

Mantras and Affirmations

In Focus Meditation, the objective is to simply focus on, and repeat, a word or phrase of your choosing. The idea here is to choose a word, phrase, or statement that will help you counter stress or divert the mind from repetitive negative thoughts (also called ruminations).

The word or phrase you select, which may be considered a mantra or, affirmation may be anything you wish, so long as it is positive, helpful, and/or meaningful to you. The most ideal mantra/affirmation will be inspirational, motivating, and soothing. Some people choose spiritual or religious mantras, although this is not a requirement. You can choose any word or phrase as your mantra/affirmation, but here are some examples to get you thinking about what might work for you:

- Calm
- Peace
- Breathe
- I am strong
- I am a survivor
- I can do this
- My future is bright
- I can do anything I set my mind to
- God is my refuge and strength

Take a moment of silence to think about what you would like to choose as your mantra/affirmation. You can always change it later if you prefer!

Focus Meditation

In Focus Meditation, the objective is to maintain focus on just one word, affirmation, or mantra, repeating it for the duration of the practice.

To practice Focus Meditation, follow these steps:

1. First choose a mantra/affirmation that you will repeat during this meditation.
2. Sit with your back straight and your hands on your lap. Close your eyes or find a point on the floor to focus on, and gently shift your focus to the breath, just noticing what it feels like to breathe in and out, noticing the quality of the breath.
3. Using a quiet whisper, state your mantra/affirmation to yourself. Repeat the mantra over and over, repeating it continuously for approximately one minute.
4. Take a break from the mantra/affirmation and focus back on the breath for another minute or so. As you near the end of the minute, continue focusing on the breath as you allow the mantra to slowly come back into your mind.
5. Shift your focus back to your mantra/affirmation, and begin to repeat it again. If another thought enters your awareness, congratulate yourself on this awareness, accept its presence, and then return the focus back to the mantra. Continue repeating the mantra/affirmation for approximately 30 seconds, building up to 3-5 minutes with practice over time.
6. Continue alternating focused breathing and focus meditation, completing two or three additional cycles of one minute of focused breathing and 3 minutes of focus meditation.
7. At the end of these cycles, return the focus to the breath, taking two long, slow deep breaths through the diaphragm before opening your eyes and coming back into the room.