

Transcendental Meditation

This is probably the most common form of meditation, and the one with the most research behind it. If people say “meditation,” they usually mean Transcendental Meditation, or TM as it is called.

Start by picking a **focus word**. The **focus word** is a word that will help you to focus on what you are doing. IT can be simple, such as “Peace,” or “calm.” It can also be a word that gives you a specific emotion or memory, like the name of a loved one or a spiritual name/word.

TM is very simple, and involves the following steps:

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position (sitting, lying, or whatever is comfortable).
2. Close Your Eyes.
3. Relax all your muscles, beginning at your feet and relaxing each muscle one-by-one up to the top of your head.
4. Breathe slowly, focusing your attention on each breath. Breath however is natural for you. You will probably notice your breathing slowing as you meditate, but don't get distracted too much by worrying about this.
5. As you breathe out, repeat your **focus word** to yourself. After a few minutes you might not need to repeat it every breath, just repeat it if your mind starts to wander.
6. Continue for 10-20 minutes. It's fine to open your eyes to check the time.

Remember don't worry about how relaxed you are. Relaxation will get easier to reach the more often you do this.

Even a few minutes of this repeated regularly can affect resting heart rate, lower anxiety, and help focus on what is going on around you. It even has been shown to help reduce addictive behavior.

It works best when you practice TM while you are not currently anxious, so that it will work better when you are.

Body-Scan

Another common meditation technique is called a Body-Scan. It means to relax and analyze the tension and feelings within your body. The steps for this type of meditation are also simple:

- Begin by bringing your attention into your body.
- You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.
- Notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feel the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor.
- Take a few deep breaths.
- Notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor, the weight and pressure, vibration, heat.
- Notice your legs against the chair, pressure, heaviness, lightness.
- Notice your back against the chair.
- Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.
- Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.
- Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms? Let your shoulders be soft.
- Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.
- Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.
- Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath.
- When you're ready, you can open your eyes.

One useful variation of this technique is to add **Muscle Tension** to the body-scan.

To do this, simply **tense** up the muscle in the area of the body that you are focused on for a few seconds, then **release** the tension. This will actually let the muscle become more relaxed than it was before you tightened it.

Ho'oponopono Hawaiian Meditation Technique

There are four simple steps to this method, and the order is not that important. The focus in ho'oponopono is on Repentance, Forgiveness, Gratitude and Love. The belief is that by focusing on these principles our nature will change in a more spiritual way, which will affect our feelings and how we interact with the world around us.

The way to practice ho'oponopono is to repeat a mantra in your head. You repeat the following phrases, or phrases that mean the same thing. It does not matter what the order is:

I'm Sorry

Please Forgive Me

Thank You

I Love You

The idea is to focus on your feelings of worry, the thing or person that is bothering you, or simply focus on sitting still while repeating these phrases. By focusing on the principles of Repentance, Forgiveness, Gratitude and Love, you are shifting attention away from anxiety or worry and towards more spiritual principles.