

What, Me Meditate?

by Thomas Warney

“Me, meditate? Hey, I’m really busy! I’ve got a million things to do, and they’re all important. How could sitting still and being quiet help me succeed?”

The fact is that a lot of people — from business executives like Oracle Computer CEO Larry Ellison to TV personalities like Jerry Seinfeld — have found that a simple meditation routine helps them to be more focused, relaxed, creative and productive. And not to mention athletes who use meditation as part of their training, those with health concerns who are advised to meditate to improve their healing and well-being, and thousands of “regular folks” that just enjoy what meditating can do for them.

Doctors and therapists have been recommending simple meditation methods for some time as an effective way to deal with stress, lower blood pressure, heighten the body’s immune system, reduce anxieties, enjoy a more grounded and positive attitude, and increase satisfaction and enjoyment at home and at work. And these are only **some** of the benefits!

“Could it work for me?”

Why not?

Here’s an easy and straightforward way to get started:

First, find a quiet place. This can be the toughest part. It may take some detective work, but most of us can find a spot that will work for us — perhaps a room at home, or an office at work where you can close the door.

Then, sit upright, with your spine comfortably straight.

Take a deep breath or two, and allow yourself to relax. Gently tensing and releasing tight muscle groups will help you relax your tensions. You can keep your eyes closed, half-closed, or open — whatever works for you.

Then all you need to do is sit quietly for about five minutes, or ten if you can.

Five minutes may seem like forever, but think of it as the time it takes to watch several meaningless TV commercials, or to read the back of the cereal box a few more times, or to be on hold with your computer tech support. It’s not so long.

It can be helpful to focus your mind in your physical centre of gravity — your abdomen just below the navel — and by counting your breaths from one to ten (on every in-breath or out-breath). Start over when you reach ten or if your mind wanders.

It may seem like you're having a lot of thoughts. These were there all along, and now you are noticing them. Since your mind is meant for thinking, let it think. Just agree that for this five or ten minute period of quiet, you're not going to get **involved** in the thoughts, or do anything about them right now. Just let them come and go, "like clouds in the sky." As you meditate more, you'll notice that a re-structuring process takes place — a lot like a company re-engineering itself for more effectiveness by simplifying, prioritizing and eliminating wasteful activities (like worry, the chief cause of mental stress).

Test meditation out for yourself — the way you'd try out a new golf club or test-drive a new car. Give it a fair chance and see how it can work for you.

Many people like to start their day with a short routine of quiet meditation, even if it means getting up a little earlier. Others prefer an afternoon "mini-retreat." And some — especially parents of active children — prefer the late evening for meditating. Some meditate two or three times a day, once they start noticing the benefits.

Meditation is a powerful success tool on its own. It is even more effective when combined with other common-sense practices such as regular exercise, a healthy diet, an awareness of your important life goals, and a positive attitude.

Give it a try. It's easy, it's effective, and you don't need to buy any equipment or a special outfit. You'll start to experience the benefits of meditating — being more relaxed, focused, positive, energized and in touch with your creativity — almost immediately, and after a short time you'll be wondering how you ever managed without it.

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