

Mindfulness 3: 10 Days to a 10-Minute Meditation Practice

CORE CONCEPT: Use this simple and doable method to develop a meditation practice.

Carving out time to develop a meditation practice seems daunting for most people. Often, we feel either like we do not have the time or that it will not matter unless we commit a serious amount of time to it. Fortunately, 10 minutes can usually be found either by reorganizing our schedules or via the time-saving benefits of practice, which are less time stuck in mental health symptoms and more efficiency approaching the tasks in our lives. Further, research also shows that even brief amounts of meditation make real differences in life.

To get started, schedule a time and place to practice, perhaps setting an alarm on your watch or phone to remind you until it is a habit. The time can be whenever suits you, although some people prefer to start or end their day with it. In fact, one way to solve the time problem for busy people is to simply wake up 15 minutes early to have quiet time for the practice. That 15 minutes of lost sleep is a good trade-off for the benefits of meditation. Whenever the time is, do try to make it a quiet, less hectic time, although that is not essential if that is not possible in your environment. In terms of place, pick somewhere that is comfortable. It may be a chair where you can sit with an upright posture, or it may be lying down on the floor or bed. Remember that this is simple and doable meditation, so do not needlessly complicate the process!

When you sit or lie down during your meditation time, the only task is to close your eyes and focus on your breath, which has been waiting for you the whole time. Naturally, distractions will arise. You will notice emotions, thoughts (maybe a lot of them, including judgments), bodily sensations, and other distractions in your environment. When you notice these distractions, simply refocus on connecting with your breath, over and over again. If you so choose, you can add in a mantra to focus your attention on the breath. Perhaps you say silently to yourself “in” when you breathe in and “out” when you breathe out. Be sure to set a timer so you do not have to think about time in a practical way (thoughts about time may still come up as distractions).

That’s it! Do this and you are officially meditating. Follow this simple 10-day schedule below to build up to 10 minutes of meditation per day. Note that, if you would like to start smaller, you can simply halve the amounts of time (i.e., building to 5 minutes of meditation). Check in on your general distress or urge level before and after the meditation, and briefly journal about your experience if you choose. After 10 days congratulate yourself. You did it!

Day one: Meditate for 1 minute.

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day two: Meditate for 2 minutes.

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day three: Meditate for 3 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day four: Meditate for 4 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day five: Meditate for 5 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day six: Mediate for 6 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day seven: Meditate for 7 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day eight: Meditate for 8 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day nine: Meditate for 9 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:

Day ten: Meditate for 10 minutes

Distress or urge level: Before _____ After _____

Describe your experience:



Mindfulness 4: Maintain Your Meditation Practice

CORE CONCEPT: Use this worksheet to maintain your meditation practice.

Track your daily meditation on this worksheet, noting how you feel before and after each meditation. Note that you can give yourself credit for shorter meditation times too.

Monday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Tuesday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Wednesday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Thursday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Friday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Saturday mediation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____

Sunday meditation

Distress/urge level before: _____ Distress/urge level after: _____