

Simple Meditation

Target:

Activity is appropriate and can be adapted for all levels K-12.

Purpose:

Introduce students to meditation as an effective, widely practiced activity that can reduce stress.

Glossary:

Meditate – to think calm thoughts in order to relax or have a spiritual activity.

Meditation – the word was adopted in late nineteenth century to refer to various spiritual practices from Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Eastern religions (*may show students Asian continent on a map or globe to identify where Eastern religions/practices originated*) and is usually defined as one of the following:

- A state that is experienced when the mind is free of all thoughts; when the mind is quiet
- Focusing the mind on a single object (such as one's breath or a mantra/chant)
- An "opening up" to the divine or to a "higher power"
- Focused thought on a topic (such as thinking about kindness)

Materials:

Seated exercise in a chair or on the floor.

Content:

Introduce students to the activity by talking about the widespread practice of meditation throughout the world. Check in with students by show of hands how many have done meditation before (e.g. in martial arts practice, at a temple, in a church). Explain to students that through this activity they will calm their body, mind and spirit. OPTIONAL: Have students take their heart rate before the activity begins and then after the meditation exercise.

Instructions:

Warm up (Optional: take heart rate and note it)

1. Begin by sitting comfortably, balanced, and relaxed (if seated in a chair, feet on the ground). Breathe easy and from the abdomen/"belly breathing" (not chest breathing).
2. Practice a few deep breaths with the group.
3. Rotate the head in easy, slow circles; change direction and rotate in slow, easy circles.
4. Look up; tilt your head way back. Look down; put your chin on your chest.
5. Drop your arms and hands to the side and shake them gently and easily.
6. Raise your feet off the floor and gently and easily shake the knees.
7. Straighten your spine while meditating.

Practice (repeat two times)

8. This is done SILENTLY.
9. When teacher says, “**Close your eyes**”, close your eyes. *[Once your eyes are closed, simply relax your mind and do not make an effort to think about anything; slowly your mind will clear and relax]*
When teacher says, “**Open your eyes**”, open your eyes.
10. Now, sit straight up, relaxed, and balanced.
11. “**Close your eyes**” (two minutes elapse)
12. “**Open your eyes**”
13. Check in with students: *how was that?* (Students may give thumbs up or thumbs down.) *Now everyone practice it again.*
14. Repeat exercise: “**Close your eyes**”...two minutes elapse...
“**Open your eyes**” (Optional: take heart rate and compare to heart rate before meditation)
15. Check in with students

Extension:

Teacher may follow-up by having students practice meditation at other times during class. Encourage students to practice meditation on their own to develop the habit of using meditation for stress reduction and overall health. Have students teach this method to a friend or family member.