

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

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## What do I need?

Technically, all you need is your breath—and an open mind—to meditate. Although a good set of [headphones or ear buds](#) wouldn't hurt. But other than that, you don't need a special meditation cushion (zafu). And you certainly don't need a singing bowl or Buddha beads! Really, all you need is a desire to calm your mind. You can practice meditation anywhere. In fact, I've done some of my best meditating on a bumpy flight in the stormy skies over Colorado! Ideally, you want a good posture when you meditate. But lots of us deal with acute or chronic pain that can make sitting in a certain position for any period of time downright torturous. So R-E-L-A-X and do the best you can. I'll provide routine guidance, but make this your program. There's no fail here.

## What resources will help me on this challenge?

You need three things to succeed on this challenge: Desire, Knowledge, and Food. Now that I just told you that no special purchases or equipment are necessary, if you are just starting out, guided meditation is the way to go. And thanks to a variety of online resources and apps, you have access to some amazing teachers. Here are my all-time favorites:

- [Headspace](#). I've been using the Headspace app off and on for years and I've been blown away by their recent upgrade. While Headspace changes their promotions every now and then, you should be able to sign up to receive ten days free. If you want to continue beyond that, you'll have to pay for a subscription (check to see if Groupon has a deal before you pay full price). The creator and voice behind Headspace is Andy Puddicombe, whose smooth British accent and encouraging guidance is a daily joy!
- [Tara Brach](#) ranks very high on my list of teachers who offer guided meditations. Visit Tara's website to access free guided meditations. Tara's voice is one of comfort and support. If you like Tara's guidance, it might be worth investing in her 40-day meditation course, called Mindfulness Daily.

I've tried a lot of guided meditation websites and listened to dozens of voices as I've experimented over the years. I keep coming back to Headspace and Tara Brach. I want you to know that I've never met Andy or Tara and I certainly don't get any proceeds from my recommendations. They are my personal favorites, but if neither "speak to you," do an online search and try some others.

**SEX! Now that I have your attention... Please try to meditate at least 15 minutes, every day. You know it's good for you. ~ Marcelo Alves**

**~ Marcelo Alves**

The iPhone and Android universe is a mecca of meditation apps. Most of the apps have a free basic version with upcharges to open additional features. Here's a short list of some of the most popular meditation apps.

- **The Mindfulness App** has a five-day guided meditation practice, meditation reminders, and timers
- **Buddhify** offers custom meditation tailored to target a specific aspect of your life
- **Smiling Mind** offers resources for different age groups, and encourages family accounts
- **Calm** offers guided meditation experiences, including a daily ten-minute program
- **Insight Timer** features guided meditations from hundreds of practitioners and music tracks
- **Stop, Breathe & Think** has guided meditation selections, a daily mood tracker, customized chimes

You know what...I'd love to be the voice that guides you every day, but that's not my expertise. So what's my job in this challenge? I'm your coach. Every day for the next 30 days. Let's do this together!  
Are you ready to start?

Before you jump into day 1, it's time to write your plan into your journal.



*Journal your Way to Health!*

What meditation app or program will you use? If that one doesn't work out, what's your backup?

Where will you meditate? Create a relaxing and calm environment in which to practice.

When will you meditate? Designate a time of day and add it to your calendar.

**And NOW you are ready for day 1!**