

## **Meditation Training**

What is yoga meditation? Meditation combines two broad dimensions of yoga practice: relaxed concentration, and the awakening of an inner observer. Concentration is defined as the effort to rest the mind in one thing. It is carried out over a long time with dedication and devotion to its practice.

During periods of meditation an inner observer awakens, quieting the mind and creating distance from distracting sensations, thoughts, and emotions. Over time, the process of meditation deepens and provides a sense of inner peace.

### **Five Step Meditation Process:**

#### **1. *Stillness***

Find a comfortable and steady meditation posture in which the head, neck, and torso are in alignment. Allow a sense of physical stillness to settle in. Stretching/yoga and exercises that facilitate strength and flexibility in the pelvis, hip joints, and back will help increase the comfort and steadiness of your posture.

#### **2. *Relaxed Effortless Breathing***

Become aware of the flow of your breath. Relaxing your abdomen and the sides of your rib cage, focus on the sensations of inhaling and exhaling. Allow the breath to become deep and diaphragmatic. As the movement of the respiratory muscles are regulated, breathing becomes calm and natural.

#### **3. *Systematic Relaxation***

Formal relaxation practices create a deeper state of physical rest and are practiced in reclining postures. Less formal relaxation practices are used in sitting postures to create a sense of inner ease. While seated, scan the body from head to toe and back again, noticing any areas of tension and/or gripping. Consciously soften those areas of the body.

#### **4. *Breath Awareness in the Nostrils***

This is the beginning of formal concentration practice. The sensation of the breath in the nostrils is a calming focus that will make your meditation stable and grounded. Breath awareness at the nostrils connects us to the core energies of the body and mind which creates a deep sense of quietness and joy.

#### **5. *Rest Your Awareness in a Sound or Mantra***

A mantra is a word or sound that is used to focus the mind. Let your awareness rest in it. The effort to maintain focus is relaxed, yet the mind continues to be filled with the sound. As the mind rests more and more deeply in its focus, the presence of awareness itself is gradually revealed.