

I've been practicing meditation for many years now and it has become one of the greatest tools in my life. It has helped me navigate grief and trauma, gives me extra patience and allows me to be more present in my life. The list goes on.... It was difficult at first to be still, to slow the thoughts down and sometimes it still is and that's ok. So I thought I'd share some of the tips and tricks that helped in establishing my own meditation practice:

1. Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, or interrupted, make sure to set your phone to do not disturb or silent. (when i was first learning to meditate I would go in our walk in closet in the dark, letting the clothes drown out the noises around me.
2. Get cozy: prop/support yourself with pillows, blankets, anything that will allow you to sit comfortably with a long and tall spine for maximum air flow. Sitting in a chair or in bed works great for this. You do not need to sit uncomfortably on a floor. Support yourself with what you need to make this practice as "comfortable" as possible. If sitting doesn't feel good for you trying lying down, place some pillows or cushions behind you to prop your body up slightly so you are not laying flat and more likely to fall asleep. Add an extra layer of clothing or a blanket as our body temperature tends to drop during meditation.
3. Let go of all expectations of how it will feel/look/be and allow the experience of getting still and quiet. Do not judge yourself for having thoughts or feeling distracted.
4. Start small, pick a set amount of time and use a timer, and work your way up to longer periods of time. Starting with 5 minutes is a great way to ease yourself into it.
5. Begin by closing your eyes and simply noticing your breath, is it shallow? Deep? Check in with your mind, your heart, your body, how are you feeling? Notice your senses, are there any noises you hear, how the fabric touches your skin, any tastes or smells? Just Notice.
6. When thoughts arise, and they will, let them and then bring your attention back to your breath. Back to the present moment, the inhales, the exhales, your life force. Try not to be attached to any of the thoughts that arise, notice them and if it helps you, label them. Thinking/Planning/Worrying/Daydreaming and then come back to the breath. Sometimes having an affirmation or mantra during meditation. Inhale - I am Exhale - Here. Another way to anchor your mind and body to the present moment is the count your inhales and exhales. Notice how you feel after you finish.
7. Remember that this is called a meditation practice for a reason, it will not be perfect, give yourself time to get in an established routine. Some days will just be better than others, try to be gentle and kind to yourself. Keep showing up and doing the work, it will be well worth it!

If sitting still doesn't work for you try a walking meditation. Get outside in nature, tune into your breath, walk silently listening to the sounds around you, soaking in all of nature's beauty. You can try counting your steps or repeating an affirmation as you're walking. Inhale - walking Exhale - listening

Let go of guilt, if you miss a day of meditation, just begin again the next day. Start small and as you begin to practice more you may find it easier to practice more often and for longer periods of time. Give yourself time and be patient with your practice.

I hope that you find these tips helpful and inspires you to try it yourself! Let me know how it goes!

"Quiet the mind and the soul will speak"~ Bhagavati

