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Meditation: They Call It Practice for a Reason



Yoga, mindfulness, and meditation used to be left to people on the fringe best described as “crunchy” or “new age.” These practices have since jumped into the mainstream as studios like Core Power, apps like HeadSpace and Calm, and trendy stores like Lululemon multiplied like bunnies. Meditation, in particular, has been introduced in a variety of settings, from nursery schools to board meetings. Increased access to meditation resources and tools has drawn interest

from people from all walks of life. Newcomers often wonder if they are “doing it right” if their thoughts start to wander during their practice. Instead of finding an elevated sense of peace, they find themselves making mental grocery lists or replaying work conversations in their heads. Don’t beat yourself up – this mental maze is not cause for concern. During meditation, your mind naturally wanders. A few simple strategies can help you embrace the opportunity to guide yourself back to the here and now.

The atmosphere is perfect – you found a few quiet minutes away from your family or needy dog. You are seated in a comfy position on the floor and your eyes are closed. You take a few calming breaths. “Is it happening yet?” you think. “Darn, I have an email in my drafts I meant to send this morning.” Suddenly, your mind is flooded with to-dos. It spins into a replay of a conversation that happened earlier the day and what you wish you would have said. The hustle bustle in your brain can be difficult to mute. Don’t give up now...this is the start of your meditation practice. Tara Brach PhD, a respected meditation teacher, offers this perspective, “Meditation is a training of our attention...it helps us arrive in the present moment in a balanced and clear way.”



Next time that happens, try this sequence instead.

1. Acknowledge the thought without judgement. Your brain will have an easier time refocusing if you gently move on without giving it a label (good, bad, etc.).
2. Applaud yourself for noticing you left the present moment and kindly walk yourself back. This pattern is at the heart of meditation and activates the muscles needed to strengthen your meditation skills.
3. Recenter yourself – a good tip is to pay attention to your body. What do you hear? How does your seat feel below you? Can you identify any scents? Use your senses to connect to the present.
4. Repeat step 1 when a new thought arises.

In theory, meditation sounds simple. In practice, it requires dedication and patience. If the type of meditation you try doesn't feel right, try another! There are many styles to consider. Some people prefer guided meditation as hearing someone's voice can help them stay in the moment. Walking meditation is an option for those who have trouble sitting still and closing their eyes for a length of time. Be gentle with yourself as you start your practice – like any other skill, it takes time to learn something new. A few simple strategies can help you return to the present with patience.

Looking for a basic guide to get started? Try the *New York Times* [guide](#).

References:

Gelles, D. (n.d.) *How to Meditate*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/how-to-meditate>

LaVito, A. (November 8, 2018). *More Americans are Meditating Than Ever Before, as Mindfulness goes Mainstream*. CNBC Health and Science. <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/11/07/meditation-use-rises-as-apps-such-as-headspace-calm-become-popular.html>

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Healthy Egg Muffin Cups

Makes 12 servings

Start your day right with Healthy Egg Muffin Cups. Only 50 calories per muffin, LOADED with vegetables, and easy to prep in advance! Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for about 4 days or frozen to heat up later. To reheat, pop them in the microwave until warm.

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup red pepper
1 cup green pepper
1 cup yellow onion
2 cups baby spinach - roughly chopped
1 cup mushrooms
2 cloves garlic minced
salt to taste
4 whole eggs
4 egg whites
Hot sauce optional for drizzling on top



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 50
Fat: 2g
Carbohydrates: 3g
Protein: 4g
Sodium: 47mg
Fiber: 1g
Cholesterol: 62mg

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Grease a standard nonstick 12-slot muffin pan with cooking spray and set aside.
3. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat.
4. Once hot, add in oil, red pepper, green pepper, and onion.
5. Sauté 5-7 minutes, or until peppers are tender.
6. Add in spinach and mushrooms and cook for an additional 2 minutes. In the last 30 seconds, add in minced garlic.
7. Season with salt and remove from heat.
8. Crack eggs and egg whites into a large 4 cup measuring cup and whisk together.
9. Stir in cooked veggies.
10. Pour the egg/veggie mixture evenly into the prepared muffin pan.
11. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until the tops are firm to the touch and eggs are cooked.
12. Cool slightly and serve immediately!