

# MONTH FOUR

## MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS



Lessons 4-1 to 4-4



# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

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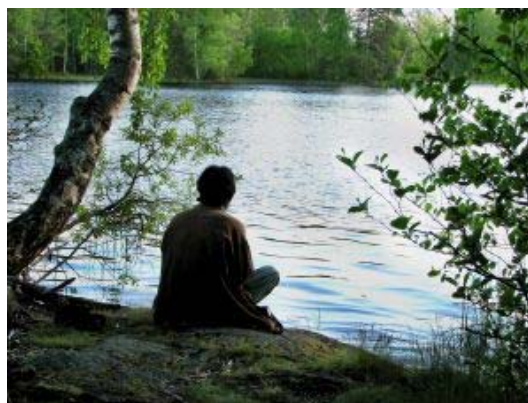
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# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

## MONTH 4, WEEK 1—RELAXATION FOUNDATION

### Lesson 4-1



*The way to do is to be.*

*- Lao Tzu*

### Essential insight—the nature of relaxation

#### Summary

- Your body's relaxation response is a necessary counterbalance to its activation or 'flight and fight' response.
- Fortunately, we can clear the toxic effects of hours of stress with relatively short periods of relaxation.
- Relaxation is an active process, and further, you can quickly and rapidly catalyse your body's relaxation response into action.

After three months of meditation, you've now established a very powerful foundation of meditation. We hope you've enjoyed learning how to sit with energy, how to relax at will and the beginnings of how to focus and concentrate your mind. Now, you are ready to begin applying your meditations specifically to the everyday situations that are most important in your life.

This month, it's stress. And you'll be delighted with this month's discoveries that being able to relax and de-stress can be a highly enjoyable art!

This week, we will be helping you to more deeply understand how relaxation takes place, so you can more efficiently use it in your life especially to combat stress.



Continued...



# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

## This Week’s Practice

Month 4, Week 1—Lesson 4-1

Your suggested practice		
<i>(This week’s new practices are shaded in blue)</i>		
	10 minutes	20 minutes
 <b>1. Movement: Foundation EBR</b>	Choose your own movement programme from the Foundation EBR	Choose your own movement programme from the Foundation EBR and practice Heart Expansion Breath with longer out breath
 <b>2. Parking the body: Tense and relax in 50% steps</b>	Listen to the CD and practice CD1:3	
 <b>3. Concentration: Body Contemplation</b>	Practice for about 3 minutes	Practice for 5 to 7 minutes
<b>Grounding Breath (Prithvi Dharanam)</b>	Practice for a couple of minutes CD1:7	Practice for 5 minutes CD1:7
 <b>4. Entering silence: Extended sitting</b>	Extend your silent sitting to between 3 and 5 minutes	
 <b>During the day</b>	Integrate the Grounding Breath into everyday life situations to decrease stress	

*A great time to relax is when you don't have time for it.  
- Sydney Harris*

## Lesson 4-1 summary

- Learn how to use the Foundation EBR and Heart Expansion Breath to overcome stress and irritation.
- Come back to your centre when you are stressed using body contemplation.
- Use the Grounding Breath in everyday life situations to combat stress
- Challenge yourself to increase the amount of time you do silent sitting.



## 1. Movement: Foundation EBR with longer out breath for stress management

Choose your own movement programme this week from the Foundation Energy Block Release sequence (EBR). Those who want a longer practice can add the Heart Expansion Breath with a longer out breath.

- Heart Expansion Breath x 3.
- Side bends x 2.
- Standing stretches x 3.
- Arm rotations x 3.
- Neck release x2 in each direction.
- Spinal twist x 3 minimum.
- Forward bends.
- Squat.
- Heart Expansion Breath x 3-10.

### Heart Expansion Breath with longer out breath

This is a very useful breath to use if ever you feel irritated—one of our most common stress symptoms. You often find that people who are angry - which is the extreme of irritation - hold their breath in, clench their jaw and don't really let the breath out. The shallow breathing that results just accentuates their feelings of anger. So in focusing on extending the out breath we help to defuse stressful energies stored inside us:

- Stand with feet apart, knees soft. Cross the arms with palms facing outwards.
- Breathe in for a count of four and draw the arms up in front of the body and above the head.



# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

Continued...





## 4. Entering silence: Extended sitting time

We invite you now to extend yourself in your sitting practice by staying in silence from between 3 to 5 minutes. If you find your mind wandering in the silence then explore any awareness of breath or body to bring yourself back to the silence.



## During the day: Grounding Breath in everyday life

Take up the challenge to extend your 'Grounding Breath' practice and to integrate it into your everyday life. So when you have a spare moment just focus inwards and practice Grounding Breath and just notice the difference it makes to your day.

## Insight questions: Revisit the stress questionnaire

This is a superb time to revisit the stress questionnaire from Month One in Week Two.

1. *Are there any significant places where your answers have changed since the beginning of the course?*
2. *Are these changes related to how you feel about yourself or how you manage yourself?*
3. *Are there any changes in how you manage your relationships, how you manage your work or how you manage your main goals and aspirations in life?*



## MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS



*And what is it to work with love?  
It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart,  
even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.*

*It is to build a house with affection,  
even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.*

*It is to sow seeds with tenderness  
and reap the harvest with joy,  
even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.*

*It is to charge all things you fashion  
with a breath of your own spirit.*

*- Kahlil Gibran - The Prophet*

## MONTH 4, WEEK 2—QUICK RELAXATION

### Lesson 4-2



*Sometimes the most urgent and vital thing you can possibly do is to take a complete rest.*

*- Ashleigh Brilliant*

### Essential insights - what quickly activates the relaxation response?

#### Summary

There are a variety of ways to quickly trigger the relaxation response. These include:

- Ensuring you have enough energy to relax, e.g. by clearing tension using systematic stretching.
- Autogenic relaxation is best initiated through the combination of movements, breath awareness and visualisation.

Most of us spend much of our day in stressful situations—meeting deadlines at work, coping with a busy personal life or mixing both together. To cope with our fast-paced, high stress lifestyles, we need all the tools we can get to catalyse our relaxation response into action!



# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

Continued...

## MONTH 4, WEEK 3—INCREASING THE FRAME

### Lesson 4-3



*I need to recover a rhythm in my heart that moves my body first and my mind second; that allows my soul to catch up with me. I need to take a sacred pause, as if I were a sun-warmed rock in the centre of a rushing river.*

*- Dawna Markova*

### Essential insights - stress and perception

#### Summary

- How we perceive our world can determine the amount of stress that we experience in our lives. We can decrease stress by incorporating a more expanded vision of situations that we find ourselves in.

Here is a traditional meditation story that typifies the importance of perception.

A student asks a teacher how to handle all the ups and downs of emotions they experience during the day. 'I often get upset by the things people do, and just as often by the things they don't do!'

The teacher looks at the student kindly and says 'Ahh, I can show you how to overcome this,' and asks the student to bring her a glass of water and some salt. When the student returns, the teacher tells him to add a large spoon of








# MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

Continued...

## This Week's Practice

Month 4, Week 3—Lesson 4-3

Your suggested practice		
	10 minutes	20 minutes
 1. <b>Movement: Waves of Peace Relaxation</b>	Practice while listening to the CD CD1:10	
 2. <b>Parking the body: tense and relax in 50% steps</b>	Briefly practice the technique without the CD	Practice the technique without the CD
<b>Grounding Breath (Prithvi Dharanam)</b>	Practice the technique without the CD but this time use it to dissolve into an ocean of light instead of peace	
 3. <b>Concentration: Increasing the Frame Meditation</b>	Resolve a stressful situation using this technique. Listen to the CD and practice CD 1:11	
 4. <b>Entering silence</b>	Sit silently for 3 - 5 minutes—try not to move at all	
 <b>During the day</b>	Use the Increasing the Frame technique to defuse stressful situations	

*The best of all true things  
is a true heart.  
Without truth  
there is no happiness,  
though you may try a million tricks.  
- Kabir*



## MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

### Lesson 4-3 summary

- The Waves of Peace relaxation balances your central nervous system & releases stress and tension.
- Use 'Grounding Breath' as a grounding and centring preparation for meditation.
- The Increasing the Frame meditation helps you change your perceptions about stressful situations.



### 1. Movement: Waves of Peace relaxation

*CD1 track 10*

This potent yet easy-to-use relaxation is particularly good for when you are very tired, or so stressed or emotional that your mind won't easily focus. Its simple rhythmic movements do the job for you! The sequence balances your central nervous system and enhances the flow of cerebra spinal fluid throughout your spine and brain.

Practice this while listening to the CD.

Continued...



### Insight questions

1. *What was your experience during the Increasing the Frame meditation?*
2. *What happened after you applied the Increasing the Frame meditation as a daily technique to combat stress?*
3. *What other ways can you expand your perception of stressful situations in your life?*



*Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air.*

*You name them - work, family, health, friends, and spirit –  
and you're keeping all of these in the air.*

*You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball.*

*If you drop it, it will bounce back.*

*But the other four balls - family, health, friends, and spirit are  
made of glass.*

*If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked,  
nicked, damaged, or even shattered. They will never be the same.*

*You must understand that and strive for balance in your life.*

*- Brian Dyson, CEO of Coca Cola  
Enterprises from 1959-1994*



## MONTH 4 – MEDITATION FOR OVERCOMING STRESS

### MONTH 4, WEEK 4—EVERY DAY RELAXATION

#### Lesson 4-4



*It is requisite for the relaxation of the mind that we make use, from time to time, of playful deeds and jokes.*

*- Thomas Aquinas*

### Essential insights—quick relaxation techniques

#### Summary

- While deep relaxation techniques are very important in counterbalancing the stresses of life, a myriad of smaller opportunities for relaxation can be found throughout each day.
- Taken together, these many small opportunities for relaxation can form an extremely important contribution to your health and well-being.
- There are many ways of relaxing the body, heart and mind that can be simply derived from your skilful choice of daily activities.

So far in the course we have introduced you to a number of very powerful relaxation techniques, which have the potential to send almost anybody into a blissful state of deep relaxation. In order to counterbalance the many stresses in our lives we need periodic bouts of extremely deep relaxation like these.

However, we'll also make huge strides in overcoming stress if we also learn to take advantage of the many smaller opportunities for initiating the relaxation response

Continued...



*Do you have the patience to wait  
till your mud settles and the water is clear?  
Can you remain unmoving  
till the right action arises by itself?  
- Lao-tzu*