GUIDED MEDITATION

Regular meditation has demonstrated its effectiveness in significantly decreasing stress and anxiety levels among individuals. Allocating a portion of your daily routine to concentrate on your breath and clear your mind can lead to a reduction in both the physical and emotional manifestations of stress and anxiety.

It takes practice and intentionality to clear your mind.

Here are five compelling reasons to incorporate meditation into your life:

- **Gain Insight into Your Challenges:** Explore and understand your emotional and physical discomfort through meditation, fostering a deeper understanding of yourself.
- **Stress Reduction:** Harness the power of meditation to lower stress levels, promoting a calmer and more balanced state of mind.
- **Enhanced Connection:** Cultivate better connections with yourself and others by incorporating meditation into your routine, fostering a sense of mindfulness and presence.
- **Sharper Focus:** Improve your ability to concentrate and stay present with regular meditation practice, enhancing your overall focus and productivity.
- **Quiet the Mind:** Use meditation as a tool to reduce the constant mental chatter, providing a peaceful space for your thoughts and promoting mental clarity.

HOW TO MEDITATE:

Choose a Relaxing Spot to Sit	Find a quiet and calming place to sit comfortably.
Set a Time Boundary	Especially if you're a beginner, start with a brief time frame, like five or 10 minutes.
Be Mindful of Your Body	Whether you're in a chair with your feet on the floor, sitting cross-legged, or kneeling, ensure stability and comfort in a position you can maintain.
Focus on Your Breath	Pay attention to the sensation of your breath as you inhale and exhale.
Acknowledge Mind Wanderings	It's natural for your attention to drift away. When you notice your mind wandering, simply guide your focus back to your breath.
Embrace a Gentle Approach	Avoid judgment or fixation on your thoughts. Return to the breath with kindness each time.
Conclude with Awareness	When ready, slowly lift your gaze or open your eyes. Take a moment to observe the sounds around you, check in with your body, and acknowledge your thoughts and emotions.

That's the essence of the practice—directing your attention, acknowledging distractions, and returning with kindness as many times as needed.

There are many apps, videos and websites that can provide guided meditation for you.

- A good beginners guide with 1, 10, 15 minute audio meditations is available at mindful.org.

- At Emory, the Emory Buddhist Club provides a free, weekly, on-campus opportunity for anyone with any interest in Buddhism to meet, practice, and learn with senior Buddhist teachers from the Atlanta area. The weekly meditations are held in Cannon Chapel on the Atlanta campus, Thursdays at 6 p.m.

- Additionally, you can explore undergraduate and graduate courses in contemplative practice and meditation from the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics.