

# Guided Meditation Groove

Or, How to 'Chill' the Buddhist Way

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In our fast-paced society, where there is so much pressure to perform and succeed, spending time each day meditating or relaxing can be extremely important. The mind is amazingly powerful, but when it gets overwhelmed, it can do very little. Meditation helps us to calm down and focus the mind. These qualities of relaxation and focus can help you in sports, in studying, and in dealing with your parents.

In meditation practice, we can access the great powers inside each of us. We need less to build or create these powers than discover them by looking inside our own mind, bodies, and hearts. No special experience or knowledge is needed to meditate, only the curiosity and willingness to look within.

Here are a few pointers to follow if you'd like to give meditation a try.



[Listen to a guided meditation](#)  
(Real Player Required)

## BEFORE YOU START

### 1) Find a comfortable place.

Designate an area or corner of your room where you'll practice, maybe near a window where there's nice light or a corner of the room that's not cluttered. Once you've found your place, make it comfortable with flowers, pictures of friends and loved ones, or place meaningful objects there. And, yes, a Justin Timberlake or Britney Spears autographed pic counts.

### 2) Find a time that works for you.

Are you an evening or morning person? Most people find that early morning or late at night before bed is the best time for meditation, but you can do it any time of day. Find a time that works for you and make this your meditation time.

### 3) Turn off the lights.

Save some energy and turn off those lights! Feel free to light a candle and enjoy its nice, soft lighting. If you use a candle, make sure it's in a safe place where it won't fall over. Or use a small lamp to provide a little light. If you're sitting in front of your computer, the subtle glow of the monitor will work just as well.

### 4) Keep distractions to a minimum.

Turn off the ringer on your phone, turn down the answering machine, and turn off your CD player. Put a "do not disturb" sign on your door and ask your family to not bother you during this time. Do whatever you can to limit distractions.

### 5) Make a commitment.

You don't have to commit to meditate every day for the rest of your life, but 5-10 minutes a day for a week can be very helpful. After the first week, re-evaluate and make the meditations longer or shorter. You can also simply meditate whenever you feel you need it. If you decide to make a commitment, make sure that the goal is reasonable. Start small and slowly build.

Next...learning how to sit.

**SIT ON IT!**

Now that you have a good time and place, find something to sit on. Meditation is often done while sitting in a chair or on the ground with a cushion or *zafu* (a round Japanese-style cushion). If you decide to sit on the floor, make sure that your butt lifts off the ground a little, so use cushions or fold a pillow in half to help. This makes it easier to cross your legs on the floor. It also helps to keep your back straight, which is very important in meditation.

Sit "Indian-style" with legs crossed or with one leg folded in front of the other. Either way, you'll want your butt to be lifted off the ground a bit. Don't try to fold your legs around in a complicated position unless you've done a lot of yoga or gymnastics.

You can also use a chair. Sit in the chair with your feet flat on the ground and your back upright. Find a firm chair that will help you sit in an upright manner. You can also try sitting on the edge of your bed, though it's a little more difficult since it's not as firm as a chair.

Whichever position you choose, rest your hands lightly in your lap or on your knees. Your head can tilt down very slightly. Try gently closing your eyes and see how that feels. If it feels strange, go ahead and keep your eyes open.

Remember, there are many forms of meditation, and there is no "one-size fits all" position or style. You'll discover your style through experimentation and listening to your intuition. Most important, have an attitude of curiosity and adventure. Don't worry too much about doing everything "right."

Now that you've found a place, a time, and something to sit on, it's time to meditate!



[Listen to a guided meditation](#)  
(Real Player Required)

Read the meditation slowly to yourself, then try it. Also make sure to try the audio meditation to the left.

### **A Guided Meditation**

Sit comfortably with your back straight but not rigid. Let your eyes close, and notice what it's like to sit with your eyes closed. It may seem a little strange at first. You may notice that as your eyes close, other senses, like hearing, become more sensitive. Notice the different sounds that become apparent to you. Notice the variety of sounds and how they change from moment to

moment.

Next, feel your body sitting on the floor or chair. Feel the pressure of your buttocks on the cushion or chair. Feel your shoulders. Feel your feet. Your belly. Feel your body sitting here. Let the body be soft and open. Relax any place of tension or holding in the body as best you can.

Then feel the movement of the breath in the body. Notice how the breath has a pattern, a beat. See if you can tune into that pattern. Notice how the belly rises on the inhalation and falls on the exhalation. Notice how the chest expands and contracts with each breath, and how the breath enters and leaves the nostrils. You are not imagining or controlling the breath, but feeling it. Allow the breath to come and go in its own pattern. Rest your attention on that flow. Tune into the pattern or rhythm of the breath.

There is nothing to figure out. Nothing to control. Nothing to change. Simply life unfolding as it will. Being present with each moment as it arises and passes. Allowing whatever needs in the mind and body to arise.

As you sit, all kinds of thoughts will arise. Some will be nice and pleasant thoughts, and some will be unpleasant. Notice and acknowledge whatever thoughts arise. Allow them to be there. Allow them to come, to have their moment, and allow them to leave. If you notice your mind carried away by one of the thoughts, drifting to the past or future, which will happen constantly, then very gently notice where your attention has been drawn and allow the breath to again become predominant. You are not trying to push away or control anything. You are simply directing the mind toward the present moment.

Again, see if you can be with each moment without struggle. Meditation is a time to rest from the constant activity of the mind. Enjoy this time. Have compassion for yourself in your sincere effort to bring more calm and peace in your life.