

Start Here! 5 Meditation Styles for Beginners

By [Tris Thorp](#)



Beginning a meditation practice can be both exciting and intimidating. If you asked 10 different people what style of meditation they practice, you might get 10 different answers. It's common to feel overwhelmed and uncertain as to where or how to get started.

The best way to begin is to familiarize yourself with some of the different types of meditation to see what resonates with you. Here are a few of the more common styles that are great for beginners.

Guided Meditation

Guided meditations have become increasingly popular in the past few years. A guided meditation is led by someone else, either in person or via a recording, that will usually (although, not always) have a theme and relaxing music playing in the background. Guided meditations generally last anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes, depending on the purpose or theme, and they come in all styles—including healing, manifesting, and going within to find your purpose. Because guided meditations are led by another person, this style of meditation is great for beginners and those who may struggle with sitting still for more than just a few minutes at a time. They are also beneficial if you would like to enhance your existing practice or focus your energy and attention on a specific outcome.

If you are interested in this type of meditation, check out Deepak and Oprah's [21-Day Meditation Experience](#), an online program where participants are sent a new recording of a guided meditation each day. This program is offered several times each year, and is free and easily accessible to everyone. You can also download a guided meditation app on your smartphone, like Insight Timer or the [Chopra Center's Ananda app](#). Bonus: There's even a guided meditation app for kids, called [Ananda Kids](#), created by the Chopra Center!

Another option is to see if there are any guided meditations being offered in your community where you can go to meditate with like-minded individuals. Many yoga studios and wellness centers offer daily guided meditations, which can be a great way to ease into your meditation practice.

Visualization Meditation

Visualization meditation is a powerful way to use the mind to influence the body and can also be an empowering way to manifest desired outcomes in your life. Deepak Chopra teaches that what we place our attention on grows stronger and what we take our attention away from will begin to diminish. The unconscious mind is extremely powerful and it works very well with imagery.

One common visualization practice is centered around health. By visualizing your body-mind as being healthy, vibrant, and energized—or grounded, peaceful, and calm—you can begin to elicit these things both mentally

and physically. Another approach is using visual imagery for creative purposes. By constructing an image in your mind of what your life might look like after having accomplished a goal and really *seeing yourself having already achieved it* is a way to begin living in ways that support the manifestation of your desired outcome.

To meditate using visual imagery, practice the following:

1. Identify your desired outcome. For example, do you wish to feel more grounded and at peace in your mind and emotions? Or would you like to envision your physical body as being healthy, vibrant, and strong? Or are you longing to create art, write poetry, be in a new relationship, or travel abroad?
2. Create an internal representation of what this looks, sounds, and feels like. Make it as real and as compelling as possible.
3. Enter into a meditative state by relaxing and taking some deep breaths and then bring the image into your awareness. Associate yourself into the picture by stepping inside it and feeling as if it has already happened.
4. When it's time to come out of meditation, simply allow the image to fade off into the distance and relinquish any attachment to outcome.
5. Meditate in this fashion anywhere from 10 to 15 minutes each day.

***Japa* or Mantra-Based Meditation**

Japa meditation is a mantra-based meditation path that is one of the oldest, most revered classical techniques known today. The word “[mantra](#)” translates to *mind vehicle* or *mind instrument*. *Japa* meditation has the practitioner repeating a word or phrase for the duration of the meditation, with the mantra being the focal point throughout.

During the practice, whenever you drift away from the mantra to other thoughts, sounds, or physical sensations, you simply guide your attention back to the repetition of the mantra. Think of it as a dance back and forth between mantra and thought. Some mantras have a specific meaning and it's said that by repeating the mantra, you are connecting to the energetic essence of its intention. Other mantras purposely have no meaning and are designed to help access deeper levels of silence. In this approach, eventually the mantra and thoughts will cancel one another out. When this happens, your conscious awareness transcends the busyness of the mind and reaches higher states of consciousness.

Popular styles of mantra-based meditation are [Primordial Sound Meditation](#) as taught by Deepak Chopra and the age-old practice of the [So Hum meditation](#). Both of these practices are easily learned in person or online for your convenience.

Loving-Kindness or *Metta* Meditation

Metta meditation, also known as Loving-Kindness meditation, is designed to cultivate four qualities of love: friendliness (*Metta*), compassion (*Karuna*), appreciative joy (*Mudita*), and equanimity (*Upekkha*). The quality of *Metta*, or friendliness, is expressed as a genuine compassion sent out with the intention of surrounding ourselves and others with loving kindness. With all that is going on in the world today, *Metta* meditation is a worthwhile practice for each of us to spend some time in each day. This style of meditation also works well as an entrance point for the practice of forgiveness and can be a powerful tool for lessening the charge of negative emotions we have toward those who have wronged us.

While there are various approaches to *Metta* meditation, this audio clip on [Loving Kindness Meditation](#) is a thorough and well-spoken version.

Another variation will have you think silently to yourself, “*May I be filled with loving kindness. May I be well. May I be peaceful and at ease. May I be truly happy.*” You would then bring someone else into your mind (someone you love and/or someone who you are feeling challenged by) and say silently, “*May you be filled with loving kindness. May you be well. May you be peaceful and at ease. May you be truly happy.*” You may then bring all of humanity into your awareness and send the same intention out to the collective—to all sentient beings, “*May we be filled with loving kindness. May we be well. May we be peaceful and at ease. May we be truly happy.*”

Once you have done this meditation a few times and you remember the process, you can begin to do the meditation on your own without listening to the audio file. Choose whatever language you prefer to use and practice this meditation for a period of time to see how it resonates with you.

Breath-Awareness Meditation

Breath-awareness meditation is a simple practice of finding a comfortable seat, closing your eyes, and placing your attention in the inhalation and exhalation of your breath. Breath awareness is an effective way to establish greater mind-body connection and to reduce stress. This type of meditation can be your preferred meditation practice each day and it is also highly useful during moments of tension in the workplace and at home.

Once you’ve tried a few different types of meditation, you will have a better idea of what resonates with you and what doesn't. The most important thing to remember is that there is no *right or wrong* meditation; there are many paths that all lead to the same destination, and the beauty of life is that we get to choose our own path.

Keep it simple at the beginning and just feel out some different techniques. When you find one that you enjoy, the next step is to set aside 15 to 20 minutes each day to cultivate your meditation practice. From there, tend to your practice each day and you will experience a number of life-changing benefits.