# Meditate to Boost Mental Health ///

The coronavirus pandemic has increased the stress of many Americans. Maintaining your mental health during these uncertain times can be challenging, especially if you're not sure how to get started. Take charge of your mental health today by meditating. There are many different types of meditation, but here are some tips for beginning a mindful practice of your own:
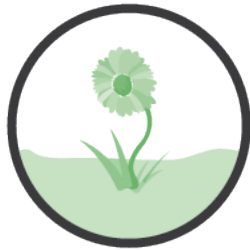
Start small
Sitting for three to five minutes may seem like a long time when you're starting out—and that's OK. Keep it simple and increase your meditation time slowly each day or week.

Schedule it
Blocking off time will help you plan for meditation. It's recommended to meditate first thing in the morning, so send yourself a calendar invitation and show up.

Designate a spot
Find a dedicated, quiet place to practice. As you continue with meditation during the pandemic, your brain will begin to associate this special area with meditation, and you'll subconsciously begin to relax when you're in this space.

Focus on breathing
Slow, steady breathing is important. As you take deep breaths in, let your belly expand—while keeping your chest still—for better mediation and mindfulness. Try counting each inhale and exhale as a way to focus your attention on your body.

Don't get discouraged
It's called practice for a reason. Meditation takes practice, and it can take a few days or even weeks to successfully incorporate it into your life. Find what works to calm your mind and keep you focused on the present.