

Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know



READY, SET, *Meditate!*

Did you know you don't have to be a spiritual guru or even have any prior experience to start practicing meditation? Meditation is for everybody. If you can sit still for a few moments and breathe – you can meditate. Yes, it really is that simple.

Meditation can train the mind just as exercise can train the body. Practicing daily meditation can aid in a plethora of benefits, such as:

- Weight loss
- Improved communication and relationships
- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Addiction management
- Sharpened thinking
- Mastery of emotions

Start Meditating in *Five Simple Steps*

1. To begin, set aside five to 10 minutes.
2. Select a spot where you feel comfortable for a few moments and take a seat. Ensure your spot offers a stable, solid seat so you can sit upright. Make sure your back is not hunched or hanging – straighten, but don't stiffen. If you are seated on the floor, consider crossing your legs in front of you. If you're on a chair or bench, have the bottoms of your feet touch the ground.
3. Allow your hands to rest on the tops of your legs – palms facing either up or down, it's all about what feels comfortable to you. If you so desire, you may close your eyes.
4. Allow yourself to be in this moment. Take in as many deep breaths as necessary. Feel the sensations in your body and allow yourself to relax. Whenever your mind begins

to wander (It will – but don't worry!), draw your attention back to your breath. Take as much time as you need for you.

5. When you're ready, open your eyes and continue with your day.

There are many forms of meditation and there's no perfect path to enlightenment. It's all about exploring your mind to find which works best for you, as each person's mind works differently. Meditation can seem simple, but is not necessarily easy. You just have to keep putting in the work and the results will follow.

"How to Do It," Mindful Staff, mindful.org, Sept. 9, 2014.

"5 Meditation Tips for Beginners," Alice Boyes, Ph.D., psychologytoday.com, March 18, 2013.

"How to Begin a Daily Meditation Practice," Ashley Turner, mindbodygreen.com, Oct. 22, 2014.

"Meditation 101: Techniques, Benefits, and a Beginner's How-To," Inner Idea, Jan. 1, 2009.

LET'S CHANGE THE WAY WE TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Do you ever casually throw around words like "depressed," "suicidal" or "OCD?" These mental health terms have seeped into our everyday language, but it's as simple as this: medical conditions, including mental health disorders, don't make for good metaphors.

Mental health-related phrases shouldn't be used in ways that aren't literal. They hurt and can keep people from seeking help. Using mental health terminology in a negative or belittling manner can be damaging. It largely contributes to the stigma surrounding mental health disorders.

"It's actually demeaning to those with true illnesses that can't easily stop these behaviors," said Dan Reidenberg, the executive director of the suicide awareness organization SAVE. "If we trivialize them into something else or we make that become the person's identity, we have done everyone a disservice."

Reidenberg said a good solution is to address stigma directly, and that starts with the words we speak. The more we understand a disorder, the more it can become normalized in society, which means looking at it just as we would look at a physical health issue.

National Mental Illness Awareness Week is Oct. 2 to Oct. 8. Let's help raise awareness as a community. We can educate others by rejecting stigmatizing stereotypes and encouraging acceptance and understanding.

Take action by advocating for equal care, providing support, and pushing for better legislation and policies to improve lives for everyone. You can also take the stigmafree pledge at nami.org/stigmafree#pledge.

"National Alliance on Mental Illness," nami.org, accessed Sept. 13, 2016."

"We Need to Change the Way We Talk About Mental Health," Lindsay Holmes, huffingtonpost.com, Sept. 6, 2016.



— Your —

GUIDE to Elder Care for Promoting Work-Life BALANCE

October is National Work and Family Month. Elder care is a major consideration when achieving work-life balance. It can involve taking aging loved ones to appointments, paying bills, grocery shopping, dressing, feeding and bathing. While this can be demanding at times, the experience as a whole can be very rewarding.

If you're already working full-time, you can easily get burned out. Signs of caregiver stress include: social isolation, frustration, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, irritability, sleep issues and health problems.

Here are tips to help you thrive in your caregiving role:

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE CARE YOU CAN PROVIDE.

When creating a care plan, be honest about the care you can give. If you're working full-time and a loved one needs full-time care, you can't realistically do both. Other family members, adult day programs, in-home care and senior companion programs are all resources at your disposal.

INVOLVE FAMILY.

Even if you're the designated caregiver, your whole family can still help. Create a plan that outlines the time and financial contributions that have been agreed upon so everyone is on the same page. Keep everyone in the loop; shared drives, such as Google Docs, can be used to note finances and health updates for everyone to access.

TAKE TIME TO RECHARGE.

You need to take care of yourself so you can provide

the best care possible. It's important to care for your own health by exercising regularly, eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep and practicing stress management techniques. If you're not healthy, how can you care for your loved one?

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP.

If you're feeling stressed, identify the cause and find solutions. There are many experts who can assist you. If you don't think you can afford professional help, see if your company has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAPs provide access to free services including counseling, legal resources, financial consulting, information and referrals for elder care, and more.

ACCEPT ASSISTANCE.

You simply cannot do it all. Accept help when it's offered and ask for it when it's not.

Outsiders often would like to help, but don't know how. Write down your loved one's schedule, along with detailed instructions and important information regarding their care. Having everything written out makes it easier for people to jump in and help.

GET SUPPORT.

Many organizations provide information, resources and support groups for caregivers. Make sure you have someone you can turn to – a friend, clergy, or counselor. There will be times you'll simply need someone to listen.

CONSIDER YOUR CAREER.

If you're having trouble striking a balance at work, talk to your supervisor about flex-time options or review your company's policy on family leave. If caregiving tasks are affecting your productivity, address these items during your lunch break.

BE REALISTIC.

Your aging loved one's condition probably will not reverse. Having unrealistic expectations can lead to heartbreak. As they advance in age, the reward doesn't come from them getting better but from the integral role you play in the quality of their final years.

For a more comprehensive guide to elder care and a list of resources, visit our blog at motivatehealth.com.

"Sandwich Generation Moms Feeling the Squeeze," APA Staff, apa.org, accessed Sept. 8, 2016.

"10 Tips for Caring for Aging Parents," Philip Moeller, money.usnews.com, July 18, 2011.