

Meditation Basics

Many people find that meditation greatly decreases the stress in their lives. It takes about 15 minutes once or twice a day. Try to meditate at the same times each day.

1 Sit in a quiet place, free from distractions. Unplug the phone and close the door. Tell everyone you are going to be busy for 15 minutes.

2 Loosen tight clothing, remove your shoes, and sit in a position that is comfortable.

3 Inhale through your nose slowly and deeply. Let your belly expand. Draw in as much air as you can. Then, hold your breath for a few seconds—four or five is fine. Begin to exhale. Shape your lips as if you were going to whistle, and

slowly breathe out between your lips. When you feel your lungs empty, sit quietly for a moment and then repeat the inhale/exhale cycle two or three times.

4 Pick a word or phrase that makes you feel calm. Many people find that words that end in an **m** or **n** sound are most helpful—words like “calm”, “home”, “noon”, or “one”.

5 Close your eyes and repeat the word or phrase over and over either in your mind or out loud. Concentrate on the way the word sounds inside your head. If you have trouble relaxing or concentrating on the word, stop, do a cycle of deep breathing, and try again.

End the exercise by gently stretching and exhaling.

—from **Taming Stress in Multiple Sclerosis**, by Frederick Foley, PhD, with Jane Sarnoff. Call your local chapter for a copy.