

# How-To Meditate for Busy People

by Jay Evans

**Medical Disclaimer:** Meditation is generally considered a safe activity, especially at the beginning levels. At these levels, it is mainly a practice in deep stillness, breathing and presence.

If you have a history of mental illness, then please consult with your health care provider before learning meditation. This is not to say that meditation will be harmful to you, but it's better to be on the safe side.

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**Meditation is simpler (and harder) than most people think. Read these steps, make sure you're somewhere where you can relax into this process, set a timer, and give it a shot:**

## **1) Take a seat**

Find place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

## **2) Set a time limit**

If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as five or 10 minutes.

## **3) Notice your body**

You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor, you can sit loosely cross-legged, you can kneel—all are fine. Just make sure you are stable and in a position you can stay in for a while.

## **4) Feel your breath**

Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes in and as it goes out.

## **5) Notice when your mind has wandered**

Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. When you get around to noticing that your mind has wandered—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

## **6) Be kind to your wandering mind**

Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.

## **7) Close with kindness**

When you're ready, gently lift your gaze (if your eyes are closed, open them). Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

**That's it! That's the practice. You go away, you come back, and you try to do it as kindly as possible.**

## **How Much Should I Meditate?**

Meditation is no more complicated than what we've described above. It is that simple ... and that challenging. It's also powerful and worth it. The key is to commit to sit every day, even if it's for five minutes. Meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg says: "One of my meditation teachers said that the most important moment in your meditation practice is the moment you sit down to do it. Because right then you're saying to yourself that you believe in change, you believe in caring for yourself, and you're making it real. You're not just holding some value like mindfulness or compassion in the abstract, but really making it real."