

Meditation reduces stress, calms the mind and harmonizes the endocrine system. Use one of the following by itself and/or at the beginning and end of your yoga practice:

*This simple seated meditation focuses on the breath to calm the mind, body and emotions.*

Sit in a comfortable position, either cross-legged on the floor or in a chair. Sit up tall with the spine straight, the shoulders relaxed and the chest open. Rest the hands on the knees with the palms facing up. Lightly touch the index finger to the thumb. Relax the face, jaw, and belly. Let the tongue rest on the roof of the mouth, just behind the front teeth. Allow the eyes to lightly close.

Breathe slowly, smoothly and deeply in and out through the nose. Let the inhale start in the belly and then rise gently up into the chest. As the breath slows and deepens, let go of any thoughts or distractions and allow the mind to focus on the breath. Feel the breath as it moves in and out of the body, feeling it move through the nose, throat, windpipe and lungs. Feel the body as it rises and falls with each breath. Bring as much of your awareness and attention to your body and breath as possible with each moment. As the thoughts return to the mind, let them go, and return the focus back to the body and breath.

Practice this meditation for 10-20 minutes. To end, gently let the eyes blink open, inhale the palms together in front of the heart, exhale and gently bow. Take a moment or two before moving on with the rest of your day.