



FITNESS HOMEWORK: Meditation and Concentration

Using Meditation to Enhance Concentration in the Classroom

Meditation is a skill that will benefit your students, whether it be in Algebra, English or Physical Education class. A meditation session only takes a few minutes prior to the beginning of your scheduled lesson and may greatly enhance the attention-span and concentration of your students.

How to Start

Meditation should be practiced in a quiet environment, free from distractions. Use the following guidelines to begin your meditation session:

1. Have your students sit in a comfortable position, making sure their head, arms, feet and back are well supported.
2. Students may keep their eyes open or closed. If they keep their eyes open, they should focus their attention on a spot on the wall to prevent visual distractions.
3. Instruct students to breathe in a smooth, rhythmic manner and focus their attention on their breathing.
4. Students should then center their attention on their feet, attempting to feel any tension that might be in that area. They imagine all the tension flowing from that area, and feel the feet becoming heavy and relaxed. They slowly progress upwards to the ankles, calves, knees, thighs, groin, hips, abdominals, chest, back, shoulders, upper arms, forearms, wrists, hands, neck, face and forehead. They scan each of these areas in succession, trying to locate tension, and allowing the tension to flow from their body. This will create a feeling of heaviness and, eventually, total body relaxation.
5. Once your students are fully relaxed, they should once again center their attention on a smooth, rhythmic breathing pattern. They should inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.
6. Now comes the “mantra.” Every time your students inhale, they should repeat in their mind the word “one.” When they exhale, they repeat the word “two.” Inhale—“one”, exhale—“two”, etc. They should attempt to maintain their rhythmic counting for up to five minutes or longer. Actually, any emotionally neutral word could be substituted for “one” and “two.”
7. When you wish to end the session, instruct your students to gradually focus their attention on their body, then their surroundings. Take a few moments for everyone to appreciate their state of relaxation. To complete the session, you could ask for descriptions of how their body felt when they were relaxed.
8. Once your students have acquired good meditative skills, they can practice anywhere—on the bus, between classes, in the library. In addition to providing a method for relieving stress, meditation will increase your students’ ability to concentrate, which is helpful to anyone.