

Meditation on an Object

Good for spiritual awareness and heightened consciousness. You may meditate on the object of your choice. Some suggested objects are a candle, a spiritual picture or figurine, a flower, religious symbols or any object that is sacred or special to you.

Meditation on a Candle: This is a particularly strong technique for learning to meditate. Self-Realization and spirituality are often described in terms of light: enlightenment, illumination, radiance, glow, halo, brilliance. The element of light appears in many descriptions of spirituality, and meditation on a candle can awaken the spiritual element by conveying an impression of this illumined condition.

The candle flame attracts the eyes to increase your ability to focus on a single object. The light makes an impression on the retina that can be retained when the eyes are closed, heightening awareness and illuminating consciousness.

HOW TO:

1. Darken your meditation room -no glaring sunlight or lamps - just perhaps a soft light - the light level should be as it is at dusk - not completely dark, but only a very low level of light in the room. Light a candle and place it in front of you, preferable at eye level so you will not need to tilt your neck. Read the preparation for meditation on the Meditation Techniques page. Come to a comfortable seated position, with the spine erect, shoulders down and back, the body relaxed, breath fluid and easy. Relax and breathe. Fully land yourself in your body and breath. Focus only on the breath flowing into and out of your body. Let any other thoughts go. The mind tries to distract you with thoughts - it is the nature of the mind. Release the thoughts. Without judgment, bring your awareness back to the breath, the life force, flowing into and out of your body.
2. Fix your gaze on the flame of the candle. Hold your gaze steadily on the light of the flame for several minutes. Continue to let any intruding thoughts go, keeping your awareness on the flame. Allow the flame to hold your full attention.
3. Close your eyes. You may choose to place your palms over your eyelids, to block external light. Keep your hands and arms relaxed. Retain the image of the candle flame - holding the image steady. If the attention wanders, guide it back to the image of the flame without judgment. If the image fades, concentrate to bring the image back. You may need to open your eyes and gaze softly at the candle for a few moments to refresh the image. Then close your eyes and focus on the image of the flame inside your eyelids. Hold this image for 5 to 7 minutes.
4. Practice steps 1-3 several times. After several practice sessions, you may find it easier to focus and retain the image of the flame. As you become proficient, add this next step. As you focus on the image of the flame, use your concentration to bring the image forward slowly. Gradually, bring the image closer and closer, until you are enveloped by the image.
5. Merge with the image of the flame - become completely absorbed by it. At this point, there is no longer "Flame" and "ME". You are one. There is no more subject or object - there is only light and unity. Remain in this state as long as you desire.
6. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes. Take a few moments to become fully present in your body. Stretch your legs and arms, turn your head side to side to release the neck. Rest a few moments before standing.

Meditation on Other Objects: This follows the same principles as described above. The differentiation between the SELF and the OBJECT is removed. You focus on your object until there is no longer "it" and "Me" - there is only one. This is the state of meditation. It takes practice and patience, so do not expect to achieve this blissful state of unity right away. Practice and regardless of whether you achieve this state of unity or not, you will find your focus and ability to concentrate increase, your ability to be calm and balanced grows and your general feeling of well-being is enhanced. **ENJOY THE JOURNEY - IT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE DESTINATION.**

Adapted from: http://www.focalpointyoga.com/object_meditation.htm For private use only.