

How to Meditate

The art of meditation is not hard to learn, but it requires much effort to master. The benefits, though, are nearly instantaneous.

The following is a guide to how to do the Zen practice called “Single-Pointed Meditation,” a way of training the mind, cultivating spiritual development, and healing oneself both physically and psychologically.

First, find a place that is quiet and with few distractions. The environment should not be filled with things that will attract the senses or spark the mind to ruminate and reflect since the goal is to develop sustained and focused awareness.

To ease meditation, a chair, kneeling bench, or a chair should be used, and the body must be properly aligned so that physical discomfort is minimized and the circulatory paths of the body remain open to maintain the flow of the body’s energy—called Chi (or qi).



The proper structure of the body is built upon a tripod of both feet flat on the ground and the tailbone in the center of the seat (if sitting on a chair) or both knees against a mat or the floor and the tailbone in the center of the bench or cushion. The weight should be more or less equal between knees and tailbone so that the feet do not fall asleep.

The spine should be straight but relaxed. In order to bring the spine into alignment, press the navel forward and the tailbone tucks under the body. Do not straighten the back by raising the shoulders since this creates tension in the lower back and between the shoulder blades. The shoulders should remain relaxed, and the chin should be tucked slightly inward but parallel with the shoulders. The tongue rests behind the top front teeth on the roof of the mouth, and the breath, which is silent and relaxed, flows in and out through the nose. The eyes should remain open but unfocused. With the chin parallel with the shoulders, the gaze should drop to no more than three or four feet to the ground in front.

Finally, the hands should rest about two-thirds of the way down the legs in a meditative mudra with the thumb of both hands covering the nails of the index finger. The hand, in this position, forms an “OK” sign and the backs of the hands rest on the thighs.



Once the body is properly aligned, the mind focuses upon the dantian—the physical center of the body’s chi, or what is known as the second Chakra in Yoga and Reiki, which is approximately one and a half inches below the navel. This form of meditation is called “Single Pointed” meditation, and consists of the mind remaining focused upon the dantian through the process of staying and returning. The goal is to keep the attention on the dantian, and as various body sensations or thoughts arise, to bring the attention back to the dantian—hence training the mind to remained focus through the process of “staying and returning.”

Sit for 15 to 30 minutes depending upon the amount of time ones schedule (and body!) allows. Try to establish a daily routine in order to maximize the physical and psychological benefits of meditation.