

## MEDITATION PRACTICE

Meditation allows us to concentrate in a relaxed way so that the mind begins to flow effortlessly toward its object. The practice helps us develop our inner witness, or witness-observer, a part of us able to remain relatively objective. This is called “the objective witness” stance. As the mind becomes quiet, it is possible to ascertain its functions and content with increasingly greater clarity.

### Five Steps in Yoga Meditation

1. *Physical Stillness*: Choose a meditation posture in which the head, neck and trunk can be aligned. Choose one that is comfortable and that you could remain in for a period of time. Once settled in, allow a state of physical stillness to arise spontaneously from your sense of comfort and ease.
2. *Rhythmic Diaphragmatic Breathing*: Bring your attention to the feeling of breathing. Feel the flow of breath through the nostrils; cooler on the inhale, warmer on the exhale. Feel the diaphragm muscle descend and flatten like a large platter on the inhale, and dome back up under the bottom of the ribcage on the exhale. Allow the breath to be even, smooth and steady, without pause.
3. *Systematic Relaxation*: While maintaining physical stillness and rhythmic diaphragmatic breathing, systematically relax each area of the body from head to toe. Relax what you notice is unnecessarily active while remaining seated.
4. *Breath Awareness*: Allow the mind to rest on the steady movement of the breath. This begins the formal practice. If the mind strays from this task, simply bring it back without comment or further disruption. You may also practice Alternate Nostril Breathing here.
5. *Mantra Repetition*: A mantra is a sound or series of sounds used as the object of focus. Use gentle effort to keep your mind focused on mentally repeating the sound. As above, as the mind wanders, gently bring it back to this task. Over time the sound repetition will become more automatic and spontaneous.

### Soham Mantra

A good mantra that supports optimal breathing and can be done by everyone, is soham. The sound “so” is recited on inhalation. “Ham” on exhalation. The sounds are not spoken out loud, but repeated mentally. Soham mimics to some degree the natural sound of breathing, and is translated as, “I am That” with “That” being one’s Divine nature, or “I am who I am.”

Meditation allows us to learn to dis-identify with mental processes and to rest in our own true nature, which is Divine. As the witness stance develops, meditation also allows us better stability for self-study of habit patterns and unconscious impediments to wellness and growth.

### Om

Repeating the universal mantra, “Om” is another mantra practice useful to everyone.

### A Few Resources for sharing with students & clients:

[Liveanddare.com/types-of-meditation](http://Liveanddare.com/types-of-meditation)

[Swamij.com/yoga-meditation.htm](http://Swamij.com/yoga-meditation.htm)

Youtube: *Meditation 101: A Beginner’s Guide* and *Why Mindfulness Is a Superpower*, both by Dan Harris