

Meditation

Meditation is a practice in which a person uses a learned skill, such as mindfulness, to train oneself to be attentive and aware of the present moment. There are many different meditation practices or focuses you can use to develop a calm mind and relaxed body — the breath, an image, counting, repeated phrases.

If you practice meditation before surgery, you'll be able to use meditation more effectively after surgery. Some of the proven benefits of meditation include:

- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Improved sleep
- Reduced pain

GETTING STARTED

Allow yourself 10 minutes to practice meditation every day. Many people find it helpful to practice relaxed breathing before or during a meditation session.

- 1 Sit in a chair or lie in a bed with your body flat on the bed. Find a position that is comfortable for you. Use pillows if needed so you can be comfortable and still.
- 2 Close your eyes. If you prefer to keep them open, rest your gaze on a nearby object. Try not to stare. Instead, soften your gaze.
- 3 Draw your attention to the places where your body touches the chair or bed. Notice the sensations in your legs and your hands. Let yourself settle into your body and the moment. Remind yourself that you don't have anywhere to be for the next ten minutes.
- 4 Next, pay attention to your breath. Start to breathe slowly and deeply. Focus on the steady rhythm of your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Let your belly relax. Notice how it gently rises and falls each time you breathe. Notice how the air moves through your nostrils. Notice how your chest expands and relaxes as you keep breathing.

You may find that your mind wanders while you meditate. This is normal. When you realize this has happened, gently draw your attention back to your breath and move on.

Often, we hold tension in parts of our body without realizing it. Let your mind drift over your body. Pay attention to the places that feel tight or painful like your neck, back or shoulders. Send your breath into those places.



For the last few minutes of your meditation, focus on parts of your body that you want to heal. Each time you breathe in, imagine that you are sending healing energy to those areas. Each time you breathe out, breathe out anything that causes you stress.

OTHER RESOURCES

Using a meditation app or CD/tape may be helpful to get started. There are many apps, CD/tape and book resources for meditation. Some resources may be available at a medical store, bookstore or library near you.

- [mindful.org](https://www.mindful.org)
- **Mayo Clinic video:** [Take a Break for Meditation: mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC7194-09](https://www.mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC7194-09)
- **Book:** Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress Free Living, by Dr. Amit Sood
- **Apps:** Insight Timer, Calm, Headspace
- Health Journeys Audio for guided meditation (purchase required): [healthjourneys.com/audio-library](https://www.healthjourneys.com/audio-library)