



## MIND GAMES: SHARPEN YOUR FOCUS THROUGH MEDITATION

Research shows that meditation delivers creativity, focus, and stress relief. Use these techniques from Sharon Salzberg, the author of *Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation*. *Andrea Bartz*

### BEFORE WORK

Duration: 5 to 15 minutes (depending on how late you're running)

→ Sit on a pillow or lie on your back. Take four deep breaths, feeling the air enter your nostrils, fill up your chest, and exit your body. Then, breathing normally, pay attention to where you feel the swooshing air the most—nostrils, chest, abdomen. Put a spotlight on that area, noting the sensations there—vibration, warmth, whatever. (Silently repeating "Inhale . . . exhale" can help you stay focused.)

→ When other thoughts crop up, as they inevitably will, don't throw in the towel or flog yourself for slipping. Just notice them and let them float on by. The act of simply coming back to your breath—that's what meditation is all about.

### BEFORE A MUST-NAIL MEETING

Duration: 1 minute. The more times you can pack this into a day, the better.

→ Do one simple thing. Maybe you finish your cup of coffee and rinse out the mug. Really focus on the sensations of what you're doing and give your mind permission to

settle on one thing instead of the 23 buzzing items on your to-do list. You'll finish even a boring task feeling less scattered, more energetic, and fulfilled by the activity.

### RIGHT BEFORE BED

Duration: 10 to 15 minutes

→ Sit comfortably or lie down. Bring your attention to the top of your head and notice what sensations are there—tingling, say, or itching or aching. (Maybe you notice an absence of sensation, which is fine too.) Very slowly, slide your attention down the front of your face, scanning for things like tightness or pressure in your forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, and cheeks.

→ Return your attention to the top of your head, then move down the back of the head, over the curve of your skull. Is your neck tight or sore? You aren't trying to do anything about the feelings you encounter; simply notice them.

→ Continue slowly inching over your neck, chest, and abs, then back up to the neck and down the back. Finish by sensing your pelvis, legs, and feet. Concentrate on your heels against the floor or mattress. Lose yourself.

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I am always more tired at 3 p.m. than at 9 p.m., so when I feel that mid-afternoon slump, I break for a 30-minute run or pop in the P90X ab disc.”

—BRENDAN SHAY,  
financial planner, Harbor Financial Group, Columbia, Maryland



### STEP UP TO THE PLATE WHAT TO ORDER AT A BUSINESS LUNCH

Hitting an important business lunch doesn't have to mean bogging yourself down with calories and fat—even at a steak house. Choose one of these combos of filling protein and vegetables (green ones, in particular, contain brain-boosting folate). And sip red wine, which research shows can improve digestion, stoking your metabolism so you burn fat at a faster clip. Your menu manual:

**BEEFTENDERLOIN**  
(six to eight ounces)  
with grilled asparagus and a baked sweet potato

**NIÇOISE SALAD**

**GRILLED SCALLOPS**  
with mixed vegetables

**SHRIMP MARINARA**  
with sautéed spinach

**CAESAR SALAD**  
with grilled chicken or shrimp



SCHEDULE YOUR MEALS FOR OPTIMUM ENERGY AND PRODUCTIVITY.

The markets may crash, but you never should—the guys at the top of their game are the ones as alert at the close of business as they are at 9 a.m. Maintaining a routine of eating three to five times a day can keep your energy levels constant and your metabolism humming. Try this schedule, straight from nutritional experts.

**6 A.M.** Start your day with an eight-ounce glass of water, says dietitian Cheryl Forberg, the author of *Flavor First: Cut Calories and Boost Flavor*. “After a full night’s sleep, you’ll be dehydrated, which can make you feel fatigued. A glass of water will give you a burst of energy and help you choose wisely at breakfast because your stomach won’t feel as empty.”

**8 A.M.** Breakfast is “the perfect way to jump-start your metabolism,” says dietitian Keri Glassman, the founder of Nutritious Life in New York City. Her eat-smart suggestions: A cheesy egg sandwich (one whole egg and three egg whites, two slices of whole-wheat toast, one ounce of lean ham, and a slice of American or Cheddar cheese); the protein-rich combo provides a healthy dose of brain-boosting choline. Or mix one cup of protein-rich plain Greek yogurt, 15 chopped omega-3-packed walnuts, and a cup of blueberries.

**11 A.M.** Try a handful of raw almonds and a banana if your energy feels low, suggests dietitian Christian Henderson, the founder of Pure Nutrition in New York City.

**1 P.M.** “Lunch should be a combination of healthy, unprocessed protein, fat, and carbs to help keep blood sugar stable and prevent that mid-afternoon energy slump,” says Jeffrey Morrison, M.D. For an average workday meal, he recommends grilled chicken over arugula with slices of avocado, eggs, and beets. Keep portions small to medium to avoid that post-meal desire to nap under your desk.

**4 P.M.** Stave off pre-dinner munchies with celery and carrot sticks with three tablespoons of hummus or guacamole. Briefcase-friendly options: turkey jerky and an apple.

**7 P.M.** Focus on vegetables and lean protein at dinner, Glassman says. Try an eight-ounce fillet of grilled salmon or a turkey burger with broccoli or sautéed spinach and a cup of quinoa.