

Develop a meditation routine for overall health and well-being

There are a lot of ways meditation can assist you in your daily life. In addition to helping calm and relax you, it can also help you manage stress. If you suffer from an illness or insomnia, meditation can improve psychological balance to help you cope. Best of all, it requires no special equipment or tools. All you need are the following:

- **A quiet location.** Be sure to meditate with as few distractions as possible.
- **Relaxed breathing.** This technique involves using the diaphragm muscle to expand your lungs in order to help you slow your breathing, take in more oxygen and reduce the use of shoulder, neck and upper chest muscles so you can breathe more efficiently.
- **A specific, comfortable posture.** Depending on your preference, meditation can be done while sitting, lying down, standing or in other positions. You can either close your eyes or look down.
- **A focus of attention.** You can focus on a mantra (a specially chosen word or set of words), an object within your line of sight or your breath. If your mind wanders, don't worry or judge yourself. Simply focus again on the present moment. One way to do this is by paying attention to your body. For example, is your breathing fast or slow? Is it deep or shallow?

It's easy to get started

When you are just starting out, try to meditate for up to 10 minutes at a time, then gradually increase as you get better at focusing. You can also try meditating for 10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the evening.

In developing your own meditation routine, consider the following:

- I want to meditate because: _____
- The best time and place for my meditation is: _____
- My meditation goal is (describe the benefits you would like to gain from meditating):



Note: Do not use meditation as a replacement for conventional care or as a reason to postpone seeing a doctor about a medical problem. To ensure coordinated and safe care, tell your health care providers about any complementary and alternative practices you use to give them a full picture of how to manage your health.

Sources: Healthwise

<http://hccam.nih.gov/health/meditation/>

Call your health coach if you have questions.