

**Instructions for a simple, scientifically-valid meditation technique from  
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**The Buddha's Meditation Method**

Choose a comfortable chair or recliner that allows you to keep your back, neck, and head reasonably aligned and straight. Sitting down is preferable to lying down because lying down invites sleep, but if you have too much discomfort sitting up, by all means lie down.

Now, close your eyes and let your awareness go inward. Keep your eyes comfortably lifted a little bit behind closed lids, as if you were looking at the top of a far away mountain range (an eye position that invites focused concentration). If you are a person of faith, this is the time for a brief prayer or invocation for Divine guidance.

Start the meditative process by observing your breathing. Don't time it, control it or try to harness your breath in any way. Just let it go in and out on its own. It doesn't matter if it's slow and deep or rapid and shallow. Let the breath do whatever it wants, and just observe it closely. If you're a beginner, do this for a full minute.

Next, for the length of the out-breath only, mentally say to yourself the sound "*Om*" (sounds like the word "home" without the "h"). *Om* is a remarkable sound. Brainwave imaging studies have demonstrated that silent repetition of *Om* causes brain waves to become very relaxed and smooth out, while increasing mental clarity. The silent chanting of *Om* on the out-breath will significantly calm and focus your mind by removing the pesky distractions of thought and feeling that try to interrupt your focus.

If you are a beginner, try observing the breath and silently chanting *Om* on the out-breath for three minutes. In all likelihood, you're going to drift off into a thought, a feeling, a daydream, or an anticipation of some sort. At first, you may not even realize you've drifted off. After all, it's perfectly normal for one's thoughts to wander. As soon as you realize it however, let go of what you're thinking, feeling, or imagining and come back to the method: *Om* on the out-breath.

That is the method, start to finish. Here is a short-cut summary:

- 1) Relax, with head, neck and spine reasonably aligned, then close your eyes, and let your awareness go inward, keeping your eyes lifted comfortably behind closed lids.

- 2) Observe your breathing - don't time or control it, just let it go in and out on its own (if you're a beginner, do this for about one minute).
- 3) Next, for the length of the out-breath only, mentally say to yourself the sound "*Om*" (if you're a beginner, do this for three minutes, longer if you can).
- 4) In all likelihood, you're going to drift off into a thought, a feeling or a daydream while you're practicing the method – as soon as this happens, let go of what you're thinking and come back to the method: *Om* on the out-breath.

With practice of this method, you will gradually drift off less and less. Think of a glass jar filled with mud and water. If you shake it and put it on a table, at first you see a million specks whirling about. Those specks are like the everyday thoughts and feelings of your conscious mind. As you let the jar sit still however, you'll see the specks settle down until the water becomes crystal clear. Similarly, if you meditate every day, you'll soon find that your thoughts and emotions settle down completely. At that point your mind becomes like the clear water in the jar. The "mind" you experience when the water becomes clear is your super-conscious mind – a state of consciousness in which your attention is highly focused and enhanced, one in which stressful, day-to-day thought and feeling are set aside and a much higher, more accurate level of thought, insight and personal power emerge.

Keep in mind that you cannot stop thinking as an act of will. That will just keep you busy thinking about not thinking. The method is the key here — silent chanting of *Om* with the out-breath. By returning to the method each time you drift off, you start locating your attention in a place that is "outside" of the everyday thought and feeling you're trying to quell.

When you are ready to conclude the formal part of meditation, stop the technique (no focus on the breath; no *Om* on the outbreath). Then just sit in the stillness, dwelling in the awareness of your super-conscious mind – an endless wellspring of insight, joy, peace, and power.

If you have difficulty with intruding thoughts while you're meditating, check your eye position. Chances are they will have lowered. The benefit of keeping your eyes lifted slightly behind closed lids comes from neurological studies which show that keeping your eyes lifted will foster a calm, focused mind. If your eyes are looking straight ahead, you will likely engage in a stream of analytical thought, and if your eyes are lowered, you will probably fall asleep.