

# TEN TIPS FOR SETTING UP YOUR MEDITATION PRACTICE

As I've mentioned, and will continue to remind you, meditation works when you make it part of your everyday routine. Consistency is king here. So, here are ten ideas to make setting up your own meditation practice easy.

## 1. Find an instructor trained in teaching meditation

NEXT! But seriously, you will benefit a lot from someone who 1) has experience meditating themselves and 2) who can help answer your questions. It's also helpful to learn and share with other people in the class.

## 2. Find the right practice for you

Your instructor should help you discover many different meditation techniques so that you can find the one that's best suited to you. Try them all on, mix and match, it's YOUR practice.

## 3. Set aside a regular time each day

Whether it's the Chopra method of RPM (**R**ise, **P**ee, **M**editate), or at the end of your work day, pick a time that's good for you and stick to it. It's easy to put it off if you don't have a regular time set aside.

## 4. Set up your space

Set aside a space that evokes a feeling of calm conducive to meditation. A comfortable (but not **too** comfortable) chair or meditation cushion, a candle, soft colors or some plants can help capture that calm you're looking for. It may be in a separate room or in a corner, wherever you can find the space. And if it's open to the rest of the house, you might consider a screen.

## 5. Talk to your family/housemates/pets

Let everyone know what you're doing so they respect your time. Hang a sign on the door, or better yet, invite them in to join you!

## 6. Meditate with others

You may have noticed that meditating with others enhances your experience. Keep that going after the class with a meditation group and your family member. It helps to keep your practice going.

## 7. Go on a retreat

Retreats are a chance to get away from all the things that usually fill up our lives. They vary in length: you can find day retreats or residential retreats for a weekend or longer. Just being quiet and meditating several times a day lets everything settle down so your experience can go deeper. On an intensive retreat you don't do much apart from meditate, but there are less demanding options as well.



**8. Take your practice off the cushion/chair**

While a formal meditation practice is important, don't forget to look for ways to be mindful throughout the day (see my *10 Ways* on mindfulness). If you find yourself in a stressful moment, remember the 3 minute mini-med. Just breathe...

**9. Reflect on your values**

It can be hard to maintain a meditation practice. Over time, and with consistent practice, you'll find that you actually miss it if you don't do it. But when you do run into a bump in the meditation road, remind yourself why you are doing it. Better health, increased compassion, better sleep, \_\_\_\_\_(fill in the blank).

**10. Be patient and persistent**

You will have your ups and downs, you'll miss days, you'll get discouraged. The key thing is to keep going. Know that the ups and downs are normal, just like a plateau on a weight loss program. Try different techniques, a different setting or a different time. Back off the amount of time you're doing it. Change things up and soon you'll be right back on track.

