

Week 4 - Dealing with Thoughts
Introduction to Yoga



It can seem that the object of meditation is to get rid of all thoughts and distractions, and when that isn't happening, you may feel like you are failing at meditation and/or the meditation can turn into a struggle, wanting your experience to be different than it is. In fact, the kind of meditation you are learning is more about working skillfully with *any* internal or external experience, and isn't really about "getting rid" of thoughts and distractions. In fact, it can be said that wandering thoughts are the weights that train the muscles of the mind.

Videos

The first video, **Non-Striving**, addresses the possibility of taking the striving out of meditation (and life!). The second video, **Attention, Intention, Attitude**, explores the attitude we take toward ourselves in meditation, which is often harsh, and the possibility of being gentler with ourselves. In the third video, **Dealing with Thoughts (in life and in meditation)**, Tara Brach talks about our relationship with thoughts, including a short practice of intentionally bringing awareness to thoughts. The last video, **Surrender to the Monkeys**, is also by Tara, and addresses our wanting for things to be different than they are and the wisdom of taking things just as they are.

Reading

The reading list this week begins with **Mindful Yoga** by Jon Kabat-Zinn. It's important to read this before beginning the Yoga practice that begins this week. The other articles in this section address some common misconceptions in meditation.

In **Meditation: It's Not What You Think**, Jon Kabat-Zinn points out that while meditation can often be accompanied by peace and relaxation, "*meditation is not relaxation spelled differently*", and as Erik Wikstrom says in the quote above, "*The moments of stillness are one of meditation's byproducts, not the practice itself.*"

13 Tips for Mindful Caregiving, looks into integrating mindfulness into your care process.

Daily Practices

For the **formal practice** this week, we introduce **Mindful Yoga** (Yoga 1) into your 30 minute practice, alternating with the other practices from the past week. This is all outlined in your Week 4 Practice Log, below. **Even if you are an experienced yoga practitioner, be sure to read "Mindful Yoga" in the reading below, before beginning the yoga practice. Mindful Yoga is different than many traditional yoga practices in that there is less of a focus on the exact posture achieved and more focus on body/mind awareness.**

The **informal practice** is about becoming aware of how we experience and process unpleasant events. As previous weeks, allow a few minutes before going to sleep to complete the informal practices log. *Below are your materials for this week:*

Videos

- Non-Striving** by Jon Kabat-Zinn (3 min)
- Attention, Intention, Attitude** by Shauna Shapiro (16 min)
- Dealing with Thoughts (in life and in meditation)** by Tara Brach (20 min)
- Surrender to the Monkeys** by Tara Brach (4 min)

Reading

- Mindful Yoga** by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- Meditation - It's Not What You Think** by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- 13 Tips for Mindful Caregiving** by Presence Care Project

Practice sheets

- Formal Practice** [PDF] - Mindful Yoga (Yoga 1), Body Scan, Sitting
- Informal Practice** [PDF or WORD format] - Unpleasant Events Calendar