

Movement Meditation



Dr Isabelle Cunningham

Movement Meditation is not for everyone (like most other meditation styles.)

Whether or not a person enjoys Movement Meditation or not will depend on a few different factors. Generally people who like to dance will enjoy this style, along with people who enjoy music and also those who are physically orientated (Yoga, sports, etc.)

A great side effect of Movement Meditation is that we can get physical exercise at the same time as practicing meditation. It is particularly good for relieving stress because it burns up excess energy stored in the muscles and disengages the Fight-or-Flight response.

Movement Meditation is also fun and frivolous (not serious like many other meditation styles) so it is a wonderful way of 'loosening up' and remember how to have fun just for fun sake!

Movement Meditation is particularly popular with teenagers (they can cut loose) and it can be practiced with absolutely any style of music. For older people it is a wonderful opportunity to move. Movement Meditation is fantastic for busy parents of young children who do not otherwise find the time for meditation. They can practice movement meditation with their children and as they meditate they also get to exercise and spend time doing something fun with their children.

The children are then getting to participate in active meditation (with the benefits of meditation blended with physical exercise) and spend fun time with Mum or Dad!

Some people do not enjoy Movement Meditation. These are usually people who are not comfortable with their bodies and do not usually enjoy dance. This meditation is an especially useful exercise for them as long as they do it alone (in private) so they are not feeling overcome with embarrassment

or caught up in how they appear to others. To practice Movement Meditation alone you will need a private space where there is room to move and fairly loud music that you really like and that makes you feel like moving. Then you just dance! Dance... Let's look at that word and consider what it means to us. Many people have rigid ideas about dance and what it should LOOK like. They may have set ideas about themselves as dancers (good or bad.) In this instance we are talking about dance in its purist form.

Noun: A series of movements that match the speed and rhythm of a piece of music.

So while Movement Meditation asks us to dance, it does not require us to dance in any particular way or perform any specific movements. It is about getting out of the head and letting the body move in the way that comes naturally when surrounded by music.

Once you have chosen your music and secured a private place (somewhere that is safe and you don't have to think too much about crashing into furniture) you simply start moving your body in any way the music suggests to you. Some people find 'following the hands' is a good way to start. Let your hands move to the music and allow your body to follow your hands.

The main thing is not to have any preconceived ideas about how you will dance, what it will feel like or what it will look like. It is about letting go. As you move to the music it is important to focus

on the music so that thoughts are not running through your mind. Some people find affirmations help to do this. Chanting words like I am beautiful, I am free, I am love, etc. It is also important to ensure that if the music you choose has lyrics they are positive!

There is no right or wrong way to practice Movement Meditation. Some people just stand still or sway. Some dance like wild creatures from the lost forest! The important thing is to get lost in the experience of BEING the music.

Some people cry and some people become ecstatic and laugh.

Think of the “dance” as being a sort of practical prayer. An act of gratitude or worship being displayed through physical movement.

Namaste
Isabelle