

# MEDITATION

*(but not as you know it)*

Discover new and unexpected ways to evoke inner calm and take a leap into happiness

If you're looking for some peace and wellbeing as Christmas nears, chances are you'll be contemplating a spot of meditation. With scientific evidence proving that anxiety levels drop after just one session of zen time, there's plenty of benefits to enjoy on a physical and mental level – from lower blood pressure to increased energy levels, improved immunity and greater self-awareness.

However, for many of us, 'conventional' meditation, which involves sitting and focusing in silence for long periods, either in a group or alone with the help of an app, just don't cut it. Incessant chatter in our head distracts us, we start to get twitchy, itchy and fidgety, and before we know it we've given up.

If this rings true with you, you're in luck as a number of new styles are emerging that are designed to promote wellness and peace of mind in a different way.

'There really is a flavour of meditation for everybody's taste,' says meditation teacher and life coach Gail Love Schock (gailschock.love).

When it comes to the tranquillity-inducing practice, we are all unique and one size simply doesn't fit all. 'The key is to connect to something you look forward to returning to; something you can develop a devotion to and truly enjoy,' says Gail. Find the perfect mind quieting method for you with our pick of new and off-beat practices that break the mould.

*'The key is to connect to something you can truly enjoy'*

## CHOOSE YOUR IDEAL STYLE

Escape on a mission to be more mindful with these meditation methods with a twist...

Try it now!

### DYNAMIC MEDITATION

**BEST FOR:** Releasing pent up emotions.

**WHAT IS IT?** You might think sitting calmly is one of the most important aspects of meditation, but Dynamic Meditation challenges everything you thought you knew about the centuries-old practice. You scream, shout and jump up and down to pumping music, all while blindfolded. 'Dynamic Meditation – or shaking – was invented in the 1970s by Indian yogi and guru Osho,' says Gail.

The aim is to channel your emotions through bodily expression. A one-hour session is usually comprised of four sections. The first quarter focuses on allowing your body to move freely while breathing fast through your nose as energy builds inside you. The second and third segments involve as much moving, shaking and dancing as possible. Switching between rolling on the floor and standing, you let go and allow yourself to be ruled by your body's natural impulses.

In a bid to unleash any stored negative emotions, you're encouraged to scream and shout the mantra 'Hoo', allowing suppressed emotions from your subconscious to be released.

The final section is standing or sitting still, feeling the free flow of energy releasing around you, before coming to a lying down position and experiencing gentle tranquillity as you passively observe thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations.

**THE BENEFITS:** It may seem odd to be moving around and making so much noise during a meditation session, but there really is a method behind the madness. 'Creating lots of heat and moving stagnant energy, anger and frustration out of the body makes way for increased joy, bliss and peace,' says Gail. 'It's perfect for people who find it hard to meditate sitting quiet and still.'

### GONG BATH MEDITATION

**BEST FOR:** Boosting energy levels.

**WHAT IS IT?** This healing therapy harnesses the power of vibrational sounds to lull you into a relaxed state. Gongs, one of the most ancient instruments in the world, are the main feature. The intense sounds they make ignite the delta and theta brain waves – the theta state is one of very deep relaxation, which governs the part of our mind that lies between the conscious and unconscious; while delta is one of low frequency, which triggers your body's healing mechanisms.

The session starts with deep breathing exercises, then you're cocooned in a blanket while you listen to the gongs being gently struck.

'The gong master will incorporate many gongs, each with a different sound frequency to help soothe and relax the body,' says Gail.

**THE BENEFITS:** If meditating in silence isn't for you, this musical meditation could be an ideal route to improved relaxation. After just one session you can expect to feel refreshed and well-rested, and long term positive effects include better sleep and lower stress levels.

### 7-11 MEDITATION

**BEST FOR:** Calming a busy mind on the go.

**WHAT IS IT?** If the fast pace of the festive season is getting to you, finding a place of calm in the mind could instantly lift any stress from your shoulders. 7-11 meditation is a relaxation technique you can do any time, anywhere. It takes only a few minutes, but the results are instantaneous. 'You breathe in through your nose for a count of 7 and exhale through your nose for a count of 11. Counting helps you empty your mind when it spins off into anxious or stressful thoughts. It's a very helpful skill to have when it comes to reducing anxiety,' says Gail.

**THE BENEFITS:** When you are stressed you tend to shallow breathe, which isn't conducive to relaxation. However, when you practice 7-11 breathing your heart rate slows, adrenalin drops and you feel calmer, more present and better able to manage what's in front of you.

### BEDITATION

**BEST FOR:** Improving sleep.

**WHAT IS IT?** If meditating cross-legged doesn't do it for you, how about finding inner calm while lying down? Beditation is, as it sounds, meditation in bed. The theory is that your body connects lying down with relaxation. This makes it easier to loosen up and practice mindfulness, clearing your mind of thoughts and connecting with your breath as you drift off. It can also help resolve sleep issues as it stills the mind.

'Before sleep, close your eyes. Placing your hands on your abdomen, deepen your breath and start to slow it down. Focus on the inhale and exhale, sending your belly skyward and your lower back into the bed. Relax, and do this for a few minutes until you drop off,' advises Gail.

You can also practise beditation before you rise. 'On waking, take 10 minutes to relax, set intentions, deepen your breath and appreciate yourself and those around you. Keep your thoughts full of kindness, patience and love.'

**THE BENEFITS:** As well as allowing you to feel calmer, clearer and more compassionate, getting deep, restful shut eye slashes the risk of chronic diseases, like cardiovascular problems and diabetes type 2, improves immunity and helps with weight management. ●