

MEDITATION TECHNIQUES from SATYANANDA YOGA

Dr Rishi Vivekananda

Body Awareness and Breath Awareness

“Please get ready for meditation.

Lie down on your back, with the feet a little apart, the hands by your sides with the palms facing upwards, and the eyes closed. Make the body as comfortable as possible, and then try to allow the body to remain perfectly still.

Develop your awareness of the body from the top of the head to the tips of the toes. Complete stillness and complete awareness of the whole body.

Continue your awareness of the whole body...the whole body... the whole body.

Mentally say to yourself: ‘I am aware...I am going to practise yoga nidra...I will not sleepI will remain awake throughout the whole practice’. *(pause)*

Now become aware of the sounds that are going on around you..... Become aware of the sounds, but do it in a special way... as soon as you hear a sound, immediately find another one... try not to stay on any particular sound, try not to think about it, try not to even identify what it is..... As soon as you hear a sound, leave it and find another, then another and so on..... Just continue that for a few minutes

Now you will begin to rotate your awareness throughout your whole physical body. Repeat the different parts of the body in your mind and simultaneously become aware of that part of the body. You can also, if you choose, visualize that part of the body in your mind, but don't concentrate too hard, and do not try to relax the part, just easy awareness.

(Right side)

Just become aware of the right hand thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, armpit, right side of the body, the waist, right hip, right thigh, knee, calf muscle, ankle, heel, sole, right big toe, second toe, third toe, fourth toe, fifth toe...

(Left side)

Become aware of the left hand thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, fifth finger, palm, back of the hand, wrist, lower arm, elbow, upper arm, shoulder, armpit, left side of the body, the waist, left hip, left thigh, knee, calf muscle, ankle, heel, sole, left big toe, second toe, third toe, fourth toe, fifth toe...

(Back)

Now come to the back. Become aware of the right buttock, left buttock, small of the back, right side of the back, left side of the back, centre of the back...right shoulder blade, left shoulder blade...centre of the shoulder blades...now become aware of the spine from the bottom right up to the top...the whole back together...back of the neck, back of the head...

(Front)

Now go to the top of the head, the top of the head, forehead, both sides of the head, right eyebrow, left eyebrow, eyebrow centre, right eyelid, left eyelid, the right eye, the left eye. right ear, left ear, right cheek, left cheek, nose, tip of the nose, upper lip, lower lip, chin, throat, right side of the chest, left side of the chest, centre of the chest, the abdomen, the right side of the abdomen, the left side of the abdomen, the upper abdomen, the navel, the lower abdomen, the pelvic area...

(Major parts)

The whole right leg...the whole left leg...both legs together. *(pause)*

The whole right arm...the whole left arm...both arms together. *(pause)*

The whole of the back, buttocks, spine, shoulder-blades...the whole of the front, abdomen, chest...the whole of the back and front...together...the whole of the head...the whole body together...the whole body together...the whole body together.

(You may repeat one or two rounds, gradually decreasing speed.)

Now just become aware of the natural breath, aware that the breath is flowing in and flowing out. There is no need to make the breathing happen, just be aware of the natural breath. Become aware of its rhythm – whether it is fast or slow, shallow or deep, but there is no need to change it – only awareness. Just remain aware of the breath for a short while.....

Now begin to count mentally each respiration; inhalation and exhalation count mentally as *one*. Count the breaths from 54 to zero, remaining aware of each breath and number; if you miss one breath then you should start again.

When you finally reach zero become aware of your physical body lying on the floor; awareness of your physical body from top to toe. Then become aware of the room and your surroundings. Then start moving your body and stretching yourself. When you are wide awake, sit up slowly and open your eyes. The practice of yoga nidra is now complete.

Awareness of Thoughts

Close your eyes and become aware of the whole body. Without moving, experience the sensation of touch. Awareness of the parts of the body that are in contact with the floor, the contact points of your clothing and skin.....

Now become aware of the outside environment. Be aware of all the sounds around; listen carefully with detached awareness. Do not judge, analyze or think about the sounds, only listen to the sounds. Go from one sound to the other. You may focus your attention on a prominent sound for a short while, but then dismiss it and find another.....

If when you try to concentrate on the sounds, a thought interrupts, just be aware of it, note it, and then go back to what you are concentrating on. Be aware of every thought. Maybe the past, figures and faces of your friends, people you love and hate, let them come. But remember, you don't belong to them, nor do they to you. You are a witness and they are just passing objects.

Now become aware of your natural breathing. Whole attention on the flow of the breath and continue the breath awareness for a short time.....

Now again direct your attention to the outside world and each and every sound.....

Now again become aware of the breathing process. Forget the outer sounds; only perceive the flow of breath.....

Remember that if thought interrupts, just be aware of it, note it, and then go back to what you are concentrating on.

Now become aware of the dark mind screen behind your closed eyes. This is the screen of your mind on which it is possible to see subconscious visions. If visions arise merely observe them as a witness. If no visions come, continue to watch..... (3 minutes then end practice)

Internal Visualisation – Guided and Spontaneous

Become aware of the eyebrow centre. Awareness of the eyebrow centre as if you are looking at it from inside. All is dark. What you see is an infinite expanse of darkness. Watch this darkness.

Make sure that your face is relaxed, the forehead is not wrinkled from concentration, and the eyes are not turned towards the centre in an effort to see.

Just remain aware of the eyebrow centre and imagine that as you inhale and exhale the breath is passing in and out of the eyebrow centre. Inhalation flows into the eyebrow centre; exhalation flows out of the eyebrow centre

Now become aware again of the darkness of the inner space. You have to become aware of the space from inside as though you are sitting in the centre of a room.

Try to see the walls of the room from where you are sitting in the centre. The room is inside your head and the skull forms the walls and ceiling.

The forehead is the front wall. Concentrate on the inner surface of the forehead.

Now take your mind to the right side, and try to see the inner surface of the right wall.

Become aware of the left side and try to see the inner surface of the left wall.

Now shift your mind to the back of the room and try to become aware of the inner surface of the back wall.

The top of the head is the ceiling of the room. Try to see the inner surface of the ceiling.

This room is your inner temple and you are seated in its centre.

Become familiar with your surroundings.

See the front of your temple from inside.

See the right side of your temple from inside.

See the left side of your temple from inside.

See the back wall of your temple from inside.

See the ceiling of your temple from inside.

Now become aware of the whole space, which is surrounded by four walls and the ceiling. It is dark inside, but now you must flood your temple with light, with colour.

Imagine that the whole room is being filled with the colour red. Visualize red manifesting inside your temple. The whole room is filled with red light.

Now imagine that the whole room is being filled with the colour orange. Visualize orange manifesting inside your temple. The whole room is filled with orange light.

Now flood your internal temple with the colour yellow. Visualize this yellow light filling the space inside your temple.

Imagine that the whole room is being filled with the colour green. Visualize green manifesting inside your temple. The whole room is filled with green light.

Now imagine that the whole room is being filled with the colour blue. Visualize blue manifesting inside your temple. The whole room is filled with blue light.

Become aware of violet light filling your internal temple. Visualize violet manifesting inside your temple. The whole room is filled with violet light.

Now you must flood your temple with the purifying sounds of the mantra aum. Continue to chant aum to yourself, and feel it penetrating every corner of your internal temple. The whole atmosphere is being charged with the powerful sounds of aum.

Become aware of your temple once again. You are seated in the centre. Become aware of the surrounding space. As I indicate kindly follow:

Awareness of the front wall of your temple from inside; the right, the left, the back and the ceiling.

Rotate your awareness to all the walls of the temple again.

And once more. Awareness of the walls of the temple and yourself seated in the middle.

Now become aware of the whole space, which is surrounded by the four walls and the ceiling. Is there darkness or is there light? Do you see any color now?

Now look especially at the front wall. It is like a large screen; the screen of the mind. Do you see anything there? Just continue to watch it, as if a movie is about to start. Just keep watching it for a while, and if anything appears there, just witness it as a neutral observer, and let it pass.....

Now become aware again of the natural breath passing in and out of the eyebrow centre.

Listen to the external sounds. Awareness of the sounds coming from outside.

Be aware of your body and your surroundings.

Chant the mantra aum aloud 3 times and when you are completely aware of your environment, slowly open your eyes.

Multiple sensation awareness – forest-temple-aum

Imagine you are walking through a forest early in the morning. It is dawn, but the sun has not yet risen. It is a beautiful forest, safe, calm and peaceful. Tall trees surround you and the atmosphere is crisp and cool.

As you walk you hear the sound of dried leaves crackling beneath your feet... and you smell the delightful woody fragrance of a damp, mossy forest.... All around you in small clusters are delicate looking wildflowers dancing in the light breeze. Dewdrops sparkle on their petals. Listen to the music of the birds that whistle and call as they welcome in a new day.... Occasionally you see a rabbit nibbling on some grass, or you catch a glimpse of a shy young deer.... The forest is alive with activity and you feel a very high and harmonious energy.

Nearby is a small rocky narrow creek.... As you cross over the creek you notice some small fish swimming about in a pool of water.... A small lizard comes out from a rocky crevice... and some luminous coloured butterflies glide gracefully through the air.... You walk among the many beautiful trees, wide spreading trees and tall austere trees, bare trees and trees with rich green foliage....

There is a clearing between the trees, and in the clearing is a small *temple* with an aura of light around it.... As you come closer you hear the sound of aum coming from the temple and a divine smell of incense comes with the breeze.... You go to the door of the temple and enter. It is cool and dim inside, on the walls there are pictures of great saints.... The sound of aum becomes louder and clearer, and you feel it vibrating in your heart.... Seated in the centre of the temple is an orange-robed yogi chanting aum. His eyes are closed and he appears not to be aware of your presence.... You sit down on the floor, close your eyes and become still.... A feeling of deep peace and harmony envelops you, as you listen to the melodious sounds of aum. Listen to the sounds of aum, and experience the feeling of peace and harmony.....

Now may follow with more visualisations

Mantra meditation

Sit in a comfortable meditative posture. Relax the body and close your eyes.....etc

Start to chant aum aloud. Try to be completely aware of the aum chanting and feel the vibrations of the mantra resonating through your whole being. Continue in that manner for some time.

Now stop chanting aloud, become aware of the eyebrow centre. When you can distinctly feel this point, start the mental repetition of aum or your personal mantra given to you by your guru. Feel the mantra vibrating at the eyebrow centre

Be aware of the internal sound of the mantra at the eyebrow centre, vibrating in harmony with the centre.

Just continue in that way.....

Now become aware of the throat centre. When you can distinctly feel this point, feel the mantra vibrating there.

Be aware of the internal sound of the mantra at the throat, vibrating in harmony with that centre.

Just continue in that way.....

Now become aware of the heart centre. When you can distinctly feel this point, feel the mantra vibrating there.

Be aware of the internal sound of the mantra at the heart centre, vibrating in harmony with that centre.

Just continue in that way.....

Now become aware of the navel centre. When you can distinctly feel this point, feel the mantra vibrating there.

Be aware of the internal sound of the mantra at the navel centre, vibrating in harmony with that centre.

Just continue in that way.....

Now just discontinue the mantra and repeat aum aloud with me three times

Breath Mantra Meditation

Try to feel energy flowing in the frontal psychic passage between the navel and throat. As the breath flows **in** the energy rises from the navel to the throat, and as the breath flows **out** it moves back down to the navel.

The energy of the inhalation flows up from the navel to the throat and the energy of the exhalation down from the throat to the navel

Continue to feel the breath moving through the frontal psychic passage between navel and throat. Do not let one breath pass without you being aware of it. Continue for a few minutes.....

Now mentally synchronise the mantra 'so ham' with the breath. 'so' sounds during inhalation and the rising of the prana in the psychic passage. 'ham' sounds during exhalation and the descending of the prana in the psychic passage. After each 'so-ham' pause briefly

Continue in this way with total awareness of both the movement of prana and the mantra.....

Now reverse the sequence of the mantras with the breath. Each breath will now start with exhalation on the mantra 'ham' followed by 'so' on inhalation. The mantra will now be 'ham-so'.

After each 'ham-so' pause briefly.....

Now merge the mantra 'so' with the ingoing breath, and 'ham' with the outgoing breath. So there is an endless circle of 'so-ham-so-ham-so-ham...'. Prolong the vibrations of 'ham' and join them with the ingoing vibrations of 'so'. Prolong the vibrations of 'so' and join them with those of 'ham'. Continuous repetition of 'so-ham' and 'ham-so' without any pause.....