Introduction to Meditation

People meditate for all sorts of reasons. To relax, calm down, relieve stress, improve relationships, understand themselves, tap into their potential, find meaning and purpose in life, awaken their spirituality.

Whatever your reason is for visiting this website, you will find something of use in this course. Meditation is an effective way to experience a sense of peace and well-being. Meditation is a journey into experience. This course is designed to facilitate experiences in meditation and provide practical exercises to guide you.

Throughout the course, there are Journal Exercises to enhance and deepen your understanding of the lessons. It is beneficial to take the time to do the Journal Exercises, before moving on to the next section of the course.

If you have a mental health condition, please consult your doctor, as to whether meditation is appropriate for you, before commencing this course.

What is Meditation?

Meditation is the practice of being still, removing your attention from the world around you, and focusing your mind to restore peace. Meditation is giving your mind something positive to concentrate on, leading to a positive , peaceful experience.

Meditation enables you to connect with your inner peace. Inner peace is at the core of every human being. It is at the core of you. But in today's busy world, most people have forgotten where to find peace. Meditation is remembering who you really are. You are peaceful. By practising meditation, you learn to accept yourself as you are, and you discover your inner strengths and positive qualities.

As you begin to meditate, you may find that you can't concentrate. This is experienced by many people as they learn meditation. So just keep going with your practice and accept where you are at. Sometimes people try too hard in the beginning, thinking that they have to 'get it right' straight away. Learning to meditate is a gradual process, so take it easy and be kind to yourself.

Meditation is the practice of learning to concentrate your mind, and guiding it in a direction that is positive, helpful and enriching.

As you think, so you feel.

Benefits of Meditation

Regular practice of meditation brings many benefits.

It is now widely recognised that meditation has a positive effect on your body, for example: lowering heart-rate and blood pressure. Meditation may calm the nervous system, increase energy and vitality, lead to a better night's sleep, assist healing and generate a greater sense of well-being.

Meditation can calm you down, lift your spirits, and give you mastery over your mind and emotions.

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

Meditation can enhance your relationships, allowing you to understand yourself, and the way you interact and communicate with others.

Meditation will empower you to adopt new habits and replace unwanted ones.

Meditation may give you a more positive outlook, and help you to find meaning and purpose in life.

Meditation allows you to tap into your potential, access your creativity and develop your spirituality. Regular meditation practice can reveal answers to your deepest questions.

These are just some of the ways that regular meditation may benefit your life. In the YOUR SAY segment of this website, you can read how meditation has enriched people's lives, across a variety of professions and nationalities.

Relaxation

The first step in meditation is to relax

Why do you need to relax?

Modern life is stressful and full of so much to do. Does it seem as if you never have enough time in the day to do everything? Do you have a never-ending list of tasks to complete, people to see?

Meditation is not about doing, it's about being. Meditation is not about managing time, it's about entering a timeless zone.

Before you enter this timeless state of being, you need to let go, to relax. Relaxation is like entering through the front door as you come home. Once you enter the front door, you can let go of the day, and all the conversations, events and activities... and come back home to yourself.

Meditation involves the intangible, unseen parts of yourself, your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, hopes - all the invisible and subtle energies of human life. Meditation lets you tune into the flow of these subtle energies. If you are not relaxed, you will feel tight, tense, stuck, holding on. In that state, energy cannot flow and meditation will be difficult. If you are holding on, you need to let go.

Two of the causes of stress are remembering the past and worrying about the future. The deepest relaxation comes when you practise being in the here and now. This practice is often referred to as 'mindfulness' or 'being in the present'.

To begin your meditation, let go. Let go of any tension in your body. Let go of thinking about what happened today. Let go of your expectations. Let go of your opinions. Let go of thinking, "It should be like this ..." Let go and allow yourself to relax deeply. Let go and allow yourself to be.

Relaxation techniques

Relaxing into Meditation

Try these two relaxation techniques.

Method One: *Three Deep Breaths*
Take three deep breaths in through the nose and out through the mouth. Let each in breath be full and deep,

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

feeling the air entering deep down into your lungs. Let each out breath be long, slow and even. As you exhale, feel that you are exhaling all stress, tension and worry. As you inhale, imagine you are breathing in peace and calmness.

Relaxation techniques (continued)

Always consult your doctor if you have any history of back problems , muscle spasms or other injuries that may be aggravated by tensing muscles.

Method Two: Progressive Muscle Relaxation
This technique asks you to tense then release different parts of your body. Tense your muscles, squeezing them tightly, then relax your muscles and let go. Remember to breathe out as you let go. You can take yourself through this step-by-step or using a guided commentary.

Meditation Methods

Just as there are many relaxation techniques and exercises for your body (stretching, weight-training, aerobics etc.), there are different ways to meditate. All meditation methods give your mind something to concentrate on. For example: some people meditate by concentrating on a candle. Some meditate on a phrase (known as a mantra) over and over in their mind. Another meditation method is to speak affirmations in your mind or you can meditate by embarking on a creative visualisation journey.

BK Meditation

The meditation method taught in this course is called BK Meditation. It is the method of directed thought. It's like speaking to your mind gently. Or asking yourself questions and then answering those questions. As you direct or guide your thoughts on your chosen theme, you will begin to experience the essence of that theme. For example: if the theme is peace, you will guide your thoughts towards peace and that leads you into an experience of peaceful feelings.

BK Meditation is the art of using thought to guide yourself into positive experiences.

As you become more experienced with meditation, you will think fewer thoughts and you will experience each thought more deeply.

The structure of this course is to

- introduce a theme to you, in the form of a short explanation
- use that theme in a meditation

To help you practise meditation, there is an audio meditation commentary after each topic. By listening to each commentary, you will learn how to direct the flow of thought. Eventually, you will be able to direct your thoughts without needing to listen to a commentary. However, the commentaries are invaluable for learning BK Meditation.

Note: you can listen to the commentaries at your computer and you can download them for your portable device .

From time to time, you may find it difficult to concentrate, even though you are experienced with BK Meditation. If that happens, it will be helpful to listen to a meditation commentary to refocus your thoughts.

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

Open-eyed meditation

Leaving your eyes open in meditation helps focus and concentration. Closing your eyes signals your body to go to sleep and triggers your mind to lose awareness, which is counter-productive to your meditation.

Experiment with open-eyed meditation. Gradually, you will get used to leaving your eyes open or half-open in meditation.

Open-eyed meditation lets you access a meditative state of mind, even when you are not sitting down. Instead of feeling that your meditative state is available only when you have stepped away from all responsibilities and closed your eyes, you will be able to bring the clarity and power of meditation into daily activity. You will integrate peace, tranquillity and strength into your busy life.

Consider how this method works. Think of a time when you daydreamed. Your eyes were open, but you were totally absorbed in other thoughts. So when you practise open-eyed meditation, your eyes focus on the task in front of you, but your mind is engaged in inner experience. You may be making a meal, but your mind stays peaceful.

How to meditate with open eyes

Whatever you look at, your mind creates thoughts about. So it helps to choose an inspiring image in front of you when you meditate. Some people like to sit in front of a candle or a flower. BK meditation suggests viewing the point of light image (download here). Be sure that the chosen image does not distract you, but rather enhances concentration and meditation.

Begin your meditation with this thought, "I am looking out through these eyes, and I now turn my attention away from the world around me and start to look within." An audio commentary is useful to develop your thoughts for meditation.

Stay focused on the image in front of you. Keep the intention to focus on the chosen image. Softly gaze upon the focus point; there is no need to stare. You might even feel that the image drifts out of focus. Resist the habit of looking around the room, at things or people. If you really feel you can't concentrate, then close your eyes, but try to open them again after a little while.

Preparing for meditation

You can meditate anywhere, indoors or outdoors. To help you concentrate, it's better to remove any potential distractions. Obviously they sometimes can't be removed - the noise of traffic or sounds of people outside - so it 's good to change what can be changed and accept what can't be changed.

Even though you can meditate anywhere, people find that choosing a regular place in their home or work environment is helpful. Over time, meditation energy starts to build in that place and so, each time you come to that place, you are more easily able to meditate.

Remove distractions

Turn off all phones. Ask people not to interrupt you. Turn off the TV, radio and computer. Make sure you are warm enough, but not so warm that you become drowsy. Dim the lights, and close curtains and blinds if needed .

You may wish to put some pictures or objects around to create the feeling that this is a meditation space. For

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

example: a point of light picture (click here for a printable image of a beautiful nature scene) or something that inspires meditation. Some people like to burn incense or fragrant oils whenthey meditate. If you are not using an audio commentary for meditation, some meditative music playing softly may help you concentrate and go beyond noises in the environment.

If you are meditating at a computer, make sure the screen is not too bright and that your screensaver is off. Click here for a point of light screen image or a point of light animation.

Posture

You don't need to sit in any particular position. However, meditation will be more focused if you sit up and keep your back straight. Some people like to sit in lotus (or half-lotus) posture, but the main thing is to be comfortable ; whatever posture you need is fine. Your age and your state of health need to be considered. Loosen tight clothing, remove your shoes. If you need to lie down, do so, but remember that lying down may trigger sleep.

Eyes

When you first start to meditate, you may feel you need to close your eyes, so that you are not distracted by anything. That's fine at first, but the BK Meditation technique is an open-eyed meditation. It's worth exploring this technique!

When to meditate?

Important

**If you think you may drift off to sleep during or after your meditation,
set an alarm if you need to stay awake, for example if you have to pick up the children from school or get back to work.**

Do not listen to meditation commentaries when you are driving, operating machinery, looking after children or doing any activity where you need to be completely alert and involved.

Be sure to schedule meditation time into your daily routine. Even when you know how helpful meditation is, somehow everything else in life seems to get done first. Make an appointment for your meditation and then keep that appointment.

The best times to meditate are first thing on waking, after your day's activities and before sleeping.

On waking

Meditation first thing in the morning is the way to set up a lovely and powerful feeling for the whole day. At this time, you can access deep calm and clarity of mind. There are very few distractions early in the morning; this time is just for you.

After work

Once you've completed the day's activities, at work or home, 'pack up' your day and bring a calm perspective into your evening, so that work stays at work, not impinging on your home and family life.

Before bed

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

Meditation before sleep helps set up a deep restful sleep and the last meditation of the day is a closure of all events. With gratitude in your heart, gently put the day aside and do not carry unnecessary memories to the next day.

How long to meditate?

When you first start daily meditation, begin with 5 minutes at a time. That's plenty. You may need to wake up 5 minutes earlier, but the benefits will soon become clear. As your meditation experience deepens, you can lengthen the time to 10–15 minutes. There's no need to pressurize yourself to sit for lengthy meditations. It's more about the quality of your experience, not the length of time. Gradually increase your sitting time to 20 minutes or half an hour. Once your meditation practice becomes regular, you may find that those 30 minutes are always enjoyable and energising, and the best part of your day.

The more you practise meditation, the more you understand it and the easier it becomes. It's good to meditate regularly, at least once a day. Set yourself realistic goals.

Setting an intention

BK Meditation is about directing your thoughts, so you need to set an intention before starting each meditation. If you are going to meditate using one of the guided commentaries, selecting a commentary is like setting the intention. If you do not wish to use an audio commentary, select a theme, goal or purpose for your meditation. Otherwise your thoughts will wander here and there, and habitual thought patterns will dominate your mind, making it difficult to meditate. If you walk into the kitchen and have no plan of what you will cook, there will be no meal. If you leave your home and don't know where you are going, you will come to a standstill or just wander aimlessly. It's the same with meditation — if you commence your meditation without an intention, an aim or a purpose, then your mind will quickly wander wherever it's used to wandering.

Here are a few examples of setting an intention for your meditation. Your meditation could explore one of these themes:-

- serenity
- soul awareness
- letting go of old attitudes
- raising self-esteem
- connecting with your highest self
- sending peace to the world
- exploring a quality of the soul, such as generosity, patience or courage.

No matter how many times your mind wanders, don't worry, just refocus and you will soon feel the benefit. Sometimes finding peace of mind may be challenging, other times you'll get it briefly and then lose it again. Accept and enjoy the process. You are definitely building up the 'muscles' of your mind each time you meditate, just as it takes time to build up muscles when you first start to exercise. Even if you experience only a few seconds of peace in each meditation, peace will accumulate over time. Many drops make an ocean.

Expectations of meditation

Understand that your meditation is all about you. Just as no two people are alike, no two meditations are alike.

When people are learning meditation, they sometimes ask, "How can I tell if I just meditated?"

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

It’s important to understand that everyone’s experience will be a little different. It all depends on you. Each meditation will be different, so there’s no point comparing one meditation with another or expecting the same experience as last time.

Remember: meditation is not about trying to blank your mind, stopping all thinking. Meditation is about directing your mind into positive and uplifting thoughts, leading you into experience.

During meditation

Here are a few of the things you might experience during meditation:

- calmness
- falling asleep
- reliving a conversation or incident from your life
- talking to yourself about how you will never be able to meditate, you can’t do it, you don’t know what you’re supposed to be doing…
- seeing a silvery point of light appear in your mind’s eye
- becoming vague or going blank, and then, after the meditation, not being able to remember what you were thinking
- feeling a strong emotion (for example anger, sadness, love)
- experiencing time move faster or slower
- having many scattered and distracting thoughts (known as mind-chatter), and being unable to concentrate
- not wanting to end the meditation, because it feels so good to meditate
- becoming immersed in the guided meditation and experiencing everything clearly.

Whenever you try something new, the process can take a little time to master. Just make meditation a regular practice and accept whatever you experience. Accept without judgment or criticism. Every meditation is an opportunity to learn something about yourself. Be patient. Be kind to yourself. Be free of expectations.

There are a couple of useful skills to assist your meditation practice. One is the skill of **Visualisation**, the other is the skill of being the **Detached Observer**. We will cover these topics shortly.

Observing your thoughts

It is said that you have somewhere between 40,000–60,000 thoughts per day. Yet you are consciously aware of perhaps 200 of those thoughts. 95 per cent of your thoughts are the same ones you had yesterday.

Be the observer

The most powerful tool that anyone can have and use in life is that of being the observer. To observe yourself in action. To observe your thoughts, your feelings, your impulses and motivations. As an observer, you can realise that behaviour patterns, such as being needy and pathetic or aggressive and manipulative or nervous and shrinking, are not you; they are patterns or habits that have been conditioned into you. If you are observing these patterns, then who is the 'I' that is observing? The observer is the original you, before the 'extra' packaging of life's conditioning arrived.

As the observer, you naturally gain more distance from the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing. As the observer, you are not affected so strongly by your emotions. You gain more perspective - just as if you were watching an actor on a stage. You realise that, as powerful as your emotions may seem, they are not you. You are not your emotions.

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

Do not judge your thoughts

Very often when you start to observe, and become aware of your thoughts and feelings, you also start to judge yourself harshly. The aim of being the observer is to accept yourself, rather than judge yourself.

In other words, you are not just the observer, but you are the detached observer. That means you don't judge or get involved in what you are observing. You can observe with understanding, and even compassion, for the way life has shaped your thought patterns. You need not be influenced by this. You don't analyse. You don't become trapped by that which you are observing. You watch it all coming and going, and understand that, with 60,000 thoughts a day, with a lifetime of input from family, culture, religion, schooling and media, you are sure to have a variety of habits. Simply accept everything you observe in yourself. The practice of meditation brings with it the possibility of change. However, first you need to know what is inside you and, for this, the detached observer is important, not the judgmental observer. Being judgmental about the self pulls you down into heaviness and makes you feel down.

The following meditation helps you to learn how to be the detached observer.

Click here to expand the meditation commentary

In practising the stage of the detached observer, the **first step** is to allow the body to relax.
I'll guide you to take 3 deep breaths and as you exhale each time, exhale fully and completely.

Take your first deep breath, hold for a little, and then slowly breathe out ….
As you do, relax your shoulders, letting them drop completely.
Now…breathing normally again
A second deep breath, breathing from your lower lungs first, and then filling the rest of the lungs. Hold.

And now release all the breath
and as you do, relax the muscles around your jaw, letting go absolutely and completely.
And return to normal breathing.
And now a final deep breath, from the lower lung, filling the rest completely, holding
…releasing and relaxing all the muscles around your eyes.
And return to normal breathing.

In this state of relaxation, the **second step** is to become aware of the external surroundings…
the support of the chair ... the floor under your feet ... my voice and the music …
the sounds you can hear outside the room… the sounds inside the room… the temperature of the air on your skin…
If you hear noises during this meditation, this is normal.
The world outside will continue, and all we are doing is turning our attention inwards.

For the **third step**, now become aware of your inner world… ask yourself, "What am I thinking?"
Now don't think these thoughts, just observe them.

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

And now…“What am I feeling?”

So knowing what you are thinking and feeling...

The **fourth step** is simply to accept… accept all the things that you are aware of, just accept.
Let them be. Don’t try and change them, fix them or control them… Don’t judge or even analyse them… that’s a task for another time perhaps.
This time is for finding an inner space of stillness and rest, and so just accept.

Then, if ‘I’ accept ‘my thoughts’ and ‘my feelings’ – then the question becomes, "Who am I?"

This brings us to the **fifth and final step**.
I am the observer, I am the one who is watching… the eternal witness, detached yet involved… unaffected and free.
While the world goes on outside my body, and even inside my psyche and personality I, the true one, remain detached, calm and clear.

Experiencing this observer stage, gently become aware of the outer world again, the chair, the sounds…
and, when you’re ready, simply open your eyes, if they are closed, and come into action now slowly and comfortably,
be aware of how long you can maintain the observer stage as you move about your life.

Visualisation

What is visualisation?

Visualisation is the means by which you create scenes or images in your mind through your imagination. Most people think in pictures. Do you? These pictures are often taken from the world around you, television, books, films and daily activities. With imagination, these pictures are put together and visualisations are created.

Visualisation can come in many forms and could be called daydreaming, speculating, picturing or focusing.

Visualisation can be a tool for creating a powerful frame of mind in trying to achieve personal goals and targets. Athletes in a 100m race will practise only seeing their lane, running with power and breaking the line first.

Visualising failure and weakness can also have the reverse effect. By putting negative images of yourself into your mind, the result is that you begin to see yourself with that vision. Whatever you are picturing in your mind will create that immediate experience.

Different ways to visualise

Whether or not you regard yourself as a 'visual' person, you are able to visualise. To find out about the way you visualise, do this simple exercise. Imagine that you are standing outside your front door. Spend about a minute doing this.

Some of you will see your front door very clearly, as if you are actually there, and you are looking out through your eyes at the door and, if you looked down, you would see the front of your body and see your feet on the

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization

front doorstep. You might see every single detail of the door – the colour, the texture, the exact location of the keyhole and the door handle. For others, the exercise will be an experience similar to watching a movie of yourself and you will see yourself standing outside your front door as if you are in the audience watching a movie of yourself. The scene may be vivid or maybe you can only see the big picture and none of the details.

Although you may not really 'see' pictures at all, you will have a sense of standing outside your front door. A knowing or an understanding. Without 'seeing' it, you will know the exact location of the keyhole. You may have a sense of your feet on the doorstep. It's more like knowing or sensing or feeling.

For most of you, standing outside your front door is probably a neutral experience with no strong emotion attached to it. It's something you do every day, entering and leaving your home. But what if you have just returned from a long trip overseas? Now, standing by your front door comes with an emotional response. Maybe a feeling of love for the people you haven't seen for a long time. Maybe disappointment because your holiday is over and it's back to routine life. Or excitement, because you have returned full of enthusiasm and vitality, and can't wait to get back into things.

Visualising during meditation is one way to enhance your experience. Visualisation helps you invoke beautiful feelings and emotions, that come with the lovely images offered in these BK Meditations.

How visualisation takes you into experience

When using visualisation to take you into a meditation experience, you need to trust the content of the images you put into your mind and to believe in them. You also need to increase your concentration. Trust and belief will deepen the more you practise positive visualising. The more you create positive and pleasant images, it is only natural that you will want that experience to last longer.

Visualisation can be enhanced if you plan a beginning, middle and end. This process will help you keep the mind on track, because the mind prefers an organised process as it is easier to follow.

Click here to expand ...

Let's try a visualisation for becoming friendlier.

Beginning: See a recent event in your mind where you struggled to be civil or kind to someone.

Middle: Now picture yourself in that same situation as a charming, friendly, smiling, happy person, in control. No matter what happens, this is how you are. Instead of annoyance and irritation, you feel calm and content. Others see you this way too and, as a result, they also start to smile and reflect the same friendliness.

End: Experience yourself as this friendly, positive and happy person, who feels this way often and has the same feeling for others. See and accept yourself as this person. Start slowly, just for a minute, and gradually build up the time spent seeing yourself in this way. Visualisation can take you into an experience, but it is a practice that helps the feeling stay with you.

Copyright 2011-2026 Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization