

Mindfulness Matters

A Meditation Guide

presented

by The Power of Girls & Jr. NBA



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About This Meditation Guide

Meditation is one of the most powerful forms of self-care you can give to yourself. It is the gift that continues to give in all aspects of your life. Though it can be as simple as focusing on your breath for a few minutes, it can also be a little intimidating. But the juice, in this case, is worth the squeeze. So many of the world's most successful and inspirational leaders – including athletes and CEOs - have this one practice in common; they have all found something magical within themselves through meditation.

The goal of this guide is to introduce you to the many ways you can use meditation or add a little extra mindfulness to your life. From going through the motions of everyday life a little bit more intentionally all the way to creating a consistent meditation practice and routine – this guide will help you find the practice that works best for you.

Why is meditation so powerful?

There's tons of research out there that shows practicing even just 10 minutes of mindfulness a day has the power to totally transform your life.

MEDITATION CAN:

- Reduce stress
- Increase self-awareness
- Allow you to respond rather than react
- Help you learn more about yourself
- Help you feel more calm and at ease
- Improve your patience

Getting Started with a Meditation Practice

Excited about meditation but don't know where or how to start? No problem. We recommend taking it a little at a time. When you first start a meditation practice you might find it is harder than you initially thought to focus even for brief periods of time. Despite your best intentions, you might find your mind wandering after the first minute of closing your eyes. That's why it's called a practice.

Almost everything great in our lives takes a little bit of work, patience, and practice. You will be building a new muscle or skill like reading or trying a new sport. You likely won't be perfect at it right away, but over time you'll be able to do it for longer periods.

First, we recommend starting small. You want to meditate for an amount of time that allows you to experience some of the benefits, but not too long that it is frustrating. Consider starting for three minutes a day every day and add one minute each week after you get the hang of it.

Second, find a type of meditation that works for you. In this guide, we've outlined some of our favorite types of meditation. There are probably a million more. There isn't a specific meditation that will work for you all the time. Often, we need to be mindful of how we're feeling and what we need. Check in with your mind and your body to see which meditation matches your current needs and future goals.

Third, be easy on yourself. It can be frustrating when our brain doesn't cooperate with something we really want to do. You might find, especially during your first few weeks, that your mind refuses to focus. That is okay! When those thoughts happen, don't judge them or get upset with yourself. Be kind and meet yourself with compassion. Your brain is just doing what it's been trained to do since you were born! When a thought appears, acknowledge it and then refocus on what you were doing. It doesn't matter how many times you have to do this, every time you take the time to meditate is a success.

Take your time and go through the different types of meditations we've shared. Be sure to highlight or star the ones that seem either the most interesting to you, or the ones that fit in with your ultimate goals. For each type of meditation, we've outlined what we think it is good for, what apps or resources are available for it, and how you can start doing it now.



Breath Meditation

Breath meditation is probably what you first think of when you hear about meditation. It allows your mind to focus on the breath going in and out of your body. As you continue to focus on your breath, you start to tune out everything going on around you. This type of meditation really helps you quiet your mind and can be done pretty much anywhere without a lot of set-up. You can do it for as long, or as little as you'd like.

Good for when:

- You're feeling a little anxious or nervous
- You don't have access to a phone or computer
- You need something fast
- You're not at home or in a familiar or comfortable environment

Here's how you do it:

- Find a comfortable seat if possible.
- Gently close your eyes, if it's safe and comfortable for you, and begin to focus your attention on the breath going in and out of your body. Here are some ways you might do so:
 - » Place one hand on your heart and the other on your stomach to feel the breath move
 - » Balanced Breathing: As you inhale count to three, as you exhale count to three
 - » Calming Breathing: If you need to calm yourself, extend your exhales a few seconds longer than your inhales
 - » Energizing Breathing: If you need more energy, extend your inhales a few seconds longer than your exhales
 - » Three-part breath: First sip in air to your throat, pause, sip in air till you feel your chest expand, pause, sip in air until you feel your stomach expand, slowly exhale and repeat
 - » Box Breathing: As you inhale count to four, then hold the inhale for four seconds, as you exhale count to four, then hold the exhale for four seconds
- If you find your mind wandering, which it will inevitably do, just bring your attention back to the breath. You can always start over!

Guided Meditation

This type of meditation is one of the most popular forms, especially for those just getting started on their meditation journey. A guided meditation involves you listening to someone talk you through a meditation, providing prompts of things to think about or ways to breathe. You can take guided meditations in-person, find them on popular meditation apps or even YouTube. You can even find guided meditations that focus on affirmations you like or a mood you want to achieve, such as gratitude or focus.

Good for when:

- You're having trouble focusing on just your breath
- You're just getting started with meditation
- You have a little more time
- You are meditating with friends or a group
- You are looking for inspiration

Here's how you do it:

- Take a few seconds to think about what you're trying to achieve with your meditation
- Find a good seat or lay down somewhere comfortable
- Do a quick search on an app you already have or online for what you need (e.g., Gratitude meditation)
- Gently close your eyes, and allow the audio to float you into your meditation

Our Favorites:

- [A meditation for grounding](#) (5 min)
- [A meditation for stress release](#) (5 min)
- [A meditation for clear thoughts](#) (10 min)
- [A meditation for self-love](#) (12 min)

Sound Meditation

This meditation focuses on one specific sense, your hearing. You can do this type of meditation anywhere, with or without music. You can practice it outside by gently closing your eyes and listening, or maybe with some headphones while listening to music. Sound meditation will change the way you experience sounds. Sometimes people notice that certain sounds will show up in their mind as colors. Or some sounds remind you of certain people or places you've been. Some people find that the frequency of music can also change their mood. There is a whole range of possibilities for sound meditation. This type of meditation is great for anyone who loves music, is very observant of their surroundings, or is looking to improve how observant they are!

Good for when:

- You are in a busy area but have access to headphones
- You want to draw your attention to the present moment

Here's how to do it:

- If you're outside with a lot of natural sounds, like at a park or a beach, you may not need to use music. But if you decide to use music, try looking for some meditation playlists to begin. Here are some of our favorites:
 - » [Apple Music Meditation Playlist](#)
 - » [Spotify Meditation Playlist](#)
 - » [Calming Sound Bath](#) (10 min)
 - » [Sound Bowls for Sleep/Anxiety](#) (1 hour)
- As you listen to the music, focus on the notes and the sounds.
- Notice what you start to see in your mind. What colors do you see? What memories are coming up? What feelings come up?
- As things show up for you, acknowledge them and let them pass.
- If you begin to feel your mind wander, bring your attention back to the sounds you're hearing.
- Once you're finished, maybe journal for a few minutes about what came up for you. If you need help on some journaling prompts, check out our **Power of Girls Journaling Guide** for inspiration.

Mindful Eating

This meditation involves different senses. Here, you will be paying attention to the taste, texture and feel of your food. It can totally change the way you experience food and nourishing your body. Don't believe us? Try something simple like a grape or an apple and notice how many sensations you can get out of mindfully eating it.

Good for when:

- You want to focus on the present moment
- You have a quiet moment to yourself while eating
- You really enjoy food!

Here's how to do it:

- Find your favorite snack or meal
- Take a minute to hold it up, observe everything about it. What does it look like? What are the colors? Shapes? What is the texture? How does it smell?
- Take a bite. How does it sound? How many different flavors can you taste? What does the texture feel like in your mouth?
- As you continue to eat, engage in all the sensory experiences with the food. Notice how this experience is different than your usual experience of eating.



Moving Meditation

This meditation allows you to engage almost all of your senses. It turns an ordinary walk or being outside into a whole new experience. During this type of meditation you ideally would have a safe area to walk outside (or inside depending on the weather). The goal is to allow yourself to be fully present in the experience around you- you listen to all the sounds, take the time to look at all the details around you, feel the wind blowing on your skin and take note of the smells in the air. This meditation helps you stay fully present in the moment and instead of trying to tune out any distractions, you focus on them. Moving meditation will allow you to notice so many more details about your area than you normally would.

Good for when:

- You are craving some outside time
- You are in the mood to get some steps in
- You have a safe space to walk around

Here's how to do it:

- You might want to limit personal distractions, such as silencing your phone (if that feels safe), not listening to music or headphones.
- As you begin to walk around, start to pay attention to all of the sensory details. What are the sounds you're hearing? Maybe some cars are driving by, kids are laughing, or the wind is rustling the leaves in a tree...
- What can you smell? Is it the smell of fresh cut grass, or food on a barbeque or a nearby restaurant? Maybe you can smell flowers or fresh rain?
- How does it feel? Can you feel the sun shining on your skin? Do you feel a gentle breeze? A cold wind? Maybe a little humidity or moisture in the air?
- What can you see? Take time to pay attention to the little details you would usually ignore. What colors or textures are around you?
- Maybe stop to actually look at the flowers and smell them. Notice how they feel in your hand and how many colors you can see.
- Ask yourself what details are new to you and take note of them. Once you're finished, maybe journal for a few minutes about what you experienced that you liked, didn't like, and what was new for you. You can compare what you wrote to the next time you do a moving meditation.

Metta Meditation

Sometimes referred to as a loving kindness meditation, this type of meditation is a great way to send some positive vibes to yourself and to those around you. In this meditation, you visualize yourself, your loved ones, people in your community, and even people who you may have had trouble with in the past. As you visualize those people you imagine sending them warm, positive energy. Once you finish this meditation, you should feel immediately lighter and happier!

Good for when:

- You want to send yourself a little extra love and care
- You are looking to lift up your mood
- You have some positive vibes that you'd like to share
- You want to get grounded in the love you have around you

Here's how to do it:

- Find a comfortable spot, either sitting or laying down, in a comfortable area.
- Decide if you want to go with a guided meditation or do it on your own. Here are some of our favorites for guided meditations:
 - » [Loving Kindness Meditation](#) (video, 5 min)
 - » [Loving Kindness Meditation](#) (video, 13 min)
 - » [Metta Meditation](#) (audio, 9 min)
- Take a few grounding breaths.
- Visualize yourself and say, "May I be safe. May I be happy. May I be at ease. May I know peace."
- Visualize someone you love and say, "May [their name] be safe. May [their name] be happy. May [their name] be at ease. May [their name] know peace."
- Visualize someone you've had challenges with and say, "May [their name] be safe. May [their name] be happy. May [their name] be at ease. May [their name] know peace."
- Visualize your community and say, "May members of my community be safe. May members of my community be happy. May members of my community be at ease. May members of my community know peace."
- Lastly, visualize the world and say, "May the world be safe. May the world be happy. May the world be at ease. May the world know peace."
- Take a few more breaths to feel grounded in this loving energy.
- You can also swap out the words/phrases used (safe, happy, at ease, know peace) to other words/phrases that may resonate with you more.

Yoga Nidra

This meditation is perfect for when you can't go to sleep or if you have some time and need to feel rested. You might notice the title has "yoga" in it, but you can think of it more like yoga for the mind rather than the physical yoga practice you see represented more commonly. This is an ancient practice with roots in India that has been passed down for generations. Yoga Nidra is a practice where you bring awareness to your body and as you do, you begin to feel your mind relax and drift into a state of deep relaxation. Be warned though before you start it, most people never get to hear the end of a Yoga Nidra meditation because they fall asleep!

Good for when:

- You are having a hard time falling asleep
- You had a tough day and need to be sure you can get some rest
- You have just enough time for a nap and need to feel rested
- You are looking to decompress before you sleep

Here's how to do it:

- We recommend using a guided version of this practice for the most benefit.
- You'll want to do this meditation lying down. Find a comfortable area to lie down in, get blankets to stay warm, a comfortable pillow for your head, and some headphones or a speaker.
- Choose one of the options below:
 - » 10 Minute Yoga Nidra
 - » 20 Minute Yoga Nidra
 - » 30 Minute Yoga Nidra
 - » 40 Minute Yoga Nidra
- Close your eyes and allow the guided meditation to drift you into a slumber.

Let's make a plan

Okay, now that we've gotten into just a few popular types of meditation, let's think about making a plan. Without a plan, it'll be easy to meditate for a few days and then completely abandon it when life gets too hectic or you wake up too late one morning. Answer the prompts below to come up with a plan that works for you.

Have you ever meditated before?

- If yes, what stopped you?
- If not, why not?

How much time do you have a day to focus on this? Be realistic!

What areas of your life do you want to focus on? Gratitude? Journaling about feelings? Building healthier habits? Self-care?

Which method are you going to choose to focus on that area?

At what time will you commit to meditating every day? AM? PM?

When will you start?

Okay - now that you've got a plan, it's time to set a reminder from one week after your start date. In that reminder, we want you to include these questions for a quick check-in on how your meditation practice is going:

- Have I been able to commit to my meditation practice this week?
 - » If yes, what can I attribute to that?
 - » If no, what's not working?
- Do I like the journaling style I chose, or should I switch it up?
- What difference have I noticed in my mood this week?
- How can I keep this commitment going?

YOU'RE STARTING TODAY - THAT'S RIGHT TODAY.

A wise woman said there's no time like the present. Pick one of the mediation styles and give it a whirl. Why not? You've got nothing to lose. Give yourself the gift of a couple of minutes, just for you.



Our Fav Resources

Looking for some more resources? We've got you covered. Check out some of our favorite videos on journaling.

- [Meditation Apps to Try Now](#)
- [Mindfulness for Teens](#)
- [15 Best Meditation Apps](#)
- [Insight Timer \(app\)](#)
- [9 Absolutely Free Meditation Apps](#)



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