

Meditation & Mindfulness Guide





Create a calm space to meditate



Choosing a room or a space to meditate can help train the body and mind to feel more comfortable, and allow you to more easily transition into meditation.

Aim to create a space that nourishes a more relaxed state of mind; for example, you could add plants, find a cool spot by a window, and keep it a phone-free zone in your home.



Choose a time to meditate, and stick to it



When you schedule a time of the day to meditate, it is easier to establish the practice as a habit, and you'll be more likely to make it a part of your daily routine.

For example, you may want to try pairing meditation with a daily habit you already have in place, like journaling before bed, or having a cup of coffee in the morning.

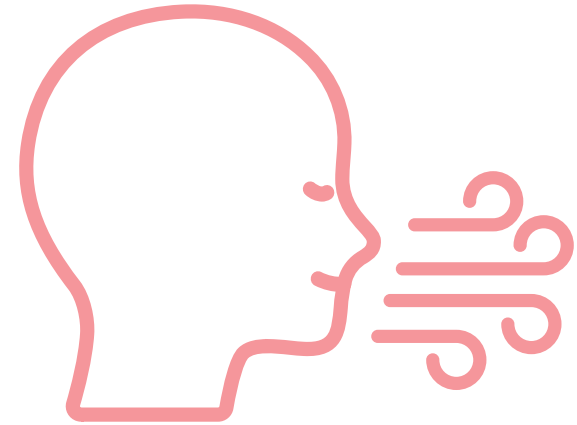


Sit comfortably and clear your mind



Take a few minutes to wind down, and then begin your meditation practice. This can help keep the mind from wandering back to distracting thoughts or negative emotions and allow you to focus more clearly.

You can sit on top of a cushion or blanket, on the floor or in a chair. Sit upright, but don't tense up – your body should feel relaxed.

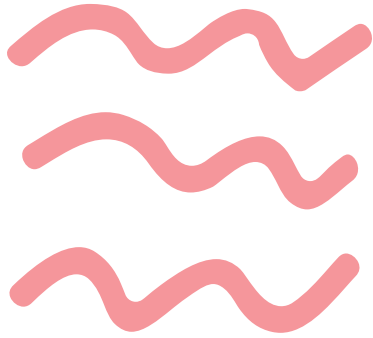


Start with a few deep breaths to calm the body



Taking a few deep breaths before you begin your meditation can trigger a relaxation response. When the relaxation response is stimulated, the body begins to feel safe and at ease.

Then, as you start the meditation, your breathing should return to a normal rate. Paying attention to your breathing will be important throughout the meditation, and this type of mindful breathing can lower stress levels in the body.



Just breathe



Meditation does not have to be complicated. The essence of mindfulness meditation is simply about bringing your awareness back to your breath, over and over again.

For example, whenever you notice a thought arising, you can acknowledge that thought by saying “thinking” or “thought,” and then come back to the feeling of yourself breathing. Noticing physical changes as you breathe in and out by placing a hand on your stomach as it rises and falls, can also help you focus.



Show yourself kindness



The core of meditation is about learning how to treat yourself with kindness no matter what you may be experiencing at any given moment.

Just like exercising, some days will feel easier than others. This could be due to the amount of sleep you had the night before, or the amount of stress you were under that week.

Remember that meditation is a skill, and it takes practice over time.



Acknowledge your emotions



It's normal to feel happy after meditating, but it's also normal to feel a bit down.

Meditation brings up good emotions, as well as bad emotions, so we can better recognize what our emotions actually are – fleeting thoughts and feelings that come and go.

Take a moment to thank yourself for practicing self-care, and be proud of the effort you took to meditate.



Try to continue every day, even if you don't feel like it



Meditating for just five to 10 minutes each day is an achievement to be proud of, and with time the process will feel more organic and natural.

If you have to skip a day for whatever reason, don't be too hard on yourself – just try to get back to your routine the next day.

Self-care tips for managing anxiety



Try to manage your tasks

Set aside a specific time to focus on your tasks – so you can reassure yourself you haven't forgotten to think about them. Some people find it helps to set a timer, or organise them in a notebook or diary.



Try to get enough sleep

Sleep gives you the energy to cope with a busy schedule; aim for between 7-9 hours a night.



Exercise

Exercise such as yoga, walking, jogging and cycling are all great for clearing your head and reducing stress.



Diet

Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels.



Get outside

The outdoors can be really helpful for your mental well-being. Even going for a walk and being outside in the fresh air for 10 minutes can do wonders for your mindset.



Screen Time

Spending too much time on your phone or computer is bad for your mental health. Try to spend some time away from screens by reading a book or doing a creative activity, such as mindfulness colouring. (See pages 11- 14)



Talk to Friends

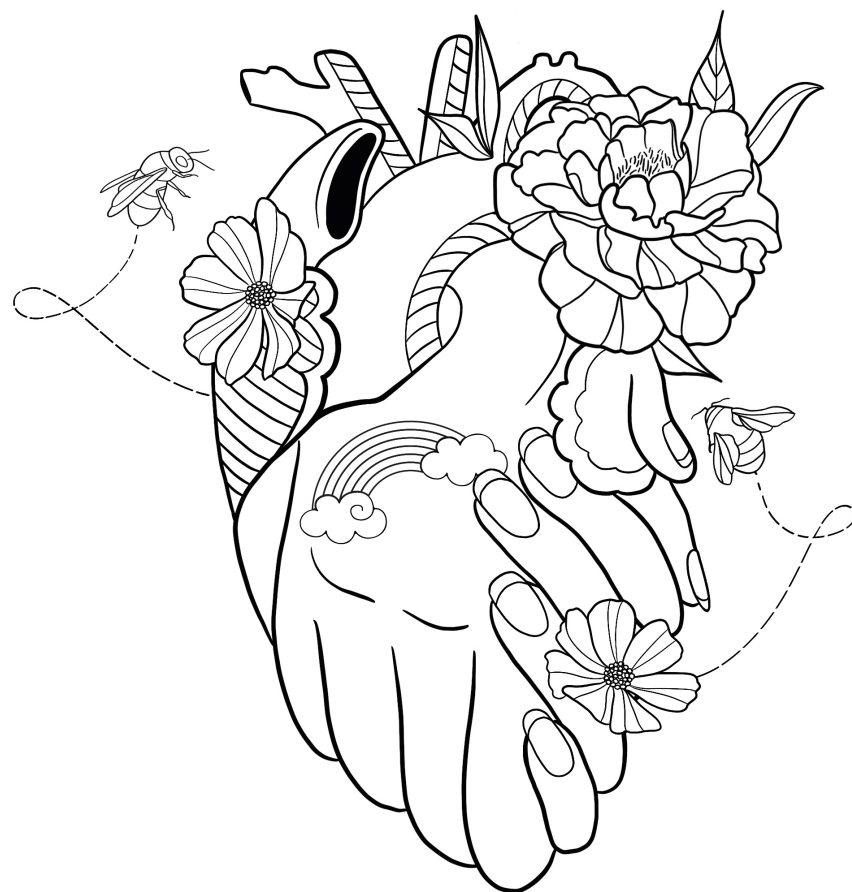
Talking to someone you trust about what's making you anxious could be a relief. It may be that just having someone listen to you and show they care can help in itself.



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Thank you
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***Where there is peace and
meditation, there is neither
anxiety nor doubt***

- St Francis de Sales

