



TEN TIPS FOR ENJOYING MEDITATION

BEGINNERS GUIDE TO CREATING & SUSTAINING A
WONDER-FULL PRACTICE

Elena Foucher

Ten Tips for Enjoying Meditation

Beginners Guide for Creating & Sustaining
A Wonder-Full Practice

Elena Maria Foucher
Elena@ElenaMariaFoucher.com

A Meditation Made Easy Production

July 2013

You are welcome to share this e-book in whole or in part, free of charge,
provided you **share it for free and you reference: ElenaMariaFoucher.com**.

Contents

Introduction	p.3
A Moving Meditation Practice	p.4
Ten Tips for Enjoying Meditation	p.8

Introduction

Meditation can be an incredibly enjoyable experience. These tips are here to help you set yourself up with a positive mindset, find and design fun practices, and give you tools for enjoying and sustaining them overtime.

I have struggled with a lot of things over the years, and eventually began to understand that a lot of my struggle was unnecessary! Yay! Which is why I am sharing these things with you, to help you skip the ick and dive in with joy.

First and foremost, meditation helped me discover myself. That has it's own challenges. Some of the things that you discover are more challenging than others... and that is part of the process of unfolding. Hints and help will show up along the way to ease you through, so stay open and honest with yourself and others about where you are and what you need.

These tips are a great set of hints. Like all help, use it wisely. Enjoy what is useful for you and let the rest go.

A Few Initial Benefits of Meditation – Relaxation & Creativity

As you shift your focus from the anxieties of your daily life onto your meditation, you relax mentally and physically. This is enjoyable immediately! As you refocus and relax, you become more and more aware of the textures of your experience, the fullness of your life, the kaleidoscope of your sensations, emotions and thoughts inside and out. Through all of this your creativity and innate wisdom are easier to access. And that, my friends, is worth all of the challenges that you will face.

There are lots of ways to enjoy these results in your life. Meditation is just one. And here is a meditation to get you started...

A Simple Moving Meditation Practice

What is Moving Meditation?

A classic way to experience meditation is to focus the mind on something like the breath, a candle or a mantra. Moving meditation uses the less common focuses of physical movements and sensations. These meditations invite you to move while focusing your attention on your movements and physical sensations. These often become a sort of spontaneous dance and it is fun to see what the body has in store for you today...

A Moving Meditation Practice

First, let's start with a simple 2 minute practice that you can play with while following these ten tips. This particular practice is inspired by Hatha Yoga Pranayama exercises, yogic breathing exercises. I call it the Upright Breath.

After you read through the instructions, you may want to rewrite them (minus all the details!) and/or make an audio recording in your own words to use while you practice.

The basic instructions are brief and bolded. There are *additional details in italics* that you may find helpful.

If you want clarity about any of this you are welcome to either skip whatever isn't clear and go with what feels right for you, or email me and ask for clarification (Elena@ElenaMariaFoucher.com) or check with a friend who has meditated for a while to see what they advise.

Upright Breath Instructions

In short this practice is about inhaling, suggesting to yourself that you are a bright balloon inflating with air gently and noticing how the body reacts to your suggestion. Super simple. The trick to this one is to sit back and notice how the body responds. That's the focus for your mind. That's the fun part, how will your body react to your suggestion? And how subtle is your ability to notice? There are a gazillion things going on inside you while you inhale... can you notice five of them? Go for it! Enjoy playing with your magnificent being!

For detailed instructions:

- a. Start by sitting or standing comfortably.** (Ok or lying down or standing on your head... these are just the easiest ways to start with.)
- b. Notice your feet on the ground and where your body contacts the seat if you are sitting. Notice the simple sensation of your body pressing down and the ground (and seat) supporting you. Take a few moments to just feel whatever that feels like right now.**

There is no right or wrong thing to notice here, or indeed any thing in particular that you are looking for, you are just taking a moment to look, to feel, to notice sensations that you experience everyday, likely without noticing them.

Enjoy noticing what you are actually feeling and experiencing. “Hm, check it out, this is what my feet feel like when I'm standing. I never really noticed.” And know that as you do this and your ability to notice gets honed, you will notice more and more subtle things. “Hey, check that out! There is this hot, tingling sensation moving through my feet and up my legs! Cool! Er, hot!”

c. Bring your attention to your breath and notice how you are breathing right now. Follow your breath for a few moments, just noticing it.

Notice how you happen to be breathing right now. No need to change how you are breathing.

If noticing your breath changes your breathing, then notice that. The point here is to practice noticing what is actually happening, including, 'Hey, I just changed my breath because I started noticing it.' and play with seeing if you can notice your breath with out changing it... sometimes that's impossible and that's fun to play with and notice.

Curiosity helps a lot here. Be curious about how you feel and how you're breathing. These first two parts are pretty quick, so do them only as long as they keep your focus.

d. Now imagine that you are a shiny balloon. Imagine that as you inhale you're filling your balloon body with air, inflating you, blowing you up (haha). As you inhale, invite each incoming breath to stand or sit you up a little straighter, as if the air was filling your shiny balloon body and lifting you upright, bit by bit. Invite your body to float up a little with each inhale. You might want to tie yourself down with a little imaginary

string.

Practice being curious about how your body is responding to the suggestion of inflating like a bright balloon. Be curious and notice (watch, feel, sense) what happens. Spend more time watching what your balloon body wants to do than making it do something by first inviting your balloon body to expand and then watching and feeling how your body responds to your invitation.

As you can imagine, there is no right or wrong way to do this. Do what feels right or comfortable in the moment, as you do it. Trust yourself and enjoy allowing your body to respond to the suggestion of being upright, straightening and lengthening.

Many of us don't sit or stand with great posture, so this practice is great for feeling into what better posture might mean for your body in each moment. Even more than about posture here, the point is to be curious about how your body wants to respond to gently inhaling "up." Your play here is to notice what happens.

As you get better and better at this you can play with this as a bit of a paradox in that you are doing something: inhaling and floating up, while also passively letting the body do what it wants to do (as much as possible just noticing if your body wants to float up, expand, straighten, lengthen... or not) and being curious about that. Paradox is a big part of this practice. And paradox practices are called practices, because the point isn't to get somewhere or solve something, the point is to learn what there is to learn from playing with the unsolvable paradoxes.

Can you invite your body to do something and then watch and be curious about what it actually wants to do? Can you play with "doing" and "not doing" at the same time? Of course you can! It is just a game! Be a toy. As soon as the game isn't fun, allow yourself to stop, regroup, and then play again or move on to something else and come back another time.

Do this practice for 2 minutes or so or until you feel complete. And...

g. If/when your mind gets bored doing this exercise, experiment with different ways to play with the concept of breath moving the body... try putting a hand on your shoulder or chest, rib cage, or belly, etc and being curious about how that part rises and falls with each breath. You can start with the area that moves the most and then move your hand to other areas and notice the differences in the ways that the other areas move or don't. Do your upper arms move with each breath? Your hips? How about your neck, your hands or knees?

Note that in the beginning any of this will get boring if you do it the same way all the time. The trick in the beginning is to do this for short amounts of time so that you don't fight too much with your mind and also change the practice often enough to keep your mind interested in paying attention.

After some time, things will get easier. Your mind will settle a bit as your attention span increases... you won't need to work quite so much to keep it focused. Also, over time, your ability to notice things gets more precise and subtle and you will be able to notice a whole realm of things that you were not even aware of before. Go balloon!

And now, drum roll please...

Ten Tips for Enjoying Meditation

1. Do practices that you enjoy. Even better, do practices that you love. Find your passion.

If you like your practice you are much more likely to do it, so do things you enjoy. If you start to get bored with a practice, change it in some way to make it more fun, or simply do a different practice all together. Get creative with your practices and make them yours, add elements from your life that you find beautiful, meaningful, powerful and fun. Your practice is yours. Make it enjoyable by doing it in ways that you enjoy.

How exactly? Here are a few suggestions to get you started. If you meditate on objects, use objects that are particularly enjoyable to focus on. If you meditate on your breath, do interesting things with it like meditate while running, playing frisbee with your dog, climbing stairs, rowing a boat, etc, etc, etc. If you sit still with your eyes closed, try meditating in your car, in a library, or outside on your balcony or porch, in a park, on the beach or other places that add variety. Notice how the different places affect your meditation and enjoy noticing those affects even when you aren't meditating!

If you can't figure out how to make a particular practice fun, try finding another one that you do find fun! There are lots of ways to meditate. The internet is your friend. Do some initial searches to start understanding what words are used to describe different practices and then do some focused searches for particular practice types that seem

interesting to you. Ask friends who meditate what they like (and why!) and find local groups that meditate and ask them.

You can also check out ToothbrushMeditations.com for meditations that you can do during your daily activities. These meditations can be done while standing on busy street corners, driving, gardening, washing the dishes, sitting at your desk, hiking in nature, etc.

2. Let your practices grow and change as you do.

Overtime, as you do any practice, you will learn how to do it so well that you won't need any guidance to practice it. You may still want to listen to or read the guidance because it helps you focus, etc, but you will not need to follow all of the instructions in order to do the practice anymore.

Once you don't need to focus on the instructions, you may notice that things start to get creative, that the practice starts changing as you're doing it. You may discover a new way to start or end a practice, you may find yourself changing the order of the parts, you may start combining several parts of the practice or combining different practices all together, and you may find yourself doing completely new things during a practice. If you choose to work with a teacher you can ask them about these things, the best ways to incorporate these changes. If you are meditating on your own, play with these things! Enjoy the changes! The evolution of a practice, and you with it, can be exhilarating. Creativity is an amazing aspect of life. Enjoy playing with it!

3. Trust yourself.

As you do any practice, know that you are the best measure of what is good for you. If you want to change something about a practice, change it! If you don't like a practice, don't do it! If you really don't want to practice today, don't!

Stop for a moment, get quiet, listen and feel deeply, noticing all of the thoughts and feelings that arise and your reactions to them. What do you really want to do? What would you really enjoy doing? Go deeper than things like boredom and frustration. Get below resistance. Find out what is really going on. Maybe it's time to change something about your practice to make it more enjoyable. Maybe you're exhausted and need to rest. Maybe you need to write down a "To do" list before your mind can settle down. Maybe you need to do some exercise first.

Trust yourself and know that ultimately, deep down you only want the best for yourself. Get down to the deep truth of what is going on with you, and follow your own advice. Help yourself help yourself!

How? If you get quiet and become receptive your voice of clarity will be easy to hear. Of course, getting quiet in the first place can be difficult, so it can also help to play with different methods for "listening". Meditation is an excellent one. You can research the wide variety of methods online to find other ones that you like, too. For instance, Applied Kinesiology uses muscle testing and Human Design uses a range of things depending on your individual design.

If things get really noisy and confusing it can help to have a teacher or a friend whom you can talk to or a journal to write in. Often just explaining what is happening out loud or in writing can help you get clear.

Listening to your deepest wisdom is an art. Your voice of clarity may be buried under a lot of "shoulds" and "musts" and habits; and thus it may take you some time to hear it clearly. Let this be a work in progress... performance art.

It can also help to imagine this as a game, which you can only win, so give yourself lots of points as you play it! "Yay! I feel clear about x, y, and z! 10 million bonus points!" And trust yourself to know when to ask for advice or perspective from outside sources. "Ok, I feel like I want

more information here. Hey, I think I'll squeeze myself an orange juice for that one! Super!” And, if this feels too silly for you, make up a serious bonus system, like rewarding yourself with the best information source possible. Make whatever you do work for you and your unique personality.

4. Set an enjoyable intention before each practice.

Use the mind's natural capacity to creatively fulfill your desires by making your desires clear from the beginning. Setting an intention also creates a focus, something for you to pay attention to, which means that you will naturally notice any changes that occur around that intention.

Another reason to do this is that mind is very suggestible. You will be able to think of many examples of how this is true... think about all of the things that you tell yourself daily and how much you've started believing the ones that you've told yourself over and over. So, use that to your advantage and suggest something that you would enjoy your mind to think about, and watch what happens! This one is *really* cool!

5. Love your mind.

Play with your mind. See what amazing things that it can do. It is infinitely creative! If you let it, it will show you all kinds of things. It will also get bored and wander and wonder and reflect and imagine. That is part of its job. Have appreciation for its creative capacity!

Meditation retrains or re-patterns it to not wander so much. That takes time! Usually. Be patient and love yourself and your beautiful, infinitely creative mind!

In the beginning, you probably will not be able to focus on your body (or anything) for long periods of time, so using your mind's natural curiosity (What's happening now?! How is this now unique?) is a great

way to keep it interested.

If paying attention seems difficult, choose practices that have more movement than less or ones that allow for faster or bigger movements, or play music, or do them in a park or in front of a window, or make any changes that occur to you that your mind finds more interesting... Stand on one foot and arbitrarily change the direction you're facing periodically, for instance.

6. Put your clock somewhere that you cannot see it.

If you know that you cannot see your clock then you won't drive yourself crazy looking at it every 10 seconds. And if you are going nuts at every practice wanting to know how much time you have left then do your practice for a shorter amount of time or switch to a practice that holds your attention better. Maybe both.

If you're really determined to do a difficult practice for a long time, you can make things easier by breaking it up into shorter time periods to ease yourself into it. For example, if you are determined to do a tough practice for 6 minutes, start by breaking it into 2 minute sets (times 3). So, meditate for 2 minutes and then take a short break. Repeat this three times (2 minutes of practice x 3 times = 6 minutes). Increase the practice times slowly over time until you build up to the 6 minutes with out breaks.

However long you practice, once you find a comfortable length of time, enjoy that. As that gets *really* comfortable, if you want to extend the amount of time, add a little bit more time and enjoy that. When you get really comfortable with that add a bit more and in this way slowly, easily and enjoyably build up to longer times.

In general, aim for something like ten to thirty minute practice sessions. Having said that, there are LOTS of different opinions about how long each session should be and how frequently you should

practice. Many schools of thought agree that 15 minutes is a good minimum time and most days is an excellent frequency.

My recommendation is, play with your timing until you start noticing some of the benefits, until you start learning interesting things about yourself (which can happen the first session), and then decide what small and powerful step you want to take next, what achievable practice schedule you want to set – and keep playing!

Which brings us to the next step...

7. Set goals that are attainable and fun.

Good practice is setting goals that are attainable from where you are right now, and that feel enjoyable. This will be true throughout your entire practice. To paraphrase a famous saying, “The longest journey starts with one fun step,” ...and continues to be a series of enjoyable steps that you can actually do, and *want* to do.

No matter what your ultimate intention is, give yourself short term goals that you can achieve and that you will enjoy achieving. For example, you can decide to meditate for 2 minutes every morning, focusing on something inspiring like compassion or the beach.

Why achievable and enjoyable? Because, if you create goals that you can accomplish and enjoy accomplishing you will not only reach them and want to reach them, you will know from those experiences that you are capable of reaching more. If you give yourself too difficult and boring a goal, you set yourself up for failure and kill your motivation before you get going very far. Yuck. So, good practice involves good goal setting.

Or no goal setting. This could be an even better discipline depending on your personality. In any case, notice what works best for you, and allow for change as you grow and evolve.

8. Let “most” of the time be a perfect amount.

What ever schedule you set, everyday or every Tuesday; let “I practice most days,” or “I practice most Tuesdays,” be perfectly enough. You don't need to actually practice every day that you plan to practice. Practicing most of the days that you plan to practice is excellent. “Most days” is great.

Let your practice be part of your life and know that your life will shift and change every day. How you feel will shift and change every day, and your priorities will shift and change every day as well. So, you will miss some days. (*Gasp!* Oh, right, that's fine.)

If you have this kind of flexible expectation you are less likely to create stress around the times that you do and don't practice. This can make it much more enjoyable to maintain a practice overtime, because it is an expectation that you can fulfill and that you can feel good about!

9. Have a practice buddy or “tracking” system to help you stay excited and motivated about your practice.

Having a buddy that you exchange emails with or that you practice with in person will give you someone to share your discoveries with, making it twice as fun. It can be really helpful to exchange ideas and tell each other about your experiences. You can encourage each other with your discoveries, help each other with rough spots and share the joys of meditating making all of it that much sweeter.

Also, doing things with someone else can increase your commitment. You may be more likely to do something if someone else is doing it with you. And if it is a person that you are emailing you will have the added advantage of tracking what you are doing, which is an excellent way to increase the 'stickiness' of an activity... the simple act of recording an activity gives it more emphasis as well as visual, historical, tangible evidence of your efforts. Very motivating!

Even with out a buddy, tracking or recording how often you practice can be a great idea. Creating a unique, personalized calendar to hang on your wall with your practice days marked on it can be a fun visual reminder to do it, and if you star the days that you meditate you'll see how much you've practiced over time.

Also, measuring your progress can be encouraging as you begin to see the usefulness, or not, of what you are doing. Improvement can be extremely motivating and if you are not improving you can feel into what wants changing about your practice.

One way to measure where you are starting at meditation wise, at least your current ability to stay focused, is to do this simple Benchmark Awareness Practice. Start by picking something to stay totally aware of for 30 seconds and give yourself a rating for how easy it is for you to do. Choose something that you are working on in your meditation practice, like being aware of all of your physical sensations for 30 seconds, or all of your emotions, or thoughts, or the sights or sounds around you for 30 seconds. How easy is this for you? Give yourself a number from 1 to 10 (easy to difficult), and record it on your cool calendar as your starting point. Do this periodically to get a sense of how you are doing overtime.

Finally, value your perseverance and the process as much as any single outcome such as improved focus. Recognize that there are a million things that you experience, develop and gain along the way and let those motivate you as well. For example, you may notice that today you could only focus for a very short time and yet your perceptions were more subtle. Or that today you didn't meditate and yet you noticed that you were getting angry and were able to feel the anger without letting it take over. Or that today you weren't able to focus at all during your meditation and yet you still gave yourself the time to do it, building the muscles of determination, persistence and acceptance. All

of these things are priceless, so acknowledge and value the whole panorama of benefits.

10. Welcome and appreciate all of the distractions. Especially the mental ones.

Are sounds distracting you? Other people? External distractions can be viewed as a blessing, a helpful reminder that you are here, right now, meditating. Hear a sound right now? Let it ground you in your physical space, a sonorous reminder that you are meditating in this moment.

“Bang!”

“Ah, I'm here in this body, in this space, hearing that sound.” That sound just offered you a great chance to “be here now”!

“Bang, bang, bang!”

“Yep, I'm right here, in this body, hearing this sound.”

You can do this with all sounds including people talking, as well as other external “distractions”. This has the added benefit of increasing your tolerance for all kinds of sounds even when you aren't meditating. Check out SoundScape on ToothbrushMeditations.com for a guided meditation on using sound as a meditation. SightScape, on the same site, offers the same thing using your visual environment.

As for the internal thoughts and feelings, these can be a bit more complex to shift. The trick is to notice them, let them pass by without adding to them by paying a lot of attention to them or going into a lot of story about why they are occurring.

Thoughts and emotions can have a lot of weight or power, especially ones that draw you into a lot of story. When the what, why, where, when, where, how sort of thing gets really appealing it can take you into all sorts of flights of fancy... and before you know it you have been daydreaming for your whole practice! This is fine. There is no good or bad. There is more and less focus, and if you want to focus on your

meditation, one thing to cultivate is to let thoughts and emotions glide right on by without picking them up and inspecting them.

Instead, when you notice that you are frustrated for instance, do something that makes sense to you like say, “Hey, I'm frustrated again. Cool, I'm alive and I can feel. Thanks frustration for reminding me what you feel like. I wonder what else I can feel?” And then wait and see what else arrives. Maybe more frustration... stay grateful and keep watching and seeing what comes next. EVERYTHING changes so the frustration will pass if you let it. If you start focusing on the stories about why it might have shown up, you effectively keep it locked in your mind and it will stay as long as you keep focusing on it!

In other words, if you feed these feelings with stories about them: why you are frustrated (why it happened, what you need to do to fix it, etc, etc, etc), you are *holding onto the frustration* by focusing on it. This is fine, it is just not the focus of your meditation, so gently recognize the feeling, and then with appreciation for your glorious mind and emotions, bring yourself back to your meditation's focus. “Ah, I'm frustrated. Look at that. Wonder what feeling will come next?” vs “ARGH!” (and lots more moments of that).

Know that as you react less and less, feed the thoughts and emotions less and less, it gets easier and easier to let them just slide by. They become a river of information floating by. Gradually you will get better and better at noticing them swim gaily by while you stay with your focus. This takes time, so be patient and compassionate!

This is another part that can be fun to imagine as a win-win game with no losing possible. The more that you can play with this versus fight with yourself the more enjoyable it will be. This is when doing things like having fun practices, short practice times, easy practice goals and expectations and allowing you and your practice to grow, evolve and be as colorful as you are helps

immensely!

11. (A Bonus) Enjoyment as a mindset. Make it a habit.

You may have noticed that a lot of these tips are choices that you make. Choosing practices that you like, choosing to play with them and make them yours, choosing practice time spans that are easy, choosing attainable goals, choosing to trust yourself, choosing to love your mind, etc, etc. Choosing to do things that you like, in ways that you like them creates habits that you enjoy.

There are two reasons to make meditation enjoyable. First, as said previously, if you enjoy it you are much more likely to do it. And meditation can improve your life immensely... it has helped me think more clearly, let go of huge amounts of conditioning, open my heart, be more creative (on MANY levels), be more honest with myself and others (and enjoy that!), become aware of powerful forces in myself I didn't even know existed, etc, etc, etc, etc.

Secondly, as you consciously focus on creating enjoyment, on making it a habit in your meditation you will discover ways to bring that habit into other parts of your life. This amazing things starts to happen.: enjoying things starts to become a choice. You learn how to choose enjoyment and how to maintain it even when things get challenging. This becomes it's own art. A delicious one.

May you grow, evolve and enjoy every moment of your practice, especially the most challenging ones!

For more help, individual guidance or suggestions, see ElenaMariaFoucher.com or email me at Elena@ElenaMariaFoucher.com.

Enjoy, Elena

Happy Practicing!

Elena Maria Foucher

Elena@ElenaMariaFoucher.com

A Meditation Made Easy Production

July 2013

You are welcome to share this e-book in whole or in part, free of charge,
provided you share it for free and reference: ElenaMariaFoucher.com.