

The Art of Meditation



Nicole Zimmer E-RYT

February 23rd // 12pm - 4pm
February 24th // 11:30am - 3:30pm
8 CEU Yoga Alliance



Pink Lotus
YOGA CENTER

Outline of Learning

Saturday

Hows and Whys of Meditation w/ Nicole

Metta Meditation w/ Nicole

Break 1:30pm-1:40pm

Finding Your Seat w/ Nicole

Spine Alignment w/ Kelly

Mindfulness Meditation w/ Nicole

Sunday

Mantras w/ Nicole & Sierra

Break 12:45pm-1pm

Japa Mala w/ Nicole & Pam

Mudras w/ Nicole

Nidra w/ Nicole

Expectations

*L*isten to Learn

Your teachers have a wealth of knowledge to share. Listen actively, take notes, keep phones out of sight, and, time permitting, save questions for the end of lessons.

*O*pen and On Time

Be all here! Have fun with lessons, and enjoy the growth. Keep distractions and side conversations to a minimum. Use built-in break times to use the restroom or grab snacks as not to disrupt the learning of others.

*T*ake What You Need - Leave the Rest

Don't expect for everything to make sense, or everything to be for you. Don't look for the "but," rather embrace the "and."

*U*se Feedback to Grow

Feedback is our most powerful teaching tool. This is the space to mess up, to learn, and to develop your practice. We are all love; zero judgement!

*S*hare Space

Only bring into the room what you need for meditation and taking notes. Allow the teachers to finish a lesson before asking questions. When given the space, answers are usually provided prior to the lesson ending.

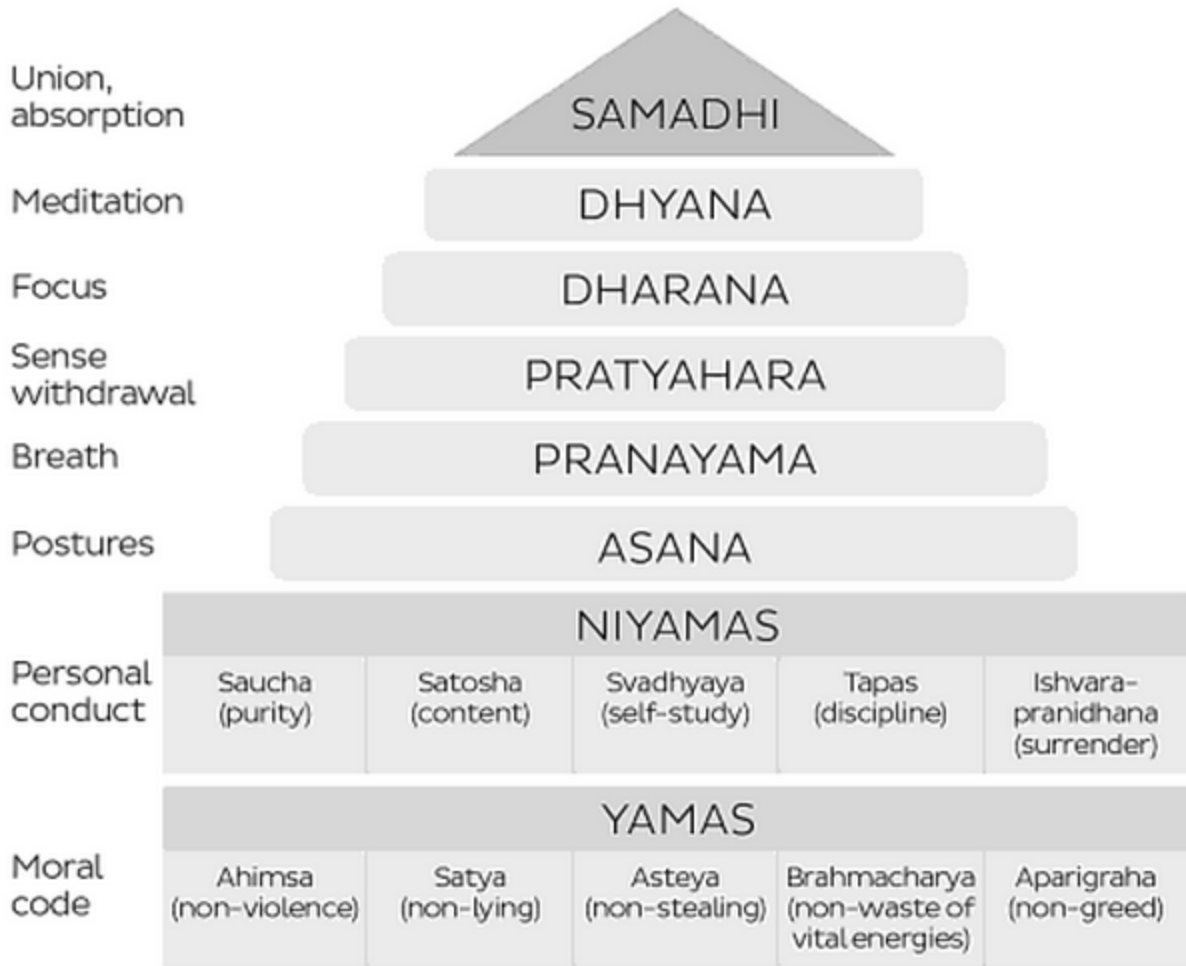
Meditation Reflections

Use this space to record what comes up as you practice meditation this weekend.

First Reaction	What Came Up? How Did it Feel?
Opening Meditation 	
Metta Meditation 	
Mindfulness Meditation 	
Day One Reflection	

First Reaction	What Came Up? How Did it Feel?
Mantra Meditation 	
Mala Meditation 	
Mudra Meditation 	
Nidra 	
Day Two Reflection	

Philosophy/ 8 Limbs of Yoga



Notes and Thoughts

What is Meditation?

Meditation is not forcing yourself to “empty the mind”. It is not escapism. Meditation is a mental exercise in relaxation, focus, and awareness. It is something everyone can learn and benefit from.

How to Start

1. Sit comfortably, with back and neck straight. Close your eyes, or gaze softly downwards
2. Take a few deep breaths to relax your body
3. Focus your attention on the object of your meditation (breath, mantra, mudra, mandala, etc.)
4. When your mind gets distracted, focus it back on the object
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 again and again as needed

Mental Benefits

Pausing- Meditation gives you the ability to pause. The “pause” is the extra space between what life throws at you, and your response to it. Mindful pauses make a difference in how you feel.

Attention- Meditation gives you the ability to zoom out and zoom in. Zooming out is taking a step back, and seeing the whole picture. Zooming in is the ability to focus your attention.

Mastery of Mind- The ability to change yourself, your thoughts, emotions and habits. It is based on the neuroplasticity of our brain.

Mastery of Emotions- Meditation gradually develops your ability to overcome negative emotions, and develop positive ones.

Observing- Observing your present-moment experience from a place of neutrality, calmness, and distance. Your awareness is wide, and your mind is calm and centered. From this comes a sense of peace, freedom, and of being unaffected.



Metta Meditation

Also called loving-kindness meditation, Metta Meditation is the simple practice of directing well-wishes towards other people.

How To

1. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed, and imagine what you wish for your life. Formulate your desires into three or four phrases. Traditionally they would be something like this:

May I be healthy and strong. May I be happy. May I be filled with ease.

2. Start with by directing the phrases at yourself.
3. Next, direct the metta towards someone you feel thankful for or someone who has helped you.
4. Now visualize someone you feel neutral about—people you neither like nor dislike. This one can be harder than you'd think, and can make you realize how quick we can be to judge people as either positive or negative in our lives.
5. Ironically, the next one can be easier: visualizing the people you don't like or who you are having a hard time with.
6. Finally, direct the metta towards everyone universally: "*May all beings everywhere be happy.*"



Notes and Thoughts

Finding Your Seat

Notes

Sukhasana



Virasana

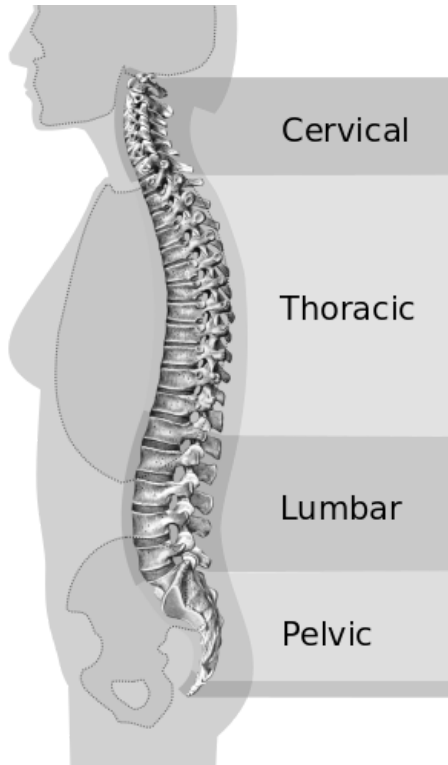


Padmasana



Spine Alignment

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna on proper posture: “*Firmly holding the spine, neck, and head erect and motionless, let the yogi focus his eyes at the point between the two eyebrows. When a Yogi is ready successfully to engage his reversed mind and life force in a battle with the outwardly pulling senses, without any strictures or pinching of the spinal nerves, the mind and life force are easily directed upward.*”



Sit Up Straight- Gently sit up straight. Stack your vertebrae one on top of the other. The lumbar should be gently crooked forward, the chest up and shoulders back.

Keep the Spine Free- Sit with your back away from the chair, keeping the spine free from external sensations. If sitting on the floor, practice sitting in a posture like lotus, half-lotus or a cross-legged position.

Rest Your Hands- Place the hands on your lap -palms turned upward in a receptive position, or palms down for grounding.

Align Your Chin- The chin should be parallel to the floor, not tilting upward or downward. This keeps the head, neck and spine in alignment.

Focus the Gaze Upward- With the eyes closed, turn your gaze upward to the point between the eyebrows. Focusing your gaze here will help keep your consciousness interiorized during meditation. If restless thoughts arise, keep bringing the gaze back to this point.

Notes and Thoughts

Mindfulness Meditation

TEN STEPS TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Notes and Thoughts



Create time & space.

Choose a regular time each day for mindfulness meditation practice, ideally a quiet place free from distraction



Set a timer.

Start with just 5 minutes and ease your way up to 15-40 minutes.



Find a comfortable sitting position.

Sit cross-legged on the floor, on the grass, or in a chair your feet flat on the ground.



Check your posture.

Sit up straight, hands in a comfortable position. Keep neck long, chin tilted slightly downward, tongue resting on roof of mouth. Relax shoulders. Close eyes or gaze downward 5-10 feet in front of you.



Take deep breaths.

Deep breathing helps settle the body and establish your presence in the space



Direct attention to your breath.

Focus on a part of the body where the breath feels prominent: nostrils; back of throat; or diaphragm. Try not to switch focus.



Maintain attention to your breath.

As you inhale and exhale, focus on the breath. If attention wanders, return to the breath. Let go of thoughts, feelings or distractions.



Repeat steps 6-7.

For the duration of meditation session. The mind will wander. Simply acknowledge this and return to your breath.



Be kind to yourself.

Don't be upset if focus occasionally drifts or if you fall asleep. If very tired, meditate with eyes open and rearrange posture to more erect (but still relaxed) position.



Prepare for a soft landing.

When the timer goes off, keep eyes closed until you're ready to open them. Be thankful. Acknowledge your practice with gratitude.

Mantras

A **mantra** is a repeated word or phrase; more specifically a word repeated in meditation. Sound is sacred. Sound is powerful. It connects us, heals us and expands our hearts. **Mantra** chanting opens us up to the connection we all share with each other and the universe.

Om Mani Padme Hum

ॐ मनि पद्मे हुं

Notes and Thoughts

Japa Mala

A mala is a string of beads used in meditation to count mantras, prayers, intentions, breathes. Mala is a Sanskrit word meaning garland, and these are ancient tools developed to keep the mind focused and clear.

A full mala contains 108 counting beads plus one guru bead. The guru (teacher) bead provides a starting and ending point.

How to Hold

Hold your mala in your right hand, and use your thumb to “count” each mantra by touching the bead during the recitation of the mantra. On each recitation lightly pull the bead towards you as you complete the mantra to moving to the next bead. The index finger is extended away from the hand and should not touch the mala or be used for counting.



Notes and Thoughts

Mudras

;'The term *mudra* applies to the use of hand gestures during meditation. The position of the fingers channel your body's energy flow in specific ways. There are more than 100 known mudras that have been developed over the centuries. Our hands hold energetic points for the elements. The use of mudras is a way of manipulating these elements.

- Thumb: Space
- Index: Air
- Middle: Fire
- Ring: Water
- Pinky: Earth



Gyan: The intention of the *Gyan* mudra is to improve concentration and sharpen memory. Try holding this mudra while meditating for insight. **Method:** Performed by touching your index fingertip to the tip of your thumb, while holding your other three fingers straight.

Notes and Thoughts

Yoga nidra, or yogic sleep, is a powerful meditation technique. While the you rest comfortably in *savasana*, this systematic meditation guides you through the five layers of self. After Yoga Nidra, you often feel a sense of wholeness.



Yoga nidra promotes deep rest and relaxation. The stages of body scan and breath awareness alone calm the nervous system, leading to less stress and better health.

Yoga nidra offers a space to explore what you need in the moment, as well as an opportunity to work on releasing long-held emotions. During yoga nidra you are able to experience an emotion and come “face to face” with what you want to overcome without feeling the emotion so completely that you become overwhelmed. Over time you continue to experience the emotion and associated feelings, moving deeper into the practice.

Notes and Thoughts