

Summary of the Steps to Meditation.

- 1- Take 10 deep slow abdominal breaths counting mentally from 10 to 1. Start again if you forget where you are.
- 2- While breathing, focus your attention in the body. Scan it from the toes all the way up to the head. Relax every part of the body you are not using to hold the posture still and steady. Autosuggestion: imagine a huge mountain. And notice how still and steady the mountain is. Bring the sense of steadiness to your body and repeat mentally “my body is still and steady like a mountain. Nothing can move me.”
- 3- Focus your attention on deep abdominal breath. Make the breath as silent and gentle as possible. Autosuggestion: “The breath is as still and silent as an ocean with no waves.”
- 4- Focus your attention in between the eyebrows (if you are more intellectual) or heart center (if you are more emotional). Let the mind rest in the place you choose.
- 5- Repeat the mantra Om coordinating it with the breath.
- 6- If the mind wanders away, gently bring it back to focus.

Steps to Meditation

One cannot learn to meditate, anymore than one can learn to sleep. One falls into both states. There are certain points to remember regarding the techniques and stages of meditation

1. Regularity of time, place and practice are important. Regularity conditions the mind to slow down its activities with a minimum of delay.
2. The most effective times are early dawn and dusk. If it is not practical to sit for meditation at these times, choose an hour when you are not involved with daily activities, and a time when the mind is apt to be calm.
3. Try to have a separate room/space for meditation. As meditation is repeated, the powerful vibrations set up will be lodged in the area; an atmosphere of peace will be felt.
4. When sitting, if possible, face North or East in order to take advantage of favorable magnetic vibrations. Sit in a steady, comfortable, cross-legged position with spine and neck straight but not tense.
5. Before beginning, command the mind to be quiet for a specific length of time. Use the breath, the mantra and the focal point as anchors to stay present.
6. Consciously regulate the breath. Begin with ten deep abdominal breaths to bring oxygen to the brain. Then slow it down to an imperceptible rate. Make it very slow and quiet.
7. Keep the breathing, rhythmic, inhale for three seconds and exhale for three seconds. Regulation of breath regulates the way the mind works.
8. Allow the mind to wander at first. It will jump around, but will eventually become concentrated as it calms down.

9. Don't force the mind to be still, as this will set in motion additional brain waves, hindering meditation.
10. Select a focal point on which the mind may rest. For people who are intellectual by nature, this may be the point between the eyebrows. For more emotional people, use the Heart Center. Experiment with these focal points for a period of time and when it feels right choose one or the other. Once you choose a focal point it is better not to change it.
11. Focus on a neutral or uplifting object, holding the image in the place of concentration. If using a Mantra (Sacred word) , repeat it mentally, and co-ordinate repetition with the breath. Although mental repetition is stronger, the mantra may be repeated aloud if one becomes drowsy. If you don't have a personalized Manta you can use: Om, faith, love, abba, father, Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me, OM Mani Padmi Hum...etc. It is recommended that once you chose a mantra you don't change it.
12. Regular practice is key to success. Even 10 min of daily meditation will positively change the anatomy of the brain.
13. Meditation opens the door to intuitive knowledge and exerts a benign influence on the mind, nerves, sense organs and body. The mind becomes calm and steady.

Additional Resources:

- o Positive Thinking and Meditation
<http://www.sivananda.org/teachings/meditation/meditation.html>
- o Relaxation response- Harvard University:
<http://www.relaxationresponse.org/howto.htm>
- o Centering prayer- Christian Meditation
<http://www.centeringprayer.com/>