

# Learn to Meditate

*Transform Yourself – Transform our World*

*“To find the Light within us, to let it grow, to nourish it, to receive its love  
and allow it to open our hearts, this is why we meditate.”*

– Norman Paulsen, founder of Sunburst



**Welcome to Sunburst's Learn to Meditate eCourse, a series of seven lessons.**

You will receive one lesson in your e-mail box every week.

In this course, you will learn the foundations of spiritual practice, including introductory meditation techniques, conscious breath work, energization exercises, and ways to bring meditation into your daily life.

May you find these tools useful in your journey to uncover the magnificent treasure that lies within you.

If you have questions or would like to discuss any of these lessons, please e-mail ***ContactUs@SunburstOnline.org*** or call **805.736.6528**.



## Lesson 1

# Coming into Stillness

This practice helps you to quiet down, open up, and begin to feel the Divine presence within you.

**Preparing** – To center yourself and set your intention, begin with an affirmation or prayer. This can be as simple as a silent moment of thankfulness.

**Posture** – Sit with a straight spine, body relaxed, either in a chair, or cross-legged on a cushion. To sit still more comfortably, keep your knees lower than the top of your hip bones. This will help to support a straight and relaxed back. You may need an extra cushion to accomplish this.

**Breathe** – To calm and deepen your breath, place your hands on your belly for several breaths. Can you feel the breath gently moving your belly in and out? Notice as your breath slows, your thoughts slow down as well. Now place your hands on your thighs or in your lap. Keeping calm and relaxed, focus your attention on the breath gently moving in and out. **Let your breath be the anchor of your meditation.**

**Point of Concentration (The Single Eye)** – With eyes half closed (or all the way closed, if this is more comfortable for you) lift your gaze slightly upward, as if looking **out through** a point between your eyebrows. You can gently rub this area to help focus your concentration here. Let your gaze be soft; do not cross or strain the eyes. Your eyes should feel very comfortable and relaxed.

This point of concentration is the single eye of which it was written: *"If your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light."* With devotion and practice, the Light of soul will someday appear before your inner gaze here, filling your heart and mind with the joyous experience of Spirit.

While focusing your gaze, keep your awareness anchored to the breath moving in and out your nostrils, cool as you inhale, warm as you exhale.

**The Practice** – One of the first things you may notice when you sit to meditate is how distracting your body and mind can be! Do not be discouraged when you find sensations or thoughts have carried your attention away. This happens to everyone; this is why meditation is called a practice. As often as your attention strays, without judging yourself simply come back to the point of focus and the breath and continue your meditation.

At first you may find the distractions come so thick and fast that it seems all you are doing is coming back to center again and again. But this process in and of itself will slowly begin to still the thoughts.

**Visualization** – When you feel calm and quiet, imagine a tiny star of Light at the very center of your inner gaze. Silently repeat, *“Reveal yourself to me”*, choosing any name for the Divine (such as Divine Light, Father, Mother, or Beloved Friend) that brings forth your love and devotion.

Visualize the Light coming toward you, becoming larger, filling your head, your entire body, with pure Light. Imagine you are breathing the Light into your body with each inhalation. Open up the doors of your heart to receive the joy, the peace, the love contained within this Light. Feel the joy and comfort of knowing Spirit is alive and residing within you.

End your practice with a silent prayer or affirmation, for yourself, for your loved ones, and for the world.

Create the habit of practicing meditation every morning and evening for 10 to 15 minutes. As you cultivate this practice with love, devotion and self-discipline, you are bringing forth Self-realization, the realization of your eternal oneness with the Divine.

**Affirmation –**

***I am neither body nor mind; immortal Self I Am.***

*“What a fantastic thing to discover, this divine consciousness,  
this Great Being which is each one of us!”*

–Norman Paulsen

## Lesson 2

# Conscious Relaxation & Energization

Conscious relaxation prepares you for meditation, allowing you to release physical, mental and emotional tensions. When you are relaxed, you create a space for breath and life force to move and heal your body, and for the power of Spirit to blossom within your soul.

Learning conscious relaxation also brings increased health and vitality. Your body/mind is always asking the question: *Am I safe?* When the answer is NO, the stress response is enacted. Under sustained or repeated stress, your body stays on alert and stress hormones keep flowing. This adaptation to chronic stress causes all kinds of disease. The Body Scan/Energization energizes your body/mind as it relaxes and release tensions. An additional benefit of this practice is that by bringing focused awareness to each body part, you are training your will to move life force. This strengthens your concentration and willpower, allowing you to have a deeper meditation experience.

### Body Scan/ Energization

This practice may be done either standing or lying down. If you are standing, place your feet about hips width apart, arms relaxed at your sides. You may want to close your eyes to help your concentration.

If you are lying down, lie on your back on the floor or on a yoga mat, arms relaxed at your sides, palms up. Let your legs and feet spread a few inches apart, and relax. Take a few deep breaths, and close your eyes.

In this practice, you bring awareness to individual parts of the body, through gentle tensing and relaxing. Try to isolate the muscles in each body part in turn, not tensing any other muscles. This is difficult to do at first, but becomes easier with practice. Relax the muscles after each gentle tensing and feel the new energy vibrating in the body part you are working with.

*First, bring awareness to your left foot – gradually tensing, then relaxing.  
Next, bring awareness to your right foot – gradually tensing, then relaxing.*

Keep moving up the body, gradually tensing, then relaxing and releasing each area in turn:

*Left calf, then right calf  
Left thigh, then right thigh  
Left buttock, then right buttock muscles  
Lower belly, below the navel  
Upper belly, above the navel  
Left forearm, then right forearm  
Left upper arm, then right upper arm  
Left shoulder, then right shoulder  
Left side of the neck, then right side of the neck  
Front of the neck, then back of the neck  
Facial muscles*

Bring your awareness to each sense organ, and consciously relax:

*Mouth and jaw*

*Nostrils*

*Ears*

*Eyes*

*Forehead and all the muscles of the scalp*

Now bring your awareness inside your head, and consciously relax any mental tension. Finally, bring awareness to the crown of your head, and feel this area relax.

Inhale deeply and fully through the nostrils, filling your lower abdomen, upper abdomen and chest. In the pause before the exhalation, tense your entire body, then release, throwing your breath out as you exhale through the mouth. Visualize that you are expelling all tensions and toxins from your body. Repeat two to three times. This practice releases toxins, oxygenating the blood and awakening the body/mind.

An alternate way of practicing a quick body scan is to bring your awareness to each body part in turn, consciously relaxing and releasing, without tensing it first. Choose the practice that works best for you.

Create a habit of practicing the body scan before your morning and evening meditations.

The above exercises are a shortened version of the Energization Exercises developed by Paramahansa Yogananda. A booklet of the full exercise program is available from Sunburst.

*The greater the will, the greater the flow of energy.*

– Paramahansa Yogananda

**Affirmation –**

***Divine Spirit is pure love, pure joy, pure consciousness.***

***Wherever I Am, Spirit is.***

## Lesson 3

# Conscious Breath

As you become more conscious of your physical breath, you will begin to perceive the subtle inner breath of prana (life force), and Spirit.

Following are some breath exercises. Experiment with practicing one or two of these before your meditation. Realize that the key to a full, natural breath is not through forced effort, but through deep relaxation.

Begin in meditation posture, with your spine straight.

### Harmonizing breath

Inhale for a count of 8

Pause for a count of 8

Exhale for a count of 8

Increase or decrease the count as you feel comfortable with this exercise, but keep the inhalation, pause and exhalation of the same length. Notice the feeling of harmony and balance this exercise brings to you.

Repeat 3 or 4 times.

### Releasing breath

Inhale fully through the nostrils, then hold your breath as you tense your whole body.

Relax completely as you double exhale through the mouth, throwing your breath out forcefully. Your breath will sound like: *Huh - huhhhh....*

Visualize your breath expelling toxins and releasing all tension from your body and mind.

Repeat 3 or 4 times.

### Ujjai breath

In Sanskrit, ujjai (pronounced *oo-jye*) means “victorious, uprising.” In this practice, very gently contract the muscles at the back of the throat. Moving through the contracted throat, the breath makes a sound like gentle ocean waves coming onto the shore, and moving back into the sea. We are all familiar with this breath: we use it whenever we whisper.

To understand how to practice this breath, open your mouth slightly, and inhale, whispering the sound “*ahhh...*” Exhale, whispering “*eee...*” Now close your mouth and continue the soft whispering sound in your throat as you relax and breathe.

Ujjai breath helps to slow down, lengthen and deepen the breath because it is moving through a narrower space in the throat. As you slow the breath, you slow the thoughts, and quiet the mind.

You may choose to use ujjai in your meditation practice, as the gentle sound can help to keep your mind focused and anchored upon breath.

## Lesson 4

# Practicing the Presence: Meditation with Mantra

*"If you can stop the thoughts for three seconds, you will see God."*

– Paramahansa Yogananda

A mantra is a sacred sound that is repeated inwardly during meditation to create deeper concentration upon the Divine. We will now add a mantra to the meditation practice that you learned in Lesson 1. The mantra we will use is *Hong Sau* (this can be pronounced *Hahm Sau* if you prefer). *Hong* is derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "I Am," and *Sau* (pronounced "sah") means "That" or "He." With this mantra, we are repeating "I Am That", or "I Am He," affirming our oneness with the Divine.

Begin your meditation with a silent prayer or affirmation to set your intention.

Relax the body and mind with the body scan/energization, as described in Lesson 2.

Next, find your point of concentration at the single eye, as described in Lesson 1.

### Breath and Mantra

Bring your awareness to your breath. Do not try to change it in any way, just watch it as if you were watching someone else's breath.

With each inhaling breath, inwardly say *Honnnnnnnng....*

With each exhaling breath, inwardly say *Saaaaaaaah....*

Do not make the sounds out loud, or even with your lips and tongue – just say the mantra mentally.

Feel as if the breath itself is silently making the sounds: *Honnnnnnnng....Saaaaah....*

### Four Part Breath

Keep your attention at the point of concentration. As you relax deeply, your breath may become slow and long. Notice the four parts of your breath: inhalation, natural pause, exhalation, natural pause.

### Relaxed Concentration

As your relaxation and one-pointed concentration upon the single eye deepen, your breath may become very soft, and the pauses between inhalations and exhalations may lengthen. Enjoy these peaceful moments of breathlessness.

If thoughts carry your attention away, do not be discouraged. With compassion for yourself, bring your gaze and your awareness back to the point of concentration, the breath and the mantra. Focus the gaze, relax, and breathe.



**Presence**

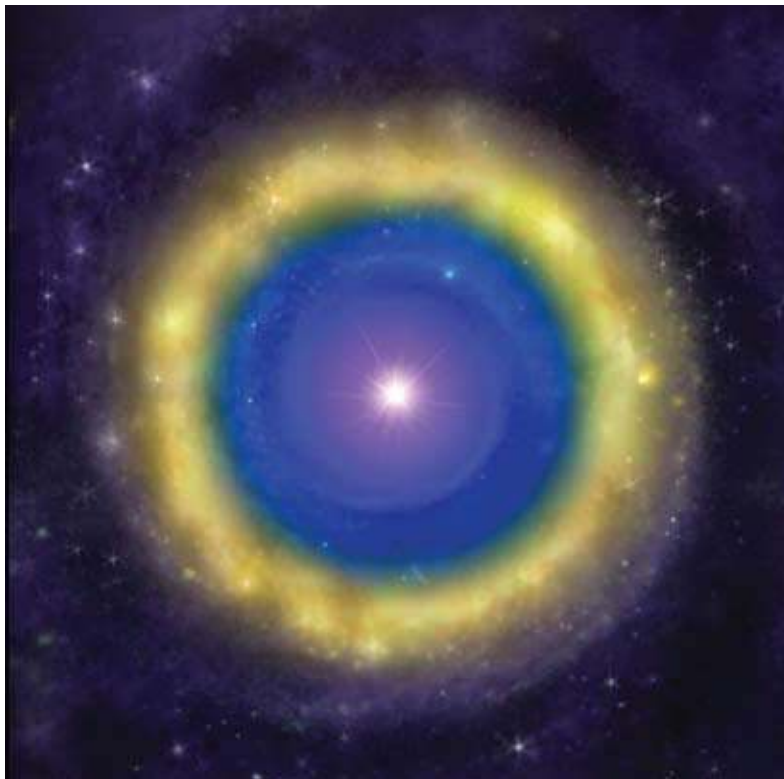
When you feel deeply calm and quiet, cease the mantra. Keep your gaze at the point of concentration. With practice, this point will open up and gain depth, like a tunnel of light. A tiny star may appear in an opal blue field, surrounded by a ring of radiant gold. This is the opening of the spiritual eye. If you do not yet see the tunnel of light and the star in the distance, visualize it. This light is the Pure Self within the center of your soul. Let your heart silently call with love and devotion, *"Reveal yourself to me."*

When your concentration drifts, practice the mantra for a few breaths, then return to the visualization. Another practice you can try is to imagine the point of concentration dividing in half, then in half again, then in half again, until it is the smallest of all places. Feel the deep peace and divine stillness emanating from this infinitely small point.

Continue your meditation practice morning and evening for 15 minutes or longer.

**Affirmation –**

*Looking within, I discover the indwelling Divine. I am guided by the peace and joy of meditation as I carry it into every moment of my life.*



*"If your eye is single, your whole body shall be full of light."*

– Jesus

## Lesson 5

# The Habit of Meditation

To encourage your habit of meditation, it is helpful to make a space in your home which you use solely for spiritual practice. You may want to get a special chair or cushion, and create a small altar with pictures, candles, beautiful shells or other treasures that inspire you.

Reading words of illumined souls or listening to uplifting music before meditation can be helpful.

Gentle stretching can create space in the connective joints of your body to enable you to sit comfortably, and relaxed yet attentive during your meditation.

Conscious movement practices such as yoga or Qi Gong are a wonderful way to prepare your body and mind for a more fruitful sitting meditation.

Showering or bathing before meditation is helpful to clear the mind, or simply washing the face and hands with cold water. You may enjoy the following practice of purifying the five outer senses:

*Turn on the sink and let the cold, refreshing water run over your wrists and hands three times.*

*Lightly press your clean wet fingers to your closed eyes three times.*

*Run your clean wet fingers along the curve of your ears three times.*

*Cup clean water in your hands and breathe it gently into your nostrils three times.*

*Sip clean water, feeling it refresh your tongue three times.*

*As you purify your sense organs, set the intention that all that you touch, see, hear, smell, and taste is God.*

The most important thing you can do to create the habit of meditation is, "Just do it!" Make a promise to yourself that no matter what is happening in your life, you will sit down every morning and evening, even if it's only for five minutes. If you fail to meditate one day, do not be discouraged. Simply start again the next day with even greater determination.

There is a saying: Spiritual practice begins as a discipline, then becomes a habit, and finally becomes a joy. Be determined to persevere until your practice is your favorite part of the day, a time to nourish your soul with divine joy.

*"Remember, you are equipped, atomically, molecularly, cellularly, right within your own body, right now at this very moment, to fully experience cosmic consciousness, divine illumination, oneness with God. You don't have to go anywhere; it's all right within you, the whole creation is right within you. How can you see it? Meditate upon it."*

– Norman Paulsen

## Lesson 6

# Living Meditation

The energies you gain access from regular meditation practice bring abundant health, life force and willpower. It is essential that you choose to use this power in a positive manner. Virtue is love in action. By contemplating the energies of virtue, you can learn to harmonize your willpower with the Divine, and become an instrument of healing and peace on this world that needs it so urgently.

In the Sunburst teachings we learn of twelve universal, cosmic energies, or virtues, that uphold and sustain the universe with the power of Love:

### The Twelve Virtues

- Loyalty**..... Be loyal to love, for love is God.
- Patience**..... Wait for the right direction.
- Honesty**..... Be truthful with yourself and others.
- Perseverance**..... Never give up aspiring toward your noble intentions.
- Compassion**..... Painful situations you endure bring the gift of compassion for others.
- Continence** (*self-control*)..... Self-control gives you the strength to be successful in all ways.
- Equanimity**..... Calm in the eye of the storm is equanimity.
- Courage**..... Love bestows courage, and brings victory over negativity.
- Humility**..... It takes the strongest willpower to say, "Thy will be done."
- Temperance**..... Temperance is moderation, the middle path between extremes.
- Charity**..... Charity is the joyful giving of your life force to serve the Divine in one another.
- Faith**..... Projecting positive images for the future is an act of faith, that what you plant will grow.

You may want to pick one virtue daily to meditate upon. Experiment with acting upon this virtue during the day. This practice will develop the power you have to create heaven on earth, within you and all around you.

*"By attempting to live in virtue every day, whether we succeed or not, just by attempting, we plant positive seeds around us. The law of cause and effect has no choice but to return these efforts toward virtue to us."*

- Norman Paulsen

## Lesson 7

### *Bring Your Meditation into Daily Life*

The Eightfold Path of Conscious Living is a simple yet powerful way to integrate the peace and joy of meditation into your daily life. Below is a brief description of each path. Walking these paths every day will nurture the awakening of the Pure Self, the divine consciousness within you.

<b>Meditation</b>	Creating the habit of daily meditation.
<b>Conduct</b>	Directing your will to live a positive and loving life, using the key of the twelve virtues, to the best of your ability.
<b>Study</b>	Studying the words and lives of illumined souls; studying the workings of the God in nature.
<b>Speech</b>	Speaking and listening with compassion.
<b>Association</b>	Choosing harmonious environments in which to live and work, to help strengthen your spiritual practice.
<b>Nourishment</b>	Nurturing your body/mind so that you have the life force to fulfill your soul's purpose here on earth.
<b>Re-creation</b>	Becoming a divine co-creator with God, creating heaven on earth all around you.
<b>Work</b>	Finding work that serves all life: minerals, plants, animals, and one another.

*It is not the magnitude of our actions but the amount of love  
that we put into them that matters.*

*- Mother Teresa*

## Sunburst Mandala

Found in varied forms throughout the world, this ancient and beautiful "keyhole door" symbol describes the soul's journey of awakening to the Pure Self within, as well as the origin and unfolding of the creation. The six-pointed star represents the union of the divine feminine and masculine energies. The twelve scallops around the star symbolize the twelve aspects of virtue, and the eight colored arcs represent the Eightfold Path of Conscious Living.



*Making the effort to walk the Eightfold Path and exemplify the Twelve Virtues in our daily life will quicken our evolution towards Christ Consciousness, the divine Pure Self within.*

- Norman Paulsen

## You have now received Sunburst's introductory meditation course.

Sunburst is dedicated to individual and collective awakening, healing and transformation through spiritual practice, conscious living, and sustainable stewardship of the Earth. We were founded in 1969 by Norman Paulsen, author of *Christ Consciousness* and direct disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda.

If you wish to learn more about Sunburst's teachings and path, we offer books, CD's and more on our website. You are also invited to visit Sunburst Sanctuary, cared for by our intentional community. We offer classes and retreats on spiritual practice and other creative subjects throughout the year.

Discover the transformational Sun techniques of Kriya Yoga meditation. Yogananda referred to Kriya Yoga meditation as "the airplane route to God." These liberating techniques greatly quicken your evolution toward Self-realization, the realization of God within you.

For information on upcoming events, please visit:

**[www.SunburstOnline.org/upcomingevents.htm](http://www.SunburstOnline.org/upcomingevents.htm)**

If you have questions about the lessons or would like to communicate with us, we would love to hear from you. Please email us or give us a call:

**[ContactUs@SunburstOnline.org](mailto:ContactUs@SunburstOnline.org)** – phone: (805) 736-6528

For general information on Sunburst, please visit:

**[www.SunburstOnline.org](http://www.SunburstOnline.org)**

*"Everything else can wait, but your search for God cannot wait."*

– Paramahansa Yogananda

*"Choose a path that will lead you to the greatest of all encounters, that your lifetime here may become a blessing to others and yourself. It is never too late!  
God is waiting to hear from you in your prayers and deep meditations."*

– Norman Paulsen

