



Mindfulness Meditation

Meditation is a core mindfulness practice that you can customize to meet you where you are, bring your attention to the present moment, and engage in more compassion and connection.

When we meditate we venture into the workings of our minds: our sensations (air blowing on our skin or a harsh smell wafting into the room), our emotions (love this, hate that, crave this, loathe that) and thoughts (wouldn't it be weird to see an elephant playing a trumpet).

Mindfulness meditation asks us to suspend judgement and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness, to ourselves and others.



Meditation does not take any single form and most practices fall within
three broad categories:

Focused - Attention Meditation

Open Attention Meditation

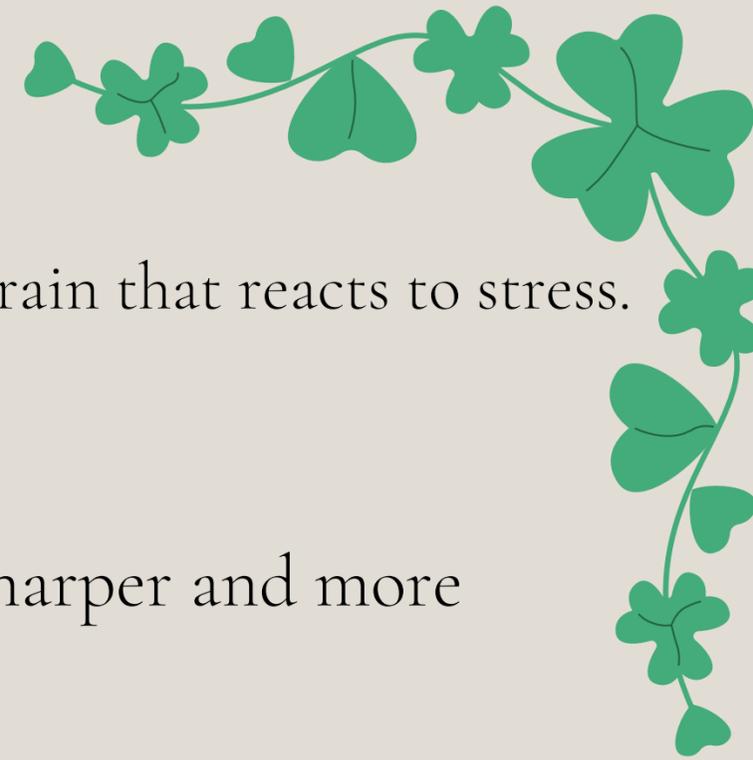
Loving - Kindness or Metta Meditation





- **Focused-attention meditation:** The aim here is to train the mind's capacity for concentration and awareness of the present moment by focusing on a single point of attention (such as the breath). If you are new to meditation, this is a good place to begin.
- **Open awareness meditation:** Rather than focusing on a specific object of attention, in this form of meditation you keep your field of awareness open, allowing you to simply witness or observe and thereby become less reactive to thoughts, emotions, and sensory experiences.
- **Compassion or loving-kindness meditation:** The aim of this practice is to cultivate deep compassion for all beings, starting with oneself and then extending compassion to friends and family, to people you find difficult, and eventually to all beings.

Why Learn to Meditate?



Increased Resilience: Meditation is associated with a reduction in activity in the part of the brain that reacts to stress. This enhances our ability to stay calm and responsive in the midst of stressful situations.

Increased focus: Meditation activates additional circuits in the brain that allow for sharper and more efficient concentration.

Decreased mind wandering: Meditation reduces moments when our attention wanders away from what is happening here and now.

Enhanced pain tolerance: Mindfulness triggers a neurological, pain-relieving response. But mindfulness meditation also helps you cultivate a non-judgmental, accepting attitude toward the pain.

Enhanced immunity: Meditation has been found to reduce markers of inflammation in the body and to strengthen the response of the immune system.

How to Meditate

Here are the basic instructions for focused attention meditation.



Sit with a straight spine, eyes closed.

Bring your attention to the sensations of breathing (either at your nose or in your chest or abdomen).

When the mind wanders, notice that you are thinking, shift your attention back to the breath, and then stay with each inhale and exhale.

Remember to also identify a convenient time and place to meditate. If you're new to meditation, you can try starting with as little as one minute of meditation each day and then build up slowly to longer practice sessions.

Here are some additional tips to help you get the most out of your meditation practice:

- Remember that meditation isn't about stopping your thoughts.
- If you feel sleepy, don't judge yourself. Pay attention to your posture. Sit upright and keep your spine erect. You can also try meditating first thing in the morning. The feeling of sleepiness usually goes away after the first few weeks.
- Find a partner to meditate with you; that way, you can hold each other accountable.
- If you already meditate, keep up the good work. Focus on maintaining consistency, and if you feel like a challenge, try lengthening your daily sessions.
- If you are having trouble getting motivated, meditate for a short amount of time (3 to 5 minutes) until you are able to build the daily habit.

