

No one ever taught us in medical school how to do what I am about to share with you now, but they did teach us about the harmful effects of stress upon our physical bodies and our emotions. We live in a tense society and are expected to shoulder a lot of things and keep a stiff upper lip. Hence, it is no wonder that we carry so much tension in our shoulders, upper back, neck and jaw.

Meditation and achieving the relaxation response have been documented countless time to benefit everything from pain to asthma to cardiovascular disease.

There are a variety of techniques and levels at which to meditate. The one presented here is designed to help you focus on quieting your mind and to be an easy introduction to the art of meditation.

Position: Either sitting comfortably in a high back chair (figure A), sitting in the lotus position (figure B) or laying flat on the floor (figure C)...really any position that is comfortable for you to be in.

The breath: Breath deeply in and out through your nose with your tongue resting comfortably on the roof of your mouth. If you place a hand below your belly button and one on your chest they should be rising and falling together.

The preparation: Start at your fingertips and try to relax any tension that you feel in your muscles of your hand. Progress your focus up your arms...then into your neck...then into your head...then down your neck to your shoulders, chest and back...then to your stomach and low back...then to your buttocks and eventually to your thighs, legs and feet.

Focus: As an introduction in learning how to focus your mind you are going to count your breaths silently to yourself. On inhalation count "1" to yourself and upon exhalation count "2". Continue counting to yourself up to "10" and then start all over again and repeat the whole process 4-6 times. ***You will be amazed at how just counting your breath will quiet your mind!***

