

This week at Making Moves, we are discussing how important meditation is for our soul. Meditation means transforming the mind. By engaging with a particular meditation practice you learn the patterns and habits of your mind, and the practice offers a means to cultivate new, more positive ways of being. With regular work and patience these nourishing, focused states of mind can deepen into profoundly peaceful and energised states of mind. Such experiences can have a transformative effect and can lead to a new understanding of life.



The benefits of meditation are manifold. It is an essential practice for mental hygiene. A calm mind, good concentration, clarity of perception, improvement in communication, blossoming of skills and talents, an unshakeable inner strength, healing, the ability to connect to an inner source of energy, relaxation, rejuvenation, and good luck are all natural results of meditating regularly.

In today's world where stress catches on faster than the eye can see or the mind can perceive, meditation is no more a luxury. It is a necessity. To be unconditionally happy and to have peace of mind, we need to tap into the power of meditation.

There are many different forms of meditation; however, the common goal is to find a quiet place that you are comfortable, close your eyes, and try to clear your mind. While your eyes are closed, observe your chest, shoulders, rib cage and belly. Make no effort to control your breath; simply focus your attention. If your mind wanders, simply return your focus back to your breath. Maintain this **meditation** practice for 2–3 minutes to start, and then try it for longer periods.

4 WAYS TO GET YOUR KIDS TO MEDITATE

1. Listen! Bell Meditation - Invite kids to sit up tall in “criss-cross applesauce” and let their eyes close. Ring a bell or singing bowl, and ask kids to use their sense of hearing to explore the sound. Ask them to listen very carefully, and as soon as they hear it stop, raise their hand. They can then practice attentive listening without the bell. Close your eyes and listen to the sounds in your space. Which are closest to you? Which are far away? Which to the left, or right? You can also try this meditation while walking down the street or lying in bed before falling asleep. (Thanks to Little Flower Yoga for the bell tip!)

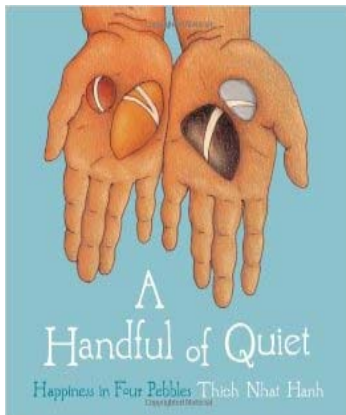
2. Sing! Relaxation Song - This meditation combines song with touch and brings even the youngest of kids to a place of peace. Invite kids to sit up tall. Sometimes we sing the syllables Sa Ta Na Ma, or sometimes an English affirmation like “I Am Strong.” With each syllable, touch a different finger to your thumb, starting with the pointer finger and moving to the pinky. We practice singing, whispering, and singing quietly to



ourselves in our minds. This is a self-soothing exercise and can be done discretely anywhere kids want to calm down, from the train to the classroom desk to the dinner table.

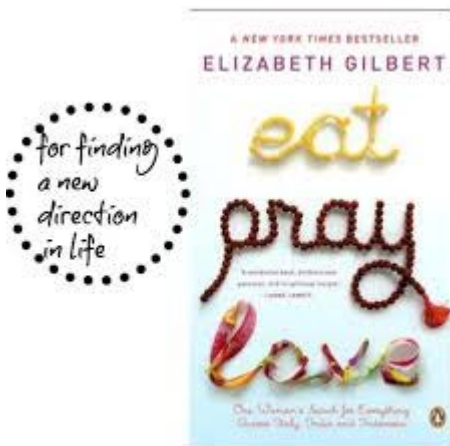
3. Breathe! Take Five Breath - Your breath is always with you. Learning to check in to it from an early age is a major tool. Try "take 5 breath" where you inhale for five, and exhale for five. Use your fingers to count as you breathe. Slowing your breath will slow down your mind. Can you feel your heart rise and fall as you breathe? Can you feel the breath enter and leave your nose?

4. Watch! Cloud Gazing - Sitting quietly, pay attention to your inhale and exhale. When thoughts or feelings come up, think of them like clouds passing through your mind, which is like the sky. You can watch the clouds come and go just like you can watch clouds in the sky move and shift in their shapes. Kids may not sit too long, but just introducing this concept is a great preparation for adult meditation. And the awareness that things are always changing and things do pass is important to share and practice observing with kids.



A Good Read...

A Handful of Quiet presents one of the best known and most innovative meditation practices developed by **Thich Nhat Hanh** as part of the Plum Village community's practice with children. Pebble meditation is a playful and fun activity that parents and educators can do with their children to introduce them to meditation. It is designed to involve children in a hands-on and creative way that touches on their interconnection with nature. Practicing pebble meditation can help relieve stress, increase concentration, nourish gratitude, and can help children deal with difficult emotions



Eat Pray Love

Liz Gilbert (Julia Roberts) thought she had everything she wanted in life: a home, a husband and a successful career. Now newly divorced and facing a turning point, she finds that she is confused about what is important to her. Daring to step out of her comfort zone, Liz embarks on a quest of self-discovery that takes her to Italy, India and Bali.