

BASIC MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

In this technique, you will focus on your breath to develop an unconscious connection so the positive feelings of relaxation, peace and well-being will be established within you and you'll be capable of retrieving these feeling whenever you wish. Do not rush this process or hold unrealistic expectations of fast results. It takes time to train your mind to exercise basic control of your thoughts before you can direct the mind toward specific intentions.

Level 1:

The first stage of meditation is actually a technique in concentration. Once relaxed, focus on your breath for a few minutes. After you find yourself completely relaxed and at ease, focus on the sounds around you. Try not to form thoughts about the sounds but rather just listen and let your mind flow around and through the sounds without clarification or judgment. Do this exercise for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, releasing your attention to the sounds and focusing on your breath as you begin to be more aware of your body.

Repeat this exercise until you can easily follow known sounds, expected sounds and unexpected sounds with the same calm, focused attention. You might start with a favorite, calming or soothing piece of music. Next, once you have mastered the known sound concentration technique, you might focus on a classical piece of music you are not too familiar with. When you feel comfortable with being able to follow this piece of music without trailing off into uncontrolled thought, you are ready to move to the final sound exercise.

The final sound focus will be on unusual sounds, such Whale Songs, or Songs of the Wolves or digital sounds. When you are able to follow sounds without your mind wandering regardless of the source, you are ready for Level 2. Level 2 may take you several weeks of practice before you are able to stay focused for 15 to 20 minutes without your mind wandering. Give yourself the time. Remember, learning to control your thoughts through this concentration exercise is like building up a new muscle.

Level 2:

The second level in this technique for improving your meditation skills focuses on your imagination and visualization abilities. After going through the relaxation process and placing yourself in a comfortable position, focus on your breath for a few minutes until you are completely relaxed and centered. You are now going to create a scene in your mind of your favorite place. This favorite place may exist in reality or only in your mind. Take the time to carefully build a detailed image of this place where you can feel the air, hear the sounds, and be aware of the smells surrounding you as you place yourself in the center of this favorite place. Spend time in this place over and over in meditation until you can quickly and clearly call upon this imagery whenever you want. Along with the image will come all the feelings of well-being, joy, peace and happiness that associate to your favorite place.

Level 3:

The third level of meditation skill development focuses on a structured thought such as a favorite saying or aphorism. There are many to choose from. Use one that generates exploratory thought processes for you. Unlike previous exercises, you are now going to let your thoughts flow. Follow these thoughts through imagery, feelings and awareness until you know that you have absorbed the meaning of this aphorism thoroughly. What will surprise you is the depth and breadth of understanding an even simple saying can produce.

Using these techniques will open you to a world of thought management, directional focus and a deeper understanding of self and acceptance of others. By focusing on the breath as you develop your meditation and concentration skills, you will begin to unconsciously associate these peaceful and relaxed feelings with the control of your breath. Then when you are faced with a stressful situation, you can call up these feelings by simply slowing your breath and consciously relaxing your muscles. Using this technique, relaxation and feelings of well-being will always be available when you need it.

Chesa Keane has taught meditation and self-help for more than 30 years. To receive your free starter Basic Meditation and Basic Relaxation Techniques and an introduction to a unique meditation tool, the TAO Totem, visit: <http://www.taototem.com> .