

Tips for beginning meditation

1. Find a quiet and comfortable place. Sit in a chair or on the floor with your head, neck and back straight but not stiff. Your chin should be slightly tipped forward. Keep your eyes closed or open-gazing about 2-3 feet ahead of you. Place your hands comfortably on your lap or legs or fold them in front of you.
2. Try to put aside all thoughts of the past and the future and stay in the present.
3. Become aware of your breathing, focusing on the sensation of air moving in and out of your nostrils and your body as you breathe. Feel your belly rise and fall, the air enter your nostrils and leave your mouth. Pay attention to the way each breath changes and is different. It may help to count your breaths: Inhale...one...exhale two up to ten and start again at one. If your mind wanders and it will, start again at one.
4. Watch every thought come and go, whether it be a worry, fear, anxiety or hope. When thoughts come up in your mind, don't ignore or suppress them but simply note them, remain calm and use your breathing as an anchor.
5. If you find yourself getting carried away in your thoughts, observe where your mind went off to, without judging, and simply return to your breathing. Remember not to be hard on yourself if this happens.
6. As the time comes to a close, sit for a minute or two, becoming aware of where you are. Get up gradually.
7. Consistency is key in beginning a meditation practice. Start off with shorter sessions like 5 or 10 minutes every day and gradually work your way up to longer sittings. Use a timer so you do not have to worry about time and you can truly be in the moment!

Taken from a variety of sources but specifically:

Kabat-Zinn J. Mindfulness Meditation: Health benefits of an ancient Buddhist practice. Mind/Body Medicine, eds. Goleman D, Gurin J. New York 1993. Consumer Reports Books, 259-275.