

Centered at the Table

By Arrah Karigan



Higher State
MEDITATIONS

Thanksgiving is more than food and family. It is also history, memory, and expectation—often arriving all at once. The body knows this. Your nervous system may tense before the first guest even steps through the door. That bracing is not failure. It is protection, written into the tissues over years of gathering, rushing, and hoping things go “just right.”

Meditation is not a retreat from that swirl but a training ground to meet it. With a little practice each day, your nervous system learns that it can pause, soften, and stay steady in the presence of others. Think of it as rehearsal: a way to prime yourself for connection without being carried off by the current.

Set a timer, put your phone on “do not disturb” (smart watch too) and turn it face down. Here are three five-minute practices to begin right now:

1. The Belly Breath Anchor

Sit comfortably. Place one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest. Breathe so the lower hand rises more than the upper one. Feel each exhale as a letting-go, like setting down something heavy. Even a few breaths this way signal safety to your body.

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2. Box Breathing

Inhale gently through the nose for a count of four. Hold the breath for four. Exhale slowly for four. Hold again for four. Continue the cycle—inhale, hold, exhale, hold. This simple square of breath steadies the nervous system and provides calm structure in moments that feel unpredictable.

3. Shoulder Roll Reset

Sit tall and slowly roll your shoulders forward, up, back, and down in a smooth circle. Do five in one direction, then five in the other. Match the movement to your breath—inhale as the shoulders rise, exhale as they fall. Feel tension loosen as if you’re wringing it out of the muscles. This physical release signals your body that it can soften, making space for calmer presence.

Five minutes a day is enough to start. This is not about perfect serenity but about giving your nervous system a little rehearsal time. When the doorbell rings and the feast begins, you may find more space in yourself to meet it—breath by breath, moment by moment.

And if you’d like to go deeper, a new resource is on the horizon. Higher State Meditations will soon launch online—created to teach meditation as a practical life skill and to bring more meditators into the world. Stay tuned.

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