



Taking Care of You

Stephen White, ACC, MC, BBA

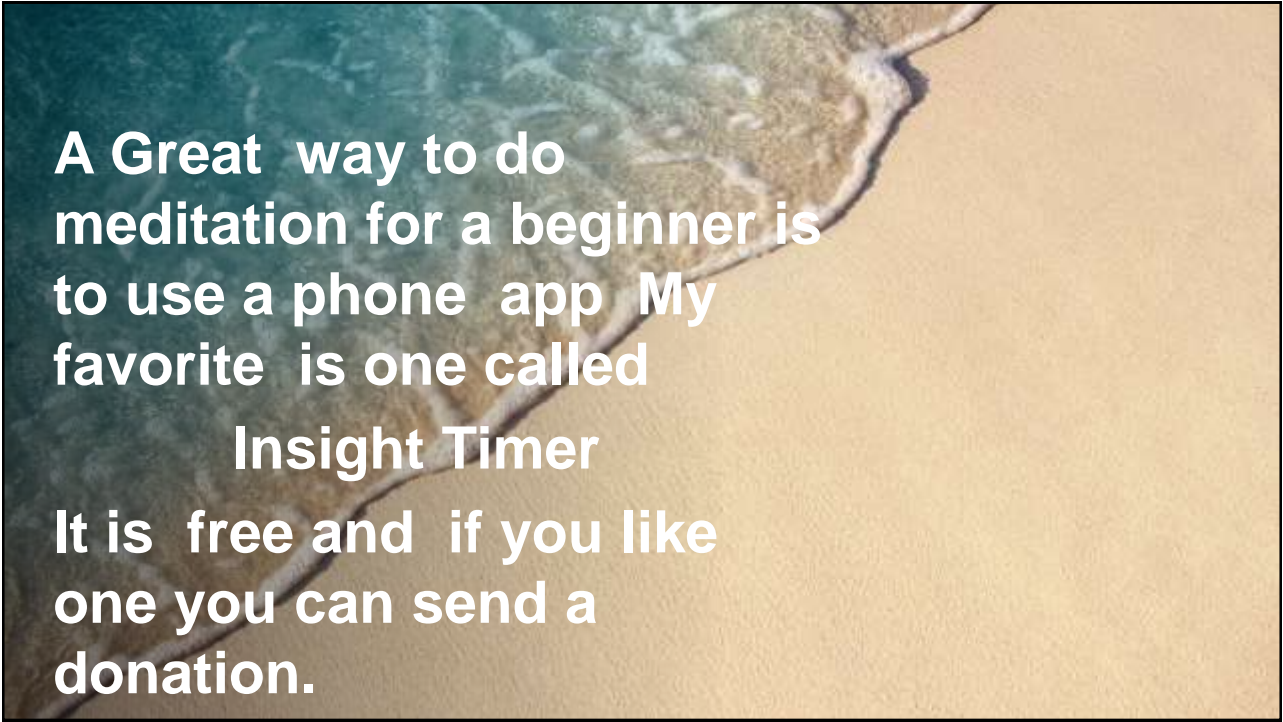
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Meditation

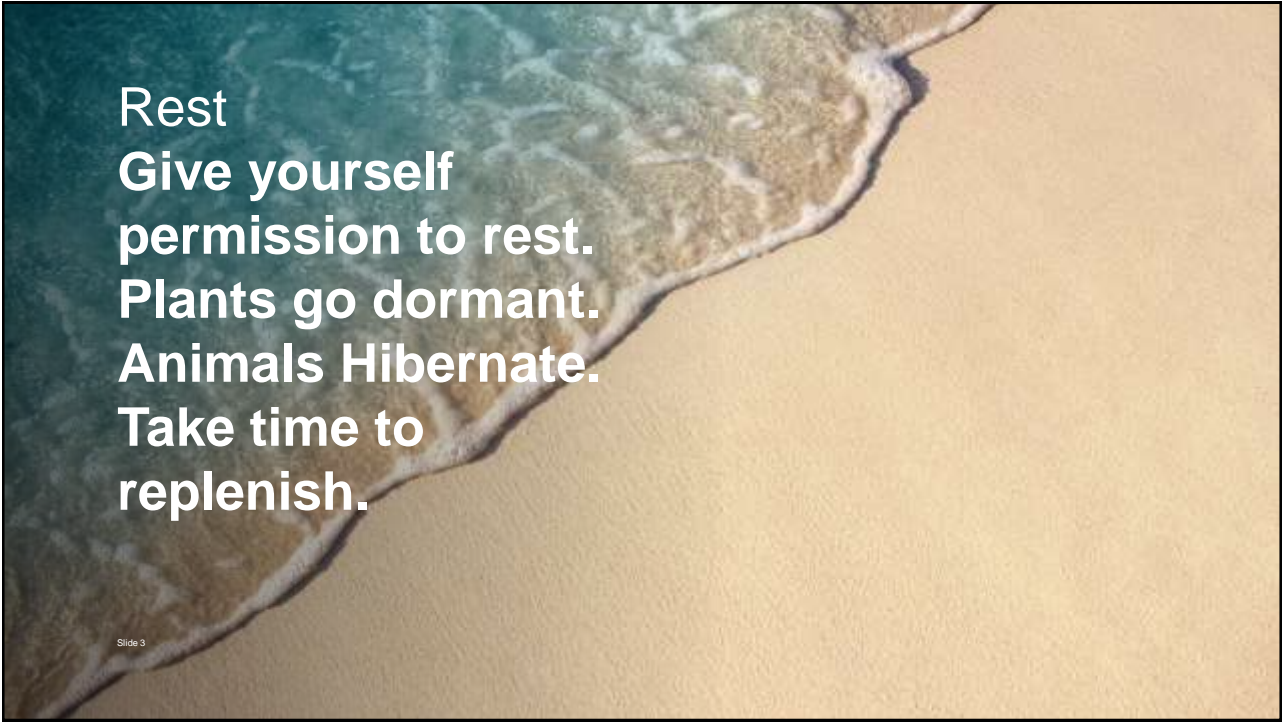
Believe it or not, Daily meditation can have a great impact on your sense of calm



**A Great way to do
meditation for a beginner is
to use a phone app My
favorite is one called**

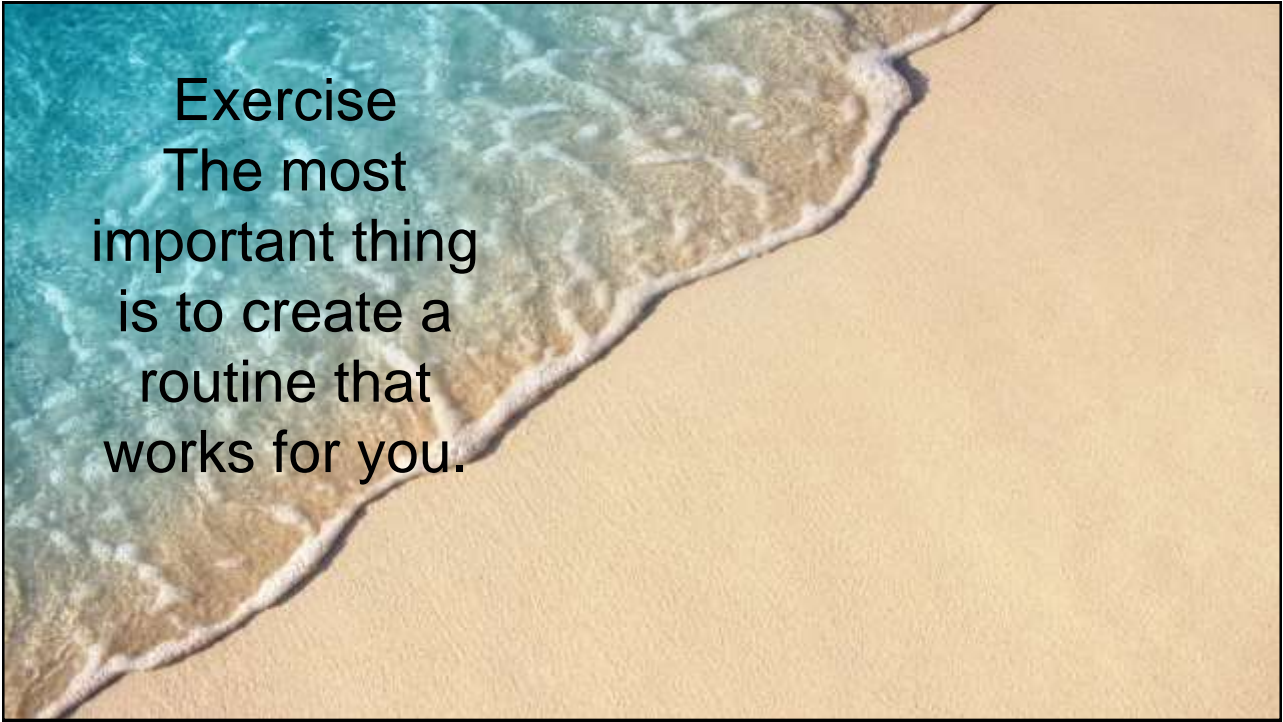
Insight Timer

**It is free and if you like
one you can send a
donation.**

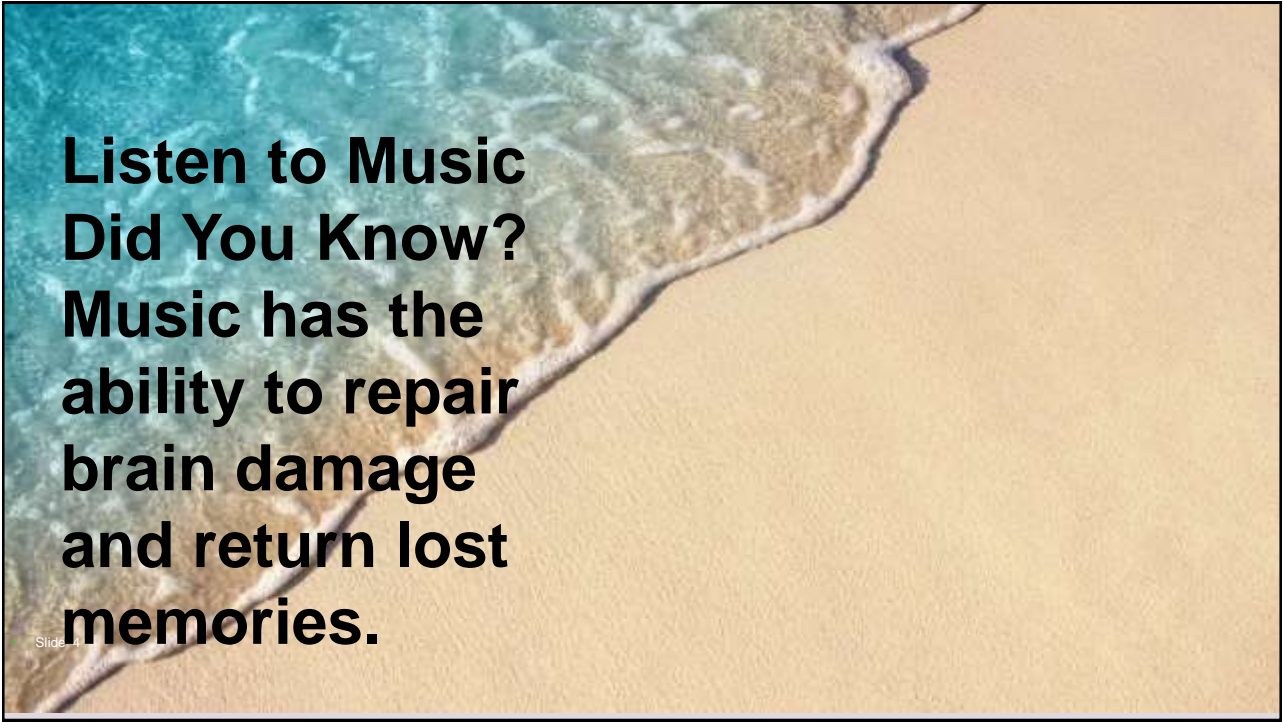


**Rest
Give yourself
permission to rest.
Plants go dormant.
Animals Hibernate.
Take time to
replenish.**

Slide 3

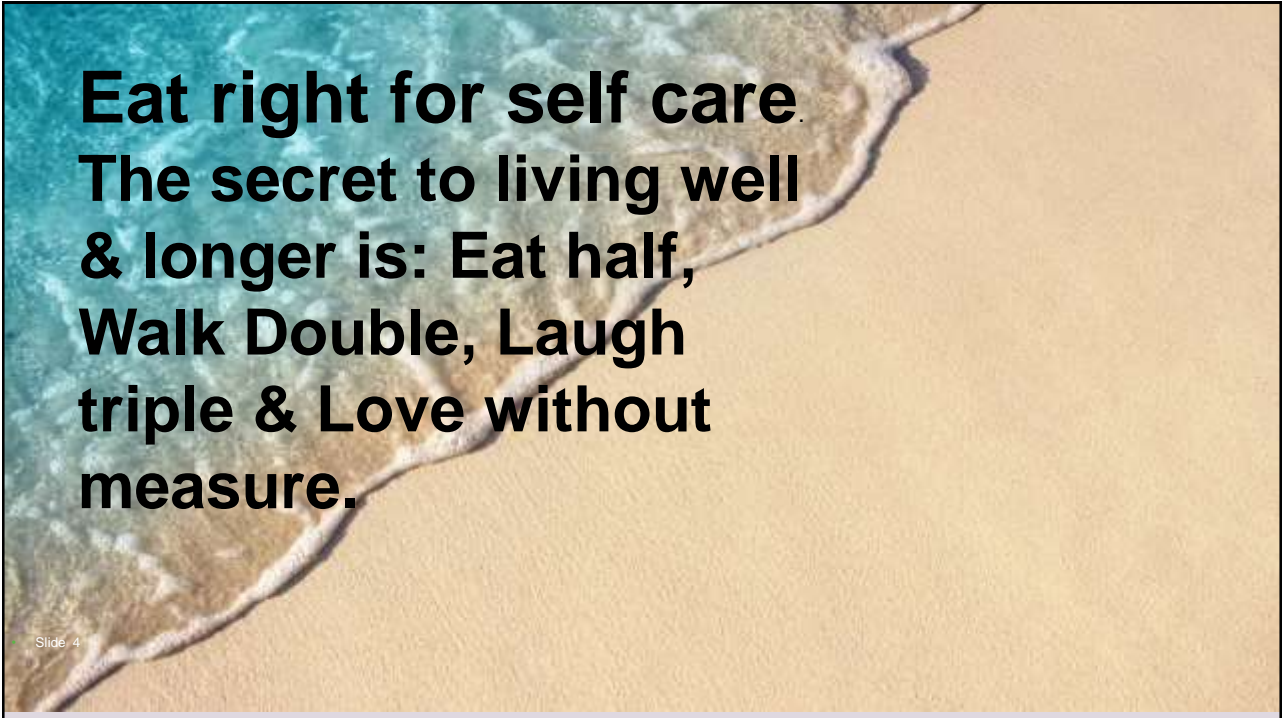


Exercise
The most
important thing
is to create a
routine that
works for you.



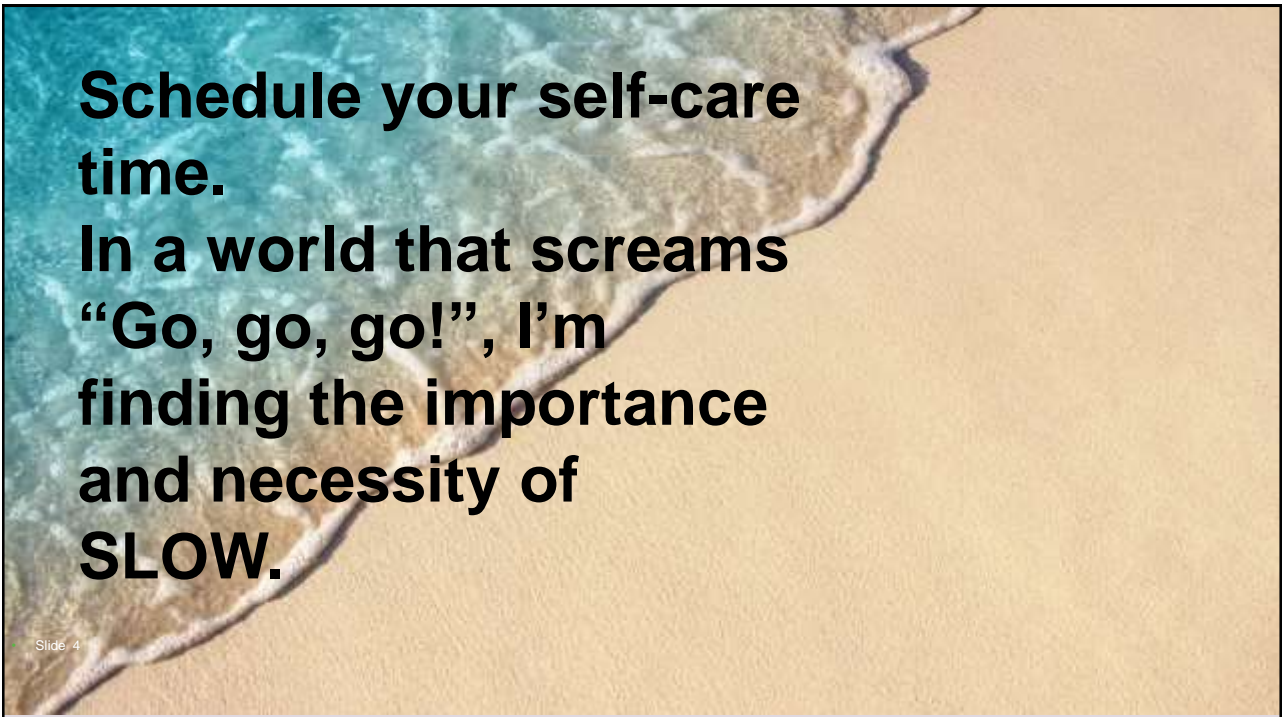
Listen to Music
Did You Know?
Music has the
ability to repair
brain damage
and return lost
memories.

Slide 1



**Eat right for self care.
The secret to living well
& longer is: Eat half,
Walk Double, Laugh
triple & Love without
measure.**

Slide 4



**Schedule your self-care
time.
In a world that screams
“Go, go, go!”, I’m
finding the importance
and necessity of
SLOW.**

Slide 4

Mental Health

Fill a notebook with inspirational sayings, poems, faith based material, jokes, funny photos, and other things that you can look through for inspiration and strength.

Slide 4

Just Breath.....

And remember, when you are stressed is when you most need to look at all the ways you're blessed!

Jane Lee Logan

Slide 4

Starting today,
remember to take care of
yourself. Sometimes you get
so busy taking care of others
that you forget that you
are important too.



How Do You Engage in Self-Care?

Fortunately, there are many things you can do to engage in self-care. You can read about self-care strategies, join self-care programs, or work with a coach or therapist who can help support your progress. No matter what you choose, the goal is to figure out which self-care strategies work best for you, learn how to use these strategies, and implement them in your regular routine so you can boost your well-being not only today but forever.

Here are 12 ways to get started with your self-care.

1. Make sleep part of your self-care routine.

Sleep can have a huge effect on how you feel both emotionally and physically. Not getting enough can even cause major health issues. But stress and other distractions can wreak havoc on our sleep.

What do you do to make sleep part of a self-care routine? Start by thinking about your nightly routine. Are you eating or drinking immediately before bed? If so, it's especially important to stay away from caffeine and sugar, which tend to keep you awake.

Reducing stress is also key. If you have work-related stress, think about the best ways to calm yourself after a hard day or relax more while on the job. You might talk to your employer about lessening your workload or settle a disagreement with a coworker.

Next, make sure your bedroom is the best possible place for you to get good REM sleep. It should be free of distractions (such as a television, laptop, cellphone, etc.). And make sure you have room-darkening curtains to keep the sun from waking you up too early in the mornings.

2. Take care of yourself by taking care of your gut.

Your gut health can have a significant impact on your health, well-being, and feelings of vitality. The types of foods you eat crucially impact the bacteria that live in your stomach, resulting in a cascade of either positive or negative outcomes. Healing the gut can lead to an unhappy person, and vice-versa.

3. Exercise daily as part of your self-care routine.

We all know exercise is good for us, but do we really know how good it is? Daily exercise can help you both physically and mentally, boosting your mood and reducing stress and anxiety, not to mention helping you shed extra weight.

Of course, it might be hard to go to the gym every day, so try to incorporate other exercises, such as walking, tennis, or yoga, which may be able to fit into your schedule more easily. The most important thing is to create a routine that works for you.

4. Eat right for self-care.

The food we eat has the potential to either keep us healthy or contribute to weight gain or diseases such as diabetes, but it can also keep our minds working and alert. Eating the right foods can help prevent short-term memory loss and inflammation, both of which can have long-term effects on the brain and, in turn, the rest of the body. Some of the most amazing self-care foods include fatty fish, blueberries, nuts, green leafy veggies, and brassicas, like broccoli.

5. Say no to others, and say yes to your self-care.

Learning to say no is really hard; many of us feel obligated to say yes when someone asks for our time or energy. However, if you're already stressed or overworked, saying yes to loved ones or coworkers can lead to burnout, anxiety, and irritability. It may take a little practice, but once you learn how to politely say no, you'll start to feel more self-confident, and you'll have more time for your self-care.

6. Take a self-care trip.

Taking a self-care trip can make a huge difference in your life. Even if you're not feeling particularly stressed, getting away for a weekend every now and then can help you disconnect, relax, and be rejuvenated. These self-care trips don't have to be costly; simply drive to the next town over and see the sights, or go camping nearby. The goal is to veer away from your normal schedule and take the time to do something just for yourself.

7. Take a self-care break by getting outside.

Spending time outside can help you reduce stress, lower your blood pressure, and live in the moment. Studies have even shown that getting outside can help reduce fatigue, making it a great way to overcome symptoms of depression or burnout. Getting outside can also help you sleep better at night, especially if you do some physical activity, like gardening, hiking, or walking while you are outside.

8. Let a pet help you with your self-care.

Pets can bring a boost to our lives. From giving unconditional love to providing companionship, pets can be hugely beneficial for our self-care. Dogs especially can help reduce stress and feelings of anxiety and can even lower blood pressure. In fact, many people who suffer from disorders like PTSD have benefited from working daily with animals, which is why service dogs have become so helpful for these individuals.

9. Take care of yourself by getting organized.

Getting organized is often the first step to becoming a healthier you because it allows you to figure out exactly what you need to do to take better care of yourself. A small change, like keeping a planner or a calendar on the fridge, can help you write down all your responsibilities and appointments, while at the same time keeping your life a bit more organized. You can also create an area to keep keys, purses, backpacks, briefcases, and coats, and make sure they're ready to go for the next day.

10. Cook at home to care for yourself.

Many people don't take the time to make themselves meals, preferring instead to stop for fast food or popping a pre-made meal in the microwave. But these "fast" meals aren't usually sufficient when it comes to feeding your body the right kinds of calories and nutrients. Even if it's only once a week, consider making a healthy meal for yourself or your whole family. You could even look into a meal delivery service or meal kit that can help you get started.

11. Read a book on self-care for self-care.

In today's fast-paced world, we tend to turn to our phones for entertainment or comfort, scrolling through news feeds that can contribute to our stress and worries rather than helping it. Instead, consider bringing a self-help book with you when you leave the house. Even better, bring books on self-care so that you can learn more about how to take care of yourself while you are taking care of yourself. You might be amazed at the difference it can make when you slow down instead of always looking at your phone. Not only can it help improve your mood, but it can also help you to stay more present and mindful.

12. Schedule your self-care time, and guard that time with everything you have.

It can be hard for us all to find extra time. But it's extremely important to plan regular self-care time. Moments alone can help you to ponder the best ways to move forward in your life and keep you grounded. And moments with friends can help you feel more connected and relaxed.

Whether you decide you want to go for a long walk, take a hot bath, or enjoy a good movie with friends, taking self-care time is imperative. Look for small ways you can incorporate it into everyday life; for example, you might wake up 15 minutes earlier to sit with a cup of tea and practice deep breathing before the chaos of the day begins, or you might take a walk around the block on your lunch break. The more you can work self-care time into your schedule, the better you'll be able to grow, enjoy your life, and thrive.

Shower Steamers

Materials

- 2 cups baking soda
- 1 cup citric acid
- 1 cup cornstarch
- 3-5 tbsp water
- Essential oils - see below
- Silicone baking/soap molds
- For a cold/flu symptoms, I recommend: 80 drops of eucalyptus essential oil & 40 drops peppermint essential oil
- For a soothing shower, I recommend: 80 drops of lavender essential oil & 40 drops of geranium essential oil

Instructions

1. Place the baking soda, citric acid, and cornstarch in a large bowl. Use a pastry cutter or large whisk to remove lumps and mix well.
2. Add the water SLOWLY, 1 tbsp at a time. You have to be very careful because if you add too much water too soon, the whole thing will fizz up. Just be patient and keep testing by grabbing a handful of the mixture and squeezing it in your hand. As soon as it feels like damp sand (that would be perfect for making a sandcastle), you've added enough water.
3. Add the essential oils, and after every few drops, use your pastry cutter or a fork to mash them into the mixture.
4. Place about 2 tbsp of mixture into each dome, and use the back of a spoon or ice cream scoop to press down and smooth.
5. Leave overnight.
6. Carefully remove from molds and package in a pretty Mason jar or clear gift bag with ribbons and decorations etc.
7. To Store: They will store for up to 6 months in a cool, dark cabinet.

To Use: Take into the shower with you, wet it under the stream of water to get it going. Place the steamer at the far end of the bath/shower stall. You want it to last,

and if it's under the stream of water it will disappear too quickly.

Caution: Because you are bringing oils into the shower, make sure you use a shower mat, and wipe out the shower floor when you are done.

HOW LONG DOES A RICE HEATING PAD STAY HOT?

Well, I'm so glad you asked because I legit spent 3 hours with the stopwatch feature on my phone tracking down the answers for you. Yes, I am a nerd.

For a rice filled heating pad that is 5×7 inches:

- Microwave for 60 seconds and it will be hot/warm for 45 minutes.
- Microwave for 90 seconds and it will be hot/warm for 70 minutes.

RICE HEATING PAD SUPPLY LIST

- fabric (100% cotton)
- binder clips or clothespins
- thread corresponding to the color of the fabric
- [sewing machine](#)
- scissors
- white rice (uncooked and the cheapest you can find)

The size of the fabric will be determined by how you want to use the microwavable heating pads. Need it for your shoulders? I'd start with a piece of fabric that is 20 x 6 inches. Monthly cramps? Try something that is at least 10 x 10. Just keep in mind the size of your microwave because if the rice bag is too large it won't heat evenly.

•



These rice heating pads are great for easing aches and pains (if heated in the microwave), and for boo boos (if put in the freezer). They're perfect for snuggling up to on the couch or placed at your feet in bed to warm up. You can also turn them into an aromatherapy rice bag simply by adding herbs or essential oils.

Even better, these are so simple to make. A monkey could make these. I know, because one of them had to teach me how to use my sewing machine.

This project is just as simple as learning how to make fabric gift bags. I believe in you and you can totally do this project!

- sewing machine
- scissors
- white rice (uncooked and the cheapest you can find)

The size of the fabric will be determined by how you want to use the microwavable heating pads. Need it for your shoulders? I'd start with a piece of fabric that is 20 x 6 inches. Monthly cramps? Try something that is at least 10 x 10. Just keep in mind the size of your microwave because if the rice bag is too large it won't heat evenly.

Try 2 x 2 inch squares to slip into gloves for homemade hand warmers.

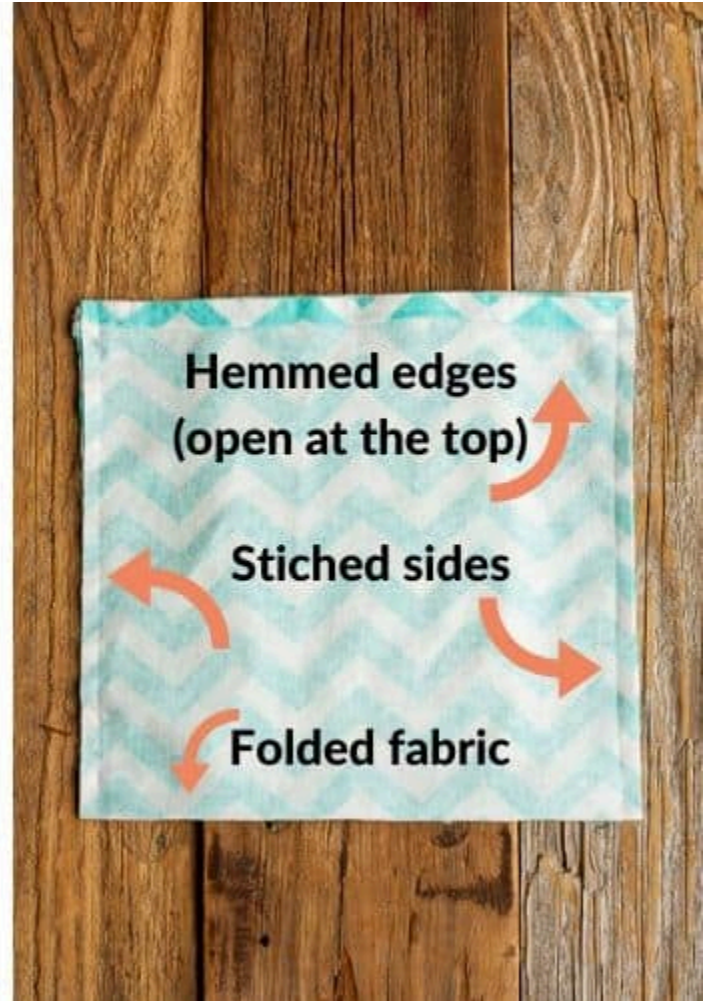
HOW DO YOU MAKE RICE HEATING PADS?

Before we get started, let's talk about two terms – **Right side of the fabric** which is the pretty/printed side. **Wrong side of the fabric**, which is the underside that won't be shown in the final product. Got it?

Start with some cute 100% cotton fabric that is double size of what you want the end product to be.

Decide which part of the fabric will be the top of the bag, and then fold an edge over (~1/4 inch) to create a hem. Press with an iron and pin. Use a sewing machine and sew a basic stitch, back-stitching at the two ends. Then, fold the right sides of the fabric together with the hemmed edges at the top.

Make a basic stitch around the sides like you're creating a pocket, leaving the hemmed edges open.



Next, turn it right side out so that the right side of the fabric is showing. Fill the bag with the rice. **Pro tip:** if you're new to sewing, fill the bag halfway with rice for the first few bags you make. They'll be easier to work with and sew shut. If you're a more experienced sewer, fill bags two-thirds full of rice before sewing shut.



I like to use clips or clothespins to keep the rice in while sewing. Use a basic stitch and sew the two hemmed sides together.



That's it! You've done it and you're now officially awesome! Once you get the hang of the process, you can knock out a DIY rice heating pad in under 10 minutes. I whipped up these four in 30 minutes, INCLUDING taking all the step-by-step photos.



CAN YOU WASH A RICE HEATING PAD?

If you make your bags without a separate cover, they are not washable. You could always slip your rice bag into a pillowcase or cover it with a towel if you think it is going to get dirty. Or, make something like these [Zero Waste Produce and Bulk Bin Shopping Bags](#) and slip the rice heating pad in and close the drawstring. You can clean the bag as often as needed.

CAN YOU HEAT A RICE BAG WITHOUT A MICROWAVE?

Yes! I once made a huge microwavable heating pad for my husband's lower back...without realizing it wouldn't fit in our microwave. Doh! We would heat it in the oven on [a baking sheet](#) for 15 minutes at 300 degrees F.

HOW TO MAKE AROMATHERAPY RICE BAGS

My preference is to add 1-2 drops of the essential oil to the outside of the fabric so that I can change the oils as needed. But, if you want to scent your rice, add 15 drops of essential oils per 2 cups of rice.

I don't sell oils for an MLM, but we do use them in our house. For kiddos with colds, I microwave the aromatherapy rice bags for 60 seconds and then add 2 drops of [this kid-safe Germ Buster](#). For help sleeping, I use 1 drop of [Sleep Aid](#).

Other lovely scents for your rice bags are [lavender](#) (I limit the use of this oil around all the males in my house), [peppermint](#), [lemon/grapefruit](#), or a homemade "Vicks" blend of [lavender](#), [eucalyptus](#), and [rosemary](#). You can use those same oils in my [Homemade Vicks Soother Tablets](#).

And if you're dealing with sick kids, go make yourself some cozy and comforting soup like [Instant Pot Chicken and Dumplings](#). You're going to need it.

PRO TIPS

- If your rice heating pads are more than 10 x 10 inches, the rice will shift around quite a bit. You can solve this issue by sewing segments called baffles to keep the rice in place before sewing the hemmed edges together. Turn the fabric right side out, then sew a straight line from the bottom end to the top.

You'll want to make a few of these lines and add rice to each segment. See photo at the bottom of the post as an example.

- If you use flaxseed or cherry pits as filler, place 1 cup of water in the microwave while you're heating the bags (don't get the bags themselves wet). Both flax and cherry pits are great if you need your bag to have a moist heat. Moist heat is wonderfully soothing for earaches.
- These microwavable heating pads are great if you're a nursing mom and are dealing with clogged ducts or a difficult letdown. Make small versions and place them after heating in your bra for 5 minutes prior to nursing/pumping.
- I would not recommend adding herbs or essential oils to nursing heating pads without approval from a lactation consultant, your midwife or OBGYN.
- Always test the temperature of the rice bag before allowing kids to use them. Some microwaves heat the filling unevenly and you want to be extra cautious.
- A 10 x 10 rice bag heated for 90 seconds would be great to keep dishes warm at potlucks or holiday dinners.

How to Get Started With Meditation

Believe it or not, daily meditation can have a great impact on your sense of calm. Learning how to meditate for only 20 minutes a day can have significant health changes. Whether or not you have a daily meditation in mind or not, regular meditation can create sense out of our hectic lives. This meditation article addresses how to meditate, and how to choose your own daily meditation practices.

Meditation: Practice the Art of Peace

"Calmness is the ideal state in which we should receive all life's experiences," writes Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952), founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship, in the book *Inner Peace*. Yogananda is regarded as one of the great spiritual teachers melding East and West. Through meditation, he writes, one can cultivate a wonderful inner quiet that will melt away stress and nervousness.

But to meditate, one must break away, however briefly, from the world. Turn off your cell phone and pager, disconnect the fax machine, shut down the computer and turn on the answering machine...allow no interruptions during this special time.

Meditation is the perfect antidote for the constant intrusion of technology in our lives. In fact, recent research has shown that meditating twice per day for about 20 minutes can actually reduce blockages in your blood vessels, significantly lowering the risk of sudden death by heart attack or stroke.

Contents

Tips for Meditation

Here are a few tips to get you started:

- **Where Should I Meditate?** You may wish to set aside a special corner of one room, your own private sanctuary, a calm, quiet and peaceful place. You might furnish the area with objects or icons that have spiritual meaning for you, developing a little altar or shrine. Use what will put you into a contemplative frame of mind. You may want to enlist the help of Mother Nature. Spend time at the ocean listening to the surf crashing upon the rocks...walk through a shaded forest trail with a cathedral of trees overhead...stand near a stream with water playing over the rocks or a waterfall...or watch the moon rise or birds fly overhead.
- **How Should I Sit When I Meditate?** Although the classic posture is to sit with legs folded and hands resting quietly on the lap or the knees, the key is to find a way of sitting that is comfortable for you. And remember, you can meditate anytime, anywhere...even driving in your car.
- **Should My Eyes Be Open or Closed?** Keep your eyes open if possible, to keep all of senses open. The goal is not to fall asleep, but to find yourself in a state of "relaxed alertness." Nor are you seeking a trancelike experience, or an altered state of consciousness. Keep your eyes "soft" — that is, do not focus on anything in particular — and your mouth slightly open.
- **How Long Should I Meditate?** Many texts recommend 20 minutes, twice daily, but it's not how long you meditate; it's whether the practice "brings you to a certain state of mindfulness and presence, where you are a little open and able to connect with your heart essence," writes Sogyal Rinpoche in the "Tibetan Book of Living and Dying."

To begin, try short sessions of four to five minutes; then break for one minute. "It's often during the break that meditation actually happens!" writes Rinpoche. It may also be useful to get into the habit of setting aside the same times every day, be they for prayer or meditation. David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B., a Benedictine monk and

author, recommends rising 15 minutes earlier than usual to give your day a "contemplative dimension." Without these precious moments, he says, "your whole day can slip away into a mad chase," but with them your entire day can be imbued with meaning and joy.

Basics Meditation

Four Basic Ways to Practice Meditation

- **Follow your breath** This is the most universal of all mindfulness techniques. First, exhale strongly a few times to clear the base of the lungs of carbon dioxide. It is helpful to review the technique for following the deep breathing method of imagining a lotus blossom residing in your lower abdomen; as the breath fills the belly, the petals of the blossom expand; as you exhale, the petals close back up.
- **Observe an icon or object** Allow your mind to rest lightly on an object. If you come from the Christian tradition, this might be an image of Christ, the Virgin Mary or the Holy Spirit.

If you are inspired by Eastern spiritual traditions, you might reflect upon an image or icon of the Buddha. You can also use a flower, crystal, or other object that has meaning for you. Lightly allow your attention to sit there, quietly and peacefully.

- **Recite a mantra** A mantra literally means "that which protects the mind." So reciting a mantra protects you with spiritual power. It is also said that when you chant a mantra, you are charging your breath and energy with the energy of the mantra. Again, choose something with meaning for you within your spiritual tradition: recite the Rosary, for example. Tibetan Buddhists use a mantra for peace, healing, transformation and healing. "Recite the mantra quietly, with deep attention, and let your breath, the mantra and your awareness become slowly one," writes Rinpoche.
- **Do a Guided Meditation.** Guided meditation is akin to guided imagery, a powerful technique that focuses and directs the imagination toward a conscious goal. (Think of a diver imagining a "perfect dive" before he leaves the platform.) Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk who is a scholar, poet, peace activist and author. He suggests trying a very simple — yet profound — guided meditation that you can learn by yourself.

Seek Inspiration

Is It Really Meditation?

The techniques described here are meditation *practices* rather than meditation itself, which is often described by experienced practitioners as "a state of being — a state of receptivity without expectation, a merging with the Divine." All of the techniques are practice to get to this final merged state.

Therefore, meditation *practice* is not meditation. One might practice meditation for years to achieve a meditative state of being. An experienced meditator might meditate for an hour to achieve a few moments of meditative consciousness.

Benefits of Meditation

The Benefits of Meditation Are Subtle

While you may not feel flashes of insight when practicing meditation, its effects will become apparent to you later, when you may notice that you responded to a crisis with uncharacteristic calmness, or failed to get "triggered" in a situation that would normally disturb you. Trust in the process, let go of your expectations of achieving "results" (after all, meditation is not a contest), and you will reap the results.

The real miracle of meditation, says Rinpoche, is a subtle transformation that happens not only in your mind and your emotions but also in your body. And, this transformation is a healing one. "Even your cells are more joyful."

Get Started With This Guided Meditation

- Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. (In) Breathing out, I know I am breathing out. (Out)
- Breathing in, my breath grows deep. (Deep) Breathing out, my breath goes slowly. (Slow)
- Aware of my body, I breathe in. (Aware of body) Relaxing my body, I breathe out. (Relaxing body)
- Calming my body, I breathe in. (Calming body) Caring for my body, I breathe out. (Caring for body)
- Smiling to my body, I breathe in. (Smiling to my body) Easing my body, I breathe out. (Easing body)
- Smiling to my body, I breathe in. (Smiling to body) Releasing the tensions in my body, I breathe out. (Releasing tensions)
- Feeling joy (to be alive), I breathe in. (Feeling joy) Feeling happy, I breathe out. (Feeling happy)
- Dwelling in the present moment, I breathe in. (Being present) Enjoying the present moment, I breathe out. (Enjoying)
- Aware of my stable posture, I breathe in. (Stable posture) Enjoying the stability, I breathe out. (Enjoying)

Source: "Blooming of a Lotus"(Parallax Press)by Thich Nhat Han

Meditation

Need a few minutes to relax?

Get comfortable in your chair. Loosen any tight, uncomfortable clothing. Let your arms rest loosely at your side. Allow yourself a few moments to relax.

If your thoughts wander, just let them while gently moving your attention back to the relaxation. If you become anxious or uncomfortable, stop the relaxation by clicking on the pause button.

To begin, focus your eyes on the candle flame. Notice its simplicity and its beauty.

Take time to notice your breathing, gradually slowing down the rate of inhaling and exhaling as you become more comfortable.

Now relax and enjoy the feeling.

Close your mouth and relax your shoulders, releasing any tension that's built up.

Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Let the air you breathe in push your stomach out.

Hold your breath in as you slowly count to four.

Breathe out slowly through your mouth as you continue counting up to six.

Breathe in (three, four, five, six).

Hold (two, three, four).

Breathe out (three, four, five, six).

Breathe in (three, four, five, six).

Hold (two, three and four).

Breathe out (three, four, five, six).

Breathe in (three, four, five, six).

Hold (two, three, four).

Breathe out (three, four, five, six).

Breathe in (three, four, five, six).

Hold (two, three, four).

Breathe out (three, four, five, six).

Breathe in (three, four, five, six).

Hold (two, three, four).

Breathe out (three, four, five, six).

Continue breathing in (four, five, six).

Hold (two, three, four).

And out (three, four, five, six).

Remember, if stray thoughts enter your mind, gently return your attention to the relaxation.

Now, as you breathe out, silently and calmly repeat to yourself:

My breathing is smooth and rhythmic.

My breathing is smooth and rhythmic.

My breathing is easy and calm.

My breathing is easy and calm.

It feels very pleasant.

If you'd like, you may close your eyes now and focus on the music, or continue to look at the flame.

Continue to repeat to yourself:

My breathing is smooth and rhythmic.

My breathing is smooth and rhythmic.

I am peaceful and calm.

I am peaceful and calm.

Continue to take deep, rhythmic breaths. Let the tension fade away each time you breathe out. Let the music soothe you.

If you've closed your eyes, gently open them and gaze at the candle flame.

Return to your day peaceful, more focused and relaxed.

Things to do to make yourself Feel Good

1. Compliment three people every day.
2. Watch a sunrise at least once a year.
3. Be the first to say, "Hello."
4. Live beneath your means.
5. Treat everyone like you want to be treated.
6. Never give up on anybody. Miracles happen.
7. Never deprive someone of hope. It may be all he has.
8. Pray not for things, but for wisdom and courage.
9. Be tough-minded but tenderhearted.
10. Be kinder than necessary.
11. Don't forget, a person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.
12. Keep your promises.
13. Learn to show cheerfulness, even when you don't feel like it.
14. Leave everything better than you found it.
15. When you arrive at your job in the morning, let the first thing you say brighten everyone's day.