

YOUR BS FREE GUIDE TO MEDITATION

Use these simple tips to achieve Monday morning zen



By **Edward Lane** Posted on February 5, 2018



1. Where do I start?

On your phone. Of the 1500+ existing meditation apps, we recommend Calm, Simple Habit and the ubiquitous (for good reason) Headspace. Then, graduate to group-guided sessions, though we'd recommend doing some digging first. Avoid unnecessary religious or spiritual elements – science-backed Meditation: Unlocked, which is based in London and labelled “no crystals, no mumbo jumbo,” has our singular focus.

[\(Related: The modern man's guide to meditation\)](#)

2. Who's it for?

It's becoming popular with work hard, play hard nine-to-fivers. Meditative techniques can help with stress, anxiety, sleep, creativity and happiness. The notion that it's for hippies with dreadlocks is as outdated as their harem pants.

[\(Related: The modern man's guide to zen\)](#)

3. Will it get me zen af?

Maybe. “As with the gym, one session isn’t enough to benefit,” explains Niraj Shah, founder of Meditation: Unlocked. Don’t expect monkish repose immediately. An open mind helps, too. The rewards are scientifically backed; you just need to tune in.



4. Is there a signature move to master?

Try coherent breathing. This technique reduces anxiety by bringing the nervous system into equilibrium between “fight and flight” and “rest and digest”, explains Shah. Perfect as a pre- presentation procedure. It’s as simple as taking a slow breath in through your nose, before breathing back out through your mouth. Build up to six seconds in and six seconds out for two minutes. Relaxing shouldn’t be complicated, after all.

5. Do I need to buy anything?

Do some reading. Ruby Wax may seem out of place in the pages of MH, but the ex-TV personality has a degree in cognitive therapy from Oxford University. Her book, *A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled* (from £4 amazon.co.uk), is entirely practical, assuring that the concept is not about “standing in the rain smiling inanely”, or “becoming nothingness while sitting in your underwear”. Well, that’s good, then.

6. What should I avoid?

Noise. Shut up, in other words. Group meditation sessions are where people go to switch off. Leave your phone outside – not on vibrate – and don’t burst into the room late and ruin everyone’s chill, bro.

[\(Related: Does meditation really work?\)](#)

Old Method, New Tricks

Meditation, believed to have originated in 1500 BC, is now the subject of cutting-edge science. We plot the research that gives it gravitas

Thick of it: Linked to slower brain ageing by increasing the thickness of the prefrontal cortex, improving memory and sharpness. - NeuroReport

Take heart: Proven to release nitric oxide, which opens up your blood vessels and helps lower blood pressure. - Massachusetts General Hospital

Pain gain: Tested for its efficacy in pain treatment opposite morphine, meditation was proven to be doubly effective. - Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

Back IT up: Meditation reverses molecular reactions in our DNA that cause poor mental health and depression. - Coventry University

