with the other foot. Your gaze should be soft and each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to the sensation of your feet on the ground as you slowly take steps forward.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is a well [written piece](#) with guided instructions from one of my favorite teachers, Jack Kornfield.

03

BODY SCAN MEDITATION



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in connecting more deeply with the sensations in your body, dropping out of your head and habitual thinking and into a somatic experience that reacquaints you with the feelings and experiences in the rest of your being. This can be a deeply grounding and often relaxing practice. A body scan meditation practices the skill of connecting your awareness with your bodily sensations, thereby connecting mind and body.

HOW TO DO IT

In either a seated meditation posture or lying down on your back in a comfortable position, close your eyes and beginning with the top of the head, move your awareness through each part of your body, focusing on feeling it from the inside out as to really inhabit and sense each place in your body very deeply. Move down your body slowly (head, eyes, ears, jaw, throat, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, chest, heart, belly, pelvic region, legs, feet, and toes) and each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to the bodily sensations and area of focus.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is a great [guided practice](#) by one of the OG's of Western meditation, Jon Kabat-Zinn.

04

TRATAKA (GAZING MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in developing focus, concentration, relaxation and are drawn to connecting with a visual means to that end. Holding a steady gaze without moving the eyes or pupils is a powerful way to calm the mind. A gazing meditation practices the skill of focused visual concentration to relax and still the mind.

HOW TO DO IT

In the Yogic tradition, the object of the gazing meditation is a candle but you can use any object that you feel drawn to for focus during this practice. (Note: if you have certain medical conditions like glaucoma, myopia or epilepsy (just to name a few) you should avoid using a candle and instead choose a non-luminous object. Also, alternating days of practice between a luminous and non-luminous object is also a good idea.) In a seated meditation posture, place the object in front of you and let your eyes rest at the top of it, holding your gaze there for a few minutes. Close your eyes and you may notice an afterimage appear. If it moves around, don't follow it, hold your eyes steady. When you feel your eyes have rested a bit, you can open and complete another round of gazing outward and inward. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to the object of your gaze.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is a very [deep teaching](#) on visual sight and this type of meditation.

05

MANTRA MEDITATION (WORD OR PHRASE MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you have a particularly “busy brain” and connect with the idea of calming your busy mind through focusing on a word or a sound. A mantra has been referred to as something to lean the mind on. Meditating with a mantra practices the skill of calming the mind through focusing the attention on repeating a sound, word or phrase silently or aloud.

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation position, choose a sound, word or phrase to repeat aloud or silently to yourself. Choose a sound or word(s) that you connect with in some way. If you’re not sure where to start, try “om” which represents the connectedness of all things and is an ancient, deeply calming yogic mantra. Inhale slowly and say the word(s) as you exhale slowly. Repeat for about a minute (or longer if you choose) and notice your experience. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to your mantra.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

Here is an [article](#) that dives deeper into Mantra Meditation.

06

KUNDALINI (CHAKRA MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in a practice that combines a somatic approach with visualization as well as the use of a mantra. Unifying these three avenues of meditation can be really powerful. Kundalini is a form of meditation that really benefits from a guided experience so you may want to seek out a guided Kundalini meditation for your practice. Kundalini or Chakra Meditation practices the skill of connecting you with your chakras or energy centers with mantras and visualizations for each.

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation position, close your eyes and bring your attention to your root chakra (the area at the base of your spine). Visualize the color red and repeat the mantra "lam". Next, move your attention to your sacral chakra which is just below your belly button, visualize the color orange and repeat the mantra "vam". Moving your focus to your solar plexus chakra which is located in your upper abdomen just 2 inches above your belly button, visualize the color yellow and repeat the mantra "ram". Now, turn your awareness towards your heart chakra, visualize the color green and repeat the mantra "yam". Next, focus on the throat chakra, visualizing the color blue and repeat the mantra "ham". Move your attention to your third eye chakra which is right between your brows and visualize the color indigo, repeating the mantra "om". Finally, focus on your crown chakra at the very top of your head and visualize the color violet. There is no mantra for the crown chakra because it represents silence. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to your chakras, visualizations, and mantras.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

Here is an [article](#) that talks about Chakra Meditation.

07

ZAZEN (SITTING MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in connecting with your direct experience of the present moment in a broad way, rather than a more focused or singular approach. Based in the Zen tradition of Buddhism, allowing everything to be exactly as it is can be one of the most enlightening and freeing experiences in life. You'll find that the spillover effect of this practice into your daily life is profound. Zazen practices the skill of cultivating a panoramic awareness of your mind and direct experience

HOW TO DO IT

Sit in an upright, alert, yet relaxed meditation position facing a blank wall with your eyes open and set in a soft gaze, not focusing on any one object in particular. Release thoughts as they come and turn your attention to allowing everything to be just as it is. Notice sounds, sensations, thoughts, feelings and let them go as they come without trying to control them. Just notice with a panoramic awareness without analyzing or conceptualizing things. Be with your direct experience in the present moment. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to your direct experience.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEAR MORE

Here is a detailed [article](#) on how to practice Zazen meditation.

08

NETI NETI (SELF INQUIRY MEDITATION)



Image: stock.adobe.com

WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in releasing self-limiting beliefs, questioning self-conceptions and connecting with your true nature. Through this practice, you gain insight into who you are by identifying who or what you are not. This type of meditation can offer profound and transformational insight into the experience and identity of “self”, which can be profoundly liberating. Self Inquiry or Neti Neti Meditation practices the skill of releasing self-conceptions that we identify with which keep us feeling small, limited and stuck or trapped.

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation position, close your eyes and, one at a time, observe sounds, bodily sensations, thoughts, and feelings, recognizing each as objects in your awareness. With each object in your awareness, ask yourself, “who am I that is hearing these sounds?”, “who am I that feels these sensations?”, “who is perceiving these thoughts and feelings?”. Consider the self-inquiry of “Who is this “I”?” Where can you find this “I” that experiences and perceives these things? Where is it located? Notice the space that is created when you are not so identified with your thoughts and feelings. Also, notice your experience when trying to locate where this “I” resides within you. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to these questions of self-inquiry.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This one is not free but it’s one of my [favorite meditations](#) of all time from Adyashanti. And here is a good [written description](#) of Self Inquiry Meditation.

09

METTA (LOVING- KINDNESS MEDITATION)



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in cultivating kindness, compassion and feelings of goodwill towards yourself and others. A loving-kindness meditation practices the skill of nurturing positive emotions and releasing negative emotions as you connect with feelings of love, benevolence, kindness, and well-being towards yourself and others. A Metta meditation can also be a helpful way to end other types of meditations so consider adding it on to the end of any other practice.

HOW TO DO IT

Either sit or lie down in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Think of a relationship you have now or have had in the past that cultivates feelings of unselfish love, genuine care, trustworthiness, and safety. It can also be helpful to think of yourself 20 years from now and imagine that version of you connecting with yourself as you are today. Sit with the feelings of loving-kindness that come from what you are envisioning. Next, project these feelings towards yourself as you repeat the metta, or loving-kindness, meditation: “May I be peaceful, May I be happy, May I be safe, May I awaken to the light of my true nature, May I be free.” Repeat this Metta meditation and direct it towards someone you love. “May they be peaceful, May they be happy, May they be safe, May they awaken to the light of their true nature, May they be free.” Next, try reciting the meditation for a more difficult relationship in your life. Finally, recite this Metta meditation for the whole world and all sentient beings. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to this Metta meditation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is a [guided practice](#) by Sylvia Boorsatein via On Being.

10

BREATH MEDITATION



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if you are interested in unifying the mind, body and present moment through the life force of the breath. A breathing focused meditation is a very useful practice to have as your breath is always with you and therefore you can engage with this calming, centering practice anytime and anywhere. A breath meditation practices the skill of directing your attention towards your breath as the object of your awareness.

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation posture, close your eyes and turn your awareness towards your breath. Feel the breath as you inhale and exhale at different points in the body. Feel the breath at the nostrils, in the chest and in the belly. Where do you feel it most strongly? You can practice holding your attention at the breath in this way without trying to change or control your breath at all. You can also practice holding your attention at the breath while counting your breath (inhale 1, exhale 1, inhale 2, exhale 2 etc.) to the count of 12. Another method is to inhale through the nose to the count of 3, hold the breath to the count of 4, and exhale through the mouth to the count of 5. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to the breath.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is a good [written instructions and guided practice](#) from Rick Hanson's Greater Good Center.

11

SOUND MEDITATION



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if the idea of effortless, receptive observation appeals to you. This is a useful practice if you find yourself in a noisy environment because rather than fighting the sounds that exist, you make them the object of your meditation. Practicing a sound meditation while in nature can be a beautiful and relaxing experience. If you find yourself a particularly auditory learner, for example, a sound meditation might feel very authentic and grounding to you (but you certainly don't have to be an auditory learner to connect very deeply with this form of meditation). Sound meditation practices the skill of receptive awareness of the sounds around you (or lack thereof).

HOW TO DO IT

In a seated meditation posture, close your eyes and take a few full, deep breaths. Turn your attention to the sounds you hear in your environment. Notice sounds that are close to you as well as more distant sounds. Notice the space between the sounds and the silence that exists there. Cultivate a state of receptive awareness of the sounds around you. Notice the spontaneous nature of sounds as well as how they come and go all on their own. Try listening with your whole being in addition to listening through your ears. Notice how the mind can very easily attach judgment or meaning to sounds, labeling them as pleasant or unpleasant. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to the sounds you hear.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

This is an [excerpt](#) from our The One You Feed Stress Reducer course. It's me doing a guided sound meditation over a background of nature sounds.

12

VISUALIZATION MEDITATION



WHO SHOULD GIVE THIS A TRY

Give this type of meditation a try if the idea of cultivating creativity and concentration by directing your attention to images in your mind's eye appeals to you. Some people find the exercise of visualizing things a powerful catalyst to elevating your sense of what's possible in your day to day life. Athletes and top performers in other arenas engage in visualization exercises to improve their performance, for example. If you find yourself a particularly visual learner, a visualization meditation might feel very energizing and inspiring to you (but you certainly don't have to be a visual learner to connect very deeply with this form of meditation). Whether you're creating an image in your mind or focusing on an idea taking form, a visualization meditation practices the skill of holding an image in the mind's eye to cultivate attention, concentration, a sense of well-being, peacefulness, calmness, and confidence.

HOW TO DO IT

Start in a seated meditation position, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Open your eyes and notice an object in your environment. Now close your eyes and try to visualize that object, holding it there and observing it for 1 minute. Repeat with other objects in your environment. Another visualization exercise is to close your eyes and imagine yourself in a bubble where you can see everything around you but no one can enter your bubble without your permission. What or whom do you want inside of the bubble with you to feel safe? Content? Cared for? Loved? Happy? Notice the feelings that are cultivated through this practice. Yet another visualization exercise is to imagine a blackboard in your mind's eye. Practice writing meaningful or affirming words, phrases, scriptures or quotes on the blackboard. Maintain your focus on the blackboard and what you are writing. You can also try visualizing yourself doing something that you are afraid of doing but very much want to do, achieving a goal you have set for yourself or living a life that you would like to create that is different somehow from the one you are currently living. With each visualization, notice how it feels and what it looks like in as much detail as possible. Each time the mind wanders, gently notice and without judgment bring it back to what you are visualizing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

Here is an [article](#) that describes 5 Visualization Techniques.



Spiritual Habits Program

BUILD SIMPLE, ACTIONABLE SPIRITUAL HABITS SO YOU FEEL CALMER, FULFILLED, AND MORE AT EASE IN YOUR LIFE

Getting started is one element of building your meditation practice - sustaining it in a way that works for you over time is another set of skills entirely. It's completely doable, though, and with a few key "hacks" or strategies, it makes doing so way easier than you might think.

As it turns out, it's not all about mustering up the willpower and discipline to maintain a meditation practice over time. Everyone has a limited budget in that department; will power and discipline are finite resources and if you rely on those two things alone, they will only carry your practice so far.

In the Spiritual Habits Program, we work together to build simple, actionable Spiritual Habits so that you feel calmer, more at ease and more fulfilled in your life.

So, how do you go about setting yourself up to have a practice that continues and grows over the long term?

I teach the Top 5 Reasons You Can't Seem To Stick With A Meditation Practice (And How To Actually Build One That Lasts) in another free guide and you can grab it by [clicking here](#).

A meditation practice is just one type of spiritual practice that you can incorporate into your life to bring more meaning, clarity, depth, wisdom, calm and strength into your daily life. And cultivating a personalized set of Spiritual Habits is the work I do in a program called [Spiritual Habits: Transform Your Life Through Practical Spirituality](#).

In this program, you learn to combine ancient spiritual wisdom with principles of behavior change to create simple, actionable spiritual habits so you feel calmer, more at ease and more fulfilled in your life.

To learn more about my Spiritual Habits Program, [click here](#).

I wish you well,
Eric

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