

Meditation for Beginners

Meditation is a state of deep physical relaxation combined with acute mental awareness. Meditation can give you a sense of calm, peace, and balance that benefits both your emotional health and overall well-being. Fit Minded is all about changing the way we view ourselves and physical activity. Meditation can help you conquer your own mind and become Fit Minded.



Benefits

Emotional

- Increase self-awareness
- Focus on the present
- Decrease negative emotions
- Build skills to manage your stress

Physical

- Improve symptoms associated with chronic diseases (heart disease, cancer)
- Ease pain
- Boosts immunity
- Improve sleep problems
- May reduce blood pressure
- Enhance energy, strength, and vigor

Getting Started

- Find a calm, quiet location.
- Sit comfortably in a chair or on the ground (sit on a pillow or blanket if needed). Adjust your position so it is symmetrical, upright, and open.
- Breathe deeply and slowly through your nose using your diaphragm muscle to expand your lungs.
- Focus your attention on a specific object, an image, a mantra (repeated word or phrase), or even your breathing.
- When thoughts enter your mind, label them as “thoughts” and let them go.
- Try to meditate for at least 20 minutes. You may need to start at 5 minutes per session and eventually work your way up to more minutes.
- Be patient. As with any practice, it is a skill you need to acquire.



Types of Meditation

There are many types of meditation. Here are a few for beginners to explore. It is important to find one you enjoy and that suits you best.

Guided Meditation

With this type of meditation you form mental images of places or situations you find relaxing. Try to use as many senses as possible, such as smells, sounds, sights, and textures. An example is to imagine yourself on a tropical beach. Feel the sun on your face and a gentle breeze coming off the water with the waves flowing rhythmically onto the sand.

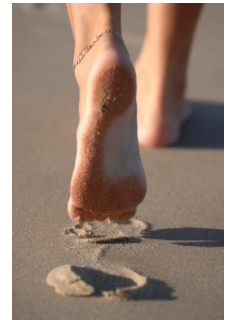


Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is the most common method of meditation in the western world. This type of meditation is based on having an increased awareness and acceptance of living in the present moment. You broaden your conscious awareness. Become aware of the flow of your breath or your diaphragm expanding and contracting. You can observe your thoughts and emotions but let them pass without judgment. Try to put aside all your thoughts of the past and of the future and focus on your mind in the present.

Walking Meditation

Pick a quiet place to walk. Focus on the experience and process of walking and become aware of one aspect of walking like your legs or feet moving. Walk with slow, small, balanced, deliberate steps. After a while, your breath and walking should slip into a regular pattern. Aim for 2-4 steps per inhalation and 2-4 steps per exhalation.



Mantra Meditation

With this method of meditation, you silently repeat a calming word, phrase, or thought to prevent negative, distracting thoughts. Repeat the mantra with each exhalation. Some common mantras are Om, One, I am, Love, and Peace to all.