

How to Prepare for Mindfulness Meditation for Stress Reduction Instruction and Practice

When a widespread difficulty like the Coronavirus pandemic grows, it becomes important to draw on our inner strength. It is the time to pause, reflect and bring wisdom, courage and care to ourselves and those around us. We human beings have survived for a thousand generations, helping one another and inspiring each other. We know how to do this. Instead of getting caught in collective fear and anxiety, we can remember to take a breath, center ourselves, and take practical precautions and protections, but calmly and in the spirit of love.

There are unique benefits and unique challenges that come with the Zoom online format.

While preparing for this instruction, inform your family members, roommates, children, or loved ones that you'll be engaging in a meditative practice, and ask them to support you in creating the space and stillness you'll need (doesn't have to be perfect).

It would be wise to silence your cell phone and eliminate any distractions that may be present in your practice space. Because this instruction is being delivered online, the temptation to surf the internet is a real possibility. There will be plenty of time after your retreat to check your email or read a news feed. Allow this period to be a time of practice and stillness for yourself.

- To support yourself and the group we ask that you close all programs except Zoom and turn off all notifications on your devices. If you need help with this, visit the [Zoom Support page](#) for more information.
- Set up auto-reply for email and phone as if you were out of town.
- I welcome you to be fully present with your camera on, as it strengthens the sense of community and the instruction container. You are welcome to blur your background. However, if you need to go to another room or tend to other matters, please turn your video camera off.

- Please don't multitask while online with our community. Engage as fully as you would if we were in person.
- Everyone will be muted when entering or exiting the rooms to cut down on feedback and extraneous sounds. You will be given the ability to unmute yourself at the appropriate time.
- Please refrain from moving your laptop / tablet / phone around with the video camera on. This helps bring a quality of settledness to our online community.
- While on zoom, please don't move around. Keep your phone or computer stationary to minimize distractions for others.

Before you begin the class promptly, it may be wise to organize a few things so that you have what you need on hand. I recommend that you find a comfortable place to engage. Have your preferred meditation cushion or chair ready in the space. Have your journal and pen, water bottle, light jacket, tissues, etc. handy.

By choosing to let go of the usual habits of distraction, online time, unnecessary busyness and tasks that can wait, you can make this a beneficial and healing time. Though initially, a home practice may feel unfamiliar or hard, you will gradually find yourself settling in and feeling grateful for the rewards. Now is the perfect time to draw on the inner strength of meditation and deepen your capacity to live amidst it all with awareness and compassion.

To give ourselves fully to practice at home is to bring the messiness of the home onto practice with us, but it is also to turn the home into a sacred space. We talk a lot about mindfulness in daily life, Well, if there were ever a time for bringing mindfulness and lovingkindness into daily life, this is it!

-Fern LaRocca