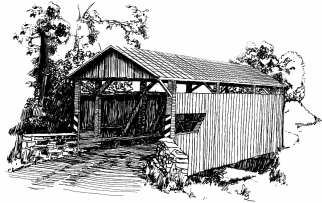


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## Relaxation Technique

Adapted from Peter Dennis and onrichmondhill.com

Meditating is easy and natural. The hard part is to find the time to do it on a regular basis. It is much like physical fitness in that regular meditation becomes easier and the benefits begin to flow after about three or four weeks of regular practice.

So, how does one meditate? There are lots of ways but here are a few simple steps that I have found to be effective with clients over the years:

- Find a quiet place where you will not be disturbed for the next 20 -30 minutes. Unplug the phones and ask others to be quiet and see that you are not interrupted.
- Sit in a comfortable chair, with your spine straight, feet on the floor and no arms or legs crossed. If you want to sit cross-legged on the floor, that is fine. If you prefer to lie down, OK but you risk falling asleep.

- Focus your attention on your breath and keep your attention there for as long as you can. To help, don't say or whisper, but think the word "in" with each inhalation and the word "out" with each exhalation. You might take note of the air as it moves in and out of your nostrils.
- Chances are your mind will begin to drift away from your breath and on to the chatter and worry of everyday life. Don't fret. Don't beat yourself up. Just gently come back to your breath. With practice, you will get better at this, but likely never perfect – and you don't have to be, you just need to get it mostly right.
- After about ten minutes or so, if you have maintained your focus on your breathing for most of that time, you will be meditating. It's that simple.

Most authorities recommend a minimum of once a day for approximately 20 minutes per session. Once you get into it, you will love the feeling of meditation and will want to stay longer. This is fine.