



YLM At Home Practice Guide

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The Year Long Meditation Vision

Join the Practice. Change the World.

Welcome to Year Long Meditation (YLM)—a global group practice dedicated to healing and nurturing our connection to collective consciousness. This group practice emerges from a powerful *sankalpa* (willpower and intention) to be a force for change in our world by discovering and reconnecting with our reality within. As Swami Rama, founder of the Himalayan Institute, often said, “Human beings are citizens of two worlds—the world outside and the world within.” When we are able to build a bridge between these two worlds through meditation, we discover an immense power for positive change, and are able to share this with the world. This is the vision for Year Long Meditation.

There has never been a time as primed for group meditation as today. Our modern life has become defined by a chronic lack of time for ourselves; by pervasive fear and doubt that have polarized society; by chronic stress and an inability to find meaning and purpose in our work and relationships. If these conditions aren’t addressed by humanity in a timely way, they could lead to a devastating collapse of consciousness. The ancient sages of the yoga tradition undertook group meditation at unique junctures in human history where such conditions were pervasive, to bring forward a powerful collective consciousness capable of healing and empowering humanity.

Today we have the opportunity to answer a call to action, and undertake Year Long Meditation with this same vision of healing and empowerment. Our collective goal is to collectively meditate for 1,000,008 hours, with a common intention to heal and nurture our connection to collective consciousness. Our goal transcends our personal desires; we are united by a greater purpose to be a force of change in the world.

Year Long Meditation invites yogis and meditators from all traditions and backgrounds all around the world to practice with a common intention.

Year Long Meditation was conceived and inspired by Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, spiritual head of the Himalayan Institute.



“In our world, there is power in unity. Therefore, this Year Long Meditation comprised of 1,000,008 hours of collective practice will be phenomenal. It will change collective consciousness. When you are part of a much bigger collective consciousness of meditators, your personal practice automatically begins to rise to a totally different height.”

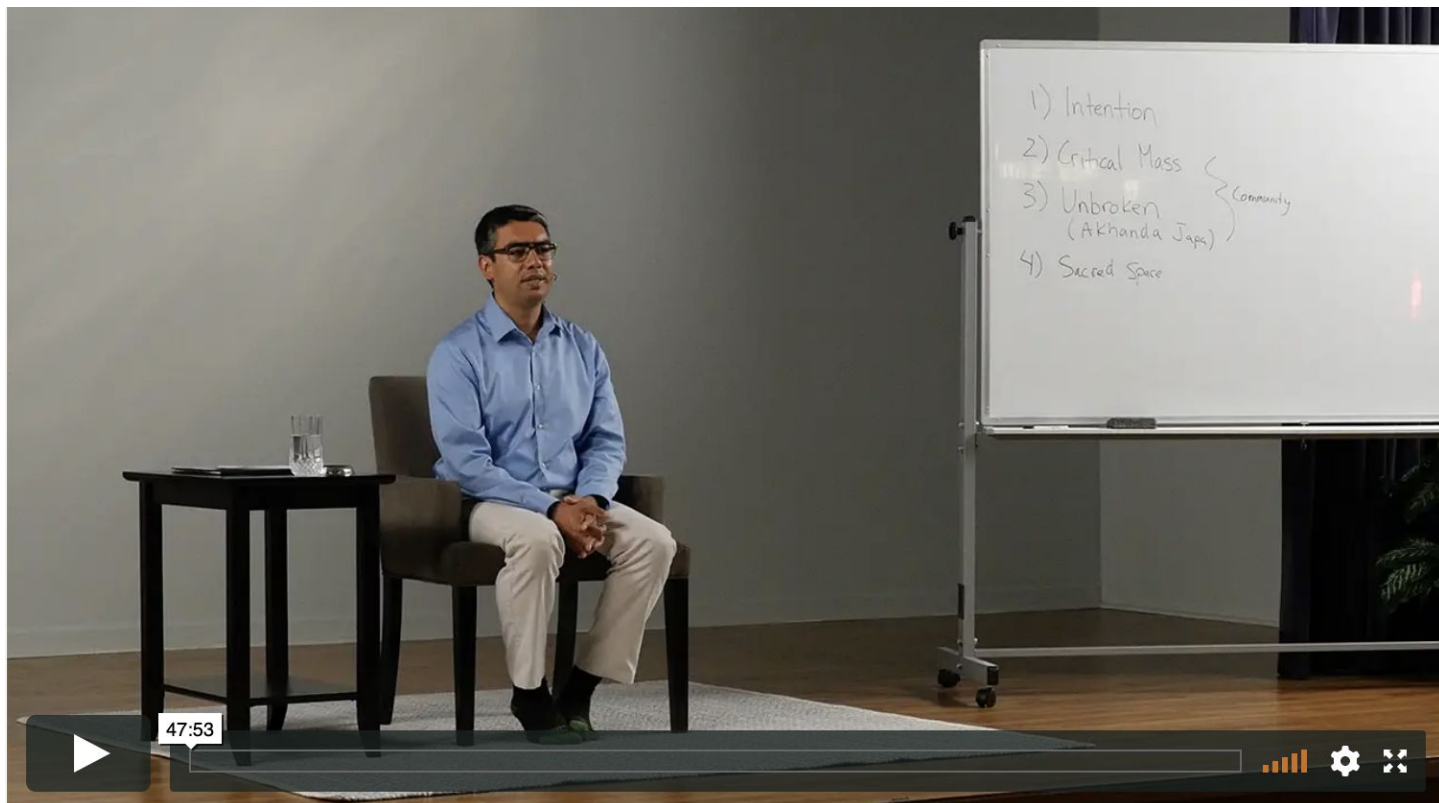
—Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, PhD
Spiritual Head, Himalayan Institute

Video: Year Long Meditation Vision with Pandit Tigunait



Joining Year Long Meditation

Webinar: Join the Practice, Change the World: Year Long Meditation with Ishan Tigunait



YLM At Home:

The heart of the Year Long Meditation is [YLM At Home](#), inviting practitioners of all backgrounds and traditions from around the world to practice together from the comfort and convenience of their personal practice space. Whether you're just beginning on the path of meditation, are practicing meditation as a conclusion to your yoga practice, or are an experienced meditator, YLM At Home is for you. All you need is the desire to cultivate a peaceful inward awareness, and the intention to connect yourself with a global community of meditators to share your inner peace and vibrancy with the world.

YLM At Home is an online platform that allows you to track your meditation and log it toward the 1,000,008-hour collective meditation goal of the Year Long Meditation. In addition, YLM At Home shares essential learning resources to help you begin or deepen your meditation today.

The following section addresses the most commonly asked questions about how to participate in YLM At Home.

FAQs about YLM At Home

Is YLM only open to meditators of a particular tradition or style? Can I join if I'm not an experienced meditator or don't even consider myself a meditator?

The Year Long Meditation is open to meditators of any tradition, style, religion, or spiritual background, anywhere in the world. YLM embraces the spirit of inclusivity and the power of unity. The yoga tradition boldly proclaims that meditation is innate to all human beings, transcending all sectarian paths, and shares a truly universal definition for meditation: a peaceful, inward flow of awareness. Anyone who seeks to experience a peaceful, inward flow of awareness is a meditator from the perspective of YLM, and is joyfully invited to participate.

How does group meditation work, and how do I participate in a group meditation from wherever I am?

Conventional wisdom holds that meditation is a personal practice, yet group meditation is among the most highly cherished practices in the yoga tradition. Group meditation is most often undertaken by practitioners in a well-chosen, defined physical location for a particular period of time. This unique time and place is known as a sacred space, and is imbued with a unique spiritual vibrancy that is partially innate to the space, and is further awakened through the power of intention (*sankalpa*).

This power of *sankalpa* is what allows a group practice to transcend the limitations of a physically-defined space, so that meditators around the globe can be fully connected to the group meditation without even being in the same physical space. As Pandit Tigunait explains:

“The important thing to understand about group meditation is that we have the intention of being together. It's the purity and clarity of that intention which transforms our personal practice into group practice ... All we need to have is the intention to bring a qualitative change in ourselves and in the world outside us.”

The power of *sankalpa* transforms our personal practice of meditation into a group practice, and is the hidden power that makes group meditation work. We all anchor ourselves to a higher purpose, to a common goal, to an intention that transcends our personal desires and that benefits all of creation. In other words, we anchor our personal practice to collective consciousness and discover our deeper strength in unity.

Do I have to practice a particular type of meditation to participate in YLM? What technique(s) of meditation are recommended?

In this group practice, there is no particular type of meditation which is required for you to join. As mentioned earlier, the yoga tradition universally defines meditation to be the experience of a peaceful, inward flow of awareness. There are many different techniques or types of meditation (or meditative practices) which lead to this experience.

In the yoga tradition, special importance has been given to those meditative practices which follow three key principles, which we recommend as well:

1. Meditative techniques which are practiced in seated posture instead of in a reclining posture.
2. Meditative techniques which are grounded in silence and stillness.
3. Meditative techniques which are enlivened by an experiential dimension of breath awareness. Some meditative practices are fully expressed through breath awareness, while others use breath awareness as a gateway to other forms of inner awareness and inner focus such as mantra.

Is there a minimum amount of meditation I must contribute to participate? What is the recommended daily practice amount?

There is no minimum amount of meditation that a participant must contribute. We encourage all meditators to contribute according to their capacity, so that Year Long Meditation helps you to joyfully expand your capacity.

To reach our 1,000,008-hour collective goal, we recognize that it will take a monumental effort from our global community of meditators. While many meditators joining this practice have set a goal of 30 minutes per day, individual daily meditation goals span a wide range from a few minutes a day to several hours. Every minute of meditation will positively impact collective consciousness!

Can I still participate if my practice is inconsistent, or if I might fall behind due to something unexpected happening in my life? Do I need to meditate every day to join YLM?

One of the foundational precepts of meditation is to strive for consistency and quality above quantity. This serves not only to help our personal practice to mature, it also allows us to derive greater support from the collective strength of the group practice.

Ideally, participants in the Year Long Meditation will meditate a consistent amount on a daily basis. But if your practice amount varies from day to day, or if you miss practice on occasion, you are still fully qualified to join the Year Long Meditation. Please use the Meditation Tracker to log your time accordingly. Remember, every minute helps impact collective consciousness.

Can I meditate with friends, or organize my own mini-group meditations to support YLM?

Yes! Meditating in small groups is one of the best ways to help sustain your practice through the Year Long Meditation and is a wonderful opportunity to share meditation with family, friends and your fellow seekers. Find a peaceful location free from distractions, which reflects the sanctity and serenity which you're seeking to experience within, and set a group intention to link your meditation to the broader collective consciousness which underpins the Year Long Meditation.

I am a yoga teacher or yoga studio owner. How can I help support YLM?

Yoga teachers and yoga studio owners play a crucial role in helping share Year Long Meditation with the world. If you're inspired by the Year Long Meditation, consider organizing group meditations at your studio, and creating a YLM At Home account on behalf of your studio to log those hours online towards the overall Year Long Meditation goal.

For yoga teachers, one of the most powerful ways to help is to consider adding a brief guided meditation at the end of your classes. Sharing the intention of Year Long Meditation and including a "3 Minutes for the World" meditation at the end of your classes is a powerful way to share the benefits of meditation with your students. On behalf of the class, you can log the collective time that each student in your class meditates, so that this time helps achieve the 1,000,008-hour Year Long Meditation goal.

For more information on how yoga teachers and yoga studios can join Year Long Meditation, please download our [PDF Guide for In Person Advocates](#).

What are the unique benefits of group meditation in relation to my personal practice?

When we undertake group meditation, we make an effort to transform our personal identity so that it can gracefully find its place in the group awareness of the practice. This introduces us to deeper dimensions of our self which are intrinsically imbued with inner clarity, unconditional love and generosity. Furthermore, group meditation can give us a direct experience of collective consciousness in action, when we experience the thread which holds everyone's practice together. These unique benefits of group meditation have tremendous potential to enrich our personal practice, and accelerate our inner growth and self-discovery.

In addition to meditation, are there other supportive practices that are part of Year Long Meditation?

Cultivating a healthy lifestyle where our body, breath and mind are fully nourished is an essential supportive practice of the Year Long Meditation. Each of us will have a distinct goal we set for ourselves

when we begin working our lifestyle, based on our individual needs and priorities. Finding balance and nourishment in our sleep, food and digestion, elimination, movement/fitness, work-life balance, and relationships are a few key lifestyle elements which can greatly support our practice.

What are the origins of group meditation in the yogic and tantric tradition?

Group meditation is an ancient practice in the yogic and tantric tradition, traditionally known as *akhanda japa* (unbroken group meditation). This practice is thousands of years old, is attested in the Vedas and other ancient scriptures, and has been undertaken at unique junctures in time when inner wisdom was called upon to guide humanity through periods of great upheaval and change.

Is there an in-person component to YLM At Home? How can I join?

The Year Long Meditation is anchored at the Sri Vidya Shrine, at the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. For the entire year-long period, there will be a continuous in-person group meditation at the Sri Vidya Shrine. [Year Long Meditation Retreats](#) are custom designed to share an opportunity to experience a group meditation in person. Led by the Himalayan Institute's senior faculty, these YLM Retreats are a unique blend of practice, inspiration, and community, all highlighting the extraordinary transformational potential of group meditation.

Building a Strong Foundation for Meditation

Cultivating a Sitting Posture

The first step for a successful meditation practice is your sitting posture. When your posture is stable and comfortable, the body can become still and relaxed, yet alert. Then you can turn your attention inward, and experience a more subtle level of awareness. With practice, your sitting posture will support ease in the breath and an alert, focused mind. In addition to the qualities of ease and stillness, a good sitting posture supports an effortless, erect alignment through the core of the body from the pelvic floor to the crown of the head.

In all meditation postures:

- Create stability and comfort
- Align head, neck and trunk around vertical axis from pelvic floor to crown of head
- Sit on a level surface with the right height prop under the hips
- Support the thighs, knees and ankles with props as needed
- Check pelvis/lower back and head/neck alignment

Selected Study Online Resources:

Videos:

[Fundamentals of Sitting Posture](#)

with Sandra Anderson (20 min)

Learn three classic poses from the yoga tradition and how to address problems in the hips, knees, and ankles in easy pose, auspicious pose, and friendship pose.

[Importance of Comfortable Meditation Seat](#)

With Luke Ketterhagen (6 min)

More hints for comfort in your meditation pose and why you may want to sit on a chair.

Yogic Breathing

Yogic breathing establishes balance in the nervous system, and frees the mind to move inward. Yogic breathing is characterized by relaxed, smooth and even cycling of the breath through inhalation and exhalation. The characteristics of yogic breathing include using the diaphragm as the main initiator of the breath; breathing quietly and evenly through the nose; and experiencing the breath as a smooth, effortless unfolding from the core of the body. As you pay attention to the qualities of your breath, your awareness becomes more subtle and can move inward. Since the breath is the connecting link between the body and the mind, yogic breathing creates a meditative state of mind—a smooth, peaceful flow of awareness. This melding of awareness of the body, breath, and mind is the beginning of meditation.

Working with the breath on a daily basis will help you train your mind and nervous system to function more efficiently, be present in the moment, and lessen the tendency to accumulate stress and tension.

Techniques for training the breath include asanas like crocodile pose; using a breath pillow in shavasana; body-centered relaxation practices; and conscious awareness of the breath in all yoga asana practice.

Key principles of yogic breathing include:

- How we breathe affects our thoughts, feelings, and behavior
- Breath is a link between the conscious and unconscious parts of our life
- Yogic breathing is relaxed and effortless, and supports meditation
- Five qualities of yogic (diaphragmatic) breathing are:
 - **Deep** - a full, rich breath without creating any strain
 - **Smooth** - free from any jerks, trembling, or shakiness
 - **Even** - a balanced duration of inhalation and exhalation
 - **Continuous** - no pause during our breath, or between inhalation/exhalation
 - **Quiet** - supporting an experience of inner silence
- Strengthen the diaphragm and deepen breath awareness with sandbag breathing, crocodile pose, twists, and other yoga postures
- Breath awareness awakens and enlivens an inner space of peace and connection to the collective consciousness

Selected Study Online Resources:

Videos:

[Foundations of Yogic Breathing](#)

with Judy Moulton, 1 hr 13 min

Instruction in diaphragmatic breathing and breath awareness; core and diaphragm strengthening exercises; and instruction for cultivating the five qualities of yogic breathing.

[Three Essential Breaths](#)

with Shari Fredrichsen, 30 min

Move mindfully and unlock your healing potential through crocodile pose, deep breathing with a breath pillow, and alternate nostril breathing.

Articles:

[Deep Breathing with a Breath Pillow](#)

by Bill Ryan

Short, 10-minute practice with sandbag to experience yogic (diaphragmatic) breathing.

[Yogic Breathing Study Guide](#)

Himalayan Institute Core Faculty

Four skills, five qualities, and anatomy of breathing and the diaphragm.

Audio:

[Rest and Breathe](#)

with Rolf Sovik, 7 min

Guided breath awareness in shavasana.

Yoga Practice to Prepare for Meditation

Most of us cannot easily sit for meditation without first preparing our body and mind. A simple movement practice geared toward uniting the mind with the breath creates the perfect foundation for a seated meditation practice. Breath-connected movement soothes the nervous system and allows the mind to turn inward and rest in an inner focus. An ideal yoga practice to prepare for meditation should fit your schedule and your capacity, and include breath training, activation of the navel center, core strengthening and alignment, and a systematic relaxation in shavasana.

Key guidelines for yoga practice that prepares us for meditation include:

- Be aware of your breath as you move in and out of postures
- Exhale as you move into poses that contract the space of the chest or abdomen (e.g., forward bends, twists)
- Inhale moving into a chest or abdomen expanding posture (e.g., backbends, side stretch, or releasing a forward bend or twist)
- Pay attention to the qualities of your breath in holding a posture, and refine your alignment to create ease, stability, and greater awareness
- Use awareness of the breath to anchor your mind in the body and its sensations
- Include core strengthening to support your sitting posture and yogic breathing

The following video classes are systematic and complete practices which include crocodile pose breath training, core strengthening, navel center activation (including agni sara), guided relaxation in shavasana, and guided seated meditation.

Selected Study Online Resources:

Videos:

[Slow Flow Sequence for Meditation](#)

with Sarah Guglielmi, 39 min

Easy, gentle flow for all levels, focusing on creating stability and comfort in body, breath, and mind.

[Dynamic Movements to Awaken Your Inner Fire](#)

with Greg Capitulo, 69 min

All levels with emphasis on standing postures and navel center.

[Yoga for Body, Breath, and Mind: A Daily Practice](#)

with Sandra Anderson, 53 min

Classic asanas and comprehensive sequencing for daily practice.

[Breath Connected Movement for Inner Focus](#)

with Judy Moulton, 40 min

Gentle sequence suitable for beginners and all levels.

Systematic Relaxation

Systematic yogic relaxation is an often overlooked but essential yoga practice. Since our attention is habitually externalized and our minds over-stimulated, we need training to truly relax. Yogic relaxation is more profound and rejuvenating than other means of relaxing such as entertainment, alcohol, going for a walk, or even sleep. Yogic relaxation regulates the autonomic nervous system which controls the involuntary functions of the body like the heart rate, breathing rate, digestion, and the stress response. Even with an otherwise healthy lifestyle, without regular yogic relaxation, stress tends to accumulate in the nervous system, and our energy levels gradually decline, along with our capacity for concentration and focus.

Systematic relaxation trains the mind to rest in a state in between the outer world of sensual perception and the unconscious world of sleep. In systematic relaxation we disengage attention from the senses and rest in inner awareness, systematically moving the mind through the body, or resting awareness in an inner space. This practice deeply refreshes and rejuvenates the mind and body, allowing us to be more spontaneously present and productive. As our skill in systematic relaxation grows, our capacity and the foundation for meditation also grows.

Key guidelines for systematic relaxation that supports meditation include:

- Practice systematic relaxation at end of asana practice, or as standalone practice
- Practice in a quiet environment with no distractions to the senses (e.g. no strong smells or bright lights)
- Follow a technique to give the mind inner resting points
- Yogic relaxation techniques include three steps:
 - Still the body in corpse pose (shavasana)
 - Establish yogic (diaphragmatic) breathing
 - Apply systematic relaxation technique moving from head to feet and back to head
- Avoid sleeping or letting the mind drift (daydreaming)
- Inner focus and concentration developed in relaxation practice are the foundation for meditation

Selected Study Online Resources:

Video:

[Fundamentals of Systematic Relaxation](#)

with Sarah Guglielmi, 17 min introduction and four guided practices listed below.

Explains how systematic relaxation differs from distraction, disengages the ten senses, and builds inner focus that leads to concentration and meditation.

Audio:

[Tension-Relaxation](#), 15 min

Train the mind to recognize muscle tension and release, awaken awareness of physical tension
Good for beginners, or if having trouble settling in other practices

[Point to Point Relaxation](#), 17 min

Combine mental and breath awareness with a sweeping breath through the body. Enhance sensitivity to pranic energy

[Guided Muscle Relaxation](#), 14 min

Train the mind to move mental awareness systematically through the body

[61 Point Relaxation](#), 19 min

Direct attention to 61 internal vital points. Provides deep and profound rest at physical and pranic level

Article:

[Replenishing Vital Energy Through Yoga Relaxation](#)

By Rolf Sovik

Preparing for Meditation

Creating a Practice Space and a Daily Practice

Finding the right place and time is the first step in establishing a regular practice. Then your practice becomes a solid foundation that supports and nourishes every aspect of your life. Regular practice is necessary to make progress and to stabilize the benefits of practice. Create a sanctuary for yourself by dedicating a space for practice, whether an entire room or just an out-of-the-way corner. Keep that space simple, clean, quiet and pleasing to you. Then dedicate a time in your daily schedule when you won't be interrupted, aren't tired or hungry, and which is well away from meals. Early morning or end of day are good times. A dedicated sacred space and a regular time support and reinforce your intention, and help draw the mind inward to a place of ease and unconditional well-being.

Key guidelines for creating an environment conducive to meditation:

- Dedicate a space for practice, and treat that space with respect
- Your practice space becomes the physical counterpart to inner meditation space
- Dedicate a regular time for your practice
- Practice is best in early morning, or at the end of the day, well away from meals
- Personalize your practice space, time, and routine
- Emphasize intention and quality of practice

Setting a Practice Goal

Our practice space and daily practice routine are a source of nourishment and inspiration that will continue to fuel our practice. In the normal course of life, our daily practice is often a meaningful yet comfortable amount of practice which we can reliably commit to. Our daily practice keeps us nourished and focused to prepare us for the day to come, or helps us digest the experiences which the day has brought us. As our daily practice matures, it grows into a strong foundation that we can continue to build on. This is when we have the opportunity to begin stretching our capacity—when we can set unique, time-bound practice goals with a specific intention, such as the Year Long Meditation.

As we look to set a practice goal for ourselves, keep these principles in mind:

- Allow your practice goal to flow from a deeper intention that is aligned with collective consciousness. Find a source of inspiration that transcends your personal desires, and which benefits the world or a higher purpose.

- Gently expand capacity, so that your goals are realistic while inspiring you to tap into your deeper potential to grow
- Quality is more important than quantity. Pick a practice goal that allows you to have a high-quality experience which is a source of joy rather than stress.
- Consistency of practice is a powerful way to accelerate your growth, and intensify your practice goal. Try to set a practice goal that inspires you to meditate daily, even if you need to reduce the size of your practice goal.
- Find ways to adapt your practice goals to your schedule, so that your practice naturally complements your lifestyle. For example, your weekday practice goal may be less than your weekend practice goals when you have more time to dedicate to your practice without feeling stressed by your work schedule.
- Trustfully surrender the outcome of your practice, so that you can enjoy both the experience of practice and the joy of sharing its fruits with the world.

Selected Study Online Resources:

Article:

[Hermitage at Home: Creating Space for Your Yoga Practice](#)

by Sandra Anderson

How and why to find a favorable environment for practice, with reference to the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

Videos:

[Establishing Your Personal Practice](#)

with Shari Friedrichsen, 5 min

Consider your minimum practice requirements to establish a realistic daily practice

[Tips for Maintaining a Daily Practice](#)

with Shari Friedrichsen, 4 min

How and why to maintain a daily practice; prioritizing your most valuable practices

[Yoga World View: Living With Purpose](#)

with Ishan Tigunait, 4 min

Yogic worldview provides meaning in life; yoga is the purposeful path of unfoldment and self-discovery

[The Collective Consciousness of Group Practice](#)

With Ishan Tigunait, 4 min

Learn how a group practice can transform us, unlocking our capacity to expand our awareness and to experience ourselves in a new way.

Meditation in the Yoga Tradition

Yoga Meditation

Meditation is the master practice of the yoga tradition, and the beginning of an inward journey that leads us to the realization of our full potential. Meditation is a natural outgrowth of our practice of asana, pranayama, and relaxation, which help us grow more stable and comfortable in our body, breath and energetic potential (prana). This experience of stability and comfort naturally matures into a profound capacity for stillness of both body and mind. This stillness, as well as proficiency in effortless yogic breathing, give us a strong foundation to practice meditation.

Yoga meditation helps us systematically train our mind and senses to peacefully flow inward. This process begins by gathering the scattered forces of our mind and energetic potential (prana), and focusing them internally. Through the combined force of our practice and the power of our intention, we guide the mind inward, toward its source.

Through meditation we find a path to enter our inner world—the peaceful yet vibrant space within our mind and heart. “The mind alone is the cause of bondage and of liberation,” the yogis tell us, because long ago they observed that the mind is like a lens through which we experience both the inner and outer worlds—it is the source of distress as well as the means for illumination. This insight led to meditative practices that help the mind to become more clear and develop deeper self-awareness. These practices calm the turbulence of the mind, and through their steadying, purifying, and harmonizing influence, they help us to discover the true nature of our core being. This inward journey has the potential to transform our life, and empower us to achieve our purpose. As Swami Rama, founder of the Himalayan Institute, reminds us, “Meditation does what nothing else can do. Meditation introduces us to our Self.”

Essential Steps in Yoga Meditation

1. STILLNESS

Find a steady and comfortable seated meditation posture in which the head, neck, and torso are in alignment. Close your eyes and allow a sense of physical stillness to naturally settle in. Yoga postures that facilitate strength and flexibility in the pelvis, hip joints, and back will help increase the comfort and steadiness of your posture.

2. YOGIC BREATHING

Cultivate a proficiency in yogic breathing—a relaxed, effortless breathing process—and become aware of the flow of your breath. Relax your abdomen and the sides of your rib cage, and focus on the sensations of inhaling and exhaling. Allow the breath to become deep and diaphragmatic. Yogic breathing is calm and natural, not forced. When you are aware of your breath for an extended period of time, you'll notice the breath naturally starts to deepen and become more smooth. This relaxes your mind and nervous system, and invites the mind to naturally turn inward toward a point of focus.

3. SYSTEMATIC RELAXATION

Formal relaxation practices are practiced in reclining postures. In contrast to meditation, relaxation practices are used in sitting postures to create a sense of inner ease. In a seated posture, scan the body from head to toe and back again, noticing any areas of tension and/or gripping. Consciously soften those areas of the body. Cultivate an experience of being which is effortless and expansive.

4. BREATH AWARENESS

This is the beginning of a formal meditation technique in the yoga tradition. Breath awareness in the nostrils connects you to the core energies of your body and mind. At first, awareness of the breath at the opening of the nostrils is a calming focus that will make your mind stable and grounded. Continue to be aware of the flow of breath from the nostrils to the forehead. Allow the mind to feel an inward and upward energetic movement with each inhalation. Allow the physical sensation of breath to grow increasingly refined and subtle with each breath, until your breath awareness transforms into a non-physical, energetic awareness (also known as pranic awareness).

5. INNER FOCUS THROUGH PRANIC AWARENESS OR MANTRA

With time and practice, breath awareness at the nostrils grows increasingly refined, and expands progressively to a more subtle energetic (pranic) awareness of the space in and around the head. Resting in this pranic awareness connects us to a vast reservoir of inner vitality and clarity, and provides the conditions for the mind to naturally begin to flow peacefully inward. This pranic awareness deepens as we continue practicing (especially through meditative pranayamas like aharana and samikarana) and serves as a foundation for advanced techniques of yoga meditation.

A mantra is a sacred sound that is used as for concentration. A universal mantra, such as So'ham (pronounced "so-hum"), Gayatri, or Maha Mrityunjaya can be used with few prerequisites, but most mantras must be personally given by a qualified teacher. Once the mind has been drawn inward through breath/pranic awareness, let your mind rest in the silent awareness of the sound of the mantra. Eventually the sound will arise spontaneously in your mind. The effort to maintain it is relaxed, yet the mind continues to be filled with it. As the mind rests more and more deeply in its focus, the presence of luminous awareness itself is gradually revealed.

Practical Guidance on Working with Meditation

The previous steps guide us on how to focus the mind and senses inward, and prepare for meditation. As you work with these steps, observe the process as it unfolds without judgment. For example, as you are observing the touch of breath in the nostrils there will be periods of focus, and periods where the mind wanders. When the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the focus of the breath in the nostrils, over and over again. Do not exert any effort to suppress thoughts or to engage with them. Simply let them come and go, returning the mind to its focus. Through this process of gentle observation, concentration strengthens and the meditative experience gradually deepens.

Key Benefits of Practicing Meditation:

1. **Pranic/Energetic Nourishment:** we are profoundly nourished at our physical, energetic and mental levels by the practice of meditation. We feel stronger within, and our mind and senses feel nourished and ready to serve the purpose of our soul.
2. **Mental Clarity:** we awaken our capacity for pure perception and intuitive discernment. We are able to make decisions that we have confidence in from the inside. We begin to see ourself and the world in a new light that is defined by our inner awareness instead of the value that the outside world defines for us.
3. **Expansion of Self-Awareness and Experience of our Inner Essence:** as our self-identity grows more refined and more expansive, we grow more vibrant, happy and peaceful and we are introduced to the finest aspect of our self, which guides us in a meaningful direction because it is intrinsically aware of our life purpose (our dharma).

Selected Study Online Resources:

Articles:

[Effortless Effort: Using the Breath to Move Inward](#)

by Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

[What Meditation Is—and Isn't](#)

By Swami Rama

[Meditation: Joy in the Heart of Silence](#)

By Swami Rama

Video Courses:

[Dynamics of Meditation](#)

By Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, 39 min

[Turning Within: Practical Strategies for Resting the Mind](#)

By Rolf Sovik, 62 min

[The Art of Mantra Meditation](#)

By Rolf Sovik, 1 hr 41 min

[Unlocking the Power of Gayatri and Maha Mrityunjaya Mantras](#)

By Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, 26 min

Video Guided Practices:

[Seated Aharana Pranayama](#)

By Judy Moulton, 17 min

[Meditation to Go \(All Levels\)](#)

By Judy Moulton, 30 min

Audio Guided Practices:

[Breath-focused Meditation](#)

By Sandra Anderson, 11 min

[Guided Meditation using So'ham Mantra](#)

By Rolf Sovik, 13 min

[Guided Meditation using your Personal Mantra](#)

By Bill Ryan, 10 min

Mantras:

[Gayatri Mantra](#)

Written PDF and audio, 6 min

[Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra](#)

Written PDF and audio, 8 min

Recommended Readings

[Moving Inward](#)

By Rolf Sovik

[Meditation and Its Practice](#)

By Swami Rama

[The Power of Mantra & The Mystery of Initiation](#)

By Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

[The Secret of the Yoga Sutra](#)

By Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

[The Practice of the Yoga Sutra](#)

By Pandit Rajmani Tigunait