

# So-Hum Meditation Instructions



by Barbara Frazier

# Introduction

The best tool for regulating the mind and making the most of what it can do is meditation.

Some of the many benefits are as follows:

- Reduces overwhelm and creates calm.
- Decreases the release of stress-related cortisol in the bloodstream.
- Creates emotional space resulting in less reactivity and more proactivity.
- Increases focus and attention.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Increases gray matter in the brain associated with enhanced memory, cognition, and control of emotions.
- Enhances creativity.
- Increases the capacity for empathy, tolerance, and compassion.

# How to Do It

## STEP #1

Choose a quiet place where you can sit without any distraction. You can use noise-blocking headphones if you need to. It's good to have them on hand in case.

Sit upright with your back straight. It's important to keep your spine straight, but you also want to be comfortable.

You can sit cross-legged if that works for you, but it's fine to sit on the edge of a bed or couch with a pillow folded just under your hips or against them so that it's easy to keep your back straight, while resting your feet flat on the floor.

You can also sit in a straight backed chair. The idea is to be comfortable so that your attention isn't drawn to bodily aches or your posture. You want to sit easily without strain.

Place your hands comfortably in your lap. Stay loose.

**STEP #2**

*Do four rounds of Square Breathing as follows:*

Start by taking in a deep breath and gently push your belly out as far as you can while taking in as much air as possible. Then move the air up into your chest by raising your shoulders up towards your ears. Do this to a slow count of 4.

Now hold for a count of 4.

Slowly exhale through your mouth to a count of 4 and lower your shoulders back to normal.

Hold for a count of 4. If you're unable to hold the count after you exhale, then just begin the inhale for the next round.

Begin the whole cycle again and complete it three more times so that you do four cycles in all.

### STEP #3

Now breathe naturally without any attempt to guide your breath. Let it have a life of its own.

Close your eyes and listen to your breath going in and out for a few minutes.

### STEP #4

Next, when you inhale, mentally say the syllable “So” and when you exhale mentally say the syllable “Hum”.

So-Hum, So-Hum . . . .

Continue this for as long as comfortable. A good start would be ten minutes, although five is fine if that's all you can do.

With regular practice, you can eventually increase to 20 or 30 minutes.

## Don't Strain

When you're meditating, thoughts will rush in constantly. When you notice that you've gone off on a thought train, just gently bring yourself back to So-Hum as you watch the in and out of your breath.

This will happen numerous times at first. It's important not to get stressed about that. Happens to everyone this way.

Some people report that they never were able to return to So-Hum after the first time, but that's all right.

The idea is to stay seated for the full duration of the time you've allotted.

Don't get wrapped up in trying to do it perfectly, or even well. This is not an achievement, but a practice. Just do it.

If you don't like the "So-Hum", you can simply say "In" and "Out" with the breath. The So-Hum usually flows very naturally and those syllables are aligned with the in and out breath.

## Best Practice

It's best to meditate on a regular daily schedule.

Meditation has compound effects, meaning the more regular you are and the longer you meditate over time, the more positive effects you will feel.

Don't look for immediate results, even though you may have some.

Pick a regular time of day, and do it everyday.