

# What is Meditation?

Meditation is clearing the mind. Early stages of learning to meditate involve holding your attention on a subject or process, like your breath. Eastern religions concentrate on meditation as a means of realising spiritual enlightenment.

Meditation in the West is practised for both health and religious or spiritual reasons, although many people regard it mainly as a self-help tool for managing stress, with gaining a sense of calm, relaxation and heightened awareness. Meditating for spiritual fulfilment, without a religious basis, is becoming common too.

## Types of meditation

Meditation has evolved out of numerous approaches to life, religions and philosophies, which means there are many different techniques.

The methods relating to our approach are:

- Emptying our mind - allowing the mind to clear, gently pushing aside any stray thoughts, or allowing thoughts to float in and out of awareness
- Using a mantra - repeating a word or phrase over and over, either aloud or silently, sometimes timed with the breath, to focus our attention and brighten our consciousness
- Concentrating on the breath - consciously noticing the movement of air in and out of our nostrils, or counting our breaths
- Mindfulness - being aware of inner experiences and simply observing them without judgement
- Movement - using a physical technique (like yoga, or any other activity not involving thought) to still our mind by coordinating our breath and body-movements

## Practicing meditation

Our approach is to sit in a comfortable position for twenty minutes, with your eyes closed. You will be encouraged to sit in a cross-legged, upright position. To begin with we observe our breath - maybe count it - and use a mantra. Since the gym will be open while we meditate, you may want to **bring earplugs or earmuffs**. When sitting still for twenty minutes you may get cold, please bear that in mind when dressing for meditation; wear comfortable clothes, nothing too tight. You will be asked to meditate every day in the morning, at around the same time.

## Risks of meditation

When meditating alone or without guidance, it is important to remember that meditation is part of living a balanced life; it should not be used to withdraw from life or to avoid personal issues.

Persons with a mental illness should consult with their doctors and bring a certificate that clears them for our meditation practice ... (please show your doctor this document).

- I have no mental illness that would preclude me from meditating
- I provide a note from my doctor, who advises I'm cleared to participate

## Join Meditation Sundays 12:00 (4 classes every month)

- I'm on an Unlimited Group Membership that includes meditation classes; no charges apply
- I pay for one course \$50 (payment includes the booklet THE ART OF MEDITATION)
- I pay for each class \$15

Name: ..... Signature: ..... Date: .....

