

# Understanding your Relaxation Response

The terms relaxation response, meditation and prayer all refer to practices that have mostly the same effect on your mind and body, so to me are synonymous. Some people may respond negatively to the idea of meditating, perhaps for religious reasons, but for the sake of simplicity, meditation is the term I shall mostly use.

There are a lot of research studies that have shown widespread benefits from regularly practising meditation. These benefits range from revving up your immune system to increased self-awareness and substantial reductions in your stress response and stress hormone production. Meditation can also help to manage depression just as effectively as antidepressant medications, enhance your sleep, ease pain, makes love-making more fun and increase overall well-being.

## 1.0 What happens when you go into a meditative state?

The effect on your body of going into a meditative state is the opposite to what happens in your stressed, 'tend and befriend' state. Your heart rate slows, your blood pressure normalises, you consume less oxygen, and the oxygen is used more efficiently because your breathing slows, your heart pumps less blood, and you sweat less.

More importantly, the adrenal glands cut down on the production of your stress hormones, adrenalin and cortisol. You make more of the primary sex hormone DHEA so that your sex hormone balance improves, and your pituitary gland starts to release more of the anti-ageing human growth hormone (HGH). Lastly, but very importantly, your immune function improves so your body is better able to fight off disease and rebuild healthy tissues.

## 2.0 Brain Waves

Meditation will take your body down into deeper and deeper states of relaxation, which can be measured by monitoring your brain wave patterns. Your brain's activity registers on an EEG scan, and the type of brain wave detected reflects your level of consciousness or unconsciousness.

### 2.1 Gamma Brainwaves

These are the most recently identified brainwaves and have the highest frequency, at greater than 40 cycles per second. Initial research is suggesting that Gamma waves are associated with bursts of insight and high-level information processing.

### 2.2 Beta Brainwaves

In normal day-to-day living, your mind is in a beta rhythm, which is typically around 12 to 40 cycles per second. This brain pattern gives you the ability to be very focused, think quickly, achieve peak performance, and be social.

Unfortunately, this is also the frequency of your ego, that nagging little inner critic who lives in your left-brain, adding to your stress levels in daily living.

In this state, your mind doesn't respond to suggestion very well, which is why repetition is often needed for learning.

### 2.3 Alpha Brainwaves

When you are more relaxed, often with your eyes shut, your brain generates the alpha brainwave pattern, which is about 8 to 12 cycles per second. You are usually in this phase when you're zoned out or maybe watching television.

When you are in this state, you are more intuitive, focused, relaxed, calm, and levelheaded. By meditating, you can cultivate operating more in the alpha brainwave state as part of normal living.

When you are in the alpha state, you tend to have more right-brain activity. You are likely to be 'in the moment', which gives reduced levels of stress, improved creativity, emotional stability, and enhanced ability to learn new things.

## 2.4 Theta Brainwaves

Theta brainwaves usually occur when you are lightly asleep and dreaming, during deep meditation, or when you are extremely relaxed, emotionally connected, or daydreaming. They typically cover the range between 4 to 8 cycles per second.

As a child, your brain spends much of its time in the theta state, which means that you tend to accept everything that is said to you as being the truth. If somebody says something negative about you, your ego registers this as a negative belief to hold on to for the rest of your life - unless you consciously work to change your beliefs.

When you are in the theta state you are often at your most creative and tuned into your intuition, so you can 'get in the zone'. This state is when you can learn most efficiently, and you can start to consciously create your own reality. It's also when you begin to get mind-body healing and feel spiritually connected.

## 2.5 Delta Brainwaves

These are the slowest of all brainwaves, ranging in frequency from about 0.5 to 4 cycles per second. You will experience them during deep, dreamless sleep, or very deep meditative states.

Delta waves generally reflect your unconscious mind and are your gateway to the collective consciousness or universal energy field (remember Quantum physics shows that everything and everybody are connected). If you are prepared to train yourself to reach this state while conscious, this is the state where you can most effectively create your own reality and access information via your intuition.

Some of the new meditation technologies discussed below can allow you to attain the Delta mind state while you are still conscious, which can assist you in creating your own life of your dreams.

## 3.0 A Simple 'How to Meditate'

If you want to do a traditional meditation, an excellent way to start is the popular 'so hum' meditation. Research at Harvard led to the development of the term the 'relaxation response' as being the opposite of the 'stress response'. Their research has shown that you can use ANY repeated phrase of your choice to initiate the meditative state.

It's the process that is important, not the words you use. The use of a mantra based on ancient Indian teachings is a widespread practice that has historically been known as transcendental meditation, now called primordial sound meditation. However, we now know that you can use any phrase that has some meaning for you. It really doesn't matter. The phrase you choose may have religious meaning for you, or it can be any mantra you select or a guiding thought, but using such a repeated phrase in this way will still initiate the relaxation response.

Initially, you should sit or lie in a place where you won't be disturbed and close your eyes. You're likely to find that if you meditate regularly in the same place, it becomes a kind of "sacred" spot for you. Just physically going to that place can feel really calming for you even if you are not actively meditating, so it becomes a good place to go for a timeout.

Personally, I used to find this worked well for me when I did this at the start of my day when I was still lying in bed. Most days, I would also meditate in bed, just before I would go off to sleep. I found that doing it in this pattern worked well for me to help me to distress from my day and sleep well. I still meditate most mornings, which helps me to have a more productive day, but I now find I enjoy my evening with the family more if I meditate soon after I get home. Do whatever feels right for YOU.

Once you're settled and ready, relax your body by tuning in to any tension points and consciously relaxing them and also relaxing your mind by consciously becoming present. To achieve this is as simple as asking yourself, "Am I present?" This simple act immediately brings you to NOW.

Begin by taking a long, slow, deep breath in through your nose while saying the word 'so' (or whatever phrase that feels right to you) quietly to yourself or in your head. Then exhale slowly through your nose while saying the word 'hum' (or whatever phrase that feels right to you). Just continue this regular breathing, gently repeating 'so' and 'hum' with each inhalation and exhalation of your breath.

Whenever your attention drifts to your thoughts, or mind, or to any sound or sensation in your body, and you find you have lost your focus on the 'so' and the 'hum', don't worry. This is a normal and important part of the process. This change in attention or brain activity is actually the releasing of some tension at a deeper level in your brain. When you become aware that your attention has drifted, gently return your attention to your breath and go back to your 'so hum'.

Repeat it quietly in your mind as you're breathing in and out. It's crucial for you to recognise that you can't do this wrong. Try to foster an attitude of no resistance to what you're doing and what is happening in your brain and body as you do it.

Continue this process for about 10 to 20 minutes with an attitude of 'nothing matters, just simplicity'. When your mind gets busy, and you become aware of it, just return to the mantra of your choice and when you feel you have had enough, continue to sit with your eyes closed for a few minutes, until you feel ready to come back to the rest of your life.

### **3.1 Walking Meditation**

Another simple possibility you might want to try is that walking in nature can also be turned into a walking meditation. To do this, all you have to do is to choose to focus on your walking time as a precious luxury, when you can engage all your senses rather than as something you have to do to get your daily exercise.

Focus on the way your body feels while you are walking - balanced and relaxed. Scan the horizon, which exercises and relaxes the powerful muscles in your eyes away from the focus on what is close to you (often the screen of a device in this modern world). Pay attention to and notice the colours of the leaves on the trees and the way they rustle in the wind; the colour and scent of flowers you pass and feel your stress levels drop as you relax into the moment.

As with any other form of meditation, your brain may wander backwards and forwards into your everyday life, so if this happens, gently guide it back to being present again, without getting frustrated. Spending your walking meditation time in as natural surroundings as possible can heal your mind as well as your heart.

Remember how the Japanese realised the healing power of walking in nature in the 1980s and coined the term *Shinrin-yoku*, which means literally 'bathing in the forest'.

### **3.2 Sacred Dance**

Another simple possibility you might want to try if you are finding meditation difficult is a sacred dance. If you do not feel comfortable sitting still because you are in your feminine energy, you may find that it is more in your nature to move and flow by dancing. So, while a man – or a woman who spends a lot of time in her masculine energy – may be totally comfortable with sitting in silence to meditate, this may not be right for you at all.

In many spiritual traditions, the feminine form of meditation was as sacred dance: any form of dance or ritual movement, done with the intention to connect with your divine feminine. In other words, anything goes. What sacred dance means to you is entirely your choice.

It might be useful, especially initially, to keep it a bit light-hearted. Create a playlist of music you only sing in the shower or feel a bit silly admitting to other people that you enjoy. Really try to let yourself go and dance like no one is watching. If you can manage it, do it in front of a full-length mirror.

## 4.0 How do I know it's doing anything?

There are some things that you might experience, which are good indicators that you are meditating successfully.

1) Firstly, your attention is on your breathing, and it feels comfortable to simply repeat your mantra. Your mind can drift off into a stream of thoughts, sometimes almost dreamlike, and sometimes you're just thinking with your eyes closed.

2) Occasionally at first, and then more often, you'll have the experience of a thoughtless state when your mind is completely silent, and your body is relaxed. Some people call this 'no mind' or the experience of a timeless mind. If you practise meditating regularly, the inner peace you experience in 'no mind' will start to spill over into every aspect of your life.

There can be times during your meditation when you fall asleep. That's okay because meditating is a gentle, natural process. Your body will do what it needs to do, so listen to the message from your body. You may then need to take steps to get the deeper rest that you obviously need during your regular sleep time.

It can take some practice before it starts to feel like it is working for you. Particularly in the early stages, you can have a lot of mind chatter from your ego going on, and you'll think that you're not making any progress at all. My experience was that it took several weeks before I started to get more periods of a silent mind, and my life started to flow, which was and still is, a wonderful feeling.

In this modern day and age, doing this may sound like hard work for some people who lead a really busy life, so what can we do to help make it the doable thing that it needs to become for you to achieve a high degree of Mind Detox?.

## 5.0 Can Technology Help?

Yes, absolutely - there are now many examples of a couple of very different technologies you can experiment to find what works for you.

### 5.1 Brain 'Entrainment'

You do not need to meditate for years, or go and study with a Tibetan master, to achieve very deep states of meditation. There is now a wide range of programmes available that use modern technology to get you into a meditative state, which usually use some form of binaural beats.

These are a form of brain 'entrainment', which work by aligning your brainwaves to the frequency of an external beat or pulse in order to trigger your desired state of mind. If brain entrainment sounds a bit freaky to you, bear in mind that you have already experienced this state any time you've lost yourself while dancing or tapped your foot to the beat of a song. In fact, native shamans have used drumbeat entrainment to create trancelike spiritual states for many thousands of years.

Below is a list of these technologies I have sampled which might help you to achieve the benefits of meditation more easily. Most of these work best if you use headphones (or earbuds if you must, as they are not great for your hearing), but some can be done with regular speakers.

These suggested technologies are purely in alphabetical order, and if you want to try them out, you can click where it says 'here' at the end of each section. There you will find a sample you can listen to freely, without having to sign up to any mailing list or make any financial commitment. If you decide you would like to purchase one of these products, you will also find links to their websites where you can follow it further.

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## ARVARI (Academy of Remote Viewing and Remote Influencing)

This technology has come out of the European military intelligence system and uses brain entrainment to teach you how to go into a 'deep theta' brain state. It's designed to access information from the quantum field outside our current spacetime reality, often called remote viewing. Yes, these techniques really are used to remotely gather intelligence by the military.

AVARI founder, Gerald O'Donnell, was first to teach remote viewing online in 1997. He then went on to develop techniques to allow you to remain conscious even in the 'deep delta' brain state, which allows you to "manifest the life, mind, body, and world of your dreams". He has named this technique remote influencing.

To explain his work, Gerald uses an analogy from the movie 'The Matrix'. The protagonist, Neo, is told, "You take the blue pill, the story ends; you wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes." The term 'red pill' is associated with a human that is aware of the true nature of the Matrix.

Some people have called Gerald's mind development tools the most powerful ones available on the planet today. This is why I have personally 'taken the red pill' and have used his programme a lot, which I believe has been a significant factor in where I am in my life and how this book has come to be written.

For more detailed information, see <http://probablefuture.com/>.

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## Holosync

Holosync is a version of brain entrainment, which is designed to progressively quieten your brain from the beta state, through alpha and theta, eventually to delta. Binaural beats are played to listeners at specific frequencies known to stimulate these brainwave states, over a backdrop of music and nature sounds.

Over time, this process is said to cause the creation of new neural pathways, leading you to increased awareness, better memory, increased creativity, faster learning, better decision-making, and allowing you to feel calmer and happier more often.

For more detailed information see <https://bp242.isrefer.com/go/cr-ws/DavidMusgrave/>

Please display the above link as <https://www.centerpointe.com/>

To listen to the track, click ['here'](#).

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## Judy Satori

Judy is a New Zealander who for the last 20 years has been trained to transmit energy that is designed to "prepare us all for the process of human evolutionary upgrade". She describes herself as "an energy healer, author, spiritual teacher and multi-dimensional galactic translator". Judy is one of many who channel information from the universe in the form of 'light language' transmissions, which are said to speak to your higher self.

Judy has an extensive library of transmissions for different purposes designed "to merge sacred science and spirituality to empower people to remember who they really are. My mission is to assist your transformation into the amazing, talented human being that you are."

These are available from at her website <https://www.ascensionlibrary.org> and to which I listen regularly.

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## LifeFlow

This system uses what the company calls 'Tri-wave Technology'. It offers what they call monaural beats, and isochronic tones to stimulate entrainment, as well as binaural beat options. Monaural beats are beats heard as single-source sound by both ears, rather than stereo. Isochronic tones are tones switched on and off in precise, rapid patterns.

Because monaural and isochronic tones are effective through open-air speakers, not just headphones, the idea is that the whole body is affected by the vibration frequencies. It may also simply be more convenient not to be restricted to headphones while exploring entrainment. The full tracks are 40-minute sessions.

To listen to one of their meditation tracks, click ['here'](#).

For more detailed information see <https://www.project-meditation.org/>

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## Mind Valley

Founded by Vishen Lakhiani in 2003, Mindvalley is now a global school of 3+ million people, producing what they claim are some of the world's top pieces of training for peak human performance. They host unique events and experiences across the world and support communities and causes aligned with their vision for humanity.

Their simple meditation products are called OmHarmonics, which uses beautifully arranged symphonies that make the binaural beats behind the tracks inaudible. You can access 'The Deep Rest' track ['here'](#) to help you destress and guide you into a deep sleep.

For more detailed information about their wide range of courses see <https://www.mindvalley.com/>

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## Silva Method

The Silva Method is a more comprehensive programme that includes meditation tracks, as well as other exercises designed to help you awaken the potential of your mind. There is a whole curriculum that includes the 'Centering Exercise', guided meditations, visualisation techniques, intuition-enhancing tools, and exercises to utilise the creative abilities of your mind at the theta level.

There have been studies demonstrating the ability of students of the programme to control their level of brain waves consciously.

For more detailed information see <https://www.silvamethod.com/>

## 5.2 Guided Meditation

How you meditate is a very personal decision based on what feels right for you. For example, some technologies rely on a form of guided meditation where the presenter usually asks you to visualise some event or state, like walking in nature, designed to take your brain into more relaxed states. Personally, I don't ever see any picture in my mind when I'm meditating, so such technologies usually do not appeal to me.

In guided meditations you are talked through the process by a guide, and for many people, they absolutely work, and they love them, so here are a couple you could try to see if they are for you.

The most popular of the guided meditation apps you can use on your phone or other devices are Calm and Headspace. Your choice should be very dependant on which is the approach and presenter that resonates with you - as that is the one that you will continue to use in the long term.

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## Calm

Calm gives you free access to their guided meditation app for seven days, although you do have to enter your Card details and they will bill you automatically if you ignore their reminder to cancel.

You can access the '7 days of calm' which gives you a great chance to see if their approach to meditation and sleep is for you and your family. They do have content for children. It is very customisable, which appeals to some and you are guided through your meditation by the very soothing voice of Tamara Levitt - an American woman.

You can access the app from your App Store or their website <https://www.calm.com/>

And access a sample distress track '[here](#)'.

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## Headspace

Headspace meditations are guided by Andy Puddicombe, who trained in Eastern meditation techniques, before returning to the UK to found Headspace.

Their guided meditation techniques stem from both the Burmese and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. There are eight core techniques, combining elements of both insight and calming meditations in most of the 10- or 30-day courses that you can access with this app. They also have content for children.

You can access the app from your App Store or their website <https://www.headspace.com>

To listen to the track, click '[here](#)'.