



The NEW MIA Daily Meditation Challenge

A 10-Day Self-Directed Activity Incentive Program

March 14 to 23, 2022

For those of us who lived through the late 70's and 80's, you may recall the popular catch phrase "Calgon, take me away." The intention behind this heavily aired slogan was simple. Reciting the words "Calgon, take me away" was a call for a stress break. A plea for a few moments of peace and quiet after a stressed-out day with work, kids, traffic and all the chaos. This catch line recognized a feeling of being overwhelmed and needing to let go of one's worries and troubles for just a short time.

In the 21st century, we can think of Calgon as meditation. Giving ourselves a time-out or stress break to just breathe. Lots has changed since the 70's and 80's but one thing remains; humans crave and need moments of peace and quiet in times of high stress. It is crucial that we take stress breaks or recovery breaks during the day to practice strategies that will decrease our stress levels and improve our psychological and overall wellness. Borrowing the words of Dr. Bernadette Melnyk, Chief Wellness Officer at Ohio State University, "Wellness is not a nicety, it is a necessity."

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a heightened level of psychological stress for many of us. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "one in five Americans report struggling with mental or behavioral health issues associated with Covid19, including anxiety, depression, increased substance use and suicidal thoughts (Columbia News, January 2021). We are witnessing a mental health pandemic growing within the Covid19 pandemic. As a global community, we need strategies to counteract the harmful psychological effects that this data speaks to and we need to prioritize self-care.

**“Meditation is the ultimate mobile device;
you can use it anywhere, anytime, unobtrusively”**

— Sharon Salzberg, Author and Meditation Teacher

MIA 
Well Aware
Work Well. Live Well.

Open to all employees, only MIA/BCBS members are eligible for prizes.

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Program Requirements

1. Commit to sitting down for 3-5 minutes to meditate for at least 8 out of the 10 days. You can practice the same meditation every day or mix it up.
2. Sample some of the various styles of meditation outlined below or select your own meditation. Being consistent with the practice is more important than the length that you practice so be kind to yourself and avoid judging the quality of your practice. The best meditation is the one that feels right for you.
3. No registration is necessary. Complete the log and prize form attached and send to Mary Harrington, mharrington@mma.org or mail to Mary Harrington, MIIA, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 by April 8, 2022.

What is Meditation?

Meditation is a stress reduction tool that has been around for thousands of years. Meditation can be defined as directed attention on the breath or an alternative anchor (sounds, body sensations) for a sustained period of time.

In meditation, we are resting our attention on the breath (or other anchor) while noticing what the mind is up to. In this experience of focused attention, we often notice that our focus gets hijacked by particular feelings, worrying thoughts or nearby sounds.

But, the good news is that we are not tasked with the responsibility of getting rid of these thoughts when meditating. Rather, meditation asks that we just notice the thoughts come and go, like clouds, and then escort the attention back to the breath (or other anchor). Having the awareness of a wandering mind is the real skill behind meditation. Breath is medicinal and just as the physical body requires daily movement to stay physically fit and well, the mind needs daily exercise to stay cognitively abled and fit.

Meditation has grown in popularity over the last few decades due to its well-researched benefits, including decreasing stress, heart rate, breathing rate, anxiety and improving concentration, mood, sleep and resilience. Meditation, used in conjunction with other healthy lifestyle habits, like exercise, a healthy diet and sleep can have a profound positive effect on one's health.

Meditation is one of those skills that anyone can learn and it requires no props, equipment or credit card. The only expectation is that you show up with a willingness to sit still in a quiet space for a few minutes and breathe with awareness.

Digital Meditation Resources:

Headspace App

10% Happier App

Calm App

tarabrach.com/guided-meditations/

bensohnhenryinstitute.org/guided-relaxation-exercises/

self-compassion.org/category/exercises/

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To help get you started, below are various styles of meditation that you can use for this challenge. You can stick with the same meditation throughout the challenge or try different ones from this list or your own research.

1. Breathing Meditation

A simple focus on the inhale and exhale of the breath as you sit comfortably in a quiet space. Notice the rise and fall of the belly and if the mind wanders, redirect your focus back on the breath.

2. Guided Imagery/Visualization

This style of meditation is like a mini mental vacation. Visualize yourself in a particular setting like a beach or a garden, and using your senses, including sounds and smells, experience the impact this self-selected place has on your mind and body.

3. Movement Meditation

This style of meditation involves paying attention to the movement and sensations in the arms and legs and your whole body. Move with awareness. Yoga is another movement meditation where we pay attention to the breath and the sensations in the body while moving from pose to pose.

4. Body Scan

This is a slow, mental scanning of your whole body from feet to top of head. This can be done seated or lying down. Check in with your body and notice how various parts of the body feel (painful, achy, energized, relaxed).

5. Loving Kindness Meditation

Silently repeating phrases that offer kindness to yourself and others. An example of a phrase could be "may I be happy, may I be healthy, may I live with ease and may I be full of love and peace". The phrases are always positive and of good quality and can be repeated substituting "I" for "you".

Tips:

1. The nature of the mind is to wander and be busy. Accept that thoughts will come and go and we don't have to take flight with each thought. It's just a thought and thoughts are not necessarily facts.
2. If the mind wanders come back to the present moment. Return to your anchor (breath, sound, body).
3. Be kind to yourself and practice non-judgmental awareness. It takes time for the mind and body to settle (yet it takes no time to trigger the stress response which is why we meditate).
4. The consistency of the meditation practice is more important than the length of the practice. Aim to show up every day, consistently, first and foremost, regardless of the minutes.
5. Do the meditation practice that best resonates with you.

**“Meditation is not about feeling a certain way.
It's about feeling the way you feel”**

— Dan Harris, Author and Founder of Ten Percent Happier

The NEW MIIA Daily Meditation Challenge Log and Prize Form



Please complete the following log form in full. Return it to Mary Harrington at mharrington@mma.org or mail to Mary Harrington, MIIA, 3 Center Plaza, Suite 610, Boston, MA 02108 by April 8, 2022. To earn a prize, you must meditate at least 3-5 minutes at least 8 out of the 10 program dates. Put an X in the box corresponding to the meditation you completed each day. All log forms must be unique in the case where a spouse or dependent is also participating.

Date	Time of day	Meditation 1	Meditation 2	Meditation 3	Meditation 4	Meditation 5	My own meditation
3/14							
3/15							
3/16							
3/17							
3/18							
3/19							
3/20							
3/21							
3/22							
3/23							
Total # of days I meditated:							

Name _____ Employer _____

MIIA/BCBS subscriber: Yes No

Email _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

Prize choice. Choose 1st and 2nd choices. If you don't specify, we will choose your prize. [Click](#) to view below prizes. Can also view at emiia.org. Click on Well Aware, then click on Incentives. Only MIIA/BCBS members eligible for prizes.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature Sound Spa | <input type="checkbox"/> Shake it work out bottle | <input type="checkbox"/> Coleman Food Container |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet Lovers travel kit | <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-massage balls (set of 2) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor headlamp | <input type="checkbox"/> Zuma cooler backpack | <input type="checkbox"/> Salad and Pasta Pals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slope Messenger Bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Fleece Blanket | <input type="checkbox"/> Sinus Soother |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wind chimes | <input type="checkbox"/> Oven mitt | <input type="checkbox"/> Under Armour ® 24 oz. Dominate Water Bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VODAPOD 32-ounce Water Bottle with Time Marker | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand warmers (package of 10) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insulated cotton cooler lunch tote | <input type="checkbox"/> Bamboo cutting board | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Collapsible strainer | |



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