



Meditation for a Calm Heart

For anyone experiencing stress, anxiety, or overwhelm with the constant stream of information that comes at us on a daily basis, the Meditation for a Calm Heart can be extremely helpful. With consistent practice, you can come into a neutral, non-reactive place and feel steady and graceful amidst the turbulence that our world can sometimes appear to create. It is a beautiful practice for beginners because it involves an easy mudra and a simple breath pattern, but it's fully engaging for any level yogi. I highly recommend that you give it a try. Here's how to do Meditation for a Calm Heart, how it works, and why it's so special to me.

How to Do It:

1. Sit in easy pose with a straight spine, close the eyes or look straight ahead and leave the eyes 1/10th open.
2. Place the left hand palm down on your heart center. Bend the right arm resting the elbow against the side of the body, and hold the right hand in gyan mudra (thumb and pointer finger meeting with the other fingers extended) at the level of the shoulder.
3. Inhale deeply and retain the breath as long as you comfortably can.
4. Then, exhale slowly and hold the breath out as long as you comfortably can.
5. Continue for 3-5 minutes.

Note: Do not hold the breath in or out so long that you're gasping or in distress. You may need to experiment a bit. In my experience, holding the breath out is more difficult than holding the breath in. It can be frightening because there is no breath, and some even start to feel panicked. This is an opportunity to confront and move beyond fears.

How It Works:

How can it be that a mudra and a breath pattern work? First, placing the left palm on the heart center brings a stillness and helps direct the prana to its ideal home: the lungs and heart. Usually the right side of the body is the projective, active side, but for this meditation the right hand is placed in a

receptive position, bringing more stillness and calm. Through the breath work, you build up the prana of the lungs and heart, creating health for the body and peace for the mind.

Why It's Special to Me:

During my teacher training, we were taught and assigned Meditation for a Calm Heart as our first 40-day sadhana. So, in part, this meditation is special to me because it was the first practice I committed to for 40-days. But, it's more than that. I embarked right away on performing the meditation, but I neglected to do the reading about it and its benefits. At this time, someone close to me was going through a very difficult time, and I was the sounding board and sometimes the dart board. I'd noticed that I wasn't suffering the stress of the situation. I was riding it out in neutrality. Then, after about 20-days into the sadhana, I finally did my reading homework and there it was: "It will be easy to gain perspective on relationships and easy to have forgiveness for those things that upset or threaten you, allowing a deeper sense of security and awareness to guide your judgment." To me, this was pure magic. It wasn't a placebo effect or psychosomatic. I had really changed internally. Wahe Guru!

The Meditation for a Calm Heart can be found in Meditation as Medicine by Dharma Singh Khalsa, MD.