

# 6 TIPS TO HELP YOU START MEDITATING

## Breath

Don't try to "calm your mind." Instead, appreciate the **sensations** of your breath. When your mind starts wandering away into thoughts, just recognize that you're thinking. Then return to appreciating the sensations of your breath.

## Arms/hands

**Relax** your shoulders and arms, letting your hands rest on your thighs. Alternately, place one hand on another in your lap.

## Legs/feet

If you're sitting in a chair, keep your **feet flat** on the floor and your spine straight. If you're sitting cross-legged on a cushion, the important thing is to have your knees below your hips. If you need a higher seat, make one.

## Emotions

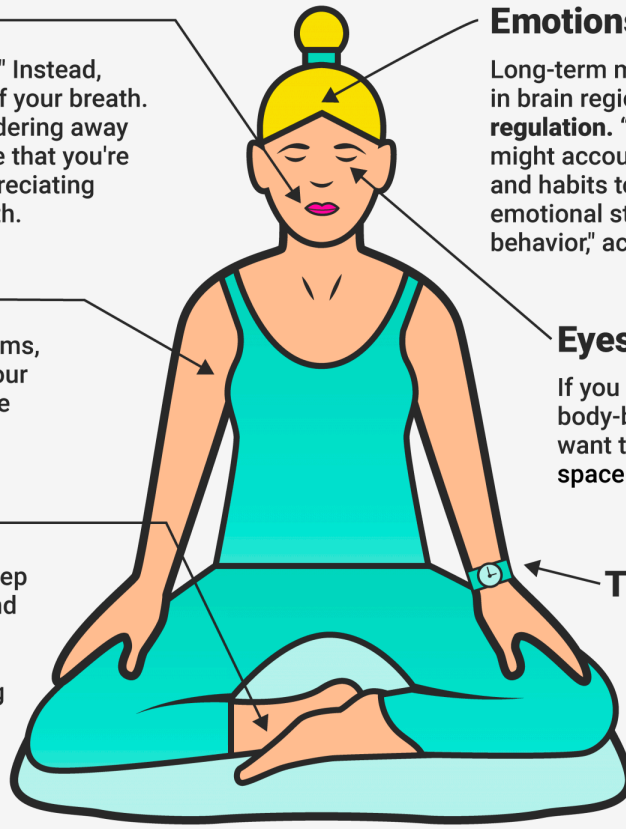
Long-term meditators show increased size in brain regions associated with **emotional regulation**. "Larger volumes in these regions might account for meditators' singular abilities and habits to cultivate positive emotions, retain emotional stability, and engage in mindful behavior," according to a UCLA study.

## Eyes

If you want the **experience** to be more body-based, close your eyes. If you want to feel more anchored in the space you're in, keep them open.

## Time

Meditation isn't about length; it's about frequency. In the same way you don't get strong by lifting one giant weight one time, you should try and sit regularly. **5 to 10 minutes** a day is a great start.



SOURCE: "Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living" by Pema Chodron; "The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation" by Thich Nhat Hanh; "10% Happier: How I Tamed the Voice in My Head, Reduced Stress Without Losing My Edge, and Found Self-Help That Actually Works—A True Story" by Dan Harris

1. Mindful Breathing
2. Mindful Observation
3. Mindful Awareness
4. Mindful Listening
5. Mindful Immersion
6. Mindful Appreciation

## Why Mindfulness Exercises?

The cultivation of moment-by-moment awareness of our surrounding environment is a practice that helps us better cope with the difficult thoughts and feelings that cause us stress and anxiety in everyday life.

With regular practice of mindfulness exercises, rather than being led on auto-pilot by emotions influenced by negative past experiences and fears of future occurrences, we harness the ability to root the mind in the present moment and deal with life's challenges in a clear-minded, calm, assertive way.

In turn, we develop a fully conscious mind-set that frees us from the imprisonment of unhelpful, self-limiting thought patterns, and enables us to be fully present to focus on positive emotions that increase compassion and understanding in ourselves and others.