

Meditation

The blog on our website (same title) has more information, especially in links-go to carnamentalwellness.org/blog

Meditation techniques, as well as how the individual interprets and applies them, vary from person to person. However, here we would like to share with you some specific types of meditations to make your meditation journey easier and more accessible.

Breathing-

In certain meditations, whether guided or individual, you may *focus on your breathing*. Breathe through your mouth, hear your breath, visualize the air going in and out of your body, feel your chest, stomach, or shoulders lifting up and down as you inhale and exhale. If any thoughts pop up, note what they are (it's helpful to understand what is bothering you and interrupting your focus most often) and then go back to focusing on your breathing. When back in real life, you can refer back to this method and take a few deep breaths whenever you have trouble focusing. The more you practice this meditation, the more helpful your real-life interventions will be.

Physical feelings-

The use of this meditation is similar to the one above, but with a different focus. This time, we will be *focusing on bodily feelings*. It is often helpful to close your eyes, and start from the feet up- are your feet in shoes? Socks? Are they touching carpet, tile, or wood? How do your legs feel- are they hanging in the air, for example, if you're sitting on a chair? Or are they touching the floor, if you're sitting? Keep asking yourself questions like this and being consciously aware of your body and how it is feeling, and keep moving up your body until you reach your head. Once back in the real world, when feeling the need to focus, close your eyes and notice a few things you are feeling, in order to give yourself a small break time to relax and focus on what is concrete and real.

Awareness of thoughts-

Unlike those above, this kind of meditation *focuses on your intrusive thoughts* instead of pushing them away and replacing them with another point of focus. Although this kind of meditation may take some getting used to, the central idea is letting thoughts flow through your mind openly and without judgment. This can be very helpful for mindfulness, or being aware of your thoughts and understanding yourself better, which is why it's sometimes called mindfulness meditation. Understanding where your natural course of thought takes you can aid you in understanding what takes up the majority of your mental space and mental or emotional energy, which can then allow you to trace it back to its root and learn how to better take care of yourself. For example, if your thoughts immediately wander to your to-do list, or stressful scenarios (whether past or made-up), then some people might conclude that stress is a mental burden for them, and furthermore that that stress is coming from their family or school's high expectations when it comes to hard work and success.

Affirmative phrases-

This kind of meditation, which entails *saying positive things about yourself out loud to manifest them into reality OR recognize their truth*, can be very helpful if you tend to struggle with low self-esteem, or even if you just need a confidence boost. It can be done sitting down or

standing, and with eyes closed or open, possibly in front of a mirror (check out our "Confidence" blog for information on power poses). The main idea is to compliment yourself- not just your physical appearance, but who you are, and who you aim to be. The key to success is to **make yourself believe it**. The more you say something, especially out loud, the more you are likely to genuinely believe it- so MAKE yourself understand how amazing you are!! Here are a few ideas, but we challenge you to come up with your own as well- every person is a unique individual with different amazing qualities that makes them amazing people. Find yours!

I am amazing. I am smart. I am kind. I am beautiful- both inside and out. My face looks amazing. My body looks amazing. My body is healthy. My true value doesn't just lie in my physical appearance, my true value is my personality.

Find some more specific and thought-out affirmations in our online blog.

Mantras-

A mantra is essentially a chant, *repeating something over and over again, but with meaning*.

There is a Sanskrit (Indian) mantra meditation practice where the chant is Sa Ta Na Ma:

SA is birth, the beginning, infinity, the totality of everything that ever was, is, or will be.

TA is life, existence, and creativity which manifests from infinity.

NA is death, change, and the transformation of consciousness.

MA is rebirth, regeneration, and resurrection which allows us to consciously experience the joy of the infinite.

To practice this kind of meditation, repeat these four sounds out loud (1min), whispering (1 min), silently (2mins), whispering (1min), and silently (1min) (yes, in that order, and you can multiply the times to make it as long/short as you need). When chanting, do it with intention. Truly try to understand the meaning of each syllable, and visualize that meaning in your own life each time you say it. Make sure that you are breathing deep breaths- try to find a rhythm, whatever it is, that works for you. Lastly, you can also add a physical aspect by touching your fingers for each syllable as shown in the picture below (touch thumb to index for SA, middle finger for TA, ring finger for NA, and pinkie for MA).

All of these kinds of meditations are meant to provide both a relaxed and safe space when you are doing the meditation itself, but they are also meant to carry into your real life when you are working or feeling stressed or pressured for any reason. They can also be extremely helpful tactics to fend off anxiety attacks or, in the long run, memory loss and physical consequences of stress. These can all be done at any time, for however much time you need. For example, right before a test, or if you feel yourself getting angry, take three deep breaths; or if something happened that made you very self-conscious, repeat a few affirmations. It's a great way to keep your emotions in check, realize that you do have control over them, and exercise that control.

There are also certain apps that have *guided meditations* for different purposes. Here are a few app options- [Calm](#), [Insight Timer](#), [Headspace](#), [Simple Habit](#), [10 Percent Happier](#).

If you choose to not use an app, listening to *lofi music*, *nature soundscapes*, or *classical music* during your meditations can be helpful in order to focus and have an external stimulus that keeps you in check, although this entirely depends on the person.