

Mantra Meditation

Dhyana

This meditation will take anywhere from five to 20 minutes, or even longer if you wish. We recommend staying in Steps 1 and 2 for one to two minutes each; in Step 3 for three to five minutes; and in Step 4 for five to 15 minutes.

Step by Step

- 1. Select** a favorite word, phrase, prayer, or fragment of a poem for meditation. Ideally, a mantra is composed of only a few words or syllables, so you can repeat it easily, without getting lost in a long phrase. Choose something uplifting that inspires you and engages your heart. Avoid words that stir up thoughts or disturb your mind.

- 2. Sit** comfortably in a chair or on the floor, supporting your posture with a blanket or a cushion. Find a position both aligned with the natural curves of the spine and relaxed, so you can remain fairly still. Close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths or do some breathing practices for several minutes, then relax your breath completely.

- 3. Repeat** your mantra slowly and steadily, concentrating on its sound as fully as you can. Repeat it in unison with the natural rhythm of your breath. Either split it so you repeat half the mantra when you inhale and the other half when you exhale, or repeat it on both the inhalation and the exhalation.

- 4. After about 10 recitations**, repeat the mantra silently by moving only your lips (this helps you keep a steady pace). Then, after another 10 repetitions, recite it internally without moving your lips.

- 5. As thoughts arise**, simply return to the mantra, knowing this is a natural part of the process. Gently bring your attention back again and again, experiencing the internal sound as fully as possible.

- 6. Continue** for the period of time you set aside for meditation. Come out of the meditation by taking a few deep breaths and then sitting quietly to see what you feel. You may feel calm and centered. Or you may be flooded with old thoughts and feelings from your subconscious, which might be uncomfortable.

Regardless of your immediate reaction, take comfort in knowing that regular practice has immense benefits: It enables you to experience the present moment more fully and to make conscious choices instead of falling into habitual reactions.

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