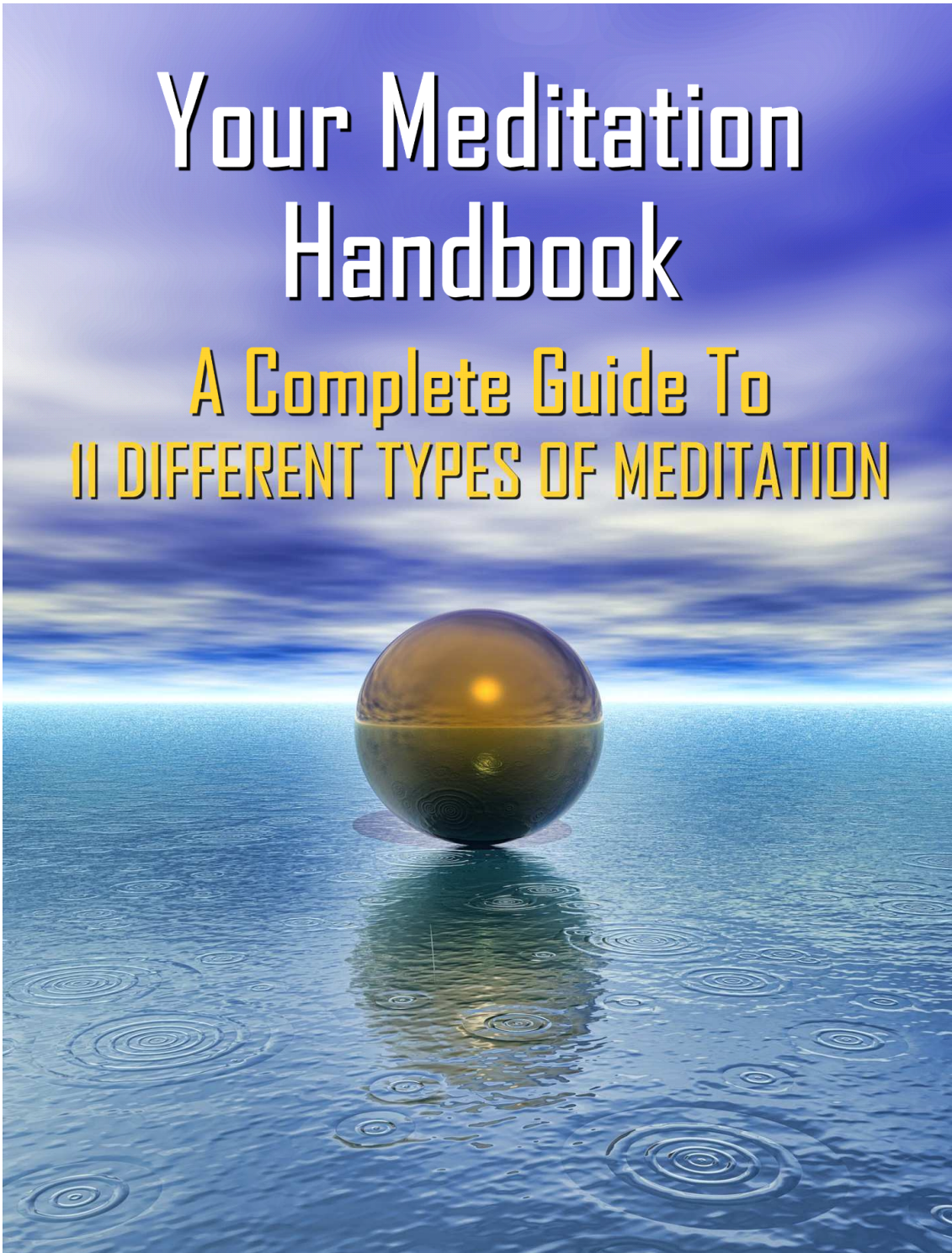


Your Meditation Handbook

A Complete Guide To
11 DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEDITATION



YourPowerToCreate.com

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS MEDITATION?

This is a question you may not have ever asked yourself before and it's probably one you have a bit of trouble answering. To some, meditation is the act of sitting quietly and trying to clear the mind of stray thoughts. To others, meditation is a set of actions that take place every day as part of a religious or therapeutic practice. While both are true, they only begin to scratch the surface on the deep history and meaning of meditation.

To put it simply, meditation is an overall thought process that influences all of the actions one takes on a daily basis. It's a way of life, because meditation goes beyond one single action or activity.

It's about transforming the mind and the way you think, to become aware of yourself and your surroundings while separating your consciousness from the struggles and activities of your life.

Moreover, there are many, many different ways to practice meditation, with each having a different goal and effect on the body and the mind.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

There are literally hundreds of benefits of meditation, for body, mind, spirit, and emotional health. One of the most significant health benefits of meditation is that it brings about a sense of calmness and relaxation that leads to a proven reduction in stress levels.

When the body experiences stress, anxiety or fear, it releases special hormones that cause a physical reaction in the body. While not harmful in normal doses, long-term exposure to these hormones can cause serious health risks. Meditation helps to mitigate these effects by training the brain to better control and limit the release of the hormones.

By reducing stress levels through meditation, it is possible to lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease, stop damage to the digestive system from over production of acids, and maintain a more balanced immune system.

Meditation can also help to strengthen different areas of the brain, slowing the loss of brain mass typically associated with aging and increasing mental agility and memory.

It can also help battle the effects of addiction, increase your ability to focus and fight off the effects of depression.

11 TYPES OF MEDITATION

The first step in understanding the true nature of meditation is by realizing that there are several different forms it takes, across different religious and spiritual boundaries. By examining the unique methods and practices of each type of meditation, you can identify key similarities and draw connections between the actions and the positive effects they bring to the mind and body.

Om Meditation

Om Meditation is one of the oldest and most basic forms of meditation. It incorporates the use of the mantra “Om” to guide you through the process of clearing your mind, regulating your breathing and entering into a calm state. A mantra is a word, phrase, or sound repeated over and over again to help reinforce a specific thought or belief.

In the case of Om Meditation, the mantra used is the sound that the world makes when it is in rest. It stands in contrast to all other sounds, which occur from two or more objects interacting.

It is meant to encourage a sense of universal peace, and help you focus on entering a state of simplicity and freedom. When you are able to free yourself from the thoughts that occupy your mind during normal consciousness, you gain access to a higher level of clarity, which enables you to better see the world as a whole and understand your place in it, as well as the deeper reasons behind different occurrences. It serves as the basis for most forms of meditation.

Primordial Sound Meditation

Another one of the most basic and traditional forms of meditation, Primordial Sound Meditation also focuses on the use of a mantra to enhance the practice. It draws on the Vedas, ancient Indian texts that are the oldest written teachings of Hinduism.

This form of meditation utilizes a Vedic mathematical formula to determine the exact sound the universe made at the time of your birth, which is your primordial sound.

When you meditate, you repeat this sound as your mantra to help you connect with the world around you and attain a higher level of awareness while simultaneously existing in a calm, restful state.

Kundalini Yoga

Meditation and yoga are deeply intertwined, with each sharing a common origin in the spiritual traditions of India and the surrounding region. Kundalini Yoga, as the name suggests, focuses on special moves within the standard realm of yoga positions that enhance the meditation process, with the end goal of unleashing kundalini energy.

This energy is believed to be one of several forms of spiritual Shakti that exist within the body, manifesting as a coil that sits at the base of the spine.

By entering into specific poses and creating a serene mental state, Kundalini Yoga seeks to uncoil that energy and raise it up through the body, reaching the mind where it helps bring about enlightenment.

Mindfulness Meditation

While many different forms of meditation seek to bring about a specific state of mind, or rather an absence of specific ways of thinking, Mindfulness Meditation doesn't actually try to change you. Instead, it places the focus on enhancing your awareness, making you more mindful of your surroundings, your actions, and everything else in your life.

It typically consists of sitting on the floor or on special meditation mats, though different practices and traditions include different seating patterns. Ultimately, the way you sit doesn't matter as much as your stillness and awareness of your body. Mindfulness Meditation also includes a focus on steady, regular breathing that is purposeful rather than absent minded.

Finally, Mindfulness Meditation requires you to become aware of your thought process and all of the information around it. Rather than attempt to get you to stop thinking all together, this type of meditation is about reflecting on your thoughts and how they fit into your life as a whole.

By relaxing and allowing yourself to address all of your thoughts, you become more self-aware and more present in all of your thoughts and actions.

Reflective Meditation

This type of meditation is similar to Mindfulness Meditation in that it also focuses on analyzing thoughts rather than ridding your mind of them completely. The key concept there is that you focus on one specific thought or concept, with the end goal being to cultivate and strengthen that concept within your life.

By reflecting on every aspect of a concept, especially as it relates to you and your current circumstances, you train your mind to focus on achieving that concept and looking at the world in that way. For example, you can use Reflective Meditation to focus on something as broad as happiness, starting out by entering into a standard meditation pose and focus on what happiness really means to you.

As you reflect on the concept of happiness, you will start to think about the different things in your life that make you happy, such as your friends or family members. This leads into examining the ways in which your life does not include happiness, which in turn allows you to identify the specific people or situations causing the blockage.

This process helps you to focus more on the good things in your life and less on the things that cause stress, as you are training your mind to emphasize the positive and joyous over the negative.

Chakra Meditation (heart-centered meditation)

Chakra Meditation involves inward reflection and self-evaluation to align of the chakra in the body, which are different forms of energy that together compile the whole of your existence and your perception of yourself. The belief system behind this form of meditation states that there are seven different chakra that comprise the different elements your being, chief among which is the chakra of the heart.

Chakra Meditation that focuses on repairing and realigning this energy is known as heart-centered meditation, and is meant to increase your confidence, compassion, and acceptance. The meditation practice involves the same starting point as other forms of meditation, wherein you need to focus on your breathing and mental awareness in order to enter into a state of reflection and openness.

The most distinct element of Chakra Meditation is the emphasis on recognizing and understanding that you are not an individual separate from the world, but rather a component of the world at large. By shifting your consciousness away from this exclusionary perspective, and opening your heart and your emotions towards the view that you are in harmony with the universe, you can achieve higher levels of calmness and self-confidence.

This meditation allows your heart chakra to heal and grow, so that it may become more in line with the other chakra. This enables you to achieve a greater level of emotional and mental balance in your life, as it leads to you feel less isolated and less like you are at odds with your surroundings.

Visualization

Visualization Meditation also carries some similarities to Reflective Meditation, though instead of focusing on an overall concept or feeling, it involves focusing on an

overarching concept, idea, or belief. It is a powerful form of meditation because it can lead to significant and impactful change in your life, but it is also one of the more difficult forms of meditation for people to get into. This is because many people view Visualization Meditation as a passive process, akin to daydreaming in that its focus is on thinking about doing something. While Visualization Meditation does involve a great deal of thinking about action, it is not solely about thought. Most people fail at Visualization Meditation because they never take the next step in the process, which is translation the thoughts developed during the meditation into reality.

Think of Visualization Meditation as a dedicated time to explore your desires, beliefs, and convictions. It requires you to identify something that you want in your life, such as earning a promotion at work or winning the love of a particular person, and examine how it would affect your life.

By devoting more of your thoughts and consciousness to this desire, you can understand it at a more intricate level, which allows you to determine if it is something you really want. It also allows you to formulate specific plans to bringing this desire to fruition, as the reflective process and time spent exploring the reality of the matter helps you identify obstacles.

Visualization Meditation forces you to open your mind to a concept, understand it intimately, and prepare yourself to performing the actions necessary to really bring it to life.

Vipassana Meditation

Vipassana Meditation has its roots in the oldest practices of Buddhism in India, first appearing over two millennia ago and passed down across the generations of practitioners. The main concept being Vipassana Meditation is gaining an understanding of the true nature of the things in your life, particularly in terms of how your body and mind function together and interact with your surroundings.

It is a type of intensely introspective meditation, as it is built around self-evaluation and self-discovery on an extremely intimate level. It uses many of the common practices found in other types of meditation, such as rhythmic breathing and the use of mantra, to help clear the mind of noise and excess thoughts, forcing it to focus in on itself and address all unresolved issues by exploring the interconnectedness of life.

When practicing Vipassana Meditation, you must be open to looking at yourself and thinking about why you are the way you are. Though it is possible to practice Vipassana Meditation with the intent of understanding a specific aspect of yourself, such as determining the origin of a phobia or recovering from a singular traumatic event, it is most effective when embraced in a holistic manner.

As you think about the way your mind and body connect, and the way you feel about specific aspects of yourself or portions of your life, you can look beyond the surface of the matter and begin to see the true nature of the situation.

Vipassana Meditation can help you to understand characteristics of yourself, such as why you feel jealous of a coworker or why you are attracted to a specific person. It also helps you think more openly about the actions of others, such as identifying that you were passed on for a promotion because another employee is objectively more qualified for the position.

Zen

Zen Meditation, also known as Zazen, is the core practice of Zen Buddhism, which is one segment of the religious practice of Buddhism. Zen Buddhism is most common in Japan, dating back thousands of years and placing its emphasis on achieving a balanced and enlightened state that allows you to think about everything in your life more clearly.

Zen Meditation includes several specific actions and steps to begin, starting with sitting on the floor, either directly on the ground or using a small pillow known as a zafu. Once seated, you need to assume one of several different sitting positions.

The Full Lotus position, which involves crossing your legs in front of you and placing each foot on the thigh of the opposite leg, may be one of the most visually familiar poses when it comes to meditation. The main purpose of each pose is to create stability, so that you can sit for extended periods of time and focus on your breathing and mental clarity without letting your mind drift onto your body.

As you continue to sit and embrace the process of Zen Meditation, you will slowly begin to slow your mind and allow your thoughts to pass freely. The goal is not to stop thinking, but to stop judging.

Zen Meditation is about eliminating the typical judgments and preconceived notions you have in regards to all things, as this inhibits your ability to think clearly and reflectively. Thinking judgmentally also stops you from entertaining certain thoughts or concepts, which impedes your ability to be open-minded and achieve greater mental clarity.

During a session of Zen Meditation, you allow your thoughts to pass through your mind however, they manifest, never actively directing them, stopping them, or otherwise interfering.

This process helps you to address deeper issues preventing you from thinking clearly, and encourages a more profound and unified view of life. In essence, it teaches you to stop getting in the way of your own mind and experience more mental and emotional peace.

Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation is a more recent form of meditation that first came into popular practice during the 1950's, when Maharishi Mahesh Yogi began a series of tours across the world to teach it to large groups of people.

Over time, the practice was adopted by numerous celebrities, while it also became the subject of multiple scientific studies to monitor its effects on the mind and body. It includes a specific structure and methodology, which begins with sitting in a relaxed

position and closing the eyes to help enhance the mental presence within the reflective state.

It draws on the long history of traditional meditation, as it also uses mantra as a means to encourage reflectiveness and ease you into a deeper state of awareness and mental relaxation. However, Transcendental Meditation requires you to speak the mantra silently to yourself rather than out loud, as other forms of meditation do.

Transcendental Meditation also only lasts for approximately 15-20 minutes each session, with sessions only occurring twice a day. During these meditative periods, Transcendental Meditation encourages you to allow your thoughts to flow freely through your mind.

As you repeat your chosen mantra in your mind, you bring a greater sense of unity to your body and overall mental state. This allows your mind to let go of the negative, stressful, or otherwise harmful thoughts that fill it during other times.

As you focus on the power and relaxation that the mantra brings, you are able to focus on other aspects of your life and identify the root causes of your unhappiness. Though it is often practiced as part of a religious system for many Buddhists, Hindus and other sects, Transcendental Meditation also allows for a secular reflection period that encourages self-improvement.

Yoga Nidra

Despite its name, Yoga Nidra is not a form of yoga, as most people understand it. Rather than being about a specific set of stretches and actions, Yoga Nidra is about maintaining the highest amount of mental and physical relaxation possible. It is a type of meditation that focuses on turning the majority of the senses inward in order to create a high level of self-awareness, rather than directing all conscious and sensory awareness on the outside world.

The main difference between Yoga Nidra and other forms of meditation is that it relies on a set of external auditory commands, such as instruction by a yogi or a set of recordings, to guide you into the state of relaxation.

As you take control of your breathing and your thought process, you slowly disconnect your senses from the world around you and shift them onto yourself, so that you may become more aware of your own feelings and thoughts.

Yoga Nidra helps you achieve what is known as a “yogic sleep” state, which is similar to the feeling you might experience as you are drifting off into sleep. While you are in this state, you are more in tune with your mind and better able to experience your thoughts in a pure and enlightened state, all while staying conscious and in control of your body and mind. It is a long-standing practice in Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as other forms of religions that incorporate meditation as a core tenant.

This form of meditation is meant to show you the power of the mind when not distracted by the outside world through the external senses. It encourages you to let go of stresses and free your mind of any harmful thoughts that would otherwise prevent you from achieving a calm state of awareness.