

Starting a Successful Meditation Practice in Today's **High Tech**, **Disconnected**, and "**Too Busy to Breathe**" World



Reid Peterson, M.A.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Part 1	
Your Obstacles.....	4
"Don't Know How".....	5
"Is This Right?".....	6
"Man, This is Hard".....	7
"Can You Loan Me Time to Meditate?".....	9
Part 2	
Preparing For Meditation.....	11
The Environment.....	12
Your Body.....	14
Part 3	
Getting Started; Successfully Meditating in Ten Days.....	16
Day 1.....	18
Day 2.....	19
Day 3.....	20
Day 4.....	21
Day 5.....	22
Day 6.....	23
Day 7.....	24
Day 8.....	25
Day 9.....	27
Day 10.....	29
Afterword.....	31

Introduction

Having started a meditation practice at a very young age, I have experienced quite a bit of ups and downs with it. There have been times where it has been so wonderful, so deep, introspective, and beautiful. But there have been times where I struggled so, making up very brilliant excuses to not even make the time for meditation.

What I've realized is that I'm normal. I'm a human being trying to engage in a spiritual experience. Sometimes I will fully be "there." Other times I will not. My meditation practice is a reflection of the emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual (otherwise known as the Holistic me) things happening during different phases of my life.

What's important to understand is that you are human too. At times you will thrive in your meditation practice, and other times you will struggle. The important thing is to recognize when this happens. Then, you can be kind, gentle, and easy with yourself.

Most beginners find meditation to be very intimidating. I don't blame them. The idea of sitting in a meditation posture looks uncomfortable and too often, meditation teachers have the ego to intimidate beginning students. There seems to be a consistent projection that meditation has to be so serious.

If that has been your experience, this ebook will provide comfort and resolution to beginning a successful meditation practice. It will cover three areas. Part one is a discussion about common obstacles to getting started. Part two gets you prepared to meditate. Part Three is a "recipe" for beginning students to follow.

As long as you make the commitment and really "do" what is written in this ebook, you will be happy with your results. I wish you well on the journey and look forward to hearing your success stories.

With gratitude,
Reid

Part One

Your Obstacles

“Don't Know How”

If I had a dollar for how many times I've heard the excuse of “I don't know how to meditate,” I would be a wealthy man! Of course you don't know how. You weren't taught to meditate in school. It was not something your family did for bonding during your childhood. Your friends didn't peer pressure you to meditate.

Meditation is an unknown. Any unknown has a level of fear associated with it. It's good that you don't know how. You don't have the bad habits that hinder your practice.

Okay, I'm kidding about the bad habits. I'm not sure if there are bad habits in meditation. The whole experience might be a bad habit because the mind will want to cling to distractions. So relax, stop judging yourself, and eliminate the excuse of not knowing how.

The question is... Do you WANT to meditate? If your answer is no, please email the ebook to someone you know who does. But my hope is that your answer is YES, and you're willing to appreciate your excuses without judgment, BUT commit to meditating anyway!

What creates a successful meditation practice is having the desire to want to do it. That is your motivation. When you want to, you care less about how to. Your focus is the desire and not the excuses.

So not knowing how to is only an excuse. Acknowledge it, thank it for serving you in some way, release it, and get ready to meditate!

“Is This Right?”

I have been involved in meditation both as a student and teacher for over 12 years. It still amazes me how many people will self-judge and think that because they have a weird experience, they're not meditating correctly. Too many people ask the question “Is this right?”

The most frequent area of this raising concern is when a student falls asleep. They share it with the instructor in a form of self judgment that they are not good at meditating because they can't stay awake.

Another area has to do with the thoughts themselves. Students will be hard on themselves and announce personal defeat because they could not “beat” their thoughts. They think that because their mind wandered so much, they did not successfully meditate.

And yet another common experience is when a student does not understand what happens to them in a meditation. They have some indefinable experience, cannot not reasonably explain it, and then convince themselves they did something wrong.

The good news is that all of these experiences (and even others) are right! In most cases, your experience will be in perfect alignment with where you're at (and I mean that psycho-spiritually). So if you fall asleep during a meditation, it's right because your body needed the rest. If you have some mystical experience during a meditation, you'll be able to gain a life insight sooner or later. Your specific experiences are all good and they're all right!

Can you be okay with whatever happens in your meditations? Can you release self judgments and embrace any experience for exactly what it is? If your answer is yes, then your meditations are perfect!

“Man, This is Hard”

I'm going to validate you right now and agree without a doubt. Yes, the thought of meditating is hard. But meditation is not.

What's hard are the expectations a person creates in their mind. The mind will try to conceptualize what meditation should be like, thus creating an expectation. But then, once you meditate, you don't meet your expectation, and most likely tell yourself you're not going to get anywhere, so you stop.

Yes, it's hard, but this is because your mind is not used to it. Your mind will do what it can to resist the experience. The resistance usually comes in the form of distractions. Distractions are either external things happening that your mind will latch onto for attention, or thoughts that happen internally, usually ones you cannot stop.

This is all okay. It's part of the learning and growing process. Do you remember when you learned to ride a bike? Maybe you were one of the lucky people who hopped on the seat and started peddling away. But most people who tried it, fell off, got back up, and tried again.

Meditation is similar but less painful. You will have setbacks, which are similar to the falls off a bicycle. Remember to get back up, try again, and get to a good place of inner peace.

You will need to be your own best friend in this process because, now that meditation is becoming more mainstream to American culture, it's also getting more competitive. You will see images of people meditating on the internet, television, and other medium. These images usually portray a person in a cross-legged sitting position, somewhere in a very tranquil area. It looks beautiful! It looks intriguing. But it is also intimidating. These images have a negative impact on the unconscious, creating beliefs that

meditation is difficult, and to meditate, takes a major change of lifestyle.

Of course we would want to be perched on a log, in the middle of a pond, where we can meditate and be in total bliss. The reality is that we probably don't even know where a place like this exists. Why don't we see more images of people in public parks meditating, or at a bus stop, or in a mall? These are places that we are more familiar with.

And what about the Gurus? Do they make it any easier? I really do think they try, but they're so far advanced that they may not be able to resonate with the more everyday challenges of beginning meditators in our culture. Gurus may have brilliant insight and wisdom, but how applicable are their answers to your challenges?

So yes, it is hard and it will take some discipline to develop a consistent practice. Know that you can achieve this, if you really want it. Part three of this ebook sets you up with the foundation for a successful practice. The only thing required of you is the commitment to make it happen. That's simple, right?

“Can You Loan Me the Time to Meditate?”

Time is one of the largest obstacles for a successful meditation practice. You are busy. And that's the truth.

Have you ever talked to someone about one of your intimate relationships, and the person you were talking to told you that in order to have time for the relationship, you needed to make time?

Meditation is similar. You have to make time for it. It won't magically appear to happen before you. It takes effort for you to schedule and follow through with.

A very positive thing about today's technology is that you can use it to create frequent schedule reminders for meditation. For example, you can email yourself reminders in advance to meditate. You can also create event reminders on your cell phone, schedule it for a future date, and then have multiple reminders for when its time for you to meditate.

Today's technology is created for your convenience. Use it to your advantage for meditation. Schedule future alerts and reminders for when it is time to meditate. Then you won't have to consciously think about when the next time for you to meditate should be.

Many students ask what time of day they should meditate. My answer is simple. Meditate at a time during the day when you feel tired. So if at 10 A.M. you are feeling some fatigue, don't pour yourself a cup of coffee. Meditate and notice how it will reenergize you.

I suggest you don't meditate before going to bed. It may sound like a good idea but you may take the risk of negatively affecting your

sleep. At bed time, rather, do something to relax. Listen to soothing music or practice some breathing techniques.

What about the duration of meditation? Can you meditate for a long period of time? Many teachers, Gurus, and masters of meditation spend up to 10 hours a day meditating. Is that the amount of time you want to commit? Of course not! What about an hour? Is that too long? Can you find an hour a day to meditate?

You don't have to meditate for as long as what the "masters" recommend. Remember; keep it simple, so you will actually do it. You can effectively meditate for 15 minutes a day and it will create successful benefits. Can you find 15 minutes a day to meditate? Even if 15 minutes is too much, you can have positive benefits for five minutes of meditation. The time really doesn't matter. What matters more is the experience.

Be creative in your daily life. Use the time you spend waiting for a train, bus, subway, phone call, email, or whatever to be a time you can meditate. Any waiting time can be meditating time. Think about how much time you spend a day waiting for something? Use that time to meditate.

Part three of this ebook is a ten day program for daily meditation. It will creatively suggest when to do it and for how long. Before you get to that section and start meditating, know right now that you can change and alter it to meet your needs. Let it be a resource, template, outline, or plan that you can use and change at any time.

Part Two

Preparing for Meditation

Your Environment

Meditation can happen anywhere, anytime. In order to be more successful at meditating, you will want your environment to support you. Believe it or not, your environment has a substantial influence on your meditation practice. If your space is comfortable and inviting, you will be motivated to meditate. If your space is messy, unorganized, and uncomfortable, you will come up with excuses not to.

I'm not going to preach Feng Shui or persuade you to go buy props for meditation. I'm going to make a few pointers, so that your environment is the space that is right for your meditation experience.

#1 Setting

Where you choose to meditate needs to resonate with your values. Most people will want to meditate outside. If that is your choice, great! Just be aware of the temperature. Meditation is a relaxing experience. When you relax, your body temperature decreases.

Meditating in nature is the ideal, but also be conscious that random and spontaneous things happen in nature. You may encounter an animal in the wild, or you may hear a plane fly above you. You may experience some surprises when you meditate in nature.

If you meditate inside, be conscious of the technology. House phones, cell phones, computers, electronic clocks, radios etc. all make sounds. Your mind may cling to these sounds for distractions. Do your best to eliminate these sounds from negatively affecting your practice.

Whether you meditate indoors or outdoors, you will want to check the lighting of your environment. Dim lighting is good because it invites you to rest. Too dim will be dark and you might fall asleep.

If you meditate indoors, but want more of an outdoor feel to the experience, play some music of nature sounds to support your meditation. You can also get some plants and place them near you in the room.

I'm sure by now that you have an idea of the physical environment you want to meditate in. Keep it simple by reducing the potential for distractions. Don't go out and spend too much money for props. You don't need them. Do the small things to make your environment more comfortable and you will have a great space for a successful meditation practice.

Your Body

You can meditate lying down, but I'm going to cover the basics for a sitting meditation. Sitting meditation is more effective because you are less likely to fall asleep. Falling asleep is okay because your body needs the rest, but sleeping is not meditating.

Here's how to prepare your body of a sitting meditation.

#1 Straight spine

Keep your posture comfortable, but your spine straight and stable. This is a fine art. There's no need to stiffen your spine to be in perfect alignment, but you don't want to slouch either.

You can sit in a chair to support your back or you can sit on the floor, on a pillow. Just keep your spine comfortably straight.

#2 Eyes closed

The eyes have been known to be the gateway to the mind. Eyes open are an invitation for the thoughts to flow because your mind will perceive the external stimuli. Since you want the thoughts to come to stillness, keep your eyes closed in your meditation. It simplifies your meditations and supports the experience to be more successful.

#3 Your hands

Rest them on your thighs. If it's comfortable, place them palms up. Palms down placements may have an effect on the hand unconsciously grasping the thigh. If that happens, you are exerting physical energy, which is unnecessary.

Some people clasp their hands in their lap. If that feels comfortable try it out. It is presumed that the energy will circulate with clasped hands.

Any muscle tension is a signal to make an adjustment with your body. The more comfortable you are, the more relaxed you will be.

Try to keep your posture pure and firm, but keep your body soft and relaxed.

Part Three

Getting Started

Successfully Meditating in 10 Days!

By now, you have the tools and resources to get your practice started. The only thing you will need from here is your commitment and devotion. That may sound like a lot, but relax. The program for getting started is convenient, fair, attainable, and simple. Make your commitment to it and you will succeed!

Remember to change or alter the program to meet your specific needs. Be aware of trying to do too much in the beginning. That's a setup for burn out or failure. (Believe me, I write that from experience)

Keep it simple and you'll succeed! Ready to start? Great!

Be the witness

Day One

Today, you will need a **timer** and a **candle**. You'll also need to be in the environment that you set up to support your success.

Here's what you'll do.

Sit comfortably on the floor. Remember the mechanics mentioned in part two.

Set your timer for **five minutes**. Yes, **ONLY** five.

Light your candle and **gaze at the flame**. For the next five minutes, **focus, concentrate**, or do whatever you can to **keep your attention on the flame**.

That's it. Remember, keep it simple. Enjoy the experience.

Day Two

Day one was pretty easy, right? Today your practice will be the same as yesterday, but **your time will increase by another minute.**

If you felt like yesterday's meditation was too simple, increase your time by two minutes, or more.

Know your needs and make the adjustments.

Now that you're in your space, sit comfortably on the floor, set your timer for six minutes (or your own time), light the candle, and concentrate on the flame.

Today, as you maintain your focus, try to **relax your eyes more.** Keep them soft.

Keeping it simple is what creates the success.

Day Three

You're doing great! Are you noticing how you're looking forward to these meditations? You're on the track to success!

Today is the final day of meditation with the candle. If you like this meditation (which is called concentrative), come back to it in the future or continue on (but add more time to each meditation).

For today, sit comfortably on the floor, set your timer for **seven** minutes (or the amount of time that feels right for you), light the candle, and concentrate on the flame.

Your additional focus for today is to concentrate so intently, that you almost feel like you're merging with the candle.

If this doesn't make sense, forget about it. Keep your eyes soft and your attention on the flame.

Day Four

Today, you're making a substantial leap in developing a successful meditation practice. You're going to transition from your eyes open to closing them.

I commend you for committing thus far. Isn't it fun? As you know, simplicity is the secret to success.

Today, you will set your timer for **seven minutes** (same as yesterday if you're following the recommended plan), sit comfortably, close your eyes, and **focus on your breath**.

If your mind wanders and the thoughts won't stop, practice a "**mind mantra**" and say to each thought "**Thank you, good bye. I'll revisit you later.**"

Set your timer, close your eyes and focus on your breath. Remember your mind mantra for the wandering thoughts and remember...

Enjoy the experience.

Day Five

If you are following the recommended plan, you are close to DOUBLING the amount of time you meditate! Keep it up. You're doing so well!

Was the eyes closed meditation a little more difficult? It tends to be. But it gets easier. The mind mantras help when the thoughts wander.

Today, set your timer for **eight minutes**. You will **close your eyes and focus on your breath**.

If your thoughts wander, you can keep the mind mantra of "thank you, goodbye." If that did not work for you, try "**Nothing, nothing, nothing.**"

Keep it simple. Stay focused on your breath. Detach from your thoughts.

Most importantly, enjoy the experience.

Day Six

Congratulate yourself for having meditated for five days in a row. Have you ever done that before?

Keeping it simple is the secret ingredient to succeeding.

Today, your timer will be set for **nine minutes**. If you feel like you can meditate for more time, set the timer to what feels right for you.

Keep your focus inward- on your breath, relax and detach from the wandering thoughts.

Being an observer of your breath is really the only thing to do.

You're keeping it simple and that's what is creating your success.

Today, for nine minutes, be an observer of your breath.

Day Seven

You are ready to go a little bit deeper. Your devotion to your practice is really paying off. Are you meditating for longer than what is recommended? You must be enjoying it! That's wonderful!

Today, the **focus** will remain **on your breath**. You will relax so much that your breath will be a little less. What is meant by this is, it will shorten, but you will feel like there is still enough air for your lungs to normally function.

The key to experiencing this is how relaxed you feel. Relax deeper and deeper and you will notice your breath make some shifts.

Set your timer for **11 minutes today**. Every part of you is aware of your breath. You're relaxed as deeply as you can be and subtle shifts in your breath bring you further into your meditation.

Day Eight

Your courage is admired for developing a meditation practice. It's not easy and you are creating one of the healthiest habits for your mental and emotional health. Keep it up!

Today, you will be deepening your **insight meditation practice**. The ability to detach from the thoughts and be an observer of your breath is a style of insight meditation. If you continue your commitment and devotion to this practice, you will come to a place of being "thoughtless" in your meditation.

Sound good? Stay committed and devoted. **You will achieve inner peace.**

Set your timer for **13 minutes today**. If you desire more time, set it for longer. If yesterday's meditation was difficult, set your timer for either the same amount of time, or less. But rest assured, **today will be a simpler experience.**

Guess what you will focus on today? You are right! **The breath is the "thing" to focus on every day.** It is your key to successful meditation. Staying focused on the breath leads to **minimization of the thoughts.** One day soon, you will have no thoughts during your meditation.

Remember to keep it simple. **You are experiencing inner peace.** Stay focused on your breath and meditate for the amount of time you set your timer to.

Day Nine

Today, your meditation is similar to the previous day. By now you are starting to be more comfortable with detaching from wandering thoughts. You are also **feeling a deeper sense of yourself**, which feels like **inner peace**.

These are good reasons to continue. Are you also noticing that you are **more alert, able to concentrate longer, and not feeling as tired in your normal, regular day**? These are more benefits from practicing meditation.

There is one more "task" to today's meditation. In addition to focusing on your breath and detaching from wandering thoughts, you are to notice the inner feelings and sensations of your body.

This is simpler than it sounds. You do this by becoming the ultimate witness to your living experience. You are the watcher, the observer, and your "job" is to simply notice what happens inside of you.

If you have an itch, notice it. If it continues and creates too much of a distraction, scratch the darn thing.

Can you detach from any of the body's sensational desires in meditation? The shifting, sighing, and other bodily functions are what I'm referring to. Just **observe** what's there. Notice what is happening, but do nothing.

Set your timer for **sixteen minutes** today. **Relax to your fullest** and be the observer of what happens in your mind and body.

Remember to keep it simple and enjoy the experience!

Day Ten

Let's take a moment to praise you!

- 1) You have meditated for **nine days** in a row!
- 2) You have **tripled** the amount of time spent meditating since day one.
- 3) You are more **focused, attentive, and present.**
- 4) Your **commitment and devotion** is very powerful!
- 5) **You are awesome!**

By now, you're experiencing some insights to how meditation serves you. You're getting better understandings of your inner world, and its helping you feel more at peace.

This is the last day of this meditation program. After today, it will be up to you how long you meditate for and what style of meditation you choose to practice. Please understand that the amount of time you spend meditating is less important than the fact that you are "doing" it. If your practice is ten minutes a day, you are more

likely to feel success than meditating for two hours, once a week.

Today's meditation is very similar to yesterday and the day before. **You are on the path to experiencing the depths of your inner self.** This type of meditation will get you there.

If you are setting your timer for the recommended amount of time suggested, put **twenty minutes** on the clock. Feel free to set your timer for more or less time.

Remember to **focus on your breath, detach from your thoughts, and notice your bodily sensations.**

By sticking to fulfilling these three requirements, you will **feel the success of your meditation practice.**

Remember to keep it simple and enjoy the experience!

Afterword

A brilliant student once asked "Why do I meditate?" She provided her own answer. It stated:

To develop the kind of wisdom that comes intuitively and spontaneously from silent awareness.

Her answer could not have need any more profound!

Stay committed and devoted to your practice. You don't need to meditate for long periods of time. Less is more. Each moment you engage in meditation, you will have a deeper and more profound experience.

This meditation program was designed for you to create individual success. There may come a time when you might feel the need for support, or you'll want to experience meditation with a group. If that happens, invite some friends to meditate with you. If they don't know how, forward them this ebook to get them started. Or you can try teaching them. You know quite well what is needed to feel the success of meditation.

Good luck, be well, and remember...

Keep it simple!

Reid Peterson, M.A.