

GETTING STARTED

In an open, unstructured meditation approach there are many ways to meditate. You'll find your way and over time it will change. By reflecting upon your meditative process, you become aware of how you're meditating and how meditation supports and informs you. Here are some initial suggestions to get started.

Finding Structure

- Choose a comfortable position with the support of a chair, couch, cushion, or backjack. It's easier to settle when you are comfortable.
- Find a quiet place where you're likely not to be disturbed.
- Choose a length of time to meditate. Consider starting with 20-30 minutes. If that seems too long, try a shorter time: don't stress yourself trying to meditate for too long. If you already meditate choose a time length that works well for you. If you are pinched for time, whatever time you have is good. Using a timer can help.

Moving Around

- Let your thoughts, feelings, emotions and attention move around. Whatever arises in meditation is okay: nothing is inherently taboo. Let your attention go where it is drawn. This might not feel like "meditation", though consider that this is another kind of meditation with different benefits.
- Try to keep your body still. If you become uncomfortable, move slowly and carefully into a more comfortable posture. Stillness in meditation develops with practice over time.

Settling In

- At times in the meditation you may want to ground your attention, especially if things become chaotic or overwhelming. You need not stay for long, though sometimes you will settle for a while.

- If you are new to meditation consider that you might already have a safe, still place that you access internally.
- You can experiment with perching on the still point where your body touches the earth; where the feet touch the ground, or the body touches the chair, couch or cushion.
- If you have a meditation practice use a focus object that comes easily to you such as the breath, awareness of the body or a mantra.
- No need to settle on a perch when something else is calling for your attention.

After Meditating

- Take time to reflect upon your meditative experiences; this is how you'll develop more meditative insight.
- Journaling can support awareness and memory.
 - Write down what is easiest to remember first. Then fill in more as you remember it.
 - Describe your experience in your own words.
 - Try and stick with what happened in the meditation. If you add interpretation or associations, put these thoughts in parenthesis or some other notation. This helps discern what happened in the meditation from what followed from it.
- Consider the content of your thoughts, the tone of your emotions, your relationship to your experience. Did you hear sounds, feel sensations, hear thoughts, see visuals? How did you relate to what happened?
- Whatever you remember will be enough. Don't be concerned with remembering all of it: it's not necessary or possible.